

# MILITARY CULTURE AND DEFENSE MANAGEMENT IN AZERBAIJAN: CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATIONS

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*The article is dedicated to studying military culture, which is of special relevance in military administration in modern times and acts as an important means of socialization between the army and society. In the article, based on various scientific sources, the author tried to reveal military culture's characteristic features and content and exhibited a specific scientific approach to its structural elements and forms. The analysis of new concepts and categories included in the value standards of military culture in the process of building an army in connection with the emergence of a new political way of thinking in Azerbaijani society formed a special subject of research in the article. The article also put forward specific considerations regarding the possibilities of applying military culture in the training of qualified officer personnel in the Azerbaijani army, as well as development prospects. As a result, in the article, taking advantage of the historical experience, the involvement of the achievements of all fields of culture in the field of military activity as a whole was evaluated as one of the important requirements facing the army, and the synthesis of all the achievements of the military culture with the reforms carried out in the military field was expressed as a guarantee of the success, success and reliable future of the army. To strengthen the value standards of military culture in the future in the process of building an army, their continuous promotion among personnel is reflected in the article as the main proposal.*

**Key words:** *military culture, military, culture, semiotic-symbolic culture, army construction, formal military culture, informal military culture*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Military history that has passed the time filter of centuries and millennia proves that the strength of the army of any state directly depends on the cultural level of its personnel. The army, which is one of the important social institutions of society, cannot

fully function without rooting itself in high culture. In other words, the army, which is formed as an integral part of public life and incorporates all the elements of the general culture in unity, forms only a unique, specific field of culture - military culture.

### **1.1. The purpose of the article**

The main goal of the article is to investigate the specific features and application mechanisms of military culture, which acts as an important means of consolidation between society and the army in modern times, as well as the basis of effective activity in military administration. The research tasks arising from this goal are the following:

1. Determining the degree of development of the topic concerning the available scientific literature;

2. Opening and analyzing the specific features of the concept of military culture;

3. Opening the content of military culture and defining its structural elements;

4. Researching the current approaches to military culture in Azerbaijan and the conditions for its realization;

5. Putting forward a proposal for the wider application of the value standards of military culture in military administration.

**1.2. Scientific methods used in the research work:** historical analogy, theoretical analysis, interpretation, and comparative analysis methods were used in the research work for deeper processing of the article.

As an independent concept, military culture has been included in scientific circulation in recent times. It is believed that its creation coincides with the end of the 19th century and

the beginning of the 20th century. Even before the emergence of the term military culture, in the early periods of human history, there were a number of norms and values of coexistence that arose directly from the instincts of self-preservation and defense of people. These values were formed based on the general culture. Later, those values became criteria of self-affirmation between clans, tribes, as well as individual individuals, and began to act as stable normative bases. With the emergence of combat-capable armies, these norms became established as unbreakable rules that were strictly protected and expected by the bearers of the military and martial arts. Of course, those rules were not directly mentioned as a secret, but they acted as elements of military culture. However, these covered only the practical aspects of military culture, its scientific and theoretical development began much later. (Sorokin: 2004, p. 27).

Unfortunately, in the modern scientific literature that we have studied so far, no attempt has been made to give a sociological definition or description of the military culture as a whole. However, there are currently a large number of works and studies dedicated to the organizational culture of the military and individual elements of the military culture in the fields of philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, culturology, as well as military sciences. But the interesting thing is that none of them have an overlapping, common idea about

military culture. Each author who studies military culture approaches it from his perspective, they exhibit different positions regarding the content of the concept, its structural elements, and its scope. A single idea summarizes these studies - the idea that military culture is an integral part of social culture. It would be appropriate to mention one issue that, compared to other countries, research on military culture has been conducted on a larger scale in Russia, and a certain scientific-theoretical base has been formed. P. Sorokin, L. Evseeva, S. Klimov, V.Kruglov, O.Marusenko, N.Morozov, O.Romax, L.Larkin, L.Cherpagina, I.Shegolev, etc. scientists and researchers have played a special role.

## **2. THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

### **2.1 Concept of military culture**

Military culture in itself is a multifaceted, multidirectional, complex concept. Therefore, it would be appropriate to examine this concept according to several characteristics. As its name suggests, it is formed from two different combinations of words - military and cultural words. The meaning of the word Harb is battle, battle, and defense. Culture acts as a set of material and spiritual values, wealth, and conditions of life and behavior created by people in the process of cooperation, not given by nature. Culture is the main social factor that regulates various areas of

human relations, from daily communication to the functioning of the global economy (Evseeva: 2014, p.92).

Military culture - as a constituent element of general culture, regulates the interaction of members of society with the military sphere and acts as a means of assimilation between them. Thanks to it, the military socialization of the young generation and the education of military patriotism are carried out, rich experience is gathered in the field of military training and educational work through military-theoretical concepts and military doctrines, and the principles and technologies of military art are applied to real life. Military culture has autonomy, in a certain sense it acts as an independent concept that includes the rules principles, and moral values existing in the military field. At the same time, it plays the role of the nucleus of social culture and regulates the mutual social relationship between the military sphere and society as a form of general culture (Klimov: 2012, p.55).

For a more in-depth study of military culture, it would be appropriate to consider it in a broad and narrow sense. In a broad sense, military culture means the material and moral values, forms of activity, and rules of conduct created by people in the country's military field. It includes economic, political, social, and spiritual components (military economy, military policy, military ideology, armed struggle, Armed

Forces, weapons and military equipment, military science, military art, military doctrines, military concepts, military traditions, artistic related to the military field culture, etc.) is included. In the narrow sense, military culture means a historically determined, stable complex of thinking and behavior patterns of people in the military field, which are formed in groups and on a massive scale. Both parties interact with each other and it is impossible to take one of them in isolation from the other (Marusenko: 2010, p.43).

## **2.2. The structure of military culture**

When looking at the scientific literature, one of the issues that attract attention is related to the efforts of some authors to ignore the military culture as a subculture. This in itself is a fundamentally wrong idea. While subculture reflects the norms and principles, lifestyle, and rules of behavior of people belonging to a specific category (for example, young people, the poor), under the name of military culture, we refer to the material and moral values, semiotic-symbolic elements that belong to the military field as a whole, we also understand the norms and principles and rules of joint action of military personnel. This includes the lifestyle, norms, and values of military personnel, language, rituals, symbols, artistic culture, and art. As can be seen from the comparison, military culture is a broader concept, while subculture,

unlike it, has a limited sphere of activity.

Military culture as a phenomenon of social life permeates all areas of the military organization. Its constituent elements can be applied to each representative of the military structure separately and to the collective as a whole. The military culture includes, on the one hand, subcultures of military personnel belonging to various types of troops of the military field, and on the other hand, military personnel of various statuses and categories - cadets, soldiers, ensigns, officers (divided into junior, senior and senior officers) with unique characteristics are distinguished (Romanova: 2008, p. 26).

When thinking about military culture, these concepts that reflect the lifestyle of military personnel first come to mind: authority, active lifestyle, strict regime, discipline, hierarchical authority, responsibility, sacrifice, etc.

There are different opinions about the structural elements of military culture. V. Kruglov, doctor of military sciences, notes that "the content of military culture consists of certain components that interact with each other." Among these components, he includes political culture, management and administrative culture, disciplinary culture, headquarters and military-technical culture, and culture of mutual relations between military personnel (Kruglov: 2015, p. 4).

O. Romakh distinguishes four sub-systems in the structure of military

culture as a whole training system - normative value system, moral-ideological system, behavioral system and material system (Romax, et.al: 2010, p.31).

Many authors distinguish military culture according to the possibilities of realization in peace and war conditions. They believe that the elements of military culture can be used both during just-defensive wars and unjust-aggressive wars. According to S. Klimov, "elements of military culture influence the behavior of a person during war and military conflicts, determine his attitude towards the defense of his homeland." (Klimov: 2012, p. 59).

On closer examination, we see that each author is right in his own right, and military culture contains all these listed elements. However, the most important flaw in the approach of the authors is related to the fact that they try to analyze these elements not in unity, but in isolation from each other, in separate groups. It should not be forgotten that military culture is an integral part of social culture, and all material and moral values, rules of conduct, and ways of thinking existing in the military field act as components that determine its formation. On the other hand, most authors for some reason ignore the fact that military culture is a means of integration and socialization between the military and society. Finally, although these authors list individual components of military culture, the issue of its object and subject remains open and they do

not attempt to give it a concrete definition. I think that military culture can be approached from a sociological point of view as follows: military culture is the totality of material and moral values, wealth created and created by people in the military field of the country, the sum of the lifestyle, activity, and behavior rules of military personnel, the social relationship between the military and society. It is a communication tool.

### **2.3. The content of military culture**

When talking about the content of military culture, it is important to note that it, like general culture, has semiotic and symbolic characteristics. This means that it can also be seen as a system that contains different types of signs and symbols that can be read as text, in which different aspects of the military sphere of society are encrypted. Weapons and military equipment, military uniforms, military accessories and equipment, military towns and barracks, as well as other material elements have a symbolic-semiotic character as well as practical purpose. For example, weapons symbolize the power and might of the army and navy, as well as the state as a whole. Each weapon is individually able to provide certain information about its owner. Even in ancient times, any weapon made it possible to determine the status of its owner. Thus, the sword tied to the warrior's belt served as a symbol of its bearer being from a noble family (Cherpagina: 2014, p.117).

It should be noted that the weapon has not only a semiotic feature but also acts as a tool that forms a positive way of thinking about the state and creates self-confidence in the process of establishing state-citizen relations. The fact that any state has modern equipment and weapons instills confidence in its citizens in the power of the state and creates a foundation for them to feel in a state of peace, security, and protection. It is no coincidence that after every military parade with the display of military equipment, the civilian population who watches it develops a high sense of confidence and pride in their army and state, and their feelings of fear and anxiety for their personal lives completely disappear and are erased from their minds. We had the opportunity to observe a clear example of this after the parade organized in Azadlig Square as a symbol of victory over the enemy after the Patriotic War, a glorious page of our modern history, which was carried out to liberate the historical lands of Azerbaijan from the long-term Armenian occupation. In addition to the military equipment, which plays an important role in ensuring a fair victory over Armenia, the display of equipment seized from the enemy as military booty in the parade evokes a feeling of sympathy for the strength, power, and invincibility of our army among the citizens of Azerbaijan, and also in the current information war, foreign countries do not want the development

and advancement of our country. and it fundamentally overthrew the negative stereotypes, pessimistic thoughts, and myths purposefully formed in public opinion by the internal villains, our eternal and eternal enemies.

The symbolic content of military culture can also be applied to military uniforms. Each military uniform indicates the affiliation of its bearer to a specific type of army and military unit of the Armed Forces. It also acts as a carrier of information about the owner's military rank, duty, awards, and honors. It is even possible to determine the military unit to which a military serviceman belongs, the type of army, his level of professionalism, as well as the name of the military educational institution he graduated from, through the uniform (Morozov: 2010, p.71).

Military culture is not homogeneous in its internal content. It has a dualistic character, it functions as a single system containing two different sets of norms. It is possible to distinguish formal and informal military culture within it.

### **2.3.1. Formal military culture**

This includes norms and principles of coexistence, etiquette rules, as well as official events organized by the military leadership, official rituals, and ceremonies, etc., established in statutes and other military legislation.

### **2.3.2. Informal military culture**

This includes the spiritual and moral qualities of military personnel, which are indicators of their culture, as well as the values related to their folklore, artistic entertainment, and satirical culture. (Romax: 2009, p. 127).

The objects of military culture should be purposefully related to the entire military infrastructure of society, its financial maintenance, family and household conditions of military servicemen's families, and the entire military-industrial complex engaged in the production and reproduction of weapons (Bystrova: 2014, p. 186).

In addition, to deeply analyze the content of this concept, we must be able to define the exact boundary between the ideal type of military culture and the culture that belongs to a specific state or a certain historical period. It is clear that since the beginning of society, there have been many different examples of military culture formed by different socio-economic formations, as well as states with different management systems and political regimes (Shegolev:2014, p.374).

### **2.4. Approaches to military culture in Azerbaijan and conditions for its realization**

Each society creates its own more or less developed military culture. The military culture of the Azerbaijani society is significantly different from the military culture existing in other

societies and has its characteristics. The military traditions of our country span several hundred years from a historical point of view. For the people of Azerbaijan, high patriotism, standing guard, and defending the Motherland with arms in hand are characteristic features of our national mentality. The roots of these traditions go back to the era of Shah Ismayil Khatai, the author of the "Whole Azerbaijan" idea. The representatives of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which entered the stage of history as the first democratic republic in the East at the beginning of the last century, and left an indelible mark on the statehood and military history of Azerbaijan, although their life was short, also rendered great services and made valuable contributions in shaping the military and cultural values of our state. After our country was occupied by Soviet Russia, the leadership of the Union began to work with great effort and purposefully in the direction of weakening these traditions. But they could not achieve it. The Azerbaijani people, who have a fighting spirit by nature, proved their struggle and perseverance against the background of the brilliant examples of heroism realized by their brave and brave sons and daughters in the Great Patriotic War. Hundreds of Azerbaijani military personnel who fought against the Germans in the ranks of the Red Army and our compatriots working on the rear front were honored with orders and medals for the heroism they demonstrated by

fulfilling their civic duties with honor and dignity and were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, the highest state award of the USSR.

In 1991, after liberating from 70 years of Soviet slavery, the Republic of Azerbaijan gained its independence, as well as in other fields, fundamental reforms were carried out in the military field. The start of the process of building an army, which is the guarantor of the independent state's defense and security, led to the emergence of new approaches to military culture. In the first years of our independence, despite the negative dynamic development of the domestic situation under the influence of both internal and external factors, the strengthening of national self-awareness and national self-assertion tendencies among people in the society led to the introduction of several new concepts contrary to the traditional Soviet ideology into the official lexicon of the state - "patriotism", "civic duty", "national statehood", "national traditions" etc.

All these changes had a strong impact not only on the daily life of society, but also on other areas of strategic importance - science, education, and the army. Due to the influence of general cultural changes, the education of patriotism came to the fore both in the military field and in the field of science and education, and all the values in society began to be formed by them.

Due to the emergence of a new political way of thinking in society, the dictionary of political terminology of the military personnel began to be updated. This dictionary includes several new concepts that can significantly affect the officer's life and activities - military-strategic direction, defense adequacy, quality parameters in the construction of the Armed Forces, military security within the framework of the modern security model, defense awareness, democratization in the army, etc. concepts like Without using them, it was impossible for an officer to correctly direct his activities in dynamically changing service conditions, to choose effective, modern training methods for personnel training. Subsequently, these concepts, analogously, combined with other elements of military culture, such as service motivation, loyalty to the Motherland, meritorious service, and competence, gave impetus to the process of building an army that reflects modern requirements.

With the return to power of the national leader Heydar Aliyev in our country, there was a turning point in the construction of the army, where new priorities began to be applied. Those priorities were aimed at the organization of all values in the army by the rapidly changing world requirements - international standards, rejecting the outdated stereotypes existing in the former Soviet military system. This process did not bypass

the military schools that are directly engaged in the training of specialized officer personnel in our country and set several new requirements and tasks for professional training. If the general requirements for officer personnel in the former Soviet army system were based mainly on two parameters - the training of personnel with high physical fitness and the ability to work with technical equipment, the new requirements, which differ from it in their versatility and scope, are more focused on high intellectual knowledge, strong convictions, was directed to the formation of national officers who meet all the criteria with strong physical and moral-psychological training, a rich world view, and the ability to use modern equipment and ammunition perfectly.

Among the new requirements, to speed up the adaptation of the officers to military service, the maximum improvement of their service motivation, moral and moral qualities, taking into account their interests, wishes, and desires, and the effective organization of their leisure time were the main ones. The consistent and worthy follower of H.Aliyev's policy, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Ilham Aliyev, is the logical result of continuing that trend in our country without turning back and with great determination, turned it into the owner of the world, and placed it among the 50 most powerful armies in the world.

Among the most important values that exist in the field of military culture in Azerbaijani society - love for one's homeland and people, loyalty to military duties, protection of the honor and dignity of a warrior, friendship, military partnership, courage and tolerance, heroism and willingness to sacrifice oneself, etc. such higher values apply. These elements of military culture are of exceptional importance in the training of commanders and are now widely used in practical activities in the training of qualified officers in the army. However, it is applied in the training of military personnel with a slight change in form and content. Since the military sector of society is an institution that bears the weight of the country's defense directly on its shoulders, cultural norms and values are applied here within the framework of the military-patriotic ideology and by the requirements of the strict military regime, and art as a means of training and education in the thinking of the officer's personality reflects the general worldview and exemplary ethics. it is used as a factor aimed at the formation of behavior. In other words, every important element in the military, including cultural values, is aimed at educating the young generation in the spirit of military patriotism, strengthening their feelings of love for the land, and the Motherland, and forming spiritual and moral values such as bravery, heroism, friendship, companionship, and generosity. It is not by chance that

military culture is also viewed as a moral field that includes the ethics of courage, endurance, kindness, obligatory mutual assistance (for example, "sacrificing one's life for the cause of one's comrades") with long-standing traditions in society.

Since ideological work is the brain center of every army, an orientation tool that encourages it to possible victories and successes, it is especially necessary to apply the elements of military culture in this field. Regardless of their specialty, if the elements of military culture are instilled in ideological working hours as well as during the educational process in association with the material and moral values, wealth and forms of activity, and rules that they should protect and expect, positive results will be achieved in the training of military personnel in the future results.

The main indicator of the level of military culture in each army is the organization of the defense of the Motherland at the expense of minimal losses, spending the necessary resources and forces within a limited time frame. Based on this, it is possible to analyze the cultural level of the army and the people as a whole. It is a matter of pride that, regardless of complex historical circumstances and harsh changes, the notions of honor, dignity, love for the people, duty, and loyalty to the Motherland have been passed down from generation to generation, and have always had special importance as

irreplaceable national and moral values and credos for every officer in the Azerbaijani army preserved. From time to time prominent representatives of our army - A. Shikhlinski, S.Mehmandarov, J.Nakhchi-vans, H.Aslanov, etc. devoted their fundamental work to searching for ways to improve the fighting ability of the army at the expense of moral values. Thanks to this, a training system was formed in our country, which has not lost its relevance to this day and is based on rich traditions.

The practical application of each of the above-mentioned elements was demonstrated by the "April battles" of 2016, which were aimed at restoring the territorial integrity of our country, liberating Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding territories occupied by Armenian usurpers, and which began on September 27, 2020, and on November 9, Azerbaijan we clearly saw during the large-scale military operations carried out under the name "Iron Fist" during the Patriotic War, which ended with absolute victory. Despite the tough obstacles and difficulties in front of him, the Azerbaijani soldier who broke the will of the great enemy in front of him by saying "First is the country" and marched on the danger with great determination and determination, managed to give him a worthy response. Having achieved a great victory in just 44 days, the Azerbaijani army managed to inscribe its name in world military history with golden letters by skillfully using deceptive

maneuvers and innovations during the military operations carried out in a coordinated manner with the participation of all types of troops. Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Gubadli, and Shusha operations, which were carried out based on hand-to-hand combat tactics without any firearms, are still being investigated today by the world's leading military experts and experts.

During the Patriotic War, the Azerbaijani army demonstrated to what extent it had a wide military potential - weapons, ammunition, military equipment, and material equipment capabilities, applied a flexible operational plan from complex situations in extreme conditions, and could easily exit with minimal losses, but also extremely high. It also showed that it has qualified personnel with professionalism, who develop and carry lofty values such as love of the Motherland, love of the land, etc. The examples of great courage, heroism, perseverance, and self-sacrifice, which are important manifestations of military culture, exhibited by the members of our army in the course of military operations, were written in golden letters in the modern military annals of Azerbaijan. I don't think I'm wrong if I say that the "Iron Fist" operation, aimed at liberating the historical lands of our people from 30 years of occupation, was also a strong message of the people-army-government unity to our foreign enemies who don't want the development of Azerbaijan.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In conclusion, I would like to note that one of the most important requirements facing the Azerbaijani army today is to draw achievements from other fields of culture into the field of military activity without wasting time. Directing existing cultural values, including all the achievements of military culture, to the reforms carried out in the military field, in many ways, means ensuring the success, success, determination to win, and a reliable future of the army in advance. If the command of the Armed Forces combines all efforts in this area, we can achieve more effective results in military management. Undoubtedly, this issue should be carried out in connection with high-level military knowledge, exemplary personnel, and combat training. Fulfillment of all these while anticipating the current requirements will ultimately lead to the scientific organization of the future activities of the army based on cultural values and will add strength to the strength of the Azerbaijani army.

In the future, to implement and strengthen the value standards of military culture in the process of building an army, it would be appropriate to continuously promote them among the personnel (mainly during ideological working hours).

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