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Estandart Reyau d'a Cheneralísma, prencipal bandera carlista d'a primera guerra bordada por María Francisca de Braganza em 1833 Royal Standard of the General in Chief, main Carlist flag of the First War embroidered by Maria Francisca de Braganza in 1833). Wikimedia Commons

# Strategic Military Leadership in Modern Greece:

## An Interdisciplinary Study of International Relations and Military Pedagogy

By MARIOS KYRIAKIDIS

**ABSTRACT:** This manuscript explores the evolution of strategic military leadership in modern Greek history through an interdisciplinary lens that integrates international relations theory and military pedagogy. Despite the extensive historiography on Greece's military and diplomatic developments, there remains a significant gap in examining how leadership formation - both as an institutional process and a pedagogical outcome - has intersected with the shifting geopolitical landscape of Southeast Europe. By situating Greek military leadership within broader theoretical frameworks of strategic studies, civil-military relations, and officer education, this study offers a novel synthesis that transcends disciplinary silos. The research is anchored in historical analysis, drawing on both primary and secondary sources, including military educational materials, state documents, and scholarly literature. It identifies key transitional periods - such as the Balkan Wars, the Asia Minor Campaign, the Cyprus crisis, and Greece's post-Cold War NATO engagement - as focal points for analyzing the interaction between leadership, pedagogy, and strategic culture. The case studies illustrate how education and training within Greek military institutions have shaped strategic thinking, operational doctrine, and political-military decision-making.

**KEYWORDS:** GREEK MILITARY HISTORY, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP, PEDAGOGY, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

### I. INTRODUCTION

**S**trategic military leadership in modern Greek history cannot be understood merely through the lens of battlefield performance or individual heroism. It is a multifaceted phenomenon, shaped over time by institutional norms, educational practices, ideological frameworks, and international alignments. Greece, having emerged as a modern state through revolution in the early 19th century, has since been exposed to persistent geopolitical pressures—

wars, occupations, shifting alliances, and ideological divisions—that have profoundly influenced the formation of its military leadership.<sup>1</sup> The current study proposes that leadership in the Greek armed forces evolved not only as a reaction to such pressures but also as a systemic outcome of pedagogical choices and strategic imperatives.

Despite the depth of scholarship in Greek military history, political science, and educational studies, these fields have rarely been brought together to analyze the structural formation of military leadership in Greece. Historians have detailed conflicts and their outcomes,<sup>2</sup> political scientists have examined civil-military relations and external alignments,<sup>3</sup> and pedagogical scholars have assessed aspects of military training.<sup>4</sup> However, the intersection of these threads - especially how they inform the development of strategic-level leadership - remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by offering an interdisciplinary analysis that draws on military history, strategic studies, and military pedagogy.

Strategic studies typically focus on decision-making under stress and the execution of doctrine, often without considering how such decision-making is cultivated through education and institutional values.<sup>5</sup> Pedagogical research tends to focus on teaching methods or ethical formation,<sup>6</sup> rarely connecting these directly to operational leadership. Historical narratives, meanwhile, often celebrate or critique military leaders without questioning the educational and ideological frameworks that shaped them.<sup>7</sup> Bridging these approaches is essential for under-

- 1 RICKS, David. *The Making of Modern Greece Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797–1896)*. London, Routledge, 2009
- 2 PLOUMIDIS, Spyridon. *From the Old to the New Greater Greece: The Bellicose Evolution of the Greek Great Idea (1912–13)*. Études balkaniques, 2013, 2: 68-90.
- 3 VEREMIS, Thanos. *The Military in Greek Politics. From Independence to Democracy*, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1998, pp. 10–14; CHATZIVASSILIOU, Evanthis. *Greece and the Cold War: Front line state, 1952-1967*. London, Routledge, 2006
- 4 TOISKALLIO, Jarmo. *Military pedagogy as a human science*. In: *Military Pedagogies*. Brill Sense, 2008. p. 127-144.
- 5 GRAY, S. Colin. *Modern Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 65–68; NATO Defense College, *Officer Education and Strategic Culture in NATO Countries*, Rome, NATO Publications, 2015.
- 6 SHERMAN, Nancy. *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of Our Soldiers*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- 7 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios “Military Training, Espionage, and Counter-Espionage in the Modern History of the Greek Army (1821–1947): A Strategic Evolution in Military Pedagogy.” *Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume – III Issue-I (2025), pp. 58–68.

standing how Greek strategic leadership has taken shape over time.

Three thematic pillars guide this inquiry. First, the study explores how historical victories and defeats - such as those in the Balkan Wars or the Asia Minor Campaign - have influenced Greece's strategic culture and military doctrine.<sup>8</sup> Second, it examines how Greece's alignment with foreign powers such as Britain, the United States, and NATO has shaped officer education and leadership models.<sup>9</sup> Third, it considers how the internal structures of military education, particularly at institutions like the Hellenic Army Academy and the National Defense College, have cultivated or constrained the development of strategic thinking.<sup>10</sup>

Greek military leadership has often oscillated between tradition and modernization, national independence and alliance conformity. Contrasting leadership outcomes from the Balkan Wars and the Asia Minor disaster underscore the role of education and ideology: the former emphasized initiative and legitimacy,<sup>11</sup> while the latter reflected rigid planning and overextension.<sup>12</sup> During the interwar period and the authoritarian Metaxas regime, military education promoted a mix of nationalism and technocratic control.<sup>13</sup> Post-World War II, NATO integration reshaped officer training, though political instability and ideological purges continued to influence the army's leadership structures.<sup>14</sup>

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8 SYRIGOS, Angelos and CHATZIVASSILIOU, Evanthis, *Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: 50 ερωτήματα και απαντήσεις* [Asia Minor Catastrophe: 50 Questions and Answers], Athens: Patakis, 2022; PLOUMIDIS, Spyridon, *Nationalism and authoritarianism in interwar Greece (1922–1940)*. London, Routledge, 2020.

9 NATO School Oberammergau, *Transforming Officer Education for the 21st Century*, NATO Doctrine Series, 2018; STERGIOU, Andreas. *A Greece, Turkey, NATO and the Cyprus Issue 1973–1988: Enemies Allied* (1st ed.). 2024, London, Routledge.

10 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios, *Η Εκπαίδευση των Ελληνικών Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση μέχρι την αναβίωση των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων (1821-1896)* (2016), [*The Training of the Greek Armed Forces from the Greek Revolution until the Revival of the Olympic Games (1821-1896)*]. Athens, Grigoris, 2016.

11 PLOUMIDIS, Spyridon. *From the Old to the New Greater Greece: The Bellicose Evolution of the Greek Great Idea (1912–13)*. Études balkaniques, 2013, 2: 68-90.

12 SYRIGOS, Angelos and CHATZIVASSILIOU, Evanthis, *Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: 50 ερωτήματα και απαντήσεις* [Asia Minor Catastrophe: 50 Questions and Answers], cit.

13 PLOUMIDIS, Spyridon, *Nationalism and authoritarianism in interwar Greece (1922–1940)*. London, Routledge, 2020.

14 VEREMIS, Thanos. *The Military in Greek Politics. From Independence to Democracy*, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1998, pp. 10–14; CHATZIVASSILIOU, Evanthis. *Greece and the Cold War: Front line state, 1952-1967*. London, Routledge, 2006



Fig. 1 *Emblem of the Hellenic Army Academy.*

*The visible Ancient Greek inscription 'Ἀρχεσθαι μαθὼν ἀρχῆς ἐπιστήσῃ' translates as: 'By learning to obey, one gains the knowledge to lead.'"*

In this context, strategic leadership is conceptualized as more than command competence. It requires critical thinking, the ability to read international dynamics, and the skill to balance military objectives with political legitimacy. Institutions such as the Hellenic Army Academy (since 1828) and the National Defense College play a central role in this process.<sup>15</sup> However, their curricular content, ideological underpinnings, and strategic vision often remain opaque in academic literature. By treating pedagogy as a core analytical lens - encompassing ethics, foresight, institutional norms, and leadership culture - this study offers a new model for understanding Greek military development.<sup>16</sup>

The research unfolds across three axes: the historical evolution of strategic leadership, the pedagogical systems that shape it, and the wider implications for military education in states with similar geostrategic conditions. Methodologically, the study adopts a historically grounded and analytically pluralistic approach. It relies on archival material from military institutions, personal writings by officers, strategic policy documents, and oral histories. These primary sources are supplemented by secondary literature in both Greek and English.

Selected case studies - ranging from the Balkan Wars (1912–13), the Asia Minor Campaign (1919 - 22), and the 1974 Cyprus crisis, to Greece's evolving NATO role post-1990 - serve to illustrate key shifts in leadership thinking and educational paradigms. These episodes are examined not only in geopolitical or

15 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios, *Η Εκπαίδευση των Ελληνικών Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση μέχρι την αναβίωση των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων (1821-1896)* (2016), [The Training of the Greek Armed Forces from the Greek Revolution until the Revival of the Olympic Games (1821-1896)]. Athens, Grigoris, 2016; Hellenic National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ), *Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών* [Curriculum]. 2023, Athens. Online at the site [setha.army.gr](http://setha.army.gr)

16 TOISKALLIO, Jarmo. *Military pedagogy as a human science*, cit.

operational terms, but also in light of the intellectual and institutional preparation of the leaders involved.<sup>17</sup> The Asia Minor failure, for instance, is read as a breakdown in strategic foresight grounded in inadequate leadership education. Similarly, the Cyprus crisis reflects the dangers of politicized military instruction. In contrast, the post-Cold War period reveals a more adaptable leadership style, shaped by NATO integration and educational reforms.<sup>18</sup>

The manuscript is structured into ten chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two reviews the literature and introduces the theoretical framework. Chapter Three outlines the methodology. Chapters Four to Seven offer the analytical core, combining historical narrative with institutional analysis. Chapter Eight synthesizes findings across cases. The final chapters present policy recommendations and wider implications.

Ultimately, the study contributes to multiple fields. It enriches Greek military historiography by viewing leadership as a product of institutional design. It advances military education studies by connecting pedagogy to strategy. It proposes a transferable analytical model for leadership development in mid-sized powers. Finally, it offers timely insights for Greek defense planning, where the cultivation of ethical, flexible, and internationally competent leaders remains vital in confronting evolving threats - from conventional force projection to cyber conflict and irregular migration.<sup>19</sup>

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of strategic military leadership in the Greek context sits at the crossroads of military history, international relations, political science, and education studies. While each of these fields offers partial insights into leadership development, there is a surprising lack of integrated scholarship that combines them into a coherent analytical model. This chapter surveys the principal debates and gaps in the literature and proposes a theoretical framework capable of capturing the interplay between leadership formation, pedagogical systems, and international

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17 PAPAPOLYVIOU, Petros, & KENTAS, Giorgos. *Nicosia: a divided capital in Europe*. Oradea, Eurolimes, (2015) 19, 19-36.

18 STERGIOU, Andreas. *A Greece, Turkey, NATO and the Cyprus Issue 1973–1988: Enemies Allied* (1st ed.). 2024, London, Routledge.

19 NATO School Oberammergau, *Transforming Officer Education for the 21st Century*, NATO Doctrine Series, 2018.

positioning.

In military studies, strategic leadership has emerged as a distinct area of inquiry, differentiating itself from tactical or operational command through its emphasis on long-term vision, civil-military integration, and complexity management. Scholars such as Colin S. Gray and Eliot Cohen argue that strategic leaders are not confined to battlefield expertise but operate as political and institutional actors.<sup>20</sup> Gray insists on the importance of historical awareness, political literacy, and intellectual agility—qualities which cannot be cultivated solely through tactical training<sup>21</sup>. Cohen refutes the myth of apolitical generals, portraying them as deeply embedded in national policy-making and diplomatic negotiation. Anthony King's work on command in the twenty-first century and C. Charles Krulak's notion of the "strategic corporal" reinforce the idea that leadership must be cultivated at all levels, from senior generals to junior officers.<sup>22</sup>

Despite these contributions, the literature is heavily centered on major Western powers, offering little insight into smaller, geopolitically constrained states like Greece. The present study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how strategic leadership has been historically constructed in the Greek military and how it is conditioned by education, doctrine, and alliance politics.

Greek military historiography has typically focused on wars, coups, and crises, with less attention paid to the institutional processes that shape leadership. Thanos Veremis and other scholars have examined the politicization of the officer corps and its entanglement with national ideology during the 20th century.<sup>23</sup> Yet, while these works highlight outcomes of leadership, they often neglect the educational and institutional processes that produce strategic thinking. For example, the Asia Minor Campaign is often analyzed in terms of misaligned political goals and weak international support, but rarely through the lens of educational deficiencies within the officer corps. Similarly, studies of the 1974 Cyprus crisis tend

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20 GRAY, S. Colin. *Modern Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 65–68; COHEN, A. Eliot. *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, Illinois, 2003.

21 GRAY, S. Colin. *Modern Strategy*, cit. pp. 65–68.

22 KING, Anthony *Command: The Twenty-First Century General*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019; KRULAK, C. Charles. *The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War*. *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 1999, pp. 14–17

23 VEREMIS, Thanos. *The Military in Greek Politics*. Cit. pp. 97–125.

to privilege diplomatic and political analysis over institutional critiques of command and education structures. The post-1990 period, despite NATO integration and officer training reforms, remains under-researched in terms of how pedagogy affected leadership philosophy and adaptability.

International relations theory provides essential conceptual grounding for understanding how Greek strategic leadership has evolved. Realist theorists such as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt argue that state behavior is driven by survival and power-balancing imperatives in an anarchic international system.<sup>24</sup> In this light, Greek leadership is seen as a rational response to threats, particularly from Turkey. Yet realism tends to overlook how leadership formation is also a cultural, educational, and institutional process. Constructivist approaches, like those of Alexander Wendt, emphasize the role of identity, norms, and historical memory in shaping strategic outlooks.<sup>25</sup> Research by Dimitris Triantaphyllou, for instance, demonstrates how elite perceptions in Greece and Turkey are shaped by deeply rooted narratives and institutional learning.<sup>26</sup> Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, offers a compelling model for Greece's security position at the crossroads of the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, and Middle East.<sup>27</sup> RSCT highlights how regional dynamics demand flexible, context-sensitive leadership that can navigate overlapping security spheres - a quality shaped not only by doctrine but also by educational formation.

Military pedagogy remains under-theorized in both Greek and comparative contexts. In Greece, discussions around military education are mostly internal or practitioner-based, with little academic critique of curricular content or leadership models. Yaroslav Repetukha emphasizes that leadership competence must be deliberately developed through tailored pedagogical methods and institutional environments.<sup>28</sup> While there is growing awareness of the need to incorporate

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24 MEARSHEIMER, John. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Norton, 2001; WALT, Stephen. *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell University Press, 1987.

25 WENDT, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

26 TRIANTAPHYLLOU, Dimitris. Greek-Turkish relations and the perceptions of their elites. *LSE Greece@ LSE*, 2017.

27 BUZAN, Barry & WAEVER, Ole. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

28 REPETUKHA, Yaroslav. "Developing Future Military Officers' Leadership Competence in the Military Academies." *Political Science and Security Studies Journal*, 2024, 5.2: 55–

strategic thinking and ethical reasoning into military training, few studies offer empirical analysis of how this is actually done in the Greek case. Internationally, the field is somewhat more developed: Leonard Wong has argued for leadership adaptability in complex environments, while Nancy Sherman explores the psychological and moral dimensions of military education.<sup>29</sup> However, such literature is often deeply embedded in Anglo-American strategic cultures, which differ significantly from Greece's context in institutional history and threat perception. This study proposes that military pedagogy in Greece is not merely a mechanism for skills transfer but a site for strategic socialization, ideological reproduction, and cultural orientation.

Taken together, the existing literature offers fragmented yet valuable insights into Greek strategic leadership. However, it lacks an integrated model that connects education, institutional development, and international orientation. This study addresses three critical gaps: first, by conceptually integrating educational and strategic frameworks; second, by offering detailed case-specific analysis of Greece as more than a peripheral actor; and third, by treating military education as a central - not auxiliary - element of strategic capacity.

To support this interdisciplinary analysis, the study draws on three main theoretical tools. From strategic leadership theory, it draws on Gray's model of strategic imagination, King's network theory of command, and NATO's evolving leadership doctrine.<sup>30</sup> From civil-military relations, it incorporates Huntington's and Janowitz's perspectives on professional responsibility and democratic accountability. From pedagogy, it applies a critical framework inspired by Paulo Freire to assess how values and strategic cognition are embedded within military education programs. Together, these lenses help explain how Greek officers are formed not only as tactical executors but as strategic agents embedded in regional, ideological, and institutional structures.

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29 WONG, Leonard. "Developing Adaptive Leaders." *Strategic Studies Institute*, U.S. Army War College, 2004; SHERMAN, Nancy. *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of Our Soldiers*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.

30 GRAY, S. Colin. *Modern Strategy*, cit. pp. 65–68; KING, Anthony. *Command: The Twenty-First Century General*. Cit.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an interdisciplinary methodology that brings together the analytical tools of military history, international relations theory, and pedagogical studies. Its central aim is to examine how strategic military leadership has been formed and expressed in the context of modern Greek history, and how military education and international dynamics have shaped its development. The methodological framework integrates historical analysis, interpretive case studies, and document-based inquiry using both primary and secondary sources, grounded in established models of qualitative social science research.<sup>31</sup>

The interdisciplinary nature of the research reflects the complexity of the subject itself. Strategic leadership cannot be understood solely through military doctrine or biographical narratives; rather, it emerges as a composite outcome shaped by historical crises, military reforms, shifting alliances, international positioning, and the educational philosophies that define officer formation. Each of these dimensions aligns with a different academic tradition: military history, international relations, and military pedagogy. This approach allows for layered analysis that captures both structural and individual factors in leadership development. Such triangulation is essential to understanding leadership not merely as a reactive product of events but as an intellectual and institutional capacity actively cultivated across time and context.<sup>32</sup>

The methodological core of the study is historical analysis, emphasizing interpretive understanding, institutional continuity, and the evolution of strategic concepts. Rather than assessing leadership success through operational performance or promotions, the study focuses on how strategic reasoning and pedagogical formation were articulated and internalized by key military elites. This mode of analysis draws on established principles in historiography that prioritize context, causality, and the interpretation of meaning within specific institutional and ideological settings. Through examination of speeches, curricula, policy documents, and educational texts, the study traces how ideas of leadership and strategy have

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31 FLYVBJERG, Bent. *Making Social Science Matter*. Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 130–137; IGGERS, Georg G. *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*. Wesleyan University Press, 2005.

32 EVANS, Richard. *In Defense of History*, London: Granta, 2001.

shifted across major periods of Greek military history, often in direct response to external pressures or internal reconfiguration. This approach is particularly suited to the Greek case, where national identity, ideological division, and regional insecurity have long intersected with military structure and leadership discourse.

A second core methodological component is the use of historical case studies. These cases were selected for their relevance to key transitions in Greek strategic orientation, officer education, and leadership culture. Case study methodology is particularly effective in explaining complex, multivariable phenomena and has been widely used in the social sciences for theory development and context-specific analysis.<sup>33</sup> This study employs a comparative, multi-case design: the Balkan Wars (1912–13)<sup>34</sup>, the Asia Minor Campaign (1919–22)<sup>35</sup>, the Cyprus crisis (1974)<sup>36</sup>, and the post-Cold War period (1990s–present). Each case represents a distinct strategic environment and a particular institutional framework for military leadership, providing contrastive yet interrelated insights into leadership development and failure. These cases are analyzed not merely for their geopolitical outcomes but for the educational structures and institutional logics that shaped the strategic reasoning of military elites during those periods.

Primary source material was central to the research process. This includes official documents from military institutions (e.g., training curricula, internal publications, speeches), memoirs and writings of military figures, parliamentary records, and institutional histories produced by the Ministry of Defense. Institutions such as the Hellenic Army Academy, the National Defense School, and the Supreme Joint War College have produced internal and public documents that provide insight into educational aims, doctrinal orientation, and leadership values. These sources are supplemented by Greek-language secondary scholarship, including the works of Thanos Veremis, Angelos Syrigos, and Evanthis Chatzivassiliou, which offer national perspectives often missing from international lit-

33 GEORGE, Alexander and BENNETT, Andrew. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. MIT Press, 2005.

34 FRAGISTAS, Charalampos. "The Balkan Wars: Their Meaning in the History of Greece." *Balkan Studies*, 1962, 3.2: 247–256.

35 SYRIGOS, Angelos and CHATZIVASSILIOU, Evanthis, *Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: 50 ερωτήματα και απαντήσεις* [Asia Minor Catastrophe: 50 Questions and Answers], cit.

36 PAPAPOLYVIOU, Petros, & KENTAS, Giorgos. *Nicosia: a divided capital in Europe*. Cit;

erature. Comparative insights were drawn from international research on military leadership and education, including works by Leonard Wong, Richard Kohn, Anthony King, and Nancy Sherman.<sup>37</sup>

The selection of periods and figures was guided by two main criteria: historical significance and leadership transformation. Each chosen period reflects a major realignment in Greek military or strategic identity. The Balkan Wars represent a phase of tactical effectiveness and national unity, in contrast to the Asia Minor Campaign, which exposes systemic leadership failures rooted in flawed civil-military relations and inadequate strategic planning.[12] The Cyprus crisis, occurring at a pivotal moment in the Cold War, illustrates how politicized leadership, weak coordination, and outdated doctrine led to operational paralysis.[13] The post-Cold War era offers an opportunity to assess how Greece attempted to modernize its officer corps through NATO-aligned reforms in military education, while simultaneously retaining legacy elements of national ideology and institutional conservatism. Figures such as Ioannis Metaxas, Dionysios Arbouzis, and post-1990s military educators are analyzed not for their biographical distinctiveness, but for what they reveal about the institutional cultures and pedagogical logics that shaped strategic thinking in their time.[14] This structural focus allows the study to assess how institutions both produce and constrain leadership capacities.

As with all historically grounded research, the study faces limitations. Access to recent internal evaluations and classified materials is restricted, particularly in post-1990s cases. Leadership is also difficult to measure objectively, since it often involves intangible traits such as foresight, ethical orientation, and institutional legitimacy. Furthermore, retrospective evaluation of leadership quality risks imposing contemporary expectations on past actors. These challenges are addressed through methodological reflexivity and the triangulation of multiple types of sources: textual, institutional, and analytical. The study does not aim to produce definitive judgments about individual leaders but to explore how institutional ecosystems support or inhibit the development of strategic thinking. By approaching military leadership as a formed—not merely reactive—phenomenon, the study contributes to broader discussions on how leadership can be cultivated in states

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37 KING, Anthony. *The Combat Soldier: Infantry, Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*. Oxford University Press, 2013; WONG, Leonard. "Developing Adaptive Leaders." Cit; SHERMAN, Nancy. *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of Our Soldiers*. Cit.

facing regional insecurity, ideological fragmentation, and external dependency.

#### IV. THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN GREEK STRATEGIC

##### MILITARY LEADERSHIP (1821 – 1941)

The emergence of strategic military leadership in modern Greece was shaped by cycles of war, foreign influence, national aspirations, and institutional reform. From the early revolutionary model of charismatic, irregular warfare to the centralized but politically fragile leadership of the early twentieth century, the Greek military underwent repeated attempts to define, structure, and professionalize its strategic culture.

During the Greek War of Independence (1821–1830), leadership was largely personal, improvised, and shaped by kleptotic traditions. Figures such as Theodoros Kolokotronis, Georgios Karaiskakis, and Athanasios Diakos were revered not for formal training but for their ability to inspire and mobilize irregular forces rooted in local loyalties and guerrilla tactics.<sup>38</sup> While Kolokotronis had some military experience under British irregular formations in the Ionian Islands, the revolutionary command system was fragmented and suspicious of centralization. Civil wars within the movement further undermined coordination and revealed an early tension between personal charisma and institutional discipline.<sup>39</sup>

After independence, the Greek state sought to establish a national army that reflected European norms. The founding of the Hellenic Army Academy (Στρατιωτική Σχολή Ευελπίδων) in 1828 signaled the first step toward professionalizing the officer corps.<sup>40</sup> However, the early state was plagued by financial instability, factionalism, and foreign influence, particularly under Bavarian advisors during the reign of King Otto. The officer corps remained divided between foreign-trained elites and veterans of the revolution, with little consensus on doctrine. Strategic leadership was virtually absent; military thought was reactive, focused more on internal security and territorial defense than on long-term

38 DAKIN, Douglas. *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821–1833*. University of California Press, 1973, pp. 45–67; FINLAY, George. *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol. II, Blackwood & Sons, 1861, pp. 221–230.

39 CLOGG, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 42–45.

40 Hellenic Army Academy. *Ιστορικό Ευελπίδων: 1828–2020*. Athens, Ministry of Defense, 2021, pp. 13–22.



Fig. 2 *Fourth Section of the XVIIIth Resolution No. 8,377, dated December 21, 1828: On the Establishment of the Cadet Company (Founding of the Hellenic Military Academy)*”

planning.<sup>41</sup>

This absence of strategic thinking was exposed in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. Triggered by nationalist enthusiasm and the deployment of troops to Crete, the war ended in disaster for Greece, revealing deep weaknesses in training, equipment, and command coordination.<sup>42</sup> The defeat catalyzed a broader reassessment of military leadership, leading to the establishment of the Hellenic General Staff Corps in 1904 and a shift toward structured planning and officer

<sup>41</sup> KOLIOPOULOS, John. *Brigands with a Cause*, Clarendon Press, 1987, pp. 200–205; KOFOS, Evangelos. *Greece and the Eastern Question*, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1975, pp. 134–147.

42 CLOGG, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*, Cit. pp.78-80.

education.

The turning point came with the Goudi coup of 1909 and the rise of Eleftherios Venizelos. Aligning with reformist officers, Venizelos invited the French military mission to Greece, initiating a wave of modernization in doctrine, training, and organizational structure. Officers such as Ioannis Metaxas, educated in Germany, played a central role in integrating European strategic concepts into Greek military education.<sup>43</sup> The results became evident in the Balkan Wars (1912–13), where the Greek army demonstrated a rare synergy between strategic initiative, operational mobility, and political leadership. The rapid capture of Thessaloniki and the effective confrontation with Bulgarian forces marked a maturation of Greek strategic capacity - though political tensions between Venizelos and Crown Prince Constantine foreshadowed future instability.<sup>44</sup>

World War I brought these tensions to the fore. The National Schism divided the military and political elite between the royalist and Venizelist camps, paralyzing decision-making. The strategic debate over neutrality versus intervention exposed deep fractures in the conception of national interest and military alignment. Venizelos's interventionist strategy clashed with King Constantine's preference for neutrality and German sympathy. The result was a fragmented army, ideological purges, and loss of operational coherence.<sup>45</sup>

The Asia Minor Campaign (1919 - 1922) represented both the culmination of Greece's expansionist ambitions and the most devastating example of strategic failure in its modern history. Initially supported by the Allies, the campaign was plagued by overextension, logistical disorganization, and a politicized high command following the return of King Constantine. The purging of experienced officers and the appointment of loyalists undermined military cohesion.<sup>46</sup>

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43 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Ελληνικός Στρατός: Ο ρόλος του στην εξέλιξη της Νεότερης Ιστορίας της Ελλάδας*. [Hellenic Army. Its role in the development of the Modern History of Greece]. Athens, Petra Publications, 2021.

44 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Στα Σπάργανα του Εθνικού Διχασμού. Από τον εθνικό θρίαμβο στην εθνική καταστροφή*. [In the Sparganas of the National Schism. From the national triumph to the national catastrophe]. Military History in «110 Χρόνια από τους Βαλκανικούς Πολέμους» [«110 Years of the Balkan Wars»]. Collective, Athens, Govostis Publications, 2023

45 MAVROGORDATOS, Th. George. *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983

46 TSIRIGOTIS, Dionysios. *The Asia Minor Debacle: The Causes of Greece's Defeat*. *Sal-*



Fig.3 *The quay of Smyrna before the destruction (1922).*

*Source: lifo.gr*

Command decisions during the campaign - particularly under General Anastasios Papoulas - showed a striking lack of adaptability and strategic foresight. The catastrophic defeat at Dumlupınar, the burning of Smyrna, and the resulting population exchange under the Treaty of Lausanne marked not only the end of Hellenism in Asia Minor but also a profound shift in Greek strategic posture.<sup>47</sup>

Following the disaster, military leadership was reoriented toward internal stability and institutional survival. The Second Hellenic Republic faced frequent coups, ideological polarization within the officer corps, and ongoing mistrust between political elites and military leadership. The 1928 Defense Reorganization Plan attempted to modernize the General Staff and centralize command, but

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*vation and Catastrophe: The Greek-Turkish War, 1919–1922*, 2020, 111.

47 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Ελληνικός Στρατός: Ο ρόλος του στην εξέλιξη της Νεότερης Ιστορίας της Ελλάδας*. [*Hellenic Army. Its role in the development of the Modern History of Greece*]. Cit.

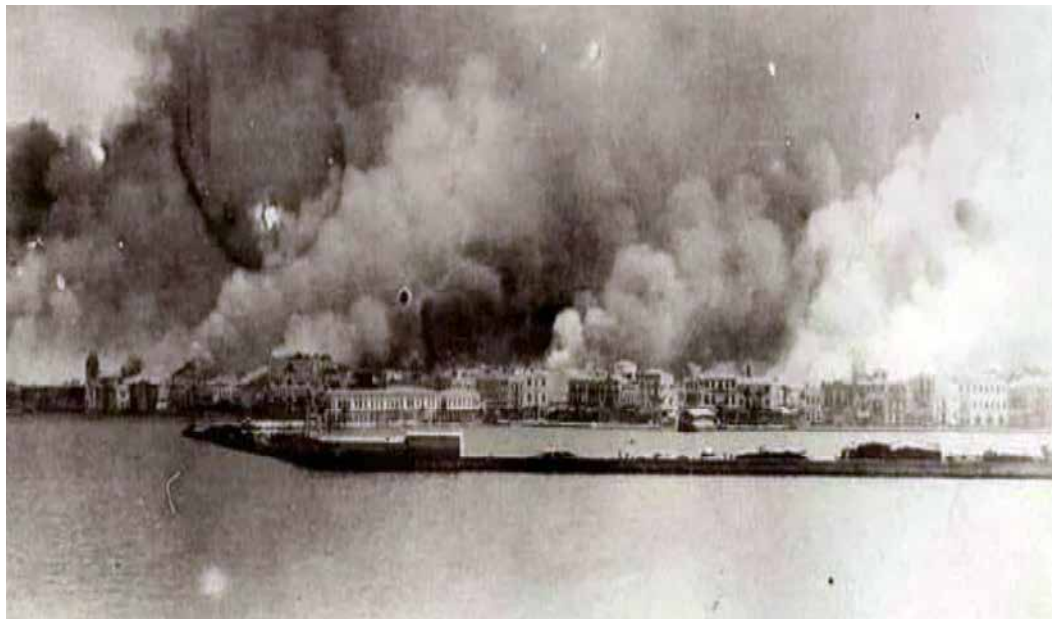


Fig. 4 *The quay of Smyrna on the day of the destruction, September 14, 1922*

*Source: lifo.gr*

without deep pedagogical reform, strategic thinking remained underdeveloped.<sup>48</sup> Officer training institutions focused on technical competence rather than broader strategic or geopolitical education. Military leadership became synonymous with internal control rather than outward-facing strategic innovation.<sup>49</sup>

The rise of Ioannis Metaxas to power in 1936 offered a paradox. An authoritarian and staunch monarchist, Metaxas introduced modernizing reforms while simultaneously consolidating political control. His German-influenced strategic thinking contributed to the planning of defensive fortifications and the successful early campaigns against Italy in 1940. However, his regime stifled open debate, rewarded loyalty over innovation, and prevented the institutionalization of critical strategic discourse.<sup>50</sup> The initial success against Mussolini's forces highlight-

48 VEREMIS, Thanos. *The Military in Greek Politics. From Independence to Democracy*, cit.

49 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. "Post-Lausanne Greece: Military Pedagogy of the Greek Army, Diplomatic Strategies, and Civil-Military Dynamics in the Interwar Period (1923 -1939).

50 CHOULIARAS, Ioannis. The importance of ideology and external factors in Greek foreign policy: the case of Ioannis Metaxas (1936 -1941). 2018.

ed the value of preparation and centralized planning, but the regime's inability to adapt or coordinate with broader alliance systems exposed the limitations of autocratic military strategy, especially during the German invasion of 1941.

By the early 1940s, Greek strategic leadership had evolved from heroic improvisation to tentative institutionalization, but the underlying tensions between political ideology, pedagogical depth, and alliance flexibility remained unresolved. The lessons of this era would reverberate throughout the Cold War, as Greece sought to rebuild its armed forces within NATO structures while confronting its own unresolved civil-military tensions.

## V. STRATEGIC MILITARY LEADERSHIP

### FROM OCCUPATION TO STRATEGIC MATURITY (1941 – PRESENT)

The Axis occupation of Greece during World War II resulted in the collapse of the regular army but also gave rise to parallel military leadership structures within the resistance. Organizations such as ELAS and EDES developed decentralized command systems suited to asymmetric warfare. These movements, despite lacking formal doctrine, demonstrated tactical adaptability, regional organization, and ideological cohesion, particularly under figures like Aris Velouchiotis. Guerrilla tactics, political commissars, and internal cadre education replaced traditional staff structures. Yet this bottom-up strategic leadership fragmented under ideological polarization, leading to a proto - civil war even before German withdrawal.<sup>51</sup>

The Greek Civil War (1946–49) that followed was a pivotal moment for military leadership. With U.S. support through the Truman Doctrine and MAAG, the National Army was rebuilt along anti-communist and pro-Western lines. Strategic leadership emphasized counterinsurgency, mobility, and terrain control, with General Alexander Papagos spearheading centralized command models. However, doctrinal innovation was minimal. The officer corps internalized Cold War ideology rather than developing long-term strategic planning capacity. This period created a rigid, professionalized leadership class, ideologically uniform

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51 MAZOWER, Mark. *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–44*, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 213–226; STAVRIANOS, L. Stavros. *The Balkans Since 1453*, New York University Press, 2000, pp. 826–829.



Fig. 5 The Emblem of the Hellenic Supreme Joint War College. The visible Ancient Greek inscription 'Αἰ τὰ ἐπιγινόμενα κρατεῖν' translates as: "Always master what comes upon you."

Source: *adispo.mil.gr*

and politically influential, shaping the military's Cold War trajectory.<sup>52</sup>

With Greece's accession to NATO in 1952, strategic leadership entered a phase of internationalization. Officers trained abroad adopted alliance doctrines, and new institutions such as the Supreme Joint War College and the National Defense School introduced joint-service education and strategic planning tools.

However, much of this was imported uncritically from NATO, lacking adaptation to Greek geostrategic particularities. Although Greece participated in alliance structures, strategic planning remained compartmentalized, and military education often prioritized loyalty and procedural competence over analytical capacity.<sup>53</sup>

The 1967 coup by mid-level officers marked the collapse of civilian oversight<sup>54</sup>.

The Junta redirected strategic leadership inward, toward ideological survival rather than external security. Military education was politicized, dissent was purged, and strategic vision was subordinated to regime paranoia. This leadership model imploded with the Cyprus crisis in 1974, where the General Staff failed to anticipate or deter Turkey's intervention. The coup in Cyprus and the subsequent invasion led to national humiliation and exposed the military's operational and

52 GEROLYMATOS, Andre. *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry*, Basic Books, 2004; TRUMAN, Harry S. "Message to Congress," March 12, 1947, National Archives.

53 DANOPOULOS, Constantine P. "Regional Security Organizations and National Interests." *Journal of Political & Military Sociology*, 1988.

54 PEDALIU, Effie G.H. "A Discordant Note: NATO and the Greek Junta." *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 2011, 22(1): 101–120.



Fig 6 *Turkish paratroopers landing in Cyprus (1974)*

*Source: efsyn.gr*

strategic incompetence.<sup>55</sup> The crisis ended the dictatorship and initiated a long process of civil-military recalibration.

Post-1974, strategic leadership entered a transitional phase. The military was gradually restructured under civilian control, while new educational reforms promoted professionalism and international engagement. Institutions such as the National Defense Council and reformed military academies redefined officer education, incorporating civil-military relations and strategic analysis. Nevertheless, strategic culture remained shaped by Cold War concerns, Turkish threat perceptions, and institutional conservatism. Leadership development still leaned toward conventional deterrence and tactical preparation rather than innovation or regional influence.

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55 FOUSKAS, Vassilis. "Reflections on the Cyprus Issue." *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 2001, 12(3): 98–127; GEROLYMATOS, Andre. "The Road to Authoritarianism." *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 35: 7–25.

The post–Cold War era catalyzed a broader transformation. The wars in the Balkans during the 1990s and emerging threats such as migration and organized crime required new strategic orientations. The officer corps, shaped by NATO norms but still recovering from the legacy of authoritarianism, was tasked with leading in multinational environments. Greece began participating in peace-keeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and later Afghanistan, exposing officers to complex multinational decision-making and interoperability requirements.<sup>56</sup> Strategic leadership was redefined to include diplomacy, interagency coordination, and regional stabilization.

By the early 2000s, institutional reforms within the Hellenic Armed Forces accelerated. Military education integrated new modules on hybrid warfare, asymmetric threats, and civil-military cooperation. The National Defense School collaborated with civilian universities to offer joint postgraduate degrees, aligning military pedagogy with broader academic standards. This pedagogical modernization aimed to produce strategic thinkers rather than procedural technicians.<sup>57</sup> Greece deepened engagement with NATO’s planning structures and began contributing to the NATO Response Force. These missions demanded officers capable of aligning national priorities with multilateral doctrines and demonstrated the need for politically literate, ethically grounded leaders.

The financial crisis of 2009 brought defense austerity but also prompted introspection. Strategic leadership shifted toward adaptive, ethically oriented frameworks. Officers were evaluated not only for tactical competence but for institutional integrity, communication skill, and civilian trust-building. Participation in EU missions (e.g., EUFOR, EUTM Mali, Operation Atalanta) further exposed Greek leaders to soft power tools and strategic cultures emphasizing legitimacy and conflict prevention.<sup>58</sup> Military exercises such as MEDUSA, INIOCHOS, and NEMESIS became practical venues for developing collaborative planning and

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56 VOSKOPOULOS, George. The Geographical and Systemic Influences on Greek Foreign Policy in the Balkans in the 1990s. *Perspectives: Review of International Affairs*, 2006, 26: 69-90.

57 PLAKOUDAS, Spyridon. “The Greek Defence Industry: From Crisis to Equilibrium.” In *The Economics of Defense Industry*, Routledge, 2023.

58 EU Military Staff. *Leadership Frameworks in EU CSDP Operations*, EEAS, 2016; European External Action Service. *Greek Contributions to CSDP Missions*, 2017.

multinational coordination skills.<sup>59</sup>

By the 2020s, Greece's strategic environment had grown more complex. Grey-zone conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean, cyberattacks, hybrid warfare, and unpredictable migration flows redefined threat perceptions. Strategic leadership now required anticipatory governance, multidomain command fluency, and civil engagement capacity. The Strategic Defense Planning Framework 2030 identified competencies such as systems thinking, mission command, and interagency crisis management as core to future leadership.<sup>60</sup>

Emerging leaders are increasingly measured by their ability to manage complexity, integrate AI and cyber tools, and operate under media scrutiny and political accountability. Female officers' inclusion in strategic roles and international postings reflects a gradual but meaningful cultural shift toward diversity and modern leadership models.

The evolution of Greek strategic leadership over two centuries—from kleptocratic valor to NATO interoperability—highlights a long struggle to reconcile national imperatives, international obligations, and institutional development. While charismatic leadership once defined Greek military identity, today's strategic leader is expected to combine operational command with ethical orientation, diplomatic skill, and educational depth. The Greek military is moving toward a hybrid model—one that incorporates the lessons of history, the demands of modern conflict, and the institutional reforms necessary for sustainable strategic leadership.

## VI. FOUNDATIONS OF MILITARY PEDAGOGY IN GREECE (1828–1974)

Military pedagogy in modern Greece was born out of an urgent state-building imperative: to professionalize command, unify doctrine, and mold officers capable of stabilizing a fragile and newly independent state<sup>61</sup>. The process began in

59 Hellenic Navy General Staff. *Multinational Exercises MEDUSA, INIOCHOS, NEMESIS*, Defense Press, 2020.

60 Ministry of National Defense. *Strategic Defense Planning Framework 2030*, Athens, 2021.

61 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Military Training, Espionage, and Counter-Espionage in the Modern History of the Greek Army (1821–1947): A Strategic Evolution in Military Pedagogy*. *Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume – III Issue-I (2025), pp.

1828 with the establishment of the Hellenic Army Academy (Στρατιωτική Σχολή Ευελπίδων), just seven years after the start of the War of Independence. The Academy's founding under Governor Ioannis Kapodistrias reflected Enlightenment ideals combined with a strong technocratic vision: Greek officers were to be not only warriors but scientific servants of the state, educated in engineering, mathematics, and fortification.

The institutional blueprint for the Academy came directly from European military schools - most notably the French *École Polytechnique* and Germanic staff colleges.<sup>62</sup> The curriculum was heavily focused on theoretical instruction, geometry, mechanics, and topographical drawing, which aligned with the 19th-century European belief that warfare could be mastered through scientific precision and rational planning. Military leadership was thus conceived as a form of technical bureaucracy, in which officers were to execute state-defined missions with competence and loyalty.

However, the Academy's function was shaped as much by foreign intervention as by Greek needs. Early instructors and administrators were often Bavarian, French, or Prussian officers seconded to the Greek state, bringing with them rigid hierarchies, autocratic command philosophies, and deeply formalistic teaching methods. This foreign presence ensured a professional baseline but also embedded a non-reflective pedagogical culture, in which questioning, improvisation, or critique of command were culturally discouraged.

The Hellenic Naval Academy (Σχολή Ναυτικών Δοκίμων), established in 1845 and formalized under the Royal Navy model, followed a somewhat different path. Drawing more inspiration from British and later Italian naval traditions, the Naval Academy emphasized seamanship, navigation, astronomy, and marine engineering. Naval pedagogy was practical and outward-looking, influenced by Greece's maritime identity and its strategic interest in projecting naval power across the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean.

The difference in pedagogical emphasis between the Army and Naval Academies was already evident by the late 19th century. Whereas the Army Academy

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58–68.

62 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Οι Σημαντικότερες Ευρωπαϊκές Εκπαιδευτικές Επιρροές στη Νεότερη Ιστορία των Ελληνικών Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων* [*The Most Important European Educational Influences in Modern History of the Greek Armed Forces*], Athens, Andy's publishers, 2022



Fig. 7 Naval Cadets in the main building of the (ΣΝΑ) 1905  
(Source: hna.gr-el-mouseio)

leaned toward bureaucratic centralism and technical rigidity, the Naval Academy fostered a more cosmopolitan, expeditionary mindset, partly due to its regular interaction with foreign navies and deployment abroad.<sup>63</sup> However, both institutions shared common weaknesses: minimal attention to leadership psychology, ethics, and political-military integration.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, military education in Greece was no longer seen solely as a pathway to technical competence but as a nationalizing force. Cadets at Evelpidon and the Naval Academy were imbued with a sense of historical mission, rooted in the ideology of the “Megali Idea” (Great Idea), which sought to unite all ethnic Greeks in one state.

Classical Greek history, Orthodox religious instruction, and mythologized accounts of the 1821 Revolution were integral parts of officer training. The goal was

63 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios, *Η Εκπαίδευση των Ελληνικών Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση μέχρι την αναβίωση των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων (1821-1896)*. (2016), [The Training of the Greek Armed Forces from the Greek Revolution until the Revival of the Olympic Games (1821-1896)], cit

to produce not only competent officers but also cultural stewards of the Greek national ethos. Instructors, often veterans of recent wars (e.g., Balkan Wars), reinforced narratives of sacrifice, destiny, and moral obligation. This function of pedagogy—indoctrination into a national-heroic worldview - persisted through various regimes and became deeply embedded in military institutional culture.

The interwar period (1919–1936) saw a return to internal fragmentation and politicization of the officer corps, much of which played out within the academies. Venizelist and Royalist factions within the military fought for control of appointments and curricula.<sup>64</sup> These divisions translated into conflicting pedagogical agendas: some emphasizing modernization and Europeanization, others reinforcing monarchic, Orthodox, and nationalist values.

With the rise of Ioannis Metaxas and the 4th of August Regime, military education became overtly ideological. A former German-trained general and authoritarian technocrat, Metaxas saw the army not only as a guarantor of internal order but as a moral engine for national rebirth.<sup>65</sup> Under his direction, the Evelpidon Academy and Naval Academy were given expanded ideological roles. Cadets attended lectures on Hellenic-Roman continuity, the dangers of parliamentarianism, and the virtues of military-led governance.

Metaxas' own writings and speeches were incorporated into officer curricula, and physical education and ceremonial discipline were elevated to doctrinal levels. The Ethniki Organosis Neolaias (EON) - Metaxas' fascist-adjacent youth movement—served as a pre-military institution, funneling ideologically primed candidates into officer academies.<sup>66</sup> The pedagogical model of this era was thus classical in content, fascist in orientation, and absolutist in tone. Officers were taught to think in civilizational binaries: order versus chaos, Hellenism versus barbarism, discipline versus democracy.

Formal military education was severely disrupted during the Axis occupation (1941–44), but informal pedagogy persisted, especially within the partisan

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64 VEREMIS, Thanos. *The Military in Greek Politics. From Independence to Democracy*, Ibid

65 CHOULIARAS, Ioannis. The importance of ideology and external factors in Greek foreign policy: the case of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941), Ibid

66 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Ελληνικός Στρατός: Ο ρόλος του στην εξέλιξη της Νεότερης Ιστορίας της Ελλάδας*. [*Hellenic Army. Its role in the development of the Modern History of Greece*], cit.

and resistance movements. ELAS, EDES, and EKKA developed their own cadre schools and regional command structures.<sup>67</sup> Training emphasized irregular warfare, sabotage, intelligence, and ideological instruction.

In ELAS, for instance, officer training was framed as partisan consciousness-raising, often held in hidden rural schools where lessons blended Marxist theory with tactical instruction. These proto-military pedagogies were localized and improvisational, but effective in mobilizing a wide volunteer base.

Despite the ideological extremes, this period demonstrated a key insight: military pedagogy could be flexible, political, and embedded in civilian environments. The contrast with the rigid authoritarian models of prewar academies was stark—and these alternative models would leave traces, especially in the postwar ideological conflicts that consumed Greek military institutions.

The post-civil war reconstruction of the armed forces coincided with Greece's entrance into NATO in 1952. This marked a fundamental turning point in military education, as Greek pedagogical frameworks became increasingly aligned with Western, particularly American, strategic concepts and training protocols.

U.S. military missions and NATO advisory groups introduced field manuals, planning frameworks, and staff education models that emphasized interoperability, technical training, and anti-communist ideological alignment. Greek officers began attending courses in the United States (e.g., Fort Leavenworth, Naval War College), and NATO-standard curriculum modules were introduced into Greek academies.

However, Greek adaptation was selective. While technical expertise and strategic vocabulary improved, the hierarchical, command-based structure of military instruction remained dominant. Cadets were still rewarded for obedience, conformity, and correct procedural execution. Socratic dialogue, critical thinking, or doctrinal challenge were rarely tolerated.

The School of National Defense (ΣΕΘΑ), founded in the 1960s to train senior officers, initially aimed to replicate Western war college models. However, under the Colonels' Junta (1967–74), it became a tool of regime indoctrination. Seminars emphasized national purity, internal threats, and traditional values.

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67 MAZOWER, Mark, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–44*, Ibid ,pp. 165–171.

The Junta-era curriculum included reading on ancient Greek military virtue, anti-communist texts, and discussions of societal degeneration under democracy. Leadership training focused not on mission command or operational innovation, but on moral fortitude and regime stability. As a result, a generation of senior officers entered the 1970s with high technical competence but minimal exposure to strategic pluralism, international law, or modern leadership philosophy.

## VII. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF GREEK MILITARY EDUCATION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Historically, Greek military education has followed a classical-technical pedagogical model that emphasizes hierarchy, repetition, and formal knowledge transmission. Mirroring traditions found in Prussian, French, and early American military institutions, this model is structured around command obedience, procedural precision, and vertical flows of information. From the mid-19th century through the post-civil war era, institutions such as the Hellenic Army Academy (ΣΣΕ), the Supreme Joint War College (ΑΔΙΣΠΟ)<sup>68</sup>, and the National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ) adopted and entrenched this approach (Gazette of the Government, 1925), producing officers known for their technical discipline, logistical proficiency, and legal-structural competence. Curricula were modular and strictly tiered, tightly overseen by senior officers with command experience, and dominated by lectures, closed-book exams, and rote learning.<sup>69</sup>

Each military academy adapted this classical model to its branch-specific needs. The Army Academy concentrated on tactical and technical skills across four years, with limited emphasis on political science, ethics, or international affairs. The Naval and Air Force Academies incorporated more exposure to technological systems and simulation-based navigation training, yet remained compartmentalized and lecture-centric.<sup>70</sup> ΑΔΙΣΠΟ, catering to field-grade officers,

68 Gazette of the Government, issue Α', no. sh. 247, art.2, Athens, 11 September 1925, p. 1921.

69 Supreme Joint War College (ΑΔΙΣΠΟ), *Οδηγός Σπουδών* [Study guide], 20th Educational Series Thessaloniki, 2022.

70 Gazette of the Government, issue Α', no. sh. 2961 Athens, 18 July 2019, pp. 35751-36026.

offered operational planning and NATO staff exercises but still relied heavily on doctrinal manuals and instructor-led analysis.<sup>71</sup> Even at ΣΕΘΑ—the apex institution for strategic education—courses in international relations and defense economics are presented primarily through lectures, with war-gaming treated as supplemental rather than integral.<sup>72</sup>

This pedagogical rigidity has generated significant cognitive and strategic gaps. Greek officer graduates lag behind NATO counterparts in areas such as systems thinking, scenario design, media engagement, political-military interfacing, and public diplomacy. These deficits are not a matter of capability but of structural inhibition; a rigid classroom hierarchy discourages inquiry, critique, or hypothesis-driven thinking.<sup>73</sup> Instructors, often lacking formal teaching training, function more as content transmitters than facilitators of analytical discourse. The replication of command structures within educational spaces suppresses student agency and critical questioning.

Nevertheless, change is underway. Since the 2010s, adaptive pedagogical trends influenced by NATO doctrine, EU defense frameworks, and reforms in American Professional Military Education (PME) have begun to reshape Greek officer training. The Ministry of Defense has introduced mission command principles, crisis simulation labs, and joint postgraduate degree funding in fields like strategic studies and defense management.<sup>74</sup> ΣΕΘΑ, in partnership with the University of Macedonia, now conducts policy-oriented strategic seminars where mixed civilian-military teams engage in applied research. ΑΔΙΣΠΟ has integrated red team/blue team exercises into its Joint Operations Module, promoting real-time operational stress analysis. These innovations, however, remain sporadic, often hinging on individual initiative rather than institutional mandate.<sup>75</sup>

A broader obstacle persists in the disconnect between military education and national security policymaking. Officers are trained to execute strategy but rarely participate in its formation. Few possess academic backgrounds in political

71 Supreme Joint War College (ΑΔΙΣΠΟ), *Οδηγός Σπουδών* [Study guide], cit.

72 Hellenic National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ), *Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών* [Curriculum]. 2023, Athens. Online at the site setha.army.gr

73 JORDAN, David, KIRAS, James D. et al., *Understanding Modern Warfare*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Ch. 11.

74 U.S. Army War College, *Strategic Leadership and Research Handbook*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: AWC Press, 2021.

75 Hellenic National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ), *Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών* [Curriculum]. Cit.

science or strategic studies, resulting in limited contributions during interagency planning or ministerial discussions. Greek parliamentary committees seldom consult military educators or utilize war college research. By contrast, systems in countries like Germany or the UK embed civil-military academic exchanges into officer training.<sup>76</sup> Without such integration, educational reform remains constrained - enhancing tactical leadership while leaving strategic discourse insulated.

The senior institutions - ΑΔΙΣΠΟ and ΣΕΘΑ - are pivotal yet uneven in their evolution. Originally staff colleges, they now address joint operations, NATO doctrine, cyber readiness, and logistics. ΣΕΘΑ's courses in crisis response and command ethics have expanded, and joint MA programs with civilian universities represent a notable development. Still, these institutions fall short in intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary scope, and civil-military collaboration. Curricula underrepresent emergent fields like artificial intelligence, information warfare, and complex ethical scenarios. Teaching remains predominantly presentational, with little cultivation of strategic creativity.

Postgraduate military education has grown through partnerships with civilian universities including the University of Macedonia, Panteion, and the University of Piraeus. Officers gain exposure to civilian academic culture, research methods, and international political theory, partially bridging the epistemic divide between military and civilian spheres. Notable programs - such as the MA in Strategic Studies (University of Macedonia & ΣΕΘΑ), the MSc in Crisis Management (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), and the Joint MA in Defense Procurement (University of Piraeus & Hellenic Navy) - introduce officers to EU policy frameworks and interagency planning environments. Yet these remain elective and accessible to a small segment of officers. Promotions still favor command performance over academic accomplishment, and a cultural divide persists, limiting full integration.

Comparative analysis highlights Greece's shortcomings and potential. The U.S. PME model emphasizes decentralized learning, strategic writing, civil-military relations, and scenario-based futures analysis, supported by capstone research projects and interministerial fellowships.<sup>77</sup> UK institutions like JSCSC

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76 KUTZ, Martin. *Innere Führung—leadership and civic education in the German armed forces*. Connections, 2003, 2.3: 109-124.

77 U.S. Army War College, *Strategic Leadership and Research Handbook*, cit.

offer accredited MAs in collaboration with civilian universities and integrate civilian scholars, journalists, and diplomats into teaching teams.<sup>78</sup> France's École de Guerre and IHEDN emphasize national-strategic alignment and interministerial education, with officers frequently transitioning into policy-making roles.<sup>79</sup> Germany embeds officer education within civilian universities, fostering long-term academic depth alongside military professionalism.<sup>80</sup> These models demonstrate varying paths toward educational relevance, adaptability, and civil-military synergy.

Greece has made technical progress - aligning with NATO educational standards, expanding language proficiency, and participating in multinational operations - but faces deeper structural challenges. A culture of strategic writing remains underdeveloped. Intellectual partnerships with civilian institutions are minimal. Promotion systems rarely assess ethical leadership, interdisciplinary agility, or diversity representation. Women and minorities are still marginal in high-level education and command preparation. Mission command exists in doctrine but not in educational practice.<sup>81</sup>

A viable proposal is the establishment of a Hellenic Strategic Leadership Institute, modeled on France's IHEDN or Germany's BAKS. This institution would integrate officer education, civil service training, and strategic planning in a unified national framework. It could offer joint civil-military seminars, research fellowships, executive courses, and structured cooperation with Parliament, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and NATO/EU bodies.<sup>82</sup>

### VIII. MILITARY LEADERSHIP AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

While classical international relations theory often conceptualizes military power as a function of material capabilities—troops, equipment, and logistical

78 JSCSC, *Defense Studies Syllabus*, Shrivenham: UK Defense Academy, 2020.

79 Ecole de Guerre, *Programmes Strategiques*, Paris: French Ministry of the Armed Forces, 2019.

80 KUTZ, Martin. *Innere Führung—leadership and civic education in the German armed forces*. Cit.

81 JORDAN, David, KIRAS, James D. et al., *Understanding Modern Warfare*, cit.

82 MAZOWER, Mark, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–44*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 213–226.

reach—in practice, military leadership functions as a distinct agent in shaping international posture. Officers are not merely instruments of state strategy, but often act as its informal diplomats, interpreters, and communicators. In alliance environments or regional crises, their role becomes particularly visible, especially in smaller states like Greece, where external alignments and geographic vulnerabilities elevate military leadership to a semi-diplomatic role.<sup>83</sup>

The Greek officer corps has evolved into a crucial intermediary between operational planning and strategic diplomacy. From participation in multinational command structures and defense attaché networks to engagement in confidence-building measures and liaison roles during joint exercises, senior Greek officers contribute directly to the architecture of regional deterrence and alliance cohesion.<sup>84</sup> Their legitimacy does not stem from electoral authority but from operational credibility and alliance fluency, grounded in what Eliot Cohen describes as the epistemic authority of commanders in strategic environments.<sup>85</sup>

This dynamic is increasingly formalized through institutional structures like NATO liaison offices, Ministry of Defense diplomatic channels, and multilateral strategic planning bodies. In deterrence theory terms, officers become vital transmitters of state intention—whether through posture, public statements, or symbolic exercises. Greek examples include the INIOCHOS and MEDUSA drills, where military timing is closely coordinated with diplomatic signaling.<sup>86</sup> In contexts like the Eastern Mediterranean, where Greek-Turkish tensions require careful signaling, statements by Chiefs of General Staff or deliberate media briefings by retired officers serve as tools of deterrence communication.

Leadership credibility thus becomes a core variable in strategic signaling. A professional and measured officer class enhances deterrent postures; an unpredictable or overly politicized one undermines them. These functions often occur

83 COHEN, Eliot A. *Supreme command: Soldiers, statesmen and leadership in wartime*. Simon and Schuster, 2012, pp. 33-49; JOHNSTON, Alastair I. *Thinking About Strategic Culture*, International Security, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1995), p.35.

84 Hellenic National Defense General Staff (ΓΕΕΘΑ), *Annual Strategic Readiness Report*, Athens: MoD, 2022.

85 COHEN, Eliot A. *Supreme command: Soldiers, statesmen and leadership in wartime*. Cit.

86 TSILIKAS, Stergios. *Greek military strategy: the doctrine of deterrence and its implications on Greek-Turkish relations*. 2001. PhD Thesis; NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence, *Strategic Communication in Southern Europe*, Riga, 2021.

alongside, but not always in coordination with, official diplomatic channels, creating a complex but symbiotic communication ecosystem between ministries, embassies, and general staffs<sup>87</sup>.

At the multilateral level, Greek officers actively shape NATO and EU policy from within strategic planning bodies such as the NATO Military Committee, the EU Military Committee, and Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) structures. These are not symbolic appointments. Officers must balance alliance priorities with national red lines, often navigating internal dilemmas between compliance and autonomy. For example, during the Kosovo War of 1999, Greek military representatives faced significant domestic opposition while remaining operationally engaged - a classic case of military diplomacy straddling normative tension.<sup>88</sup> More recently, Greek participation in Black Sea initiatives has been shaped by senior officers' ability to interpret alliance demands into doctrinal adaptation without compromising core deterrent principles toward Turkey.<sup>89</sup>

Strategic culture further mediates this dynamic. Drawing on Johnston's framework, Greek strategic culture is defined by perceptions of encirclement, maritime prioritization, alliance dependency, and emphasis on deterrence rather than projection.<sup>90</sup> Officers act not just as policy implementers but as narrative carriers of this culture. Their speeches, plans, and doctrinal references reflect and reinforce these cultural logics. In doing so, they shape both internal national identity and external alliance perceptions.

This leads to the central role of military pedagogy - not merely as a means of tactical training, but as a mechanism of strategic identity formation. As constructivist theory posits, the international system is not just material but ideational, made of shared norms and identities.<sup>91</sup> Military education, then, becomes a key

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87 Hellenic National Defense General Staff (ΓΕΕΘΑ), *Annual Strategic Readiness Report*, cit.

88 ARMAKOLAS, Ioannis. *Greece: Kosovo's Most Engaged Non-Recogniser*. The Politics of Recognition and Engagement: EU Member State Relations with Kosovo. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019. 123-146.

89 Hellenic National Defense General Staff (ΓΕΕΘΑ), *Signing of the «Military Cooperation Program» between Greece – Egypt for the Year 2024*, online at the site [geetha.mil.gr](http://geetha.mil.gr)

90 JOHNSTON, Alastair I. *Thinking About Strategic Culture*, cit, p.45; TSILIKAS, Stergios. *Greek military strategy: the doctrine of deterrence and its implications on Greek-Turkish relations*. Cit.

91 WENDT, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*, cit.

site of identity transmission. Greek war colleges, such as the National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ) and the Supreme Joint War College (ΑΔΙΣΠΟ), have incorporated international relations into their curricula—covering realism, liberalism, hybrid threats, and alliance architecture.<sup>92</sup> However, most of this instruction remains descriptive, offering factual knowledge of alliances without encouraging critical engagement or reflexivity.<sup>93</sup>

The problem is not the absence of IR content, but its superficial integration. Without being embedded in simulations, ethical debates, or planning exercises, international relations becomes abstract rather than operational. Strategic thinking is thus taught, but not lived—limiting the emergence of officers capable of functioning fully in the “strategic diplomatic” role.

Military academies themselves serve as instruments of defense diplomacy. Bilateral officer exchanges, participation in NATO’s DEEP program, and sending cadets to institutions like École de Guerre or Shrivenham are all part of a wider soft power strategy. These exchanges foster alliance cohesion by exposing Greek officers to foreign strategic cultures and norms.<sup>94</sup> Hosting foreign instructors and cadets in Greece further enhances the country’s defense diplomacy profile, turning institutions like ΣΕΘΑ into symbolic platforms of strategic influence.

However, the educational transformation remains incomplete. Despite the growing diplomatic roles played by officers - such as defense attachés or NATO liaisons - these assignments are still treated as secondary or honorary. Training in public diplomacy, strategic messaging, and international law is offered but not institutionalized as a core professional track. The best-prepared officers often develop diplomatic fluency on the job rather than through structured training programs.<sup>95</sup>

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92 Hellenic National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ) *Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών* [Curriculum]. 2023, Athens. Online at the site [setha.army.gr](http://setha.army.gr)

93 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Military Training, Espionage, and Counter-Espionage in the Modern History of the Greek Army (1821–1947): A Strategic Evolution in Military Pedagogy*. *Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume – III Issue-I (2025), pp. 58–68.

94 KUTZ, Martin. *Innere Führung—leadership and civic education in the German armed forces*. Cit.

95 NATO Education and Training Command, *Officer Education Standardization Guidelines*, Brussels: NATO HQ, 2020.

Case studies underscore both potential and gap. A defense attaché in Cairo (2017–2021) played a decisive role in cementing trilateral naval cooperation between Greece, Egypt, and Cyprus, not just as a formal representative but as a policy innovator and cultural broker.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, a Greek brigadier general in KFOR HQ during the 2020 rotation helped de-escalate border tensions in Kosovo through direct engagement with EULEX and local actors—acting as a conflict manager more than a traditional commander.<sup>97</sup> These roles are increasingly common but not yet supported by institutional pathways.

Efforts at institutionalization exist. ΣΕΘΑ and ΑΔΙΣΠΟ have introduced modules in strategic communication, international law, and leadership in multinational environments.<sup>98</sup> However, these remain elective or inconsistently emphasized. Language training is often inadequate, and career advancement still prioritizes command performance over strategic or diplomatic skills. In contrast, systems like the UK's Shrivenham, France's École de Guerre, and Germany's Führung-sakademie integrate dual-track careers, requiring policy writing and civilian-academic interaction for promotion.<sup>99</sup>

To bridge this gap, a strategic-diplomatic officer model is needed. This would involve early identification of suitable candidates, formal two-year rotational training (in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), dual certification (military and civilian), and integration into career promotion tracks. Such a model would institutionalize what is now informal and ensure that Greece develops officers capable of both commanding and negotiating in complex international arenas.<sup>100</sup>

The challenge is not merely pedagogical but cultural. A traditional command ethos may resist redefining diplomacy as core military competence. Nevertheless, modern warfare increasingly demands officers fluent in both hard power and stra-

96 Hellenic National Defense General Staff (ΓΕΕΘΑ), *Signing of the «Military Cooperation Program» between Greece – Egypt for the Year 2024*, cit.

97 ARMAKOLAS, Ioannis. *Greece: Kosovo's Most Engaged Non-Recogniser*. Cit.

98 Hellenic National Defense School (ΣΕΘΑ), *Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών* [Curriculum]. Cit.

99 COHEN, Eliot A. *Supreme command: Soldiers, statesmen and leadership in wartime*, cit; KUTZ, Martin. *Innere Führung—leadership and civic education in the German armed forces*. Cit.

100 NATO Education and Training Command, *Officer Education Standardization Guidelines*, cit.

tegic narrative. Building the “strategic diplomatic officer” is not about softening the military - it is about aligning it with the demands of 21st-century security environments.

## IX. CASE STUDIES IN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Strategic leadership in the Greek military context has evolved across radically different political systems, doctrinal foundations, and international alignments. From the hyper-centralized model of the Metaxas era, through the doctrinal collapse of the 1974 Cyprus crisis, to the alliance-driven leadership of the post-2000 generation, the trajectory of Greek military leadership offers a revealing lens into the interplay between pedagogy, institutional culture, and international engagement. Three case studies illuminate this evolution: Ioannis Metaxas as a strategic educator and doctrinal planner; the 1974 Cyprus crisis as a case of failed civil-military leadership; and the emergence of alliance-integrated officers in the post - Cold War NATO context.

Ioannis Metaxas stands as a unique figure whose career fused military professionalism, authoritarian rule, and doctrinal authorship<sup>101</sup>. Trained at the Kriegsakademie in Berlin (1899–1903), Metaxas absorbed the epistemic and institutional principles of Prussian military rationalism: centralized planning, logistical integration, and systemic national defense.<sup>102</sup> His early staff planning contributions during the Balkan Wars demonstrated not only technical competence but also a conceptual shift toward viewing military power as an instrument of total national mobilization. In his 1925 “Memorandum on National Defense,” he proposed a doctrine of defensive fortification, delay-based attrition, and civil infrastructure integration - a vision that would materialize in the Metaxas Line, modeled after the Maginot Line in France.<sup>103</sup>

More than a field commander, Metaxas was a pedagogical reformer.<sup>104</sup> As

101 PLOUMIDIS, Spyridon, *Nationalism and authoritarianism in interwar Greece (1922–1940)*, cit.

102 CLOGG, Richard A *Concise History of Greece*, cit, pp. 142–144.

103 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Power and Politics: The Greek Army in the Modern History of Greece (1821–1949)*. *Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume – III Issue-I (2015), pp.210-219.

104 KOFAS, Jon, V. *Authoritarianism in Greece: The Metaxas Regime*. 1983, East European Monographs.

Prime Minister (1936–1941), he redesigned Greece's military academies around nationalist ideology, anti-parliamentarianism, and operational engineering. He oversaw curriculum centralization, imposed ideological instruction, and modeled preparatory schools on the German cadet system<sup>105</sup>. His own lectures at ΣΕΘΑ reinforced the fusion of moral, civilizational, and strategic instruction<sup>106</sup>. This model, while coherent, discouraged critical thinking and reinforced doctrinal rigidity that echoed across decades. His civil-military leadership during the Greco-Italian war in 1940—particularly in covert mobilization, media control, and staff coordination—demonstrated the efficiency of integrated command, even as it warned against authoritarian overreach.<sup>107</sup>

In stark contrast, the 1974 Cyprus crisis reveals the dangers of personalized, ideologized command. Initiated by a coup orchestrated from Athens by the Ioannidis junta, the crisis culminated in a Turkish invasion and the occupation of 37% of the island.<sup>108</sup> Strategic misjudgments abounded: no viable contingency planning existed, maritime surveillance failed, and mobilization efforts were chaotic. The general staff relied on outdated or ideologically driven plans like “Σχέδιο Αφροδίτη,” reflecting a military culture shaped more by political loyalty than strategic literacy.<sup>109</sup> Education under the junta emphasized anti-communist indoctrination over strategic realism, and war colleges had been stripped of scenario planning, NATO doctrine, or IR analysis.<sup>110</sup>

Leadership fragmentation further paralyzed decision-making. Competing authorities between Athens, the National Guard in Cyprus, and confused field commanders led to institutional breakdown. Civilian oversight had been eliminated,

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105 GENERAL STATE ARCHIVES (ΓΑΚ). *National Youth Organization Archives* (EON), files 13,16, 26,27

106 CHOULIARAS, Ioannis. The importance of ideology and external factors in Greek foreign policy: the case of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941), cit.

107 CLOGG, Richard *A Concise History of Greece*, cit, p. 146

108 Hellenic Parliament, *Φάκελος Κύπρου [Cyprus File], Volume A: The findings of the Committee of Inquiry of the Hellenic Parliament and the Parliamentary Committee of the House of Representatives*, Hellenic Parliament Publications Athens-Lefkosia 2018.

109 SAKKAS, John. “The Greek Military Regime and the Cyprus Question” In *The Greek Military Dictatorship: Revisiting a Troubled Past, 1967–1974* edited by Othon Anastasakis and Katerina Lagos, 320-339. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2021.

110 BRITZ, Malena. Keeping a Low Profile: Greek Strategic Culture and International Military. *European Participation in International Operations: The Role of Strategic Culture*, 2016, 77.

foreign ministries were excluded, and alliances ignored. Turkey invoked its rights under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee,<sup>111</sup> and the Greek leadership had no credible response mechanism.<sup>112</sup> The ultimate failure was not tactical but institutional and pedagogical: a generation of officers trained under authoritarian systems lacked the reflexes, analysis, and civil-military fluency required for adaptive leadership<sup>113</sup>.

Reform followed swiftly in the post-junta period. New PME directives mandated IR content, joint operations theory, and integration with NATO's Defense Education Enhancement Programme. A reconstitution of civilian authority over military planning occurred through mechanisms like the National Defense Council (ΣΑΜ), and a new officer generation trained abroad or in collaboration with Greek universities emerged with exposure to pluralistic security thinking.<sup>114</sup>

The post-2000 generation of Greek strategic leadership represents a marked turn toward alliance-integrated professionalism. Officers educated under NATO-led curricula or joint postgraduate programs now operate fluently in multi-lateral environments. In Kosovo (KFOR), Greek officers led logistics, managed CIMIC units, and coordinated with EULEX, often acting as mediators and strategic communicators.<sup>115</sup> In Afghanistan (ISAF), they engaged in COIN doctrine, multinational planning, and intelligence-sharing. In Operation Atalanta, naval officers coordinated anti-piracy efforts within EU legal frameworks and participated in media briefings.<sup>116</sup>

These experiences shaped a new leadership prototype: alliance-literate, diplomatically fluent, and operationally flexible. Greek officers today brief ambas-

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111 Hellenic Republic- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Treaty of Guarantee*, 16 August 1960, art. I- V

112 CHATZIVASSILIOU, Evanthis. *The Cyprus Question, 1878-1960: The Constitutional Aspect*. University of Minnesota: Minnesota, Mediterranean and East European Monographs, no. 11. (2002).

113 ANASTASAKIS, Othon Evangelos. *Authoritarianism in 20th Century Greece: Ideology and Education under the Dictatorships of 1936 and 1967*. University of London, London School of Economics (United Kingdom), 1992.

114 SAKKAS, John. "The Greek Military Regime and the Cyprus Question". Cit.

115 CAPARINI, Marina. Security sector reform and NATO and EU enlargement. *SIPRI year-book*, 2003, 237-260.

116 KACAŁA, Tomasz. The role of military leadership in strategic communication (Strat-Com). *Journal of Positive Management*, 2016, 7.1: 32-44.

sadors, manage NATO planning teams, and represent national interests in hybrid missions. However, challenges remain. Command culture retains elements of hierarchy that resist horizontal interoperability. Language proficiency gaps at mid-ranks persist. PME research output remains minimal, with Greek war colleges rarely producing peer-reviewed strategic studies. Moreover, promotion incentives do not always reward alliance service, discouraging participation in critical deployments.<sup>117</sup>

This evolving profile of Greek strategic leadership - meticulously doctrinal in the Metaxas era, fatally politicized in 1974, and increasingly multilateral post-2000 - demonstrates how military education and strategic culture co-produce leadership outcomes. While the modern officer corps has made significant strides in interoperability and diplomatic engagement, its institutional frameworks must continue adapting to reward strategic adaptability, foster pedagogical innovation, and bridge the persistent gap between national doctrine and alliance realities.

#### X. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The historical arc of Greek strategic leadership reveals distinct, recurring paradigms - from the heroic-nationalist commanders of the 19th century to the alliance-integrated strategic officers of the post-2000 NATO era. Each paradigm is shaped by external threat environments, regime type, and institutional maturity, but also by epistemological shifts in how leadership is understood and cultivated. Leadership, in the Greek case, has been both a reflection of military doctrine and a product of cultural identity.

In the early 19th century, figures such as Kolokotronis and Makriyannis exemplified a heroic-personalist leadership model, grounded in oral tradition, tactical improvisation, and mythologized nationalism. This form of command arose from the irregular, decentralized character of the revolutionary armed forces and reflected the values of the nascent Greek state.<sup>118</sup> Officer formation was informal, and decisions were often personality-driven rather than institutionally coordinated.

The founding of the Evelpidon Military Academy in 1828 and the later incor-

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117 BRITZ, Malena. Keeping a Low Profile: Greek Strategic Culture and International Military. Cit.

118 DAKIN, Douglas, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, cit;

poration of Prussian and French staff models marked a shift toward a technocratic leadership paradigm. Leaders such as Ioannis Metaxas and Alexandros Papagos embodied this transformation. Educated abroad, they introduced strategic planning, centralized doctrine, and infrastructural military logic to the Greek armed forces.<sup>119</sup> This professionalization was essential in building a modern military structure but also introduced hierarchical rigidity and a top-down decision-making culture.

However, the authoritarian turn during the junta period (1967–1974) interrupted this trajectory. Military leadership was co-opted by ideological loyalty and political allegiance. Doctrinal continuity collapsed, officer education was hollowed out, and operational planning was subordinated to regime goals. The Cyprus Crisis in 1974 exposed the consequences of this distortion: strategic miscalculation, absence of command coherence, and total civil-military disjunction.<sup>120</sup>

Post-2000, Greece entered a new era of military leadership. Officers were increasingly trained in multinational environments, required to operate within NATO and EU frameworks, and expected to demonstrate diplomatic, ethical, and communication competencies alongside operational command. Leadership became modular and adaptive, reflecting the complexity of contemporary threat environments.<sup>121</sup>

Despite these transformations, several patterns of continuity persist. First, strategic decision-making remains highly centralized. From Metaxas to the modern General Staff, Greek leadership has favored top-down authority structures, even within NATO-interoperable framework.<sup>122</sup> Second, doctrinal innovation often depends on dominant personalities rather than institutional momentum, making reform episodic rather than structural. Third, ambivalence toward political oversight continues to characterize the Greek officer corps. While respect

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119 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Power and Politics: The Greek Army in the Modern History of Greece (1821–1949)*, cit.

120 KOLIPOULOS S. John S. and VEREMIS M. Thanos M., *Modern Greece: A History since 1821*, cit. pp. 31-33

121 TSIKKIROU, Andreas, PASHIARDIS, Petros. *Strategic planning and education: the case of Cyprus*. International Journal of Educational Management, (2002). Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 6-17.

122 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *Power and Politics: The Greek Army in the Modern History of Greece (1821–1949)*, cit. pp.210-219.

for democratic governance is well established, there remains an undercurrent of skepticism toward civilian competence, especially in volatile periods. Lastly, Greek military leadership is consistently framed within a national-historical narrative—one that draws from Hellenism, Orthodoxy, and collective trauma such as the Asia Minor Catastrophe or the Cyprus debacle.<sup>123</sup>

These cultural anchors, while vital for cohesion, can also obstruct pragmatic risk assessment and international alignment. Leadership shaped primarily by mythology risks strategic rigidity.

Crucially, moments of national trauma have functioned as critical junctures in leadership recalibration. The Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922 triggered reforms in staff planning and civil-military relations.<sup>124</sup> The Cyprus Crisis forced the re-introduction of strategic doctrine, the reassertion of civilian control, and alignment with NATO planning structures. The Balkan operations of the 1990s and subsequent NATO integration catalyzed a shift toward networked, interoperable leadership styles.

The linchpin in all these transitions is pedagogy. Military education in Greece -its content, structure, and institutional values - has been both a mirror of broader strategic culture and a driver of leadership formation. Initially modeled on technical-instructional traditions, Greek PME emphasized engineering, artillery, and field fortifications, often neglecting diplomacy, legal frameworks, or alliance coordination.<sup>125</sup> Metaxas introduced strategic content, but with ideological rigidity. Papagos institutionalized joint staff training and scenario planning but remained closed to civilian input. The junta-era officer corps was educated in discipline rather than decision-making, loyalty rather than ethics.

Modern reforms - particularly those influenced by NATO's DEEP program - have sought to reverse this trajectory. New curricula at institutions like ΑΔΙΣΠΟ

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123 KOLIOPOULOS S. John S. and VEREMIS M. Thanos M., *Modern Greece: A History since 1821*, cit.

124 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios. *The Greek army and the 1922 refugee crisis: Military intervention in the aftermath of the Asia minor catastrophe*. International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2025, 14(03), 914-927.

125 KYRIAKIDIS, Marios, *Η Εκπαίδευση των Ελληνικών Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση μέχρι την αναβίωση των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων (1821-1896)*. (2016), [*The Training of the Greek Armed Forces from the Greek Revolution until the Revival of the Olympic Games (1821-1896)*]. cit

and ΣΕΘΑ incorporate interdisciplinary teaching, case studies, MA-level thesis work, and civil-military simulations.<sup>126</sup> The result has been the emergence of a leadership model that values reflexivity, interoperability, and strategic communication.

Yet gaps persist. PME remains insufficiently connected with civilian academia. Few officers publish in peer-reviewed journals. Wargaming and simulation remain inconsistently applied. Officer selection for advanced training is not systematically tied to cognitive potential. Above all, Greece still lacks a formal doctrine of strategic pedagogy - a unified framework outlining the intellectual and ethical standards expected of modern officers.

National identity remains a powerful force in Greek military culture. Heroic archetypes, Orthodox symbolism, and civilizational narratives shape officer worldview, curriculum content, and ceremonial practice. While these reinforce cohesion and morale, they may obscure pluralistic and legally grounded understandings of security. Officers shaped by heroic-nationalist identity may show reluctance toward alliance compromise or civilian oversight.

This identity-strategy nexus also affects communication. Greek strategic messaging often draws on emotionally and historically charged language, contrasting with the rules-based, neutral rhetoric preferred in NATO and EU circles. This creates a dissonance that highlights the need for narrative calibration and cross-cultural communication training within PME.

Ultimately, effective modern strategic leadership requires a paradigm shift. Officers must be equipped not only with doctrinal and technical knowledge but also with the conceptual, intercultural, and ethical tools needed to lead in multi-lateral, contested environments. The case studies of Metaxas, the 1974 collapse, and the post-2000 NATO officers demonstrate that leadership quality is not merely personal - it is institutional, pedagogical, and cultural.

To this end, a national doctrine of strategic pedagogy must be formulated—one that defines the competencies expected of senior officers in five domains:

1. Conceptual Fluency – Understanding war as a political, legal, and moral phenomenon.

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<sup>126</sup> TSIAKKIROS, Andreas, PASHIARDIS, Petros. *Strategic planning and education: the case of Cyprus*. Cit.

2. Interoperability – Aligning Greek doctrine with NATO, EU, and UN standards.
3. Pedagogical Reflexivity – Seeing education as a continuous, critical function of leadership.
4. Strategic Communication – Managing domestic legitimacy and alliance narrative coherence.
5. Civil-Military Integration – Collaborating effectively with political leadership and society.

Moreover, leadership formation must move beyond the military silo. It must become a cross-ministerial policy concern, involving the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, academic institutions, and parliamentary bodies. Greece stands at the nexus of multiple strategic challenges - Eastern Mediterranean dynamics, Balkan fragility, cyber-hybrid threats - and needs an officer corps capable of responding not only with force, but with judgment, strategy, and diplomacy.

## XI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study has investigated the evolution of strategic military leadership in Greece through a multidisciplinary perspective that integrates military history, pedagogical structures, and international alignment. It has demonstrated that leadership is not the product of individual aptitude alone, nor can it be reduced to operational success or command charisma. Rather, it emerges over time as a constructed phenomenon - shaped and conditioned by the educational systems, institutional cultures, and ideological frameworks within which military officers are trained and socialized. From the revolutionary commanders of the 19th century to the NATO-integrated professionals of the 21st, the Greek case offers a longitudinal field of analysis, illustrating how leadership is formed, transformed, and occasionally constrained through deliberate pedagogical and institutional processes.

Three overarching conclusions are drawn. First, leadership in the Greek military is pedagogically produced. The transition from heroic, personality-driven models of the past to contemporary frameworks of professional interoperability shows that strategic competence is not innate but cultivated. Critical thinking,

doctrinal diversity, and interdisciplinary formation are not supplementary elements of officer education - they constitute its very foundation. Second, pedagogy is directly tied to strategic performance. Historical cases demonstrate that coherent and open-ended educational systems are associated with adaptive leadership outcomes, while dogmatic, ideologically narrow, or procedurally rigid curricula correlate with strategic miscalculation and operational failure. Education, therefore, is not a preparatory mechanism external to strategy; it is constitutive of the strategic capacity of the state itself. Third, national identity operates both as an enabling force and a limiting condition. While the invocation of Hellenic continuity, Orthodox values, and historical martyrdom provides cohesion and moral framing, it can also obscure the analytical clarity required in complex operational environments. Officers must be trained to engage critically with these symbolic resources - not to abandon them, but to prevent them from becoming substitutes for rational judgment.

On the basis of these findings, the study advances original contributions across several academic fields. In military history, it recasts leadership as an institutional and educational outcome rather than a biographical or tactical phenomenon. In international relations, it links officer education to alliance credibility and multi-lateral performance, treating professional military education as a strategic instrument of national posture. In civil-military studies, it redefines the officer as an ethical, communicative, and politically situated actor operating within democratic governance structures. Most significantly, in the domain of military pedagogy, it introduces a theory of strategic pedagogy that positions education as an active site of doctrine formation, institutional legitimacy, and leadership generation. This reframing elevates pedagogy from a technical function to a strategic domain in its own right.

The research also yields practical implications for institutional reform. It suggests that Greece must articulate a formal doctrine of strategic military education - one that defines the competencies required for contemporary command, incorporates interdisciplinary methodologies, and reflects the ethical and intercultural realities of modern defense environments. Such a doctrine would anchor education at the core of national defense planning, integrating cognitive formation into operational readiness. Moreover, it argues for the establishment of stable and reciprocal partnerships between military and civilian academic institutions, enabling co-produced curricula, shared faculty, and research collaboration. This

would not only diversify epistemological inputs but also foster critical reflection and institutional transparency. In addition, the study highlights the necessity of embedding strategic communication and ethical literacy into officer education. Leaders must be prepared to operate not only in conventional arenas of force but also in narrative, legal, and symbolic domains, particularly under the conditions of hybrid warfare and alliance dynamics. Finally, it calls for a realignment of promotion and evaluation criteria, incentivizing intellectual flexibility, interagency competence, multilateral engagement, and contributions to strategic discourse. These changes would redirect professional incentives toward the development of adaptive, ethically grounded, and strategically literate leadership profiles.

In conclusion, the figure of the Greek strategic officer must be reimagined. No longer defined by battlefield legacy or bureaucratic hierarchy, the contemporary officer is expected to lead across domains - military, diplomatic, legal, and communicative - within both national and international frameworks. In this context, leadership can no longer be reactive or accidental. It must be purposefully formed through coherent educational systems, democratic accountability, and strategic foresight. Military education must be treated not as an administrative process, but as strategy in practice - the intellectual infrastructure through which national defense capabilities are imagined, prepared, and enacted. If Greece is to remain relevant and credible in an increasingly complex security environment, then investment in pedagogical modernization, institutional integration, and leadership cultivation must become an explicit national priority.

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