

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MILITARY- MINDSET

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More than in any job, the belief system a soldier holds is significantly shaped by the professional environment in which he finds himself from the first day he enters a military academy. A military career differs from other professions in terms of socialization, as military academies and military barracks physically separate soldiers from civilians for an extended period while the military in general enlists those who view national security as a main concern. Even though military cadets may be ideologically diverse at the beginning of their education, a distinct type of military man is created over time through training, operations, and even wars, and this man holds a belief system which separates him from the rest of society. This belief system, which is called military-mindset or military ethic, consists of certain characteristics. Since the professional responsibility of a soldier is the security of the state and its citizens, the military man is inclined to have pessimistic views of the enemy's intentions as he sees violence as a key trait of human nature. As a result, the military man prefers to adopt military measures to solve problems. Finally, in some militaries the military man is educated to follow a certain political ideology which may enhance his pessimism and preference for military measures.

This article attempts to figure out how engaging with another profession, with politics in this case, helps to transform this military mindset in certain cases. The politicization of soldiers, depending on how it occurs, may transform the inflexible and pessimist military mindset over time as new norms and values replace the former ones. This argument will be analyzed by

comparing Turkish and Israeli soldiers' and soldier-politicians' understanding of the ethnic relations and conflicts in their respective states. The critical difference between the military men of these countries is how they are politicized. For many decades, the Turkish military has controlled politics without participating in the civilian administration whereas Israeli generals have been active participants in politics and passionate pursuers of political careers. Related to this difference, Turkish soldiers tried to impose a political ideology, through which they were educated, on the civilians whereas Israeli soldiers, without having an institutional ideology in the army, adapted themselves to the political ideologies that existed in the civilian political arena. The main finding of this paper is that the lack of institutional ideology in the military and military officers' participation in politics may provide the transformation of military mindset whereas military control with a certain political ideology prevents this process by obstructing the learning of new norms and values.

I advance this argument in four parts. First, I will outline the characteristics of the military mindset. Second, I will give general information about Turkish and Israeli civil-military relations. Third, I will identify the preferences of Turkish and Israeli soldiers and soldier-politicians in two ethnic conflict cases – the Kurdish issue in Turkey and Arab/Palestinian issue in Israel – and show how Israeli officers' mindset is diverse and open to transformation while Turkish officers' mindset is homogenous and static. In this section, I will also make a within-case comparison in the Israeli case to show how diversity in the political system is also essential for the transformation of military mindset. I will conclude by summarizing these findings.

The Characteristics of the Military Mindset

In simple terms, military mindset refers to the ideas, values and norms a military man holds about the role of the army and the use of force in domestic and international affairs.

Although a professional military career may attract a certain type of person who has ideological beliefs similar to military-mindset, the characteristics of this mindset are mainly gained during the military education. What is more important is that the ideas, values and norms learned during the military education are permanent in a soldier's mind. As Cohen puts it, the militaries are "total institutions that mold the beliefs of their members for life."¹ These characteristics of the military mindset fall into three ideological patterns.

First, soldiers are trained as realistic, pessimistic and cautious men. The main objectives of military training are to survive in the battlefield, win wars, and protect the borders of the state and security of the citizens from external threats. In this profession, even a small mistake may have enormous consequences; therefore, a soldier has to take all worst-case scenarios into consideration, which makes him a natural-born pessimist. Samuel Huntington, who put the military mindset into theoretical perspective for the first time, argues that a military man sees "violence rooted in the permanent biological and psychological nature of men" and "between the good and evil in man, the military ethic emphasizes the evil." If a military man wants to survive, protect and win, he has to be "a man of Hobbes" who trusts no one other than himself and his companion-in-arms.² This pessimism is mainly about the capacities and intentions of the enemy, but soldiers may also mistrust the politicians who, they believe, lack an accurate understanding of security affairs. Therefore, the first characteristic of the military mindset points to realism and pessimism in a soldier's cautious mind.

¹ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 98.

² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 61.

Related to this pessimism and realism, the second ideological pattern in the military mindset is a soldiers' preference for military measures to end security problems.³ This preference is based on the fact that soldiers see security affairs from a unique perspective. Because they "are socialized to envision national security as a strictly military problem," as Sechser argues, soldiers may undervalue economic and diplomatic aspects of security problems whereas they exaggerate security threats, highlight the advantages of striking first and generate optimistic evaluations of the result of the war.⁴ However desirable it is, long and comprehensive thinking is not expected from them because in the battlefield comprehensive thinking may lead to a loss of precious time, or worse, death and defeat. As a result of this education, soldiers tend to prefer short-term military measures over diplomacy, which is unpredictable and takes a longer time to apply. Furthermore, soldiers see political concessions to the adversary as a weakness which can be exploited in the future if the balance of power between the two groups changes in favor of the enemy. According to soldiers, diplomatic concessions only prolong the existing problems, whereas, with a certain triumph on the battlefield, the victor can impose its conditions on the

³ It is important to note that this issue is controversial in the civil-military relations literature. Some scholars who focus on American civil-military relations argue that although soldiers are pessimistic and cautious, they do not prefer use force to end security problems. For instance, in his analysis of American political decision-making during the Cold War, Richard Betts argues that high-ranking generals were more cautious in recommending use of force than civilian politicians whereas Huntington states that a soldier "tends to see himself as the perennial victim of civilian warmongering. It is the people and the politicians, public opinion and governments, who start wars. It is the military who have to fight them" Richard K. Betts. *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 69. However, in the recent decade a great literature has extended this research sample by including other countries and these scholars have found that soldiers are more war-prone than civilians and they are likely to use military measures to end domestic and international problems. Michael Brecher, "Crisis Escalation: Model and Findings," *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (April 1996), pp. 215-230; Todd S. Sechser, "Are Soldiers Less War-Prone than Statesmen?" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48, No. 5, (October 2004), pp. 746-774; Brian Lai and Dan Slater, "Institutions of the Offensive: Domestic Sources of Dispute Initiation in Authoritarian Regimes, 1950-1992," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 1, (January 2006), pp. 113-126; Brandon M. Stewart and Yuri M. Zhukov, "Use of Force and Civil-Military Relations in Russia: An Automated Content Analysis," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, (June 2009), pp. 319-343; Jessica L. Weeks, "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2, (May 2012), pp. 326-347. According to this literature, which is called militarism or military activism, military-mindset is an important variable that affects soldiers' preferences. Because this paper focuses on Turkey and Israel, I will take their theoretical arguments as the second characteristic of the military mindset.

⁴ Sechser, *Are Soldiers Less War-Prone than Statesmen?*, p. 750-751.

enemy and decisively end the problem. Because soldiers see diplomacy as a waste of time, they also do not like civilians to meddle in military matters with alternative solutions.⁵

In addition to officers' pessimism and preference for military measures, military education may impose a certain kind of ideology on officers, which is the third characteristic of the military mindset. In several political armies, soldiers are educated about their roles in domestic and international affairs as well as their relations with civilian politicians and in some cases this education may exceed the boundaries of military professionalism. For example, since independence in Pakistan soldiers are taught that they are the guardians of the state; this is a self-appointed role in which the military is the main institution responsible for the state's Indian, Kashmir, and nuclear policies. The Pakistani soldiers believe that if civilians violate the military's preferences on these issues, they have the right to overthrow the government to protect national interests from selfish politicians. Similarly, in several Latin American countries such as Brazil, Chile, Argentina, etc. the soldiers gave themselves the role of shaping the political and economic destiny of their respective states during the Cold War. Yet, it is important to note that this characteristic is not universal and in professional armies, military cadets focus on military-technical subjects such as military history, geography, war-planning, etc. while the task of shaping political ideologies is left to civilian politicians. I argue that the presence of ideological indoctrination within the military is one of the important differences between the Turkish and Israeli armies and it is an important variable that affects the transformation of military mindset. Another important difference is how these armies are politicized which will be explained below.

Military Control versus Military Participation

Military Control in Turkey

⁵ ibid, p. 751; Weeks, *Strongmen and Straw Men*, p. 333.

Military influence in politics is the most lasting phenomenon in Turkish political history. From the time they emerged as nomadic people on the plains of Central Asia, the military way of life became dominant among the Turks and they either became the military arm of Islamic empires, such as the Abbasid Caliphate, or the Turks themselves formed militarily strong states like the Ottoman Empire.⁶ Even in these pre-modern states, the military had important political power as Turkish generals tried to control the Abbasid Caliphs⁷ or Ottoman soldiers deposed and/or killed several sultans and grand-viziers who contradicted their interests.⁸ By taking this traditional military influence in politics into consideration, it is not surprising that the Republic of Turkey was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a former Ottoman officer, and his close associates, mainly from the Ottoman military after the War of Independence (1919-23).

Despite the fact that the founding fathers abandoned their uniforms before becoming politicians and did not set up a military regime, during the first fifteen years of the state former officers held key government positions, such as the office of President (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 1923-38), Prime Minister (İsmet İnönü, 1923-24 and 1925-1937; Ali Fethi Okyar, 1924-25), Minister of Internal Affairs (Recep Peker, 1924-25; Cemil Uygur, 1925-27) and Minister of Defense (Kazım Özalp, 1922-24 and 1935-39; Ali Fethi Okyar, 1924-25; Recep Peker, 1925-27). During these years, no less than fifteen percent of each assembly was made up of soldier-politicians and, as Frey points out, this group constituted one-third of the top leadership within these assemblies.⁹ At the same time, Fevzi Çakmak, the Chief of General Staff (CGS) between 1922 and 1944, had significant influence on political decision-making. Çakmak frequently

⁶ For more information about the historical roots of the Turkish army, see Mevlüt Bozdemir, *Türk Ordusunun Tarihî Kaynakları*, (Ankara: A.Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982).

⁷ For the Turks during the Abbasid Caliphate, Hugh Kennedy, *When Baghdad Rules the Muslim World: The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty*, (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2005); Amira K. Bennison, *The Great Caliphs: The Golden Age of the Abbasid Empire*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁸ Hale shows that only between 1618 and 1730 no less than six sultans were deposed by Ottoman soldiers. William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 8.

⁹ Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), p. 181, 260.

attended the Council of Ministers, there was no parliamentary control over his decisions, and, as Ataturk intended, he was directly responsible to the head of state. He could establish direct contacts with other ministries and his concerns often overwhelmed those of any other politicians. Although trustworthy members of the bureaucracy also held important government posts, in the end, the prime decision-makers in this period were three military men: Ataturk, Inonu and Cakmak. Therefore, as Momayezi states, “Men with military backgrounds not only won the war of independence, they laid the foundations on which the new Turkey was based.”¹⁰

In spite of civilianization of the former officers and civilian control of the military, the political system on the ground reflected the characteristics of a military-bureaucratic rule. As Rizvi states, the organizational and professional orientations of military-bureaucratic rulers are serious obstacles to creating participatory institutions as these rulers emphasize discipline, internal cohesion, sound administration, and compliance rather than bargaining, persuasion, compromise, and dialogue.¹¹ This kind of governance can be observed in Turkey during the state-building years given that order and stability were uppermost in the minds of the founding fathers. The priority was to form a secular, homogenous and modern Turkish state and dissident voices coming from religious and Kurdish circles were not tolerated. Therefore, although Ataturk allowed the formation of two opposition parties, first the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) in 1924 and the Liberal Republican Party in 1930, to compete against his Republican People’s Party (RPP), the multi-party system in this period was short-lived. These parties were closed after dissatisfied groups joined them and jeopardized Ataturk’s objectives. The military fully supported the government in these objectives, repressing the Kurdish and religious rebellions and spreading Kemalist principles through mandatory military service. All in all, what was present in

¹⁰ Nasser Momayezi, “Civil-Military Relations In Turkey,” *International Journal of Peace*, Vol.15, No. 3(1998), p. 3.

¹¹ Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 27-28.

Turkish politics during this period was military control, in the form of retired former officers, rather than military participation.

This military control in Turkish politics took an institutional form after the founding fathers died and/or lost their political power. After the Second World War, under threat from the Soviet Union, Turkish officials adopted a multi-party system in order to join the Western bloc. Consequently, in 1950, the RPP, under the leadership of Inonu, lost elections against the Democratic Party headed by Adnan Menderes and Celal Bayar and for the first time the Republic was not ruled by soldier-politicians. Yet, the recognition of a multi-party system and civilian leadership did not end military influence in Turkey; on the contrary, as Jenkins states, the military's role in political decision-making was enhanced by the failure of the parliamentary system,¹² the political chaos it created, and the military coup that followed in May 1960. After this critical juncture, the Turkish military tried to control the politicians through different institutional and constitutional means which were enlarged after each military intervention in 1971, 1980 and 1997.

First, the military regime created the National Security Council (NSC) in 1961 and through this institution the army controlled state policies on national security issues. In addition, the number of the military officers on the council, and its jurisdiction, grew significantly after the military interventions in 1971 and 1980.¹³ Second, the president began to be chosen from among

¹² Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics*, (New York: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001), p. 9.

¹³ In the 1961 Constitution, the NSC was tasked to “communicate the requisite fundamental recommendations to the Council of Ministers with the purpose of assisting in the making of decisions related to national security and coordination.” In the 1982 Constitution, on the other hand, the council was tasked to “submit to the Council of Ministers its views on taking decisions and ensuring necessary coordination with regard to the formulation, establishment, and implementation of the national security policy of the state” and the ministers were asked “give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council concerning the measures that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and indivisibility of the county, and the peace and security of society.” By changing “communicate” with “submit” and “recommendation”

generals, and from 1960 to 1989 retired military officers (Cemal Gursel, Cevdet Sunay, Fahri Koruturk and Kenan Evren) were appointed to this post. Rather than participation in politics, the main intention behind this arrangement was to control the politicians as the presidents mainly shared the concerns of the military officers. While avoiding party politics, the officers gave special attention to the Presidency and did not want it to be held by a politician who was deemed to be anti-Kemalist; for example, they opposed the nomination of Abdullah Gul, who had an Islamic background, for this post in 2007. Third, in 1961 the military adopted an Internal Service Law which emphasized the Armed Forces' responsibility to protect the territorial integrity of the country and *the nature of the Turkish regime*. The second part of the article would be used to justify future military interference into domestic politics. Finally, the constitutions adopted after the military coups highlighted national security and increased military control over politics. The 1982 Constitution was especially important in this regard, as in its sixty-five articles all areas of public life – economic, political, social and cultural – were shaped by the notion of national security.¹⁴ In sum, through the NSC, Presidency, Internal Service Law and constitutions, the Turkish military attempted to control the political structure while avoiding party politics. This control lasted until 2007 when the presidential crisis and Ergenekon trials against military officers who were accused of plotting against the government significantly damaged the military's reputation.

Military Participation in Israel

In Israel, on the other hand, the picture is quite different. Unlike the Turks, the Israelis did not have a traditional military culture as their military institutions came into existence at the

with "giving priority consideration," the new constitution attempted to make the NSC the main institution responsible for formulating and implementing national security policy.

¹⁴ Meryem Erdal, "Mevzuatta Milli Guvenlik," in Ali Bayramoglu and Ahmet Insel, eds., *Almanak Turkiye 2006-2008: Guvenlik Sektoru ve Demokratik Gozetim*, (Istanbul: TESEV Yayinlari, 2009), pp. 43-65.

beginning of twentieth century with the establishment of Bar Giora (1907), HaShomer (1909) and Haganah (1920). Yet, as soon as the state was formed in May 1948, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) became one of the most influential actors in Israeli politics as the neighboring Arab states rejected the presence of a Jewish state in the region and successive wars took place between Israelis and Arabs in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. In this external threat environment, the military generals assumed important political roles. For example, during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Moshe Dayan, the CGS from 1953-58, was the one who held secret meetings with King Abdullah of Transjordan to reach a peace agreement while Yitzhak Rabin, the CGS from 1964-68, had his first diplomatic experience in the 1949 Armistice talks in Rhodes. In addition to the external threat environment, the difficulties of the newborn state also helped the military to increase its influence in politics and society. The main problem for the state during this period was the massive strain on its resources in trying to receive and settle waves of Jewish immigrants while in the middle of a conflict with the Arabs. Here, the military played a significant role in handling these difficulties by carrying out non-military tasks in the areas of immigration, assimilation, education, and settlement.¹⁵ Finally, the personality of David Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister from 1948-53 and 1955-63, was an important factor in the military influence on policymaking. Although not a soldier-politician,¹⁶ Ben-Gurion was intensely interested in military affairs and his chief confidant and assistant during his tenure was Moshe Dayan, who had a similar worldview and ideology with the Old Man. Ben-Gurion's trust in Dayan and other

¹⁵ For more information on the "non-military use of the military," see Tom Bowden, *Army in the Service of the State*, (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1976); Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Zeev Drory, *The Israel Defence Force and the Foundation of Israel: Utopia in Uniform*, (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁶ Although he served as full corporal in the Jewish Battalion within the British army in 1918, Ben-Gurion cannot be classified as a soldier-politician because, rather than military education and career, what pushed him to soldiery were his political activism and his ability to affect masses, characteristics which led him to be defined by a military report as "the best man in the Jewish Battalion." Indeed, the very same political activism ended his military career when he left the military camp without a pass to seek converts for Jewish unification. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*.

military officers such as Ariel Sharon was based on his admiration for the military heroes, which separated him from the other prime ministers in this period, Moshe Sharett and Levi Eshkol.¹⁷

Despite these factors, however, military influence in Israel never turned into military control as civilian control of the military was a well-established norm even before the independence of the state.¹⁸ Although military officers such as Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, Yigael Yadin, Yigal Allon, Ariel Sharon and many others were active participants in political decision-making, the final decision rested with the civilian politicians, even when the politicians and officers differed, as witnessed especially during the short-term rule of Moshe Sharett in 1953-55.¹⁹ What differentiates this control of the military from the civilian control during the state-building process in Turkey is that the Israeli politicians in this period had no, or very little, military background. Unlike active officers, soldier-politicians played almost no role in the political decision-making. For example, within the First Knesset (1949-1951) there were only three members – Israel Galili, Yizhar Harari, and Eliyahu Lankin (a member of Irgun) – who had command-level military careers and none of them served as minister. Moshe Dayan was the first soldier-politician who held an important ministerial post; he served as Minister of Agriculture in the Fourth Knesset (1959-1961). This situation not only provided respect for the civilian politicians from the beginning, it also prevented the possibility that later generations of military officers would see themselves as heirs of the founding fathers, as happened in Turkey.

¹⁷ Yechiam Weitz, "The Founding Father and the General: David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 6, (2011), p. 857-858.

¹⁸ For example, in 1940 when David Ben-Gurion adopted militant Zionism against Britain, the Jewish leader severely reprimanded two emissaries from the Haganah who begged him to stop the demonstrations. According to an eye-witness, even this "begging" was enough to frustrate Ben-Gurion: "He stormed at them like a flood of lava, upbraiding them for their timidity and their misguided comprehension of the political situation. He boiled with anger and concluded by declaring that the Zionist executive alone was responsible for implementing political policy, and it was up to the Haganah to obey or resign." Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2013).

¹⁹ For some examples of political-military confrontation in this period, see Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism: A Study Based on Moshe Sharett's Personal Diary and Other Documents*, (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1982) and Gabriel Sheffer, *Moshe Sharett: Biography of a Political Moderate*, (New York: Clarendon Press, 1996).

Nevertheless, the number of soldier-politicians in Israeli politics significantly increased after the first generation of military officers retired and they started replacing the founding fathers. Contrary to Turkish military officers who saw a military career as a sacred duty and refrained from party politics, Israeli soldiers were passionate pursuers of political careers.²⁰ The Six-Day War in 1967 was an important critical juncture leading to an increase in soldier-politicians. During the war, Israelis pressured Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to appoint Moshe Dayan as the Minister of Defense, and the Israeli victory was partly credited to his presence in the government. The 1973 Yom Kippur War was another watershed event as the war brought significant criticism upon Golda Meir's government given that it led to 2,687 dead, 7,251 wounded and 314 prisoners on the Israeli side.²¹ In the elections after the war, the Israeli public chose Yitzhak Rabin as the Prime Minister and he became the first soldier-politician to hold this post. In the 1970s, retired officers also started heading political parties with Rabin leading the Labor Party, Yigael Yadin founding the center party Dash, and Ariel Sharon founding the Shlomzion Party. As a result of military victories against the Arab states and their experience in political decision-making, former officers were highly respected individuals in Israeli society who became very popular in elections.

With the continuous threat environment, soldier-politicians continued to be an important presence in Israeli politics in the following decades. For example, from 1987 to 2005 when the state faced Palestinian problems in the occupied territories, there were three soldier-politicians who served as prime minister (Rabin, Ehud Barak, and Sharon – out of six prime ministers), five defense ministers (Rabin, Yitzhak Mordechai, Barak, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer and Shaul Mofaz –

²⁰ The early retirement age in Israel was a significant cause of this difference with Turkish soldiers. Among Israel's military heads in the first two decades Yaakov Dori retired at the age of 50, Yigael Yadin at 35, Mordechai Maklef at 33, Moshe Dayan at 43, Haim Lakov at 42, Tvzi Tzur at 41, and Yitzhak Rabin retired in 1968 when he was 46.

²¹ Simon Dunstan, *The Yom Kippur War 1973 (2): The Sinai*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2003).

out of seven defense ministers) and several political party leaders (such as Rabin, Sharon, Barak, Rafael Eitan, Ben-Eliezer, Amram Mitzna, etc.). This domination was to such a degree that average party control by soldier-politicians in this period was forty percent.²² However, unlike the Turkish case, this participation was not intended to provide military control or impose a certain ideology on politicians as military officers spread among different political parties and adopted diverse political ideologies. Although all soldier-politicians more or less had a military-mindset and shared the concerns of military officers, they did not have any objective to change the democratic control of the military as they passionately pursued their political careers.

In this period, the military also institutionally participated in political decision-making even more than during the state-building period as the territories occupied in the Six-Day War were put under the military control. With this responsibility, military officers continued to participate in cabinet meetings and take part in negotiations with foreign states about the territories. As the institution which has “by far the most highly developed policymaking capabilities in Israel” in terms of situational assessment, policy planning and implementation,²³ the IDF played a significant role in the Oslo process between 1993 and 2000 given that a sizable percentage of the negotiating teams was comprised of military officers. When the negotiations halted, military officers such as the CGS Shaul Mofaz, his deputy Yossi Beilin, and Amos Gilad, head of the Military Intelligence’s research division, were critical in shaping the government’s belief that conflict was inevitable and that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was not a peace partner.²⁴ Nevertheless, in spite of all of this influence, several critical decisions made by civilians during this time over the objections of the military officers, show that the officers were

²² Giora Goldberg, “The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System,” *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (July 2006), p. 387.

²³ Charles D. Freilich, *Zion’s Dilemmas: How Israel Makes National Security Policy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), p. 4.

²⁴ “Military Intelligence Presented Erroneous Assumption on Palestinians,” *Haaretz*, 10 June 2004.

merely participants, not deciding voices.²⁵

This section has shown that Turkey and Israel have different forms of civil-military relations, although in both states the military is an influential actor in political decision-making. The analysis above demonstrates that in Turkey this influence takes the form of military control, as both former officers in the state-building process and then the military in later decades prioritized order and stability over participatory politics and the main objective was to control the politicians and their policies. In Israel, the military officers were eager to participate in politics after retirement. Because the IDF was a newly-formed army in the state-building process this participation was only at the institutional level. But over time, the number of soldier-politicians significantly increased as the first generation soldiers started retiring while the military as an institution kept influencing the political decisions, albeit the officers were not the prime decision-makers. The next section will analyze how this difference between control and participation affects the characteristics of the military mindset.

Case I: Military Control and Turkey's Kurdish Policy

The Kurdish question is the most serious political, economic and social problem Turkey has faced since the foundation of the state. Although there were infrequent rebellions in the late Ottoman period as a result of the modernization and centralization process, the wave of Kurdish rebellions started with the Nasturi rebellion in 1924 and until the complete repression in the Dersim rebellion of 1939, Kurdish groups rebelled against the new government twenty-four times in a period of fifteen years.²⁶ In 1984, another Kurdish insurgency, combined with terrorist tactics, headed by the PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, Kurdistan Workers' Party) started in

²⁵ These decisions include Barak's decision to withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000 and Sharon's Gaza Disengagement Plan in 2005

²⁶ For the list of rebellions in the Ottoman and early republic periods see Mehmet Ali Birand, "Bugüne kadar Kaç Kürt İsyanı Oldu?" *Hürriyet*, 3 January 2008.

Turkey and so far the mutual violence between the Turkish state and the PKK has cost more than forty thousand lives. Against these rebellions, Turkish soldier-politicians and military officers held the three characteristics of the military-mindset, and the military control over politics did not allow alternative options to gain ground.

Pessimism/Realism

Both soldier-politicians in the early Republican period and the military officers fighting against the PKK were pessimistic about the intentions of the Kurds as they believed that the ultimate objective of the rebellions was to form an independent Kurdish state. They were also pessimistic about the Kurdish capabilities to realize this objective because they saw these rebellions as activities supported by foreign states. For the soldier-politicians in the state-building process, their experience in the Ottoman Army played a significant role in the formation of these beliefs. These soldier-politicians who ruled the country in this period had been close witnesses to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire as a result of nationalist uprisings in the Balkans and the Middle East. They had also witnessed the Treaty of Sevres, the peace agreement signed between the Ottoman Empire and Allied Forces at the end of the First World War, which was based on secret agreements between the Allied Forces to partition the Ottoman lands. Although the Independence War prevented the implementation of the treaty, it left a legacy called “the fear of Sevres” through which various social and political events were interpreted as a secret design by Western powers to divide Turkey.

Kurdish rebellions were interpreted in the same way and all major rebellions in this period were linked by Turkish politicians to a foreign power. Indeed, the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925) coincided with the dispute between Turkey and Britain over Mosul and Kerkuk; the Agri rebellion (1930) took place when Turkey demanded border rectification from Iran; and, the

Dersim rebellion (1937-39) occurred when Turkey tried to place the Hatay region, mandated by France, into its own territory. Taking this into consideration, foreign support for the Kurds was a popular theme as, in his Kurdish report written in 1925, the Minister of Internal Affairs Cemil Uybadin argued that the Kurdish actions were supported by foreign powers, especially by Britain and France.²⁷ Similarly, Prime Minister Ismet Inonu reported in 1935 that the activities of the Kurdish tribes were supported by the French government which attempted to occupy Turkey's southeastern cities, such as Mardin, Urfa, Antep and Maras, in order to control Syria in the pre-war period.²⁸ As witnesses to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the Treaty of Sevres, Kurdish rebellions were seen by Turkish officials as a foreign-based threat to the territorial integrity of the state rather than an integration problem that could be solved through social and economic measures.

The same pessimism was also seen in the minds of Turkish military officers during the PKK violence, as they defined the PKK as a separatist terrorist organization supported by foreign states in order to weaken and divide Turkey. For instance, retired Gen. Altay Tokat, who served in the Kurdish region from 1987-1989 and 1995-1997, argued that foreign states, who could not forget that Turkey had ruined the plans of imperialist powers to divide Anatolia with the Treaty of Sevres, now supported the separatist terrorist organization because they feared the growth of Turkey in the Middle East.²⁹ During the PKK violence, even the Western states' criticism of

²⁷ Hüseyin Yayman, *Şark Meselesinden Demokratik Açılıma Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, (Ankara: SETA Yayınları, 2011), pp. 72-76.

²⁸ While ultimately France failed, the soldier-politicians believed that they had not abandoned their ambitions to control the Kurdish areas in order to control Syria. Saygı Öztürk, *İsmet Paşa'nın Kürt Raporu*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008), p. 22-25

²⁹ Fikret Bila, *Komutanlar Cephesi*, (İstanbul: Detay Yayıncılık, 2007), p. 174-175. According to Talat, not only imperialist powers but also foreign states which had clashing interests with Turkey, supported the PKK in the past. For example, Tokat argues, Syria supported the PKK because of the water problem at the end of the 1980s as well as its historical demand for the Hatay Province, which was annexed by Turkey in 1939 as a result of a plebiscite; Greece and Cyprus gave military education to PKK members in order to turn the Aegean Sea into a "Greek lake" and gain its international prestige back which was lost after Turkey's Cyprus operation in 1974; and even Serbia supported

human rights violations or their push for democratization were understood as hostile acts against Turkey. An official report from the army staff, announced in December 2000, for example, blamed the European Union for encouraging the PKK by promoting Kurdish education and broadcasting.³⁰ In addition, the Turkish military never overcame its suspicion that the final objective of the PKK was to establish an independent Kurdish state. Although the PKK ended its demand for a Kurdish state in 1993, the military officers saw this as a deception which was caused by the successful military operations against the PKK and its diminishing military power. According to military officers, the final objective of the PKK had not changed and they argued that identity-related demands such as Kurdish education and broadcasting, the recognition of Kurdish identity in the Constitution, and/or Kurdish self-rule in an autonomous region were only intermediary objectives to reach the final objective.

Preference for Military Measures

Related to this pessimism, Turkish soldier-politicians and military officers preferred military measures and security policies to identity-based social reforms and political reforms in both periods. As soon as the Sheikh Said Rebellion erupted in 1925, Prime Minister Ali Fethi Okyar, a moderate soldier-politician and the PRP leader, was removed from power by President Ataturk who appointed Inonu, since he was more willing than Okyar to take the necessary security measures. Inonu successfully suppressed the rebellion and later adopted a plan for the Kurdish region which was called the “Reform Plan for the East” (*Şark Islahat Planı*). Although the name seems to offer reforms for the eastern region, the plan did not include any social, economic or political reforms, but focused only on the security aspects of the Kurdish issue. The plan proposed to punish those who speak any non-Turkish language in state offices, schools and

the PKK because of its anger with Turkish policy during the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Altay Tokat, *Mucadele ve Cozum: PKK Bolucu Teroru*, (Istanbul: Nergiz Yayinlari, 2013), p. 22-30.

³⁰ “Ordu’dan Son Dakika Golu,” *Milliyet*, 8 December 2000, p. 21.

bazaars; to remove native judges from the judicial courts; not to sell or even rent Armenian properties to Kurds; the appointment of “idealist” Turkish public officers to the region; the relocation of Kurds to Western cities; the concentration of military barracks in the region; education of Kurdish children in boarding schools in Western cities; abandoning some Kurdish villages and many other security-oriented measures.³¹ In sum, the plan offered securitization, Turkification and assimilation to end Kurdish rebellions in the region. These same proposals were reiterated in most of the government and military reports, like that of Fevzi Cakmak in 1931, written about the Kurdish issue during this period.³²

Although social and economic measures were offered by a few politicians, these proposals were not taken into consideration when the rebellions were ongoing. For example, in his Kurdish report written in 1937, Celal Bayar, who served as Minister of Finance (1932-1937), Prime Minister (1937-1939), and later President (1950-60), emphasized the importance of improving the economic condition of the region and the Kurdish population. In the report, Bayar also criticized the fact that some Kurds were not educated or hired as public officers only because they are Kurds. According to him, this discriminatory treatment was damaging to the control of the region. Although punishing those who rebelled is understandable, he stated, after the rebellion governing should take a different form, it should be a moderate system without discrimination.³³ Although Ataturk liked Bayar’s report and appointed him as prime minister instead of Inonu, when the Dersim rebellion started in 1937 the prioritization of order and

³¹ Yayman, *Şark Meselesinden Demokratik Açılıma Türkiye’nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, pp. 76-82.

³² In his report written in 1931, Cakmak described the Kurdish population as a threat and argued that this problem could not be solved by treating the Kurds kindly. Instead, he stated, the use of force would be more effective and it should be the basis of state policies on the Kurdish issue. The most radical suggestion of the report was to establish a “colony regime” within the Kurdish region. Cakmak believed that the state should approach the Dersim region as a colony and the Kurds should be assimilated with the Turks. Rızzeddin Çalışlar, *Dersim Raporu*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2011), pp. 248-251.

³³ For the report, see Celal Bayar, *Sark Raporu*, (İstanbul: Kaynak yayinlari, 2006).

stability necessitated military measures again and Bayar could not implement his social and economic proposals.

The preference for military measures was also dominant among the military officers in the 1980s and 1990s. The military officers in this period generally did not see an identity problem but a security problem that could be dealt with first with the military defeat of the PKK. After that, they could focus on ending the long-lasting feudalism in the region and promote its economic development.³⁴ Therefore, identity-related reforms were opposed by the military officers and under the control of the military, civilians had limited power to disagree. For instance, when President Turgut Ozal stated in 1992 that the Kurdish issue should be discussed from all perspectives even if it involves the idea of federalism, CGS Dogan Gures warned him that the unitary structure of the state cannot be open to discussion when terrorist activities were ongoing.³⁵ Similarly, when Tansu Ciller offered Kurdish education and broadcasting upon being elected as prime minister in 1993, a high-ranking general noted that this initiative was against the 1982 Constitution and warned her that the recognition of Kurdish education and broadcasting would lead to more demands, including an independent Kurdish state.³⁶ It is possible to offer numerous similar examples of military control over Turkish politics and the Kurdish issue, but the bottom line is that this control limited the civilians' capability to offer alternative solutions to the use of force, and the Kurdish issue was totally entrusted to the military officers by the civilian politicians who did not want to contradict the army. As a result, military measures remained the only option in the Kurdish policy.

Ideological Indoctrination

³⁴ Rt. Gen. Necati Ozgen states, "The soldier does his job, eradicate the terrorist; however, the politicians does not do their part and we are again at the beginning. We always saw it." Bila, *Komutanlar Cephesi*, p. 99.

³⁵ Later Ozal would state that on the political solution of the Kurdish issue he "convinced everybody but Dogan Pasha." "Gures: Ikna Olmadim," *Milliyet*, 3 November 1996.

³⁶ "TSK'dan 'Kurtce Yayina Hayir'," *Cumhuriyet*, 20 July 1993.

Since independence Turkish officers were educated to protect a certain political ideology: Kemalism. Kemalism is a founding ideology of the Turkish state and it is quite a fuzzy concept that involves six tenets: secularism, nationalism, republicanism, statism, popularism, and reformism. For the Kurdish issue, the tenet of nationalism is important as it offers a Turkish nationality for whoever lives in the Republic of Turkey and whoever says he is a Turk. Although in the first few years of the state, Kurdish identity was recognized by the founding fathers,³⁷ after the Kurdish rebellions started, an emphasis on ethnic identities diminished and all inhabitants in the Republic were defined as Turks regardless of their ethnic identity.³⁸ With the ongoing Kurdish rebellions, the emphasis on Turkishness took a radical form in this period led to the creation of several radical theories: the Turkish History Thesis argues that all inhabitants of Anatolia are ethnically Turks,³⁹ and the Sun-Language Theory argues that all languages spoken in Anatolia, including Kurdish, derived from Turkish. Although these radical theories were abandoned after the 1930s, the emphasis on the exclusion of ethnic identities from the definition of Turkish nationality remained a part of Kemalist ideology.

As the guardians of Kemalist ideology, the Turkish military preserved this principle and expected the civilian government not to contradict its definition of Turkishness. For decades, military officers rejected the presence of Kurdish identity as can be seen after the military coup in 1960 when President Cemal Gursel stated, “There are no Kurds in this country. Whoever says

³⁷ Atatürk’s speech in Izmir in January 1922 is an oft-quoted example of this recognition when he pointed out that there were Kurds in the Turkish parliament, both groups have a common destiny and there will be a kind of autonomy guaranteed for the Kurds in the constitution. Uğur Mumcu, “Kürtlere Özerklik!” *Milliyet*, 1 Mart 1992.

³⁸ This definition entered the 1924 constitution stating that “Inhabitants of Turkey shall be called Turk regardless of their religion and race.”

³⁹ According to this, Turks have been in Anatolia from early historical periods, some academics said for 10,000 years, and all ethnic groups in Anatolia such as the Kurds, Armenians, Lazes, etc. “derived their origins from ‘the same original, primitive mass’” which was Turkishness. Soner Cagaptay, “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (2004), p. 93.

he is a Kurd, I will spit in his face.”⁴⁰ Following the military coup in 1980, Kurdish identity kept being rejected by the military and a small booklet was distributed to high-ranking officials, stamped as secret, which defined Kurds as those “who live in the mountains of eastern Turkey where there is too much snow. Those who walk on this snow create a different noise, and this noise is known as Kurd.”⁴¹ With the growing PKK violence and the interest of the international media on the conflict, the Turkish officers could not reject Kurdish identity in the 1980s and 1990s but they refrained from using the word Kurd. For example, Dogan Gures, the chief of the army staff in 1990-94, frequently reiterated that Turkey does not have a “Kurdish problem” but a “Southeast problem,”⁴² while his successor Ismail Hakki Karadayi, stated that “It is treason to part Turkey with identities.”⁴³ For the same reason, military officers opposed identity-related reforms such as Kurdish education and broadcasting.

The important point here is that rejecting Kurdish identity fed the soldiers’ pessimism and their preference for military measures as even benign demands from the moderate Kurdish groups were met with resistance by the Turkish military because these demands, they believed, violated the Kemalist ideology. By controlling the political system, Turkish soldier-politicians and the military did not allow the alternative preference structures to gain ground as alternative Kurdish policies. Finally, because Turkish soldiers entered the political system as a controlling mechanism, not a participatory one, and they refrained from party politics, these norms – pessimism, preference for military measures and Kemalist ideology – became dominant throughout their life, even after retirement. As we will see below, this is different from the Israeli

⁴⁰ Yayman, *Şark Meselesinden Demokratik Açılıma Türkiye’nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, p. 169.

⁴¹ Hakan M. Yavuz, “A Preamble to the Kurdish Question: The Politics of Kurdish Identity,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (1998), p. 14.

⁴² “‘Halk PKK’yi İstemiyor’,” *Milliyet*, 26 March 1993.

⁴³ Bila, *Komutanlar Cephesi*, p. 110.

case as some retired soldiers transformed their preference structure after entering politics and some active military officers adapted themselves to the ideologies of moderate political parties.

Case II: Military Participation and Israel's Arab/Palestinian Policy

As soon as it was formed in May 1948, the Israeli state faced an ethnic conflict as neighboring Arab countries did not accept the presence of a Jewish state in the region. While this conflict took the form of international conflict in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, with the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 and the occupation of the West Bank, Sinai, Gaza and East Jerusalem in 1967 it turned into a domestic conflict as Israeli military forces and Palestinians fought against each other during the first (1987-93) and second (2000-2005) intifadas. Similar to the Turkish military, pessimism and preference for military measures were significant parts of the Israeli military-mindset in regard to these conflicts. However, ideological indoctrination was not a main concern in the IDF. Because of this difference, I will start my explanation of Israeli military-mindset with this issue and then I will analyze how the lack of ideological indoctrination and military participation affects the pessimism and preference for military measures in the military-mindset.

Ideological Indoctrination

In Israel, the IDF has never assumed responsibility for developing a political ideology or imposing a political mindset on the elected civilian politicians. It is true that Israeli officers are highly politicized and their speeches have important political implications. For example, during the first intifada the CGS Dan Shomron's call for the right-wing Likud government to negotiate with the Palestinians⁴⁴ was an indirect support for the Labor Party which argued that there was no military solution to the intifada problem. Similarly, the CGS Shaul Mofaz's description of the

⁴⁴ "Arens, Shomron Disagree on State of PLO Terrorism," *Jerusalem Post*, 5 February 1989.

Palestinian Authority as a “terrorist entity”⁴⁵ in the summer of 2001 was a challenge to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres who was negotiating with Yasser Arafat at the same time. Yet, despite this politicized character, the IDF did not embrace a political ideology as the Turkish military did with Kemalism. Rather than imposing a certain political ideology on military cadets and civilian politicians, Israeli officers were affected by political ideologies within the political system.

During the state-building process, the main political ideology that affected military officers was Ben-Gurion’s militant socialist-Zionism. According to Ben-Gurion, the problem between Israel and its neighbors was neither a border nor a refugee problem but “a problem of physical existence;” therefore, he believed, the problem could be solved, on the part of the Arabs, only with the removal of Israel from the “map of the Earth.”⁴⁶ After the first Israeli-Arab War in 1948, Ben-Gurion held the idea that a second round of war between Israel and the Arab states was inevitable and he was concerned with Israeli capacities against this “existential threat.”⁴⁷ Therefore, he gave special attention to military measures, including territorial expansion,⁴⁸ to solve the capacity problem. Although this was not a one party regime and there was opposition to Ben-Gurion even within his Mapai Party, the military officers shared Ben-Gurion’s political ideology and supported him in his political confrontation with other actors, especially Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett. It is not an exaggeration to claim that Ben-Gurion-military relations were as close as Ataturk-military relations in Turkey as some officers defined

⁴⁵ “Mofaz: P.A. is Terrorist Entity,” *Israel National News*, 28 February 2001.

⁴⁶ Reuven Pedatzur, “Ben-Gurion’s Enduring Legacy,” in Daniel Bar-Tal et al., eds., *Security Concerns: Insight from the Israeli Experience*, (Stamford: JAI Press, 1998), p. 145-146.

⁴⁷ This concern was explained with two terms, *i katan be-toch yam arvi* (a small island in an Arab sea) and *meatim mul rabbim* (the few against the many), which indicated that Israel had small geographical size and population compared to neighboring Arab states. Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Force*, (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), p. 125-126.

⁴⁸ Ben-Gurion argued that the state should not bind itself to a certain territory in case of Arab aggression and with this belief, he opposed specifying the boundaries of the state in the Proclamation of Independence. Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2013). Morris argues that Ben-Gurion accepted the partition of Palestinian lands in May 1948 without abandoning his commitment to Jewish sovereignty in all Palestine as an ultimate Zionist goal. Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 15.

themselves as “Ben-Gurionist.” Nevertheless, “Ben-Gurionism” was not an inextricable part of the Israeli military mindset and Israeli officers did not equate his political personality with the state as the Turkish military did for Ataturk. For example, when some politicians wanted to call Ben-Gurion back to power before the Six Day War, it was Moshe Dayan who objected to this call by arguing that Ben-Gurion had an imperfect vision of the Israeli situation.⁴⁹

Following the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights, Sinai, and East Jerusalem in 1967, the Israeli political system was mainly divided between two ideologies. On the one side, there were moderate left parties which believed that the peace between Arabs and Israelis is possible and Israel should give back some part of the occupied territories in return for a peace treaty with the Arabs. Against this formula, shortly called “land for peace,” there were right-wing political parties which rejected the withdrawal from the territories and accepted military strength as the main determinant in the Palestinian conflict. The lack of ideological indoctrination within the Israeli military is clear from the fact that both political ideologies had supporters among the officers. Military chiefs such as Yitzhak Rabin, Moshe Dayan, Dan Shomron, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak belonged to the first group whereas Rafael Eitan, Ariel Sharon, Shaul Mofaz, Moshe Yaalon were hawkish generals who believed that concessions to Arabs may endanger Israeli security.

What is interesting in the Israeli case is that when there was a confrontation between political ideologies, we see retired or active military generals representing different parties. For example, before the elections in 1988 under the shadow of the intifada, both left-wing Labor and right-wing Likud parties introduced former generals in their election campaigns in order to bolster their views on the territories; Labor generals argued that security did not necessitate

⁴⁹ Moshe Dayan, *Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life*, (New York: Morrow, 1976), p. 348-349.

holding the entire West Bank and Likud generals emphasized Israel's lack of territorial depth.⁵⁰ Similarly, in the 2003 elections both Labor and Likud's candidates for prime minister were former generals, Amram Mitzna and Ariel Sharon, respectively. All this shows that there is no certain ideological indoctrination in the IDF and rather than imposing a certain political ideology on the political system, Israeli officers were influenced by what is going on in Israeli politics, which affected their pessimism and preference for military measures in return.

Pessimism/Realism

Then the question becomes, how does military participation and the lack of institutional ideology affected the other two characteristics of the military mindset? During the state-building process, Israeli officers were not less pessimistic than their Turkish counterparts about the intentions and capacities of the enemy, namely the Arabs. This pessimism was exacerbated by the fact that the dominant ideology in the political system, Ben-Gurionism, was militant, and interaction with the politicians through military participation did not help to change the general pessimism in the military mindset. For example, Dayan's understanding of the Arab threat was almost identical with Ben-Gurion: "For the Arabs, the question was not one of finding a solution to this or that problem; the question, for them, was the very existence of Israel. Their aim was to annihilate Israel, and this cannot be done at the conference table."⁵¹ Lack of territorial depth again was a constant problem for the military officers and even the first military doctrine, Plan D (*Tochnit Daleth*), prepared by Yigael Yadin and launched on March 10, 1948, was responding to this problem by covering "far-reaching measures that would lead to a complete demographic, ethnic, social and political transformation of Palestine from an Arab land to a Jewish state" rather

⁵⁰ Hasan A. Barari, *Israeli Politics and the Middle East Peace Process, 1988-2002*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 44.

⁵¹ Quoted from Jonathan B. Isacoff, *Writing the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Pragmatism and Historical Inquiry*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), p. 53.

than being a limited military plan in time of crisis.⁵² Finally, the belief in the inevitability of war was quite strong in the military-mindset. For example, before the Six Day War, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and moderate politicians were constantly told by military officers that war was inevitable and that their seeking a diplomatic solution would not only increase casualties when Egypt attacked, but it would also damage Israel's deterrent capacity in future confrontations.⁵³

With the pluralization in the Israeli political system and increase in military participation in politics after 1967, we see that some active and retired officers relaxed their pessimism. Ezer Weizman, the air force commander and head of operations in the Six Day War, is a good example of this. During his military service, Weizman was one of the more hawkish generals in the Israeli army, and he once even burst into Eshkol's office and shouted in his face to lead the army to war.⁵⁴ After retiring from the army, Weizman served as Minister of Defense under the Likud government from 1977-80 and his military-mindset was significantly moderated when he participated in the Israeli-Egypt peace process. Although at first Weizman was pessimistic about Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem in 1977,⁵⁵ over time he started to view Sadat as a partner in peace. Weizman was involved in a constructivist dialogue with Sadat and he resigned from the Likud government because he believed that Prime Minister Menachem Begin was not serious about the Palestinian autonomy agreed to in the 1979 Camp David Treaty. In the same way, Sadat's diplomatic initiative softened Dayan who served as Foreign Minister in the same government and resigned for the same reason as Weizman. According to Dayan, Sadat was sincere and not a hypocrite, he wanted peace with Israel, and "by all means, what he has

⁵² Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War Against the Palestinians*, (New York: Verso, 2003), p. 24-25.

⁵³ Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 81.

⁵⁴ Udi Lebel, *Communicating Security: Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 40.

⁵⁵ During Sadat's speech in the Knesset, Weizman passed a note to Prime Minister Menachem Begin, stating, "We have to prepare for war." Ezer Weizman, *The Battle for Peace*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), p. 33.

done should be appreciated.”⁵⁶

Similarly, during the first intifada those officers who participated in the political decision-making and adopted the “land for peace” formula were less pessimistic about Arab intentions and capacities than the others. For example, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, CGS from 1995-98, was one of the generals who advocated for peace with the Palestinians from 1987 and the pictures of him wearing Arab gowns and being arm-in-arm with Arab negotiators during the Taba peace talks were once regarded as signals of a breakthrough between Israelis and Palestinians. During his tenure as the military chief, he even confronted the government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who, Shahak believed, did not take “responsibility to take the bull by the horns and to deal with the peace process.”⁵⁷ Before that, during the first intifada, CGS Dan Shomron was the one constantly calling on the right-wing Likud government to negotiate with the Palestinians and he argued that a peace settlement is “worth much more than territory.”⁵⁸

Nevertheless, during this period there were also retired and active military officers who kept their pessimism towards Arabs and the Palestinians and adopted right-wing ideology. For example, throughout his political career, Rafael Eitan, the CGS from 1978-83 and later the leader of the ultra-nationalist Tzomet Party, argued that concessions given to the Arabs “are interpreted by them as signs of weakness and of weariness from the struggle” and they “harden [Arab’s] positions, and turn them into even more vigorous adversaries.”⁵⁹ Similarly, the top military echelon of the Second Intifada, such as Shaul Mofaz, Moshe Yaalon, and Amos Gilad, believed that the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had never been sincere with the Oslo peace process and

⁵⁶ “Sadat Must Deal with Israel: Dayan,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 February 1978.

⁵⁷ Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006), p. 84.

⁵⁸ “Retiring Israeli Army Chief Would Trade Land for Peace,” *Washington Post*, 20 March 1991.

⁵⁹ Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, p. 165.

he was preparing for an inevitable clash with Israel.⁶⁰ This complex picture is the result of a lack of institutional ideology which pushed the soldiers toward different political ideologies.

Preference for Military Measures

The same complex picture is also observable in the soldiers' preference for military measures. In addition to pessimism on Arabs intentions and capacities, Ben-Gurion and military officers were also sharing the preference for military measures during the state-building process. During this period, military officers were the main advocates for international warfare with the Arab states. For example, in the pre-Suez War negotiations with Britain and France, it was Moshe Dayan who convinced the hesitant Ben-Gurion to attack Egypt, because he believed if this opportunity was missed, Israel "would have to fight alone in the future and [its] casualties might be much higher."⁶¹ As mentioned, the same was true in the Six Day War when the military officers pressured Eshkol, such as when he was told that the army is "ready like never before to totally destroy the Egyptian forces."⁶² In this period, the officers also supported the reprisal policy, which began in February 1950 when Moshe Dayan, then Chief of the Southern Command, organized sabotage operations and planted mines against Arab states in retaliation for the acts of violence committed by Palestinian infiltrators or Arab agents in Israeli border areas. The logic of the reprisal policy was based on the belief that "the only language the Arabs understand is force" and that "for every Arab assault, there must be a reaction."⁶³ In the early years diplomacy was not a preferred option by either the military officers or Ben-Gurion.

⁶⁰ Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace: Israel and the Arabs, 1948-2003*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 172.

⁶¹ Dayan, *Moshe Dayan*, p. 223.

⁶² Patrick Tyler, *A World of Trouble: The White House and the Middle East, From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), p. 92.

⁶³ After his retirement from the government, Moshe Sharett criticized this mindset in his speech at Beit Berl, Labor Movement's study center, in November 1957. The speech was published in the Jerusalem Post on October 18, 1966, only after Sharett died. For the English version of the speech, see <http://www.sharett.org.il/English/articles/The-Other-Approach.htm>.

In the post-1967 period we again see diversity among the military officers on the preference for military measures. As mentioned, Sadat's visit to Israel transformed some retired officers' understanding on the efficiency of diplomacy. Similarly, Yitzhak Rabin, the military chief in the Six Day War, also moderated his views on the use of force. In his memoirs written after his first tenure as the prime minister from 1974-77, Rabin ended the book by stating that "the risks of peace are preferable by far to the grim certainties that await every nation in war,"⁶⁴ a position he did not take during his tenure as the CGS. Yet, his real moderation occurred at the beginning of the first intifada, during which he served as the Defense Minister. Shortly after his initiation of a "policy of beating" in late-1987, Rabin recognized that Israel "can't rule by force over 1.5-million Palestinians."⁶⁵ While this statement caused a rift between Rabin and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Amram Mitzna, the head of Central Command, questioned the efficiency of large-scale military measures demanded by the right-wing politicians as he stated, "The more violent we get, the more we do not distinguish between the guilty and the innocent. We'll get into a vicious cycle that we'll never be able to get out of."⁶⁶ In parallel to these views, Shomron also argued that there is no military solution to the intifada because there is "no way for weapons to fight" the motivation of the Palestinian population which is to get their own state.⁶⁷

On the other hand, there was a group of active and retired military officers who advocated military measures. Rafael Eitan's solution to the intifada, for example, was "a bullet in the head of every stone thrower."⁶⁸ Rehavam Zeevi, who once headed the Israeli Army's command in the West Bank and then led the right-wing Moledet Party, was calling for an

⁶⁴ Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 337.

⁶⁵ "Israeli Army Feels Pressure from Unrest," *St. Petersburg Times*, 25 February 1988.

⁶⁶ Glenn Frankel, *Beyond the Promised Land: Jews and Arabs on the Hard Road to a New Israel*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 87-88.

⁶⁷ "Shomron on Intifada," *Jerusalem Post*, 16 June 1989.

⁶⁸ Azmi Bishara, *Israel Faces the Uprising: A Preliminary Assessment*, Middle East Report, No. 157, (December 1988), <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer157/israel-faces-uprising>.

expulsion policy by arguing that the Arabs would be “compelled to make peace with Israel” only when Israel adopts a policy of “transferring” the Palestinian Arabs from the occupied territories to neighboring Arab lands.⁶⁹ During the second intifada, CGS Mofaz urged for the government to declare the PA as an enemy as well as deporting Arafat out of the territories.⁷⁰ Finally, Moshe Yaalon, CGS from 2002-2005, was the one who prepared the “Operation Field of Thorns,” a contingency plan prepared in 1996 that became the guideline for the heavy use of force at the beginning of the second intifada.

All this shows that military participation is two-way street in ideologically heterogeneous states. While there is a possibility that some officers may relax their pessimism and preference for military measures through participation in politics and interacting with civilian politicians as well as enemies, it is also true that some officers may find a home in political parties whose ideologies are in accordance with their pessimism and preference for military measures. The significant conditions for this diversity are a lack of ideological indoctrination within the army and ideological diversity within the political system. This combination of factors after the Six Day War meant that some active and retired military officers, but not all, transformed their military mindset through participation in politics.

Conclusion

This article attempted to compare two different forms of politicization of the military and how these forms are differentiated from each other in terms of affecting the characteristics of military mindset. It found that military control of politics, as happened in Turkey, is less likely to transform officers’ pessimism and preference for military measures. By controlling the politicians Turkish soldiers neither allowed any alternative political option on the Kurdish issue

⁶⁹ “Israeli Proposes Ouster of Arabs,” *New York Times*, 31 July 1987.

⁷⁰ “IDF Chief: Palestinians Preparing for Drawn-Out Conflict,” *Haaretz*, 31 July 2001.

to evolve among civilians nor adapted themselves to any political ideology other than the one they had been indoctrinated with in the military academy. This is why Turkish soldiers' pessimism on Kurdish intentions and their preference for military measures against the Kurds were constant phenomena from the 1920s to 2000s. By refraining from party politics, Turkish soldiers did not interact with alternative political ideologies and, as a result, their military mindset on the Kurdish issue remained homogenous, static, and inflexible over time.

On the other hand, in the Israeli case we see that military participation offers more of an opportunity to transform the military mindset, especially if there is no ideological indoctrination within the military. Rather than controlling the politicians with their own ideology, since independence, Israeli officers' mindsets were affected by what was going on in Israeli politics. Participation in politics and interaction with politicians as well as enemies allowed the Israeli soldiers to overcome the pessimism and preference for military measures which are natural in the military mindset. However, we should note that military participation is a necessary but not sufficient factor. During the Israeli state-building process, active officers significantly participated in politics but did not transform their military mindset because there was only one dominant ideology in the political system and it was also militant. With the diversity in the political ideologies after the Six Day War and the emergence of different ideas on how to reach peace with the enemies, some officers could transform their military mindset while others kept their pessimism and preference for military measures by adopting right-wing political ideologies. Therefore, not only military participation, but the lack of ideological indoctrination within the military and diversity in the political system are important factors for the transformation of military mindset. The combination of all these factors means that in Israel the military mindset

on the Arab/Palestinian issue is diverse, flexible and open to transformation, especially after the pluralization of the Israeli political system after 1967.