

Comparative Analysis of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations in Turkey and South Korea till early 2000s

Türkiye ve Güney Kore'deki Demokratikleşme ve Sivil-Asker İlişkilerinin 2000'li Yılların Başlarına Kadarki Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

Giray Sadık*

Abstract

In the process of achieving political, economic and social development, the essence of establishing sound civilian rule remains as one of the key factors in consolidating democracy alongside with reinforcing socio-economic factors. This process becomes ever more challenging as the developing countries are in desperate need to attain political and economic modernization simultaneously. In order to address this heated debate on the civil-military relations in developing countries the article undertakes to present a comparative insight on the role of the civil-military relations in socio-political and economic development by tracing the emerging motivations and balances for military's involvement in politics.

Although having markedly divergent historical backgrounds, Turkey and South Korea constitute leading examples for developing countries in the different regions of the world. Alongside with broadly common – developing country – notion, the development of civil-military relations in both countries provides substantial ground for comparison of the role of military in the modernization and democratization processes of these countries till early 2000s.

With the aim of tracking the reasons and repercussions of military's increasingly milder influence over politics the article begins with the introduction of theoretical framework for comparative analysis, and then proceeds with the application of comparative framework followed by the brief historical overviews of civil-military relations of respective countries. In the analysis part, the impacts of endogenous and extraneous factors to civil-military relations are comparatively examined. In order to track the motives and restrains for varying forms of military influence in the political processes of these developing countries the study employs Sundhaussen's "Endogenous and Extraneous Factors". Finally, the conclusion summarizes comparative findings, while outlining the implications of emerging civil-military relations in the development and democratization processes of these countries.

Key Words: Civil-Military Relations, Military Involvement in Politics, Democratization, Turkey, South Korea

Özet

Siyasi, iktisadi ve toplumsal gelişme sürecinde, esaslı bir sivil yönetimin oluşturulması, demokrasinin kurumsallaştırılmasındaki anahtar faktörlerdendir. Bu süreç, gelişmekte olan ülkelerin siyasi ve iktisadi modernleşmeyi aynı anda gerçekleştirme gereksiniminden dolayı daha da karmaşık bir hal almaktadır.

* Yrd. Doç. Dr. Giray Sadık, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, gsadik@ybu.edu.tr

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Gelişmekte olan ülkelerdeki sivil-asker ilişkilerine yönelik süregelen tartışmaları irdelemek için bu makale, sivil-asker ilişkilerine karşılaştırmalı bakış açısının özelliklerinden yararlanarak ordunun siyasete olan etkisini teşvik eden ve sınırlayan faktörleri analiz etmektedir.

Her ne kadar birbirinden farklı tarihi geçmişlere sahip olsalar da Türkiye ve Güney Kore, dünyanın farklı bölgelerindeki gelişmekte olan demokrasilerin önde gelen örneklerindedir. Genel olarak ortak – gelişmekte olan ülke – kavramının yanısıra her iki ülkedeki sivil-asker ilişkileri de modernleşmenin ve demokratikleşmenin karşılaştırmalı analizi bilhassa 1 2000’li yılların başlarına kadarki dönem için önemli bir zemin oluşturmaktadır.

Ordunun siyasetteki gittikçe azalan etkisinin nedenlerini ve yansımalarını incelemek için makale, karşılaştırmalı analiz için kuramsal çerçevenin tanıtılmasıyla başlar, sonrasında bu kuramsal çerçevenin karşılaştırmalı uygulanmasıyla devam eder, ve bu analizleri her iki ülkenin sivil-asker ilişkilerinin incelenmesi takip eder. Analiz kısmında ise içsel (kurumsal) ve dışsal (toplumsal ve uluslararası) faktörlerin etkileri karşılaştırmalı olarak irdelenir. Gelişmekte olan bu ülkelerin siyasetlerindeki asker rolünün motivasyonlarına ve sınırlamalarına olan etkili süreçlerin takip edilebilmesi için bu çalışmadaki analizlerin oluşturulmasında Sundhaussen’in “İçsel ve Dışsal Faktörleri” kullanılmaktadır. Sonuç kısmında ise karşılaştırmalı bulgular ile sivil-asker ilişkilerinin bu ülkelerin gelişmesine ve demokratikleşmesine olan etkileri analiz edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil-Asker İlişkileri, Ordunun Siyasete Etkisi, Demokratikleşme, Türkiye, Güney Kore

Introduction

The armed forces have three massive political advantages over civilian organizations: a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotional symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms. ... The wonder, therefore, is not why this rebels against its civilian masters, but why it ever obeys them.

Samuel Finer, *The Man on Horseback*¹

As long as the officers remain in the Party we shall build neither a strong Party nor a strong army.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *The Founder of Turkish Republic*²

In the process of achieving political, economic and social development, the essence of establishing sound civilian rule remains as one of the key factors in consolidating democracy alongside with reinforcing socio-economic factors. This process becomes ever more challenging as the developing countries are in desperate need to attain political and economic modernization simultaneously. Since political reforms tend to be in contradiction with the existing patterns in developing societies, the divergence with regard to the overall well being of the country may lead to severe internal quarrels that

¹ Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), p.5.

² Quoted, D. Lerner and P.R. Robinson, “Swords and Ploughshares: the Turkish Army as a Modernizing Force”. *World Politics*, vol.13, no.1, 1960, pp.19-20.

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eventually undermine the entire modernization process. Considering the immature economies and weak civil or non-existent civil society in developing countries the essence of civil-military relations remains as the most critical element in promoting or inhibiting political transformation. For that reason, the paper undertakes to present a comparative insight on the role of the civil-military relations in developing countries by tracing the emerging motivations and balances for military's prolonged involvement in politics.

Although having markedly divergent historical backgrounds, Turkey and South Korea constitute leading examples for developing countries in the different regions of the world. Alongside with broadly common 'developing country' notion, the recent development of civil-military relations in both countries provides substantial ground for comparison of the role of military in the modernization processes of respective countries especially till early 2000s. Having their last direct military interventions in early 1980s both countries have embarked on simultaneous development and democratization process with remaining *indirect* influence of military in politics. In order to track the reasons and repercussions of military's increasingly mild influence over politics the paper begins with the introduction of theoretical framework for comparative analysis, and then proceeds with general comparative overview followed by the brief historical overviews of civil-military relations of respective countries. In the analysis part, the impacts of endogenous and extraneous factors to civil-military relations are comparatively examined. Finally, the conclusion summarizes comparative findings, while outlining the implications of emerging civil-military relations in the development process of these countries.

Theoretical Basis for Comparative Analysis

Since the paper primarily concentrates on conducting comparative analysis rather than refining the existing theories towards the cases under concern, the introduction of the theoretical framework to be employed throughout the study at the very beginning remains essential. For that reason, the paper bases the comparative analysis on the already refined proposition of Ulf Sundhaussen. In order to track the motives and restrains for varying forms of military influence in the modernization processes of these developing countries the study employs Sundhaussen's "Endogenous and Extraneous Factors"³ as the theoretical basis for comparative analysis. Principally, Sundhaussen presents a combination of several partial theories. "From a more general perspective, two theoretical propositions can be identified: both are the cornerstones of the comparative school of civil-military relations, and serve as focal points

³ Ulf Sundhaussen, "The Durability of Military Regimes in Southeast Asia", in Zakaria Haji Ahmad and Harald Crouch (eds.), *Military-Civilian Relations in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), 272.

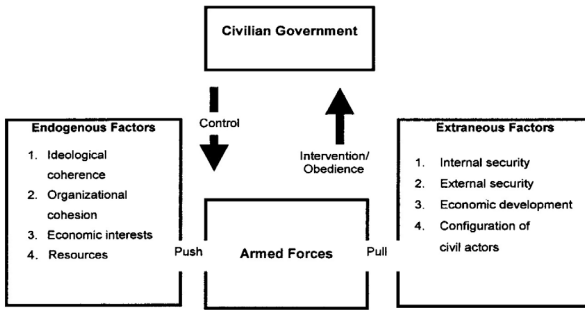
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for several explanatory models”.⁴ In essence, Sundhaussen combines these poles-apart propositions by assuming that military intervention is the outcome of several interdependent endogenous and extraneous factors. Thus, his model can be viewed as rather a synthesis of the existing schools of thought. Agreeing with the “motives” and “moods” notion of Samuel Finer⁵ and placing it in the endogenous factors (i.e., the character of the internal organization of the military) of his approach, while maintaining the influence of extraneous factors such as society’s political, cultural, economic and international dispositions Sundhaussen puts forward a balanced and comprehensive theoretical ground for comparative analysis. As illustrated in Figure 1, the internal (endogenous) dynamics of military organization can serve as *push* factors, while society’s economic, cultural and international dispositions, extraneous but interrelated to military; can serve as *pull* factors in the decision and style of military intervention.

Figure 1

Push and Pull Factors of Military Intervention



Source: Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.361.

General Comparative Overview

Prior to elaborate on the historical overviews of civil-military relations in each country, it is of use to have general comparative perspective. Such perspective will not only present a comprehensive outlook to civil-military interaction, but also it will enable us to put the particular notion of civil-military relations in a broader frame of analysis, which is critical for any sound study that aims to drive all-encompassing conclusions rather than mere comparison.

⁴ Charles F. Kennedy and David J. Louscher, “Civil-Military Interaction: Data in Search of a Theory”, in Charles F. Kennedy and David J. Louscher (eds.), *Civil-Military Interaction in Asia and Africa* (Laiden: Brill, 1991), p.1.

⁵ Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), p.20.

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As stated in the very beginning of the paper the key factor that makes these cases substantial for comparison is their developing notion. Such notion can be particularly observed from their relatively high birth and GDP growth rates, depicted in Table-1 that presents the major socio-economic indicators for these countries.

Table-1: Comparing Main Socio-Economic Indicators: Turkey and South Korea (2003)

Country	Area (sq km)	Population (persons)	Birth Rate (births/1,000)	Labor Force (persons)	GDP (US\$)	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	GDP Growth Rate (%)
Turkey	780,580	68,11 million	17.59	23.8 million	468 billion	7,000	4.2
South Korea	98,480	48.29 million	12.60	22 million	931 billion	19,400	5.8

Source: CIAO (*Columbia International Affairs Online*) - Country Data for 2003.

Nevertheless, even this elementary similarity does not mean that these countries share identical socio-economic structures. Although both of them enjoying relatively high GDP growth rates among the developing countries, they tend to differ in their performance relative to each other. In that regard, the economic mobilization of Korean society is remarkable. Despite the fact that its population is roughly 20 million less than Turkey, South Korea almost catches Turkey in terms of its labor force. Given the massive size of state-employed public sector in Turkey such difference becomes even more striking. Undoubtedly, these differences contribute to Turkish society's civil-military relations by placing the members of TAF at the high ranks of education and professional career, given the relative incompetence of private sector to attract many, as this has been increasingly the case for South Korea since 1980s. Nevertheless, this overarching public perception has started to change from mid-1990s onwards particularly in Turkey due to the Europeanization process aiming to advance country's political system to the ones of the EU member states.

Table-2: Comparing Main Economic Indicators: Turkey and South Korea (2003)

Country	Area (sq km)	Population (persons)	Exports (US\$)	Imports (US\$)	External Debt (US\$)
Turkey	780,580	68,11 million	37.6 billion	43.9 billion	118.3 billion
South Korea	98,480	48.29 million	159.2 billion	146.6 billion	128.2 billion

Source: CIAO (*Columbia International Affairs Online*) - Country Data for 2003.

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To further such comparison in economic realm and address to its socio-political repercussions Table-2 stresses on the comparison of export-import balance of these countries. With the aim of keeping in mind the territorial and demographic size of the entities we are comparing, I kept the area and population parameters in Table-2 as well. Thus, the difference in terms of the magnitude of the growth becomes ever more apparent. Therefore, not surprisingly, South Korean society becomes increasingly market oriented with the strive to attain careers in growing private sector rather than traditionally praised state offices or army's officer ranks. Although it can be regarded as too general points, indeed these elements are critical in formulation of civil-military relations in developing societies, since they do not effect societies' perceptions towards their militaries (i.e.: cultural disposition, extraneous factor) but also they have an enduring impact on the recruitment and organization of militaries (i.e., resources, endogenous factor).

Last but not the least, when the costs of development of these countries compared economically in terms of their external debt for instance (See Table-2) the figures are relatively closer. Thus, although, with much lower levels of economic performance Turkey borrowed nearly as much as South Korea. Alongside of with other socio-political predicaments such as the economic crisis of 1994 that severed socio-economic measures in Turkey, this situation inevitably makes Turkey more open to foreign influence through making it increasingly receptive to the economic incentives from the European Union (hereafter EU) and the International Monetary Fund (hereafter IMF). Undoubtedly, these developments contribute to the international disposition of Turkish society, which in turn becomes one of the extraneous factors that effects military involvement in politics. Before discussing comprehensively the comparative impacts of such characteristics, the study presents brief historical backgrounds of civil-military relations in these countries respectively.

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Historical Overview of Civil-Military Relations in Turkey

In view of the fact that the military's substantial role in the foundation, modernization and guarding of the Turkish Republic, the emerging motives and balances for military involvement in politics cannot be traced comprehensively without basing these developments in historical context. As the paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of more recent factors for military involvement in politics rather than detailed historical narrative, this part outlines the cornerstones of civil-military relations since the foundation of Turkish Republic.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic and its first president (1923-1938), realized that the military's entanglement in politics worked against both unity and discipline in the military. Basically as a consequence of this historical legacy, the military in Turkey fluctuated between the "liberal-democratic model" – a military differentiated from the civilian power

but subordinated to it, highly professionalized and depoliticized – and the “ruler type of the praetorian model” in which the military takes over direct political power and shortly afterwards returns to its barracks, hoping to have created conditions for a better functioning democracy.⁶

During the single-party years between 1923 and 1945, civil-military relations in Turkey moved progressively toward the liberal-democratic model, although the military’s professionalization lagged far behind its subordination to the civilian power. Being well aware of the unsympathetic attitude of Atatürk and İnönü (the successor of Atatürk) toward the military’s day-to-day involvement in politics General Fevzi Çakmak, Chief of the General Staff from 1922 to 1944, Çakmak’s orientation also led to the relegation of the military into a secondary position vis-à-vis the (single) political party and the civil bureaucracy. Still, “during these years the military was considered by Atatürk and İnönü as the ultimate buttress for the Republican regime”⁷. Yet one should keep in mind that both of them were the prominent officers of the Ottoman Empire, who successfully led the War of Turkish Liberation, and therefore enjoying unprecedented level of domestic popularity and international reputation.

Nevertheless, this period of effective administration and the supremacy of the civilian rule (since both Atatürk and İnönü abandoned their military posts while assuming the presidency) replaced by another phase in civil-military relations in democratizing Turkey: the installation of the multi-party regime in 1946. Undoubtedly, this period has generated more complex civil-military relations given the atmosphere of political instability, lagging economic productivity and social dissent coupled with the international pressures due to the Cold War. In this phase, the military, as the guardian of the Kemalist principles (republicanism, nationalism, secularism, populism, statism, and reformism-revolutionism) intervened in politics three times (1960-1961, 1971-1973, 1980-1983) to end the political turmoil and restore order, and particularly to safeguard the principles of republicanism and secularism in the Turkish polity. During this period, the military increasingly adopted a rationalist version of democracy; that is, “democracy as an enlightened debate by which to find the best way”⁸. The three military interventions were the results of the military’s perception that the politicians had been diverting from rational democracy, and thus deteriorating domestic support and international respect to the Republic. On the international front, Turkey’s NATO membership in 1952 has contributed to the increasing professionalization of Turkish

⁶ On these models, see Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 10-18, 21.

⁷ Dankwart A. Rustow, “The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic”, *World Politics* 11 (1959): 549-550.

⁸ For this definition of democracy, see Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited: Part Two. The Classical Issues* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1987).

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military. Its leaders also “realized that military intervention is not a successful means of bringing about a better functioning democracy and that each intervention could cause the military to lose prestige in the country”⁹. In addition, Turkey began to face intense pressures both domestically and internationally for greater democratization. As a consequence of these developments, “the military not only returned to its barracks rather quickly following each intervention but over the years also became more and more reluctant to intervene at all”¹⁰. Even so, one can hardly argue that the military is isolated from political decision making in Turkey. As the military realizes the perils of direct intervention, its political involvement tends to be increasingly behind the scenes, which adds complexity to Turkish civil-military relations. The comprehensive analysis of such complexity requires the consideration of endogenous and ex-traneous factors affecting military’s political involvement in politics, as well as the consideration similar cases of this sophisticated power play.

Historical Overview of Civil-Military Relations in South Korea

Although with varying dynamics and time frames the historical pattern of civil-military relations in developing South Korea presents substantial similarities with that of Turkey. Beginning with the foundation of the state in the aftermath of the Second World War, “after Korea gained independence in 1948, the military became a very powerful political force in Korean politics”¹¹. The military had a profound impact on Korean politics through direct interventions in national politics, and by interacting with society and the economy in various forms.

Unlike Turkish military, the military in South Korea had lacked internal cohesion and various factions within the military intervened in politics for the sake of asserting their will. As a result, “18 factions of the armed forces have successfully supplanted the government twice in the last forty years”¹². Two coup d’états took place in 1961 and 1979. Yet, unlike in Turkey, the armed forces did not intervene as an organization. In both of the cases, only factions within the military, which supplanted their political masters and their military seniors, rebelled against the existing authority. Furthermore, an openly military regime existed only during the short period of the so-called “Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR, 1961-63) and in 1979, a junta (the Special Committee for National Security Measures) assumed power only to hand it over one year later to the formally civilian government of coup leader

⁹ Metin Heper and Aylin Guney, “The Military and Democracy in the Third Turkish Republic”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Summer 1996, Vol. 22, Issue 4.

¹⁰ Ahmet Evin, “Demilitarization and Civilianization of the Regime” in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, eds. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994).

¹¹ Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.358.

¹² *Ibid.* 367.

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Chun Doo-hwan"¹³. Nevertheless, the periods lacking military intervention were usually the phases of quasi-civilian regimes with strong military support, though not an openly military regime, rather than functioning democracy.

Alongside with the military's strong inclination to take part in politics, unlike Turkish military, which returned to its barracks short after each intervention, Korean military also had a substantial number of the population in its ranks through compulsory military service. With similar mandatory conscription in Turkey, the military has become one of the most important institutions of political socialization in South Korea.

Since democratization in 1987, South Korea has steadily developed into a democratic polity with stable democratic institutions and procedures. This was seen clearly when "Kim Young-sam became the first civilian to assume the country's highest national and governmental office in 1993"¹⁴ after over thirty years of military dominance in national politics. In the 1990s, the pattern of civil-military relations in South Korea changed dramatically. Akin to the position of the Turkish military, most observers see little threat of a return to direct military rule in the future. Yet another embedded parallel needs to be comparatively analyzed for both cases to what extent such retreat from direct intervention has led the respective militaries to decline their various indirect means of involvement. What are the emerging motivations and balances for military's involvement in politics in these developing countries?

Comparing the Impact of Endogenous Factors to Civil-Military Relations: Turkey and South Korea

The emerging motives and balances for military's involvement in politics can be analyzed by taking into consideration the endogenous and extraneous factors. For the sake of facilitating comparative analysis the paper examines both of the cases under these functional categories.

In view of the impact of interaction between military and society, the military's internal motives for political involvement need to be outlined. Hence, the internal dynamics of military tend to serve as push factors for intervention, and therefore constitute the roots of the civil-military interactions. Military, though presents itself as a monolithic actor with clear policy preferences such as guarding the nation tends to be influenced by a variety of interdependent factors. In accordance with the introduced theoretical framework at the beginning of the paper (See Figure 1) the following issues – constituting the backbone of the comparative analysis of endogenous factors – are examined:

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Aurel Croissant, "Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.358.

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- Ideological Coherence
- Organizational Cohesion
- Economic Interests
- Resources

Considering the interaction of these factors the papers deliberately refrains from point by point analysis. Instead it underlines the comparative interaction among these various factors that are motivating or discouraging military involvement in politics. To be more specific, both in Turkey and South Korea military refrained from direct intervention from the early 1980s onwards. This can be traced to its unwillingness to assume any direct rule as long as the political leadership considered its ideological principles. Nevertheless, this alignment of the respective militaries cannot be solely attributed to their ideological coherence in their perception vis-à-vis political involvement. For instance, in South Korea “in the 1990s, the armed forces were ideologically coherent, weakly factionalized, and without considerable economic private interests of its members”¹⁵. Though in line with this multi-causal explanation, the interdependence of these factors tend to be more ideologically driven in the case of the Turkish military. The army has played a prominent role in Turkey’s political modernization “leading the country along a Western path, by endorsing the dynamic transformation of the Turkish state and society, in line with Atatürk’s ideological commitment to the West”¹⁶. Turkish military’s self-perception as the leading actor and guardian of the Turkish modernization persists in contemporary Turkish politics. Yet this strong ideological commitment constitutes a motive and a balance for Turkish military’s political involvement. As the guardian of the Republic and Atatürk’s principles Turkish military shares utmost sensitivity towards the rise of influence of political Islam in certain segments of society particularly after mid-1990s, therefore this pushes Turkish military to intervene. While the notion of modern democracy introduced by Atatürk rejects military involvement in day-to-day politics, apparently this serves as an ideological restraint for Turkish military. Thus, though ideologically more coherent than South Korean military, it is difficult to argue that such coherence has served consistently either as a motive for or a balance against Turkish military’s political involvement. Perhaps this can serve as the principal endogenous basis for military to keep its influence over domestic polity indirectly.

Nevertheless, it is hardly possible to disengage the interaction of ideology as an end with the available means to its disposal that are centered on the

¹⁵ Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.378.

¹⁶ Nilüfer Narlı, “Civil-Military Relations in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, pp.107-127.

organizational cohesion, economic interests and resources of the respective militaries. In the early phases of their democratization processes – early 1980s for Turkey and late 1980s for South Korea – both militaries tend to employ similar means for securing indirect political influence, though not necessarily with identical ideological drives. In South Korea the election of the former general Roh Tae-woo “put the armed forces into a position that allowed them to secure their own organizational, financial, and personal interests against civilian interference after democratization”¹⁷. Though rather ideologically driven – ending political turmoil and guarding the order of the Republic – Kenan Evren, former chief of general staff, was elected as the President of the Turkish Republic. Different maps, similar paths. Apparently this is not to argue that the remaining endogenous factors can be disregarded in analyzing the motive for Turkish military’s indirect political involvement. But rather to underline the essence of weighing these endogenous factors is the case of concern.

Yet none of these endogenous factors exists in a vacuum. The impact of militaries’ indirect involvement in politics tend to be not only restricted with the transfer of their ideological cohesions to organizational coherent effectiveness in domestic political spectrum, but also the consideration of the vast resources at their disposal in both of the cases. As Croissant argues for South Korean military, “given its strategic position, manpower, resources, and corporative tradition, the military represented a power bloc that could not be ignored by any government”¹⁸. Though not at the top of the ideological ranking, this observation for South Korean military constitutes the key similarity, if not an identical endogenous factor that characterizes the de facto prominence of Turkish military in politics as well.

Table-3: Comparative Military Expenditures: Turkey and South Korea (2003)

Country	Military Expenditure (US\$)	Military Expenditure (%GDP)
Turkey	8.1 billion	4.5
South Korea	12.8 billion	2.8

Source: CIAO (*Columbia International Affairs Online*) - Country Data for 2003.

As outline in Table-3 the consideration of military expenditures would be of use in tracking the allocation of resources to the militaries’ in respective countries. Although considerably higher in amount the percentage of military expenditure to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in South Korea needs to be underlined. In this regard, Turkey’s percentage of military expenditure to

¹⁷ Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.370.

¹⁸ Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.367.

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GDP remarkably exceeds that of the South Korea. This can be attributed the inadequacy of civilian control over the military budget. As noted by a well-known Turkish journalist “the defense budget has never been subjected to parliamentary debate. It has not been discussed in the press. It has never been criticized”¹⁹. Though the situation of the South Korea is far from being perfect as compare to the European democracies with averaging less than 2 % of military expenditure/GDP ratio, its achievement in this regard is remarkable. South Korean ability to curtail military expenditure while attaining increasing levels of economic growth could serve as a model for endogenous resource allocation for Turkish military. Especially considering the fact both countries have been in an extensive alliance relationship with the United States since 1950s – Turkey via NATO and South Korea via bilateral strategic relations – there are lessons to be learned from each other’s alliance experience and its reflections on military expenditure and hence on civil-military relations.

Last but not the least among the endogenous factors is the fact that both countries have compulsory military service that provides their respective militaries with invaluable human resource. Military service, “though compulsory for all Turkish men since 1927, is seen as a national duty and heroic mission because citizens have been socialized with values promoting the army’s role as protector of the state”.²⁰ Unlikely, South Korean military employs compulsory military service as an agent of political socialization, whereas in Turkey the socialization reinforces military service and military’s socio-political standing in Turkish society. Such critical nuances point out to the fact that militaries’ political involvement cannot be solely explained by endogenous factors, particularly where “the distinction between the professional and political roles of the military was still blurred”.²¹

Comparing the Impact of Extraneous Factors to Civil-Military Relations: Turkey and South Korea

In view of the fact that the endogenous factors of the respective militaries are inadequate to explain the complex motives and balances for military involvement in politics, the consideration of extraneous factors remains essential. These factors are qualifying the contextual motives and restraints for military to intervene. Beyond the significance of militaries’ interaction with a range of domestic and international polity, its exposure to their fluctuations makes the consideration of extraneous factors ever more critical in comparatively analyzing the emerging motives and balances for military involvement in politics. To this end, the paper takes the following points as a reference to its analysis of

¹⁹ M. Ali Birand, *Nokta* (Istanbul weekly), Nov. 1986.

²⁰ Nilüfer Narlı, “Civil-Military Relations in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p.118.

²¹ Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.371.

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external factors in line with the outlined theoretical framework in the beginning (See Figure 1).

- Internal Security
- External Security
- Economic Development
- Configuration of Civil Actors

These factors can either serve to pull military into politics or pull it back from political engagement. For instance, “extra-parliamentary opposition from students, churches, and the civil rights movements challenged the military regime”²² in South Korea. Thus, military’s direct rule was challenged directly at domestic level. Presumably, this situation constituted internal threat for the military regime in South Korea, but not necessarily for Koreans at large. In contrast, Turkish army has not had a tradition of ruling the country after intervention. Nevertheless, this does not mean that military interventions foster internal security so that the military involvement in politics becomes redundant. Rather the recent history of the mid-range domestic outcomes of direct military intervention in early 1980s demonstrates that the case is quite opposite. In Turkey “in the mid-1990s, the civilian government’s failure to check the growing influence of the Islamists and Kurdish separatists gave the military an opportunity to justify and even expand its dominant role in Turkey’s internal affairs”²³. Though one may not necessarily agree with the second half of the sentence, the inability of civilian government to maintain internal order publicly legitimized Turkish military’s political involvement. With regards to the guardian role of Turkish military – both for the secular Republic and its territorial integrity – “support for military’s watchdog role continues today”²⁴. With the election of Justice and Development Party in 2002 the ongoing process of establishing civilian control over armed forces in line with the EU’s Copenhagen Criteria have contributed to heated public debates over the role of military in Turkish politics. It remains to be seen if these loaded discussions have been paving the way for a more democratic Turkey, or if they lead to further polarization and instability, and hence putting the fragile Turkish democracy at risk.

This situation tends to be ever more complicated by the incorporation of external security issues in the threat assessment of Turkish military. As Doğan Güreş, former chief of general staff, stressed the remaining orientation of the Turkish military towards internal and external threats, “the duty of the Turkish armed forces has not changed. As in the past, it is to protect the Turkish

²² Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.369.

²³ Nilüfer Narlı, “Civil-Military Relations in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p.115.

²⁴ Ibid. 117.

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Republic against internal and external enemies"²⁵. Thus, the notion of security is amalgamated in Turkish military's doctrine combining its internal and external facets. Undoubtedly, this translates into domestic polity as increasing prospects for military's political involvement. Nilüfer Narlı also substantiates this argument by pointing out that "the threats posed by the PKK [separatist, terrorist organization] since early 1980s, combined with the unstable environment of the Middle East, have shaped the relationship between the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), political institutions and society".²⁶ Therefore, akin to the endogenous factors extraneous factors are also in constant interplay with each other, and thus the analysis of their comprehensive interaction leads to thorough consideration of their impact on militaries' political involvement. To be more specific in that regard, "the army's heroic status as guardian, the perception of external military threats from the region, and favorable portrayals in the media and in schools has facilitated the army's strong presence in society".²⁷

Consequently, both in Turkey and in South Korea the configuration of civil actors has been arranged in a manner that facilitates the respective militaries' involvement in politics. Moreover, in a manner that crafts public opinion in support of indirect military involvement. In South Korea for instance, "based on a convincing victory and a solid plurality of votes in the election of December 1992, Kim Young-sam undoubtedly possessed greater democratic legitimacy than his predecessor"²⁸ as an elected civilian president. However, the military's abandonment of open political engagement did not lead to the institutionalization of civilian control over the military. In early 1990s South Korea, "the military still occupied a privileged position, as the ratio of retired military in the cabinet and National Assembly".²⁹ Thus, military was informally engaging in politics and running the country. On the other hand, in Turkey the military has never been eager to rule the country, but its below-underlined concerns made it to craft its indirect political involvement in a formal manner. According to Article 118 of the 1982 constitution (written after the last direct military intervention in Turkey), "Turkey's Council of Ministers must consider with priority, the decisions of the National Security Council (NSC) concerning necessary measures for the protection and independence of the state, the unity and indivisibility of the country, and the peace and security of society".³⁰ Therefore, Turkish military has institutionalized its indirect political involve-

²⁵ Quoted in Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Anomaly of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," in *Comparative Politics* Vol.29 No.2, 1997. p.161.

²⁶ Nilüfer Narlı, "Civil-Military Relations in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p.117.

²⁷ Nilüfer Narlı, "Civil-Military Relations in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p.108.

²⁸ Aurel Croissant, "Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.371.

²⁹ Ibid. p.370.

³⁰ Quoted in Nilüfer Narlı, "Civil-Military Relations in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring2002, p.106.

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ment for the sake of preserving its ability to intervene within constitutional framework. As a result, through NSC Turkish military has become legally part of the configuration of civil politics, while configuration of civil actors remains broader domain that can still serve as an extraneous factor. But to what extent independent is another matter of debate? Regardless of the impact of such development on the remaining civil actors, “majority of Turks accept the military as the guardian of democracy, secularism, and national unity and approve of the military’s involvement in politics”.³¹ Although at the time of military intervention public support for the armed forces might have been higher due to the ongoing political turmoil of the time, military’s involvement in politics have started to become an increasing source of public concern and thus debate, if not polarization, in the aftermath of 2002. There is a growing literature aiming to explain the post-2002 transformation of Turkish civil-military relations, yet this period is out of the scope of this article.

Having seemingly lost its hope on political civil-military quarrels Korean public gradually appreciated the integral impact of economic development on modernization, and incremental democratization. Accordingly, “the positive impact of militarization on the modernization of Korean society and its economic development has lost relevance since the late 1970s, when the private sector began to supply the labor market with a sufficient number of well-educated skilled workers and managers”.³² Thus, Korean society eventually built a growing and promising source for social mobilization within its own configuration of civil actors. As pointed out in the beginning of extraneous factors, the role of labor unions and student organizations in challenging military regime signals that the essentials of democratic polity have been burgeoning in South Korea. Whereas unfortunately similar burgeoning was lacking in Turkish society and not surprisingly Turkish military remained one of the most prominent and socially preferred employers alongside with its strong symbolic status. Nevertheless, this is not to argue that it is detrimental of having cutting-edge military equipped with great opportunities for the youth of the country, but rather to underline the inability of the configuration of the civil actors to generate alternative sources of social mobilization. In the last decade Turkey experienced at least 2 major economic crises – more according to some – governed by coalition governments of varying stability until recent current government elected in late 2002. Undoubtedly these are not extraneous factors contributing to civil-military relations and therefore they are not fostering democracy at all.

Finally, addressing to the impact of international environment on militaries’ motives for political involvement is also necessary, since the role of

³¹ Nilüfer Narlı, “Civil-Military Relations in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p.116.

³² Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.371.

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international community has far exceeded the one of mere external security threats and their pertinent alignments. For instance, with the end of the Cold War, the international context for direct military intervention became increasingly unfavorable. Pressures from various international actors have even made indirect political involvements of military unpopular domestically and unacceptable internationally. In Turkey's case the Copenhagen Criteria of the European Union (EU) to start accession talks can be given as example of overt pressures of international actors. With Copenhagen Criteria the EU basically demands from the official candidates of having sound, functioning democratic institutions. As a long-standing candidate for the EU accession, recent constitutional amendments towards increasing democratization Turkey are developments in that regard. Similar impact of the US of South Korea can be traced for the early periods of democratization, though not as remarkable as the one of the EU on Turkey. Even so, the ultimate impact of such international pressures on Turkey still remains the case to be seen. Drawing attention to these international factors and their growing influence does not mean to argue that the military has lost all its incentives for political involvement. On the contrary, "the armed forces are still a powerful player in national security politics"³³ Croissant notes for South Korea while this remains the fact for Turkey as well.

Comparative Findings

In line with the theoretical basis of paper, this part outlines the comparative findings pertinent to the interaction of the endogenous and extraneous factors in shaping the militaries' attitudes towards political involvement. Apparently, this is not a straightforward process that can be explained by mere presence or absence of certain factors, but rather qualifying the unique nature of civil-military relations for each case may be helpful in explaining dissimilar –though not necessarily contrasting– final destinations of these developing nations.

Since the late 1980s, Korean "social and political opportunity structures have been favorable for the institutionalization of civilian control over the military. The military, in turn, lost the motive – as well as the mood – to intervene against the civilian authorities"³⁴. Thus, democratization in South Korea becomes a remarkable success story with regard to civil-military relations and the eventual institutionalization of civilian control. On the other hand, in Turkey, despite similar democratization wave has started since early 1980s, the combination of endogenous and extraneous factors failed to produce such institutionalization akin to the one of the South Korea. This could be particularly attributed to the absence of mutual reinforcement between the endogenous and extraneous factors to balance military involvement in Turkish

³³ Aurel Croissant, "Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.372.

³⁴ Aurel Croissant, "Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 30, No: 3, Spring 2004, p.378.

politics. In turn, Turkish military's willingness to delegate the rule of the country to the elected civilians as soon as the order is maintained has turned to be the one of indirectly checking the political contemplation in Turkish politics due to the unfavorable configuration of extraneous factors. In the critical years between 1985 and 1995, Turkey suffered most from separatist terror, which constituted primary internal security threat, and thus pulled military into domestic domain of Turkish politics. As this costly struggle against terrorism impeded the flourishing opportunities for rapid economic growth akin to South Korea, it gradually paved way for the two major economic crises in mid 1990s. All in all the adverse combination of these extraneous factors led to increasing social discontent and political polarization, which in turn prevented the emergence of any single-party stable government in the last decade. Growing social distrust to the existing political parties of the system exacerbated the rise of political Islam in the considerable discontented parts of Turkish society. Certainly this raised Turkish military's concerns about the secular notion of the Republic. Therefore the culmination of extraneous factors paved the way for emerging concerns of Turkish military, which in turn from theoretical point of view served as the motives for military involvement in politics.

Conclusions and Implications

As can be noted from the comparative findings, stating the reasons of success becomes relatively easier as compare to tracing the roots of in-between situations. For that reason perhaps, throughout the paper analysis tends to be more on Turkish civil-military relations rather than Korean. Yet with its remarkably growing economy and simultaneously competent political reforms South Korea serves as a substantial reference for comparatively analyzing Turkish civil-military relations than any other developing nation.

Tracing these elements of comparison for the emerging motives and balances to military involvement in politics presented the fact that such comparative examination cannot be conducted by taking internal or external factors as the basis of comparison. Rather the multi-causal explanation remains critical in capturing the essence of civil-military relations in respective countries. To this end, Sundhaussen's theoretical framework has enabled comprehensive consideration of endogenous and extraneous factors to military intervention. Nevertheless, the paper is not at the conclusive point of arguing that it covered entire range of socio-political and economic issues that can constitute grounds for these factors. Rather the paper outlines key political and economic developments in respective countries that served as either motives or balances – or in some cases both – towards militaries' involvement in politics. Throughout the paper, the interaction of these factors within each category –endogenous and extraneous– and among these categories has been underlined. In conclusion, the nature of such interaction tends to be an influential cumulative element in determining the militaries' disposition of politi-

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cal involvement. So far, in South Korea the interaction between endogenous and extraneous factors has been mutually reinforcing. Whereas in Turkey, such interaction tends to involve certain controversies that apparently fail to foster declining levels of military involvement in politics.

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