

**AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH NATIONAL AND MILITARY
CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF KOREAN WAR**

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to analyze Turkish national and military culture in the context of Korean War. The Korean War is the first international military contribution of modern Turkish Republic and Turkish Armed Forces. This was the first contact with other countries' and cultures' armies since the foundation of the modern republic. Following the war Turkey joined to NATO and became a certain member of western block of cold war era. Turkish troops' efforts and involvement in the Korean War did not only contribute to independence of Korea but also contributed to the world peace. Turkish military has a cultural background, which mainly stems from sociological and managerial characteristics of Turkish national culture. In this study an analysis of Turkish military culture is made within scope of Korean War according to Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions.

Key words: Korean War, Culture, Cultural Dimensions, Management, Military Culture, Korean Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey has a strong military both in quality and quantity in her region and Europe. Being the second biggest military force of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the eighth of the world, Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) cooperated and still taking part in several international peacekeeping operations stretching from Somali to Bosnia and from Kosovo to Afghanistan. The military culture of Turkey had a lot of commonalities with her national culture throughout her history. In Turkey, Armed Forces have great value in the eyes of the nation. Because, TAF is the most important organization against both internal and external threats to the sovereignty and prosperity of the country. In addition, since the foundation of the republic, TAF had been ready to defend the country with its welltrained and professionally educated personnel. Thus, it should not be perceived as a surprise that TAF has been evaluated as *the most dependable*

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organization of the country by Turkish citizens each year, until now, since 1980, according to the results of annual GALLUP researches.

The aim of this study is to analyse the Turkish national and military culture within the scope of Korean War. The Korean War is the first international peacekeeping operation of the TAF since the independence of Turkey. The values, traditions, customs and habits, which compose the life style of a nation, differ across societies. Therefore every society has its own unique culture (İnceoğlu, 2004, p. 128). Culture is an important notion for armed forces as well. Military organizations are not only the primary part of their national cultures but also a part of universal culture. Similar to other organizations, military organizations also affect and are affected by cultural context, in which they existed. Additionally, the culture created by the armed forces makes them distinct from other governmental organizations.

The reason of studying military culture in the light of Korean War lies upon the importance of Korean War in Turkish history from the sociological point of view. Korean War is the first international operation that modern TAF and young Turkish Republic took part in. Following the end of war Turkey joined the NATO. By this means Turkey took her place among the alliance of western world.

1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KOREAN WAR

Following the Soviet Union's declaration of war against Japan at the end of World War II, the U.S. Defense Ministry proposed Japanese forces, which are on the north of the 38th parallel, to surrender to Soviet Troops and which are on the south of the 38th parallel, to surrender to the U.S. Troops. This proposal was the beginning of Korea's division into two parts. After that declaration, the Soviet troops invaded the northern part of Korean Peninsula and the U.S troops occupied the south. After declaration of Republic of Korea on the south and Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the north, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. troops withdrew from the country, in 1947, due to decision of United Nations Security Council (Yücel and Yılmaz, 1995, p. 147). At the end of 1949, following the strengthening of communist system in China, the Soviets began enticing North Koreans to fight against the South. As a result of these efforts, the Korean disagreement turned into a brutal war, with the attacks of the North Korean forces on June 25, 1950.

The North Korean Army invaded the South on June 25, 1950. Under the aegis of the United Nations, countries allied with the United States, intervened on behalf of South Korea. Turkey attended this operation with a brigade level of army unit. Turkish brigade consisting of 259 officers, 395 noncommissioned officers, 22 army civilians, and 4414 corporals and privates, a total number of 5.090 personnel, attended the war and began fighting

against the Chinese Army on 5th of August 1950. Beginning with the victory of Kunuri on 29th of November and ending with the cease-fire in July of 1953, the Turkish brigade accomplished her missions with considerable successes. Following the war, the level of Turkish troops decreased gradually from year to year. Finally a symbolic Turkish squad withdrew from Korea in 1971. The casualties of Turkish troops were; 721 martyrs, 2147 wounded in action (WIA), 234 prisoners of war (POW) and 175 missed in action (MIA), during the 3 years of war, according to the sources of Korean Defense Ministry. Within three rotations, a total of 14.936 Turkish soldiers fought against Chinese and North Korean forces.

During three-year-period, 15.000 Turkish soldiers were assigned to Korea Operation. For every soldier, as family members and friends, at least 20 people were interested in the war. So, totally a number of 300.000 people were deeply interested in the war and it is easy to say that during the years of war, the Korean War was the main concern of the Turkish nation. It is possible to say that there are a great number of people who know a lot about and feel sympathy for Korea because of the war and the Korean War veteran's memories. The Turkish people feel that they have blood brotherhood with the Koreans as a result of the common fight against the invaders. The Turkish soldiers, who came back from Korea were called "Korean" by their friends and they still have "Korean" as nicknames (Lee, 1989, p. 20).

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF KOREAN CULTURE

In their studies, Hofstede (1991) and Trompenaars (1993) describe Korean culture as one of the prominent collectivist cultures (Cho and Yoon, 1998, p. 70). Besides that, according to Hofstede and Bond (1988) and Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) Korean culture is categorized with large power distance, less tolerance of uncertainty and high masculinity (Kim and Kim, 2010, p. 487). However traditional Korean culture can be examined within meaning of the Tao. It would be a correct determination that early stages of Korean culture dates back to Taoist belief. The meaning of the Tao is explained in the book *Tao Te Ching*, which is written by Lao Tzu who is a Chinese philosopher. Lao Tzu defines Tao as the one, which is invisible, inaudible and unfathomable. That is, Tao is the name of the reality, which characterizes all the nature and surroundings. The understanding of Tao can be done with extinction of distinction between subject and object. Following the reign of Yi dynasty, Confucianism was adopted as the dominant belief system. Confucianism proposes five basic principals, which should be taken into consideration in human relations. These principles are righteousness between king and people, love between parents and children, distinction between husband and wife, trust between friends and order between senior and junior of which violation is accepted as immoral and cause loosing of

one's face. In this context Confucianism, along with Buddhism and Tao provide basis of Korean culture (Lee, 1999, pp. 183-186). However following the 1960s Christianity began to spread among population in a more shamanistic way. That is, Christian churches and religious men usually featured Christian doctrines, which are similar to Shamanism; in this way many Shamanistic rituals were incorporated in this new kind of belief system (Kim, 2000, p. 117).

3. TURKISH MILITARY TRADITION AND KOREAN WAR

Military culture can be described as the way of using power and feature of attitudes depending on military knowledge and collection of experience. Anyone or any organization cannot isolate itself from environment in which it exists. Therefore military organizations have important impacts on social knowledge of their nations. Military organizations can be presented with their cultural values and can affect the society with its features (Ilhan, 1999).

Turkish military is proud of its *modern warrior tradition*, which is the heritage of the Ottoman Empire and the genius of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who is the founder of modern Turkey. The endurance of Turkish soldiers can be assessed from the fact that there were no lost in Turkish prisoner of wars (POWs) during and after Korean War and also none of them was defected by the enemy (Frehenbach, 1963, p. 33). The Turkish national culture necessitates forbearance against difficulties and obedience to orders of superiors and elders. Turkish society is so merciful to the repressed nations and ready to show the bravery and heroism. In the Korean War, Turkish soldiers adapted to the UN forces in a short time and presented their *military culture* and the *warrior skills* as well. A Turkish soldier, trained for the Korean War, told an American journalist in his interview that, "*I am proud of saving the world peace and saving my country from distant against the enemy.*" Another Turkish soldier answered the question of "*Why do you want to go to Korea?*" as "*I am going to Korea in order to extinguish the fire there. Because I am sure that one day that fire will come to my country too.*" (Deral, 1963, p. 9)

Social organizations are the main instruments of social life and are generally classified regarding the basic functions they execute. Armed forces society in Turkey, focuses on defending and securing the country mainly but they can perform other functions as well (Özönder and Nirun, 1985). Turkish military has an important socio-political role in the life of society. The Turkish Armed Forces has a purpose of *servicing the nation*, which fosters to serve for the welfare of the nation and these missions are not only because of the institutional norms but also being the result of a socio-political institution (Türkdoğan, 2002).

Turkish national culture is so respectful and tolerant to different religions due to its traditions and long-term living experience with variety of religions and cultures throughout history (Denizli, 1994, p. 10). The most prominent difference between Turkish and Korean nations and their armies is their religions, which would not be a problem for the Koreans who hosts various belief systems and Turks who have deep rooted tradition of tolerance against all belief systems. As Hungarian historians indicated in the 15th century; “*Turks never force anyone to apostasy, try to convince them to give up their religions.*” (Dikici, 2006, p. 451). Equality, interdependence, continence, tolerance and sympathy are distinguishing features of Turkish national culture, which are same for Koreans. Therefore these features make it easy for Turkish soldiers to cooperate with Koreans.

In Turkish society, beginning from ancient Asia Turkish States to the Ottoman Empire, order of society was maintained through special unwritten social laws, of which name is *töre*. The human rights and tolerance were the main points of ruling the country. So it can be stated that Turks’ reaction to Korean War was a result of her political heritage. The Turkish states, throughout history, always ruled people of other nations in a paternalistic way, instead of exploiting them. In the oldest written script of Turkish history, *Orhun Monuments*, Turkish Kagan (ruler) declared that “*I awakened my people who had died by the order of god and fed them, I dressed the naked ones, enriched the poor, and made the less more.*” In 1492, Sultan Bayezid ordered Ottoman navy commander (*Kaputan Paşa*) to bring the Jews, who were subject to cruelty for their religion, from Spain to Istanbul (Epstein, 1980). According to Turkish culture, *war* is not a way of enslaving others, instead as stated in the *Orhun Monuments* by Bilge Kagan, “*war is a way of making the poor ones rich and making the less more*” (Divitçioğlu, 1987, p. 219). In accordance with the main direction of Atatürk on peacekeeping: “*Peace at home, peace in the world*”, deployment of Turkish troops on South Korea, who was under tyranny of the invaders at that time, was an easy task for Turkish government to convince the people and the parliament.

Courage and endurance are important elements of a military culture. On 13th of February 1951, the Supreme Commander of the UN troops, General MacArthur, addressed to the Turkish soldiers: “*I am glad to see you. Everybody calls you as “the bravest of the braves”. There is nothing impossible for Turks, who have saved the 8th Army in Kunuri and defeated the enemy in Kunyangjangji*”. Lt. Colonel Blair of the US Army wrote in his article, which was published in the daily newspaper of 1st USA Corps, about the fighting skills of the Turkish troops as “*Enemy soldiers were equipped very well. They had plenty of food and ammunition. There was only one Turkish soldier against every three enemy soldiers. But the Turkish soldiers were so predominant.*” Also, the North Korean soldiers who fought in

Kunuri Combat against the Turkish soldiers were saying; “*They were fighting bravely. We did not understand why they withstood so much. Then we caught a soldier as a prisoner of war and understood that they were the Turks*” (Yazıcı, 1963, p. 384).

Turkish national culture played a merciful role in Korea. A Korean writer, Jeon, wrote in one of his articles: “*The Turkish soldiers were collecting the hungry, bare, and lost little children; feeding, dressing and taking care of them. Only the Turkish soldiers were doing this. This was the sign of the paternalism of these great soldiers*” (Baltacıoğlu, 1995) During the War, in 1951, with the cooperation of the Turkish soldiers, a primary school in Suwan city was constructed and named as *Ankara School* and that school provided education to the children in poor conditions. Turkish soldiers in Korea saw themselves as representatives of their country. In Turkish tradition, state is a *house of father*, where people are protected and guarded by statesmen. *Father state* is an idiom in Turkish to describe this conception like for the Turkish Kagans and Sultans were described as the fathers of the state and the protectors of the Turkish Nation.

4. AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH NATIONAL AND MILITARY CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF KOREAN WAR

The characteristics of the Turkish national culture could be specified within different frameworks. In order to have basis for this evaluation, the position of the national culture of Turkey could be elaborated with Hofstede’s variables (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede has described several different cultures and their main characteristics, in his worldwide research book of *Cultural Consequences* (Hofstede, 1980). Turkish culture is also a part of his research. In order to analysis Turkish culture in more systematical point of view, Hofstede’s cultural framework is used. To this end, culture is analysed under four dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity (Hofstede, 1980).

4.1 Individualism/Collectivism

Individualism/collectivism refers to the extent to which people prefer to take care of themselves and their immediate families, remaining emotionally independent from groups, organizations, and other collectivities or prefer to identify themselves within groups that they belong to (Schneider and Barsoux, 1997). According to Hofstede’s (1980) research Turkey has a collectivist culture. Similar to the national culture, Turkish military culture is also collectivist. Because of this similarity, collective tendency of Turkish national culture positively affects the identification with the TAF. Furthermore, loyalty to the in-group and common goals are among other major contributions of collective culture. According to Turkish military culture, saying “we” is more important and prominent than “I”, self-

sacrifice for the good of group is one of significant attitudes of Turkish soldiers. People prefer to be managed as groups. That is, they prefer to be evaluated in terms of group's success rather than as individuals in Turkish military. As Ergun (1991, p. 15) emphasizes: "*Majority of Turkish nation are not individualistic.*", Esmer (1997) defines Turks as "*Little amount of individualistic but generally collectivistic*" and Ceylan (1997) points that "*Turkish people could not be individualized and too late to be individualized*"

According to Turkish military tradition, loyalty to the leader is not only based on the mutual exchange of interests; rather it is the outcome of cultural processes. Disobedience leads to shame and loss of face of individuals and the groups. This relationship between the individual and group creates the right for the control of the individuals by the group. The emphasis on harmony and consensus helps the military leader to establish the team spirit easily. On the other hand although purpose of training is to teach how to execute military duties, sometimes collectivism hampers individual learning due to group pressure over members. This cultural characteristic sometimes creates a hurdle against creativity. Therefore the emphasis of group-think has almost the same influence on individual creativity and competition. Another disadvantage of a collectivist culture can be the prevalence of relationships over tasks (Varoğlu, Sığırı and Işın, 2005, p. 557).

The commander of Turkish troops in Korean War, General Tahsin Yazıcı emphasized that Turkish military played a caring role for others. By the end of the war, a good many of blasted and ruined villages were repaired by Turkish soldiers. The Turkish soldiers are not trapped within boundaries of individualism. Therefore they stand strong against ambiguities, difficulties and help each other (Yazıcı, 1963, p. 15). An article, which was published in an American review by McCall, analyzed the process of Turkish soldiers who were Prisoner of War (POW) and stated that: "*These young Turkish soldiers, who had grown up in the steppe of Anatolia with a lot of poorness, took the same test with our wealthy and comfort American soldiers. Turks passed the test and returned home with no loss. But our soldiers could not care and defend each others. They tried to live only individually*" (Göksel, 1983, p. 38).

According to Turkish national and military culture, the interest of group is more important than the interest of individuals. Reacting against group values is generally an unforgiven mistake in collectivistic societies as well as in Turkish Military Tradition. Cohesiveness and harmony are important factors in being a member of a group, which protects its members in the exchange of loyalty. In Chinese prisoner camps during the Korean War, all of the prisoners of war (POWs) were forced to wear one type

prisoner uniforms instead of their national uniforms. The aim of this process was to terminate military hierarchy among prisoners and force them to use brutality instead of rank order. In this circumstance when they gave insufficient food to the prisoners, only the strong ones could eat it, while the weaks could not. However Turkish prisoners were completely an exception. That is, they carried on the chain of command system even though they were forced not to do. By this means, they even celebrated their religious days and shared food equally among themselves (Pesler, 1983, p. 54). The Turkish POWs in Korea did not bow to pressure of enemy and did not collapse under prisonery because of their feeling of *mutual solidarity*. Chinese Command of Prisoner Camp took off POWs insignias of ranks, but Turkish POWs still acted as if they have their ranks. Then Chinese intelligent officers took away the highest ranked Turkish soldiers, who were captains, from other Turkish POWs but nothing changed. The second high ranked officer after the Captain took the command immediately. More surprisingly in the absence of officers, privates carried on chain of command according to their seniority (The Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, 1973). In addition, the UN soldiers, who were taken as POW after Kunuri Battle, were forced to walk in a *death march* on the cold days, in which the ones who can not walk any further were shot by the guards. But if one of Turkish POWs were stumbled, then others had run to help him and even carried him.

In collectivist cultures like Turkish culture, the prizes are delivered upon to social status in the group and cohesiveness to the group. The leadership function in this type of cultures can be concluded as creation of an organization climate, which supports teamwork and integration (Schneider, 1998, p. 79). In 1951, after Kumyangjangji battle, the American Supreme Command in Korea asked to report the successful personnel of 241st Turkish Regiment to decorate War Medals. But the Regiment Commander Col. Celal Dora answered the message, as *“This victory was the result of the self-sacrifice and effort of my whole personnel. I can not pick any of these heroes as the hero of this battle. If the Supreme Command does not have enough medals for all of my personnel then they can decorate only one medal to our glorious regiment flag therefore they will be honored all of my regiment”* (Dora, 1963, p. 208). Then *Turkish Armed Forces Distinguished Unit Medal* was decorated to regiment flag via American Supreme Command (Özel, 1999, p. 398).

In military culture, collectivistic behavior is also important from the aspect of adapting the social and organizational norms. Having organizational common goals, discipline, and regulation have a great impact on adapting organizational norms. An example of adapting the organizational and group norms can be given of Turkish soldiers' willingness to attend the Korean War. After UN's call and Turkish government's decision to deploy troops to Korea, thousands of voluntary

application was sent to Turkish General Staff from all around the country. The number of voluntaries was more than needed so the soldiers were chosen by lottery. Any soldier must have a medical certificate if he was chosen to go the Korean War in the lottery. Some soldiers who were not permitted to attend because of medical fault, begged to doctors to approve their report to provide them to attend the War (Denizli, 1994, p. 66). The same situation happened following the end of Cyprus Peace War for 20 years. Today thousands of Turkish boys are joining the army with great pride and traditional unofficial ceremonies that take place prior to and during traveling to the basic training bases for military service.

4.2. Power Distance

Power distance refers to the extent to which people believe that power and status are distributed unequally and accept an unequal distribution of power as the proper way for social systems to be organized. In organizations, power distance influences the amount of formal hierarchy, the degree of centralization, and the amount of participation in decision-making (Hofstede, 1991). The distance of power ranges across cultures. That is, less power distanced societies are not comfortable with social class distinctions, strict organizational hierarchy and unequal distribution of power. On the other hand cultures in which power distance is accepted, like Turkish culture, strict social and organizational hierarchy are accepted. That is to say an individual's social or organizational position influences how he acts and how others treat him.

In Hofstede's study, Turkish society categorized as a high level power distanced culture (Hofstede, 1980). Similar to the national culture, Turkish Military culture also carries typical characteristics of high power distance. Basım (2000) supported Hofstede's (1980) categorization with findings of his empirical research, which determines Turkish military leaders' tendencies toward high power distanced attitudes. Power distanced systems cause creation of some kind of charismatic and heroic figures that leaders tend to be, in the eyes of their subordinates as happens in Turkish military. However, high power distanced systems have some disadvantages such as high centralization, in which subordinates usually expect to be told what to do. In this circumstance leaders carry all the responsibilities of decisions and actions. In this way high power distance cause more top-down communication instead of an environment in which all parties expressed their opinions without hesitation. That's why, *the most dangerous case for military leaders is to loose the trust of their subordinates and to cause a feeling that he could not protect the followers*" (Varoğlu et al., 2005, p. 557).

4.3. Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance measures the extent to which people in a society feel threatened by ambiguous situations and the extent to which they try to avoid these situations by providing greater stability, establishing more formal rules, rejecting deviant ideas and behavior, and accepting the possibility of absolute truths and the attainment of expertise. According to Hofstede (1980; 1991) Turkish culture has high level of uncertainty avoidance, which refers to society's "discomfort with uncertainty and tendency to predictability and stability (Trompenaars, 1993). According to results of Basım's (2000, p. 33) research, Turkish national and military cultures are typical examples of strong uncertainty avoidant cultures. The emotional need to be busy and inner urge to work hard are advantages for military leaders in the Turkish culture. This characteristic provides cultural support for the tight rules, precision, punctuality, formalization and management of uncertainty in military environments. For instance, the chain of command continues until two soldiers are left in any circumstances because of seniority system, which is determined even with differences in attendance to military on the daily basis and which provides right to command the other one. In this way emergence of uncertainty is prevented (Varoğlu et al., 2005, p. 560).

It can be said that people's skill of living with uncertainty and their leaders' capacity to remove uncertainty has a close and positive relationship (Zhenkang, 1999). In societies with high degree of uncertainty avoidance, people tend to "obey the leaders" to decrease the uncertainty. In these types of societies, under conditions with an intense uncertainty, like economic or political crisis and wars, people tend to believe in their leaders, trust them and give all responsibilities to their leaders (Sargut, 1994). For example, in 1951, Kumyangjangni battle, 10th Company attacked to a well fortified enemy position, and fronted with heavy machine gun fire. The Platoon commander tried to attack to the pillbox in order to end the machine gun fire, but he was hit on the shoulder. Nevertheless he acted as if he was not injured in order his men not to be demoralized and stood up (Denizli, 1994, p. 127). Another example shows strong bonds among soldiers, which removes any uncertainties and cause mutual trust between subordinates and leaders. That is, many Turkish soldiers were wounded severely in the Kunuri Battle and evacuated to American or Japanese hospitals close to the battlefield. However, most of them insisted to go back to their units immediately instead of going back to home. It was written in the war memories of Regiment Commander Colonel Celal Dora that despite the American doctors' advice, Captain Sacit, who was severely injured in the battle, to be sent to Turkey, he denied and said that "*I can still be useful for my regiment*" and returned to his unit (Dora, 1963, p. 188). Uncertainty avoidance does not mean *risk avoidance*. Because a certain amount of risk should be taken in order to

reach victory on the battlefield. The Turkish Regiment Commander Colonel Celal Dora's order to his regiment constitutes a typical example of risk taking and bravery; *"You will never surrender to enemy. You would rather to die instead of being POW. If I surrender, one who is close to me can kill me with his gun. If he does not have a gun, it will be a right for him to kill me with bare hands. It will be a right for him."* (Dora, 1963, p. 40).

4.4. Masculinity / Femininity

Masculinity / femininity dimension refers to societies' tendency toward either masculine values of assertiveness, competitiveness, and materialism or toward feminine values of nurturing, quality of life and relationships (Hall, 1997). According to Hofstede (1980) Turkish culture emphasizes slightly feminine values. Masculine cultures concentrate on success and achievements. On the other hand, feminine cultures concentrate on the social relations. While in masculine cultures, earning money is important; in feminine cultures the quality of life is more prominent. Leaders in feminine cultures focus on wellness and happiness of the people, on the contrary in masculine cultures leaders focus on the achievement of concrete and clear targets and gained benefits (Schneider, 1998, p. 80). Having the characteristics of feminine culture, according to Turkish military tradition, dominant values of caring for others and sympathy for the weak are certain characteristics of leaders which influence their subordinates. This cultural characteristic puts people and relations among people in front. Because of this feminine culture, female officers don't encounter problems in TAF. Captain Tarcan's behavior constitutes a specific example of caring behavior of Turkish officers. That is, during the Korean War, prior to Wegas battle, Captain Tarcan, who was a company commander at that time, gave a short break and let his men to rest in order to make required preparations for the upcoming fight. Meanwhile almost all of the soldiers were writing letters to their families or friends, in case of losing their lives soon. Captain Tarcan called one of his soldiers and asked him whom he was writing the letter. Upon this, the soldier gave him the letter, which he wrote to his fiancée in a mood that he might be a martyr in the next day's battle. Then the Company Commander wrote a note on small paper that "Don't worry, your fiancée will be with you soon..." and put the note in the soldier's envelope (Öke, 1990, p. 169). When looking through uncertainty avoidance and masculinity scale, Turkey's place is on the strong uncertainty avoidance/feminine part of the scale, by having job security, positive relations and life quality, which are mixed on value of social motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

The international missions affect the armies that take part in multinational operations and it becomes even more complicated with the expansion of peacekeeping operations of NATO and UN. Above individual,

group and sectoral culture levels, mostly national culture influences the shape of the organizational culture. Understanding these interactions would provide us better solutions and new ways of solving culture-related problems.

The Turkish military culture is not only influenced by its national culture but also interacts with its environment and influenced by sectoral military cultures of NATO and the UN. The importance of the sectoral culture has increased because of the globalization in civilian life and internationalization in military life during the last century. Turkish military is an organization that has a unique culture. Values like loyalty to the nation and country, obedience, determination and endurance, courage and bravery, self-sacrifice, getting along with peers, ethical behavior, altruism, and professionalism, responsibility for duty, honesty, and competence are adopted by all members of TAF. These values are socially constructed through years of experience, dating back to 209 B.C., which indicates the accepted foundation day of the Turkish Army.

The main source of the Turkish military culture and tradition is its national culture, mainly due to conscription mechanism and human resources of officers and noncommissioned officers. Turkish people are defined as the “most proud people” following Venezuela, which can be explained as the positive feelings of people for their country, in a research made in 2006. According to same research, Turkish people are the ones, who proud of their history and trust their armed forces the most. The main reason for these results can be explained with Turkish culture’s structure of “Army-Nation”. That’s why, each member of the Turkish society is proud of serving in the military.

Culture cannot be shaped and created in a short period of time. It takes hundreds of years for a nation to have a cultural background. In this way, Turkish military culture and tradition evolved through hundreds of years. In this study we made a historical and anecdotal look to the Korean War and try to figure out cultural values within the framework of Korean War, which is the first international mission and first serious operation of the modern TAF. The studies on the Turkish culture were also supported by the sociological data like anecdotes and interviews.

The cultural values of a military are as important as their weapons and other equipment. Because, cultural values form the driving force of every military, by molding each men as a one fist. Therefore leaders of a country or the decision makers of an armed forces should internalize the cultural values of their nation and their followers. Future researchers’ detailed studies, supported with empirical findings, on Turkish national culture would help to understand successes and failures of the nation better.

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