

# The Professed Culture of the Business Organizations in the Defense Industry in Bulgaria. What Does it Look Like? And do they Need it?

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## Summary

*Purpose* – This article aims to outline and analyze the role, structure and dominating content of professed organizational culture among the companies in the defense industry in Bulgaria as conscious and the official expression of their leadership intentions within the contemporary business environment, uniquely justifying the existence of each entity.

*Design/methodology/approach* – A qualitative study is conducted, based on a literature review of academic publications in the sphere of professed organizational culture. Furthermore, the websites of the target companies were carefully examined in order to outline the practical approach to presenting the unique official culture of defense business organizations.

*Findings* – An elaborate set of cultural attributes to be found on the second level in Edgar Schein's model of organizational culture is identified. Based on literature review, the intersection between official corporate culture expressions and defense

sector is outlined. Important nuances in the development of Bulgarian defense, technological and industrial base are described, encompassing the transition period to market economy and democratic political system. A survey of professed culture attributes is conducted among the members of Bulgarian defense, technological and industrial base. It is concluded that these companies prefer disclosing their official cultures in a very succinct way to utilizing the potential power and impact of the most popular firm documents in this field as mission and vision or relying on small number of their simpler building elements. Recommendations to senior managers of the Bulgarian defense companies regarding smart and intensive use of official culture elements are given.

*Research limitations/implications* – The financial data for the surveyed companies is not accessible.

*Originality/value* – A snapshot of preferred professed culture attributes among the members of Bulgarian defense, technological and industrial base is composed, implying their leadership strategic intentions. The second level in Edgar Schein's model of

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organizational culture is populated with a set of cultural attributes.

**Keywords:** organizational culture, firm culture, corporate culture, professed culture, defense sector

**JEL:** L20, M14, H56.

## INTRODUCTION

The serious cultural clashes nowadays and the recurrent international conflicts come as a consequence of numerous failures to solve, absolve or resolve seamlessly complex social and political issues and achieve consensus on how to balance the needs of various stakeholders in diverse situations, initiatives, processes and phenomena in the long-term by governments and quasi-state organizations (Malley, 2018; Council on Foreign Relations, 2019; Sen Nag, 2018). That is why these clashes and conflicts continuously disclose their realizations at different cultural levels (global, regional, national, ethnic, professional, organizational, etc.). Furthermore, globalization, international trade, information technology, increasing competitiveness, turbulence in business environment, climatic changes, war for talent and management fads contribute to continuously satisfying the necessity of business (or functioning) model renewal for existing organizations and incessant quest for modern ways of collaboration among entities not only in the business sphere, but also in the non-government sector and state-owned enterprises, for example, in the defense sector. The active realizations of the aforementioned external and internal challenges for business organizations and their stakeholders come into being as important and recurring issues for managers to deal with from the moment they adequately identify them and assess their potential impact on organizational existence and future development. On the one hand, new answers to fundamental issues in the

sphere of strategic management are required to be provided by senior managers of defense contractors, as follows (Schein, Schein, 2017; Wezeman, Fleurant, Kuimova, Tian, Wezeman, 2018; European Defense Agency, 2018; Defense industry, 2019):

- Issues, related to justifying the reason of organizational existence, i.e. (a) to protect the interest and values of a single nation, a group of nations, to uphold Euro-Atlantic or other values, or (b) to generate profit for stockholders, adopting all kinds of political unrests, potential and ongoing war conflicts all over the world as market opportunities.
- Issues, related to balancing the interests of different stakeholders, i.e. the extent of conforming undertaken business activities to decisions, restrictions and recommendations of international quasi-state organizations and national regulatory agencies.
- Issues, related to redefining the extent of reliance on defense production as a driver of innovations, economic growth and an ultimate source of increase for national and regional competitiveness levels.

On the other hand, the complex interaction among the aforementioned factors generates important preconditions for (see Nakata, 2009; Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank, Ulrich, 2012; Armstrong, 2012):

- The observed increasing fluidity in the nature of culture, driven by crossing continental, national and regional borders, co-mingling, hybridizing, morphing and clashing among the numerous and diverse manifestations of its attributes along the continuum "integration – collision".
- The emergence of important playgrounds for cultural encounters or even clashes such as media, migrations,

telecommunications, international trade, information technology, supranational organizations, small or medium-sized companies, trying to internationalize their business activities, the realizations of any types of public-private partnerships, and unfortunately terrorism.

- The increased implementation of human resource management practices, oriented to the potential dissolution of organizational borders through initiating numerous forms of employment, interaction and engagement to concrete personnel categories (for example permanently full-time hired employees, permanent part-time, fixed-term, on-call work, leased, distant employees) or to groups of specialists outside the company (e.g. potential employees, employees of company constituencies, irrespective of their physical work locations).

That is why the current article focuses on outlining and analyzing the role and dominating content of professed firm culture among the companies in the defense industry in Bulgaria as conscious and formal expression of their leadership intentions in the contemporary business environment, uniquely justifying the existence of each entity. The achievement of the aforementioned aim is based on the fulfillment of the following tasks:

- Exploring the intersections between culture and defense business.
- Performing an in-depth study at the level of professed culture in business organizations.
- Tracing the development of the Bulgarian defense sector during the transition period.
- Empirically surveying the professed culture attributes within the Bulgarian defense, technological and industrial base.

## 1. EXPOSING CULTURAL REVERBERATIONS IN THE DEFENSE BUSINESS

The organizations, belonging to the defense sector, traditionally function without being paid too much attention by the majority of respective stakeholders, and their working activities may be characterized by deliberate adherence to silence and secretiveness up to the emergence of a specific (key marker) event that has the potential to bring the respective defense organization (a contractor, an agency, etc.) to media breaking news in relation with identified operation/ business (export sales) irregularities and scandals, allowed production process crises, and inevitable massive staff cuts or recurring personnel shortages, hampering the growth in this industry. But most of the time the measures taken to solve, resolve or absolve the respective organizational issues - not only by managers, but also by politicians and administrators, remain covert, because of the sensitive nature of this industry. This is the reason why a thorough literature review of the relationship between culture and organizations in the defense industry is needed, based on the contents of a list of pre-selected academic databases (see 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d, 2017e, 2017f). In fact, the existence of an oblique relationship between culture and the defense sector may be traced back to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Schein, 1988; Dyer Jr., 1983; Schein, 1983; Van Maanen, Barley, 1983; Van Maanen, Barley, 1982; Van Maanen, Schein, 1977; Schein, 1963). The last is expressed by predominantly mentioning the Office of Naval Research (Organizational effectiveness group, Naval research psychological sciences division, Resident representative at MIT) as a controlling office and/or monitoring agency and military organizations as one of the provided numerous examples in

regard with presented critical analysis of important cultural frameworks. Traditionally the respective countries, represented by their national defense institutions include in their organizational settings the necessary production facilities, supplying them with equipment and inventories for the accomplishment of their regular functioning and planned operations. The succession of global and regional economic and other crises (the energy crisis from the beginning of the 1970s, the disintegration of the socialist block in the 1990s, the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA, etc.) provoked a continuous pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency in the management of military activities, achieved through means such as privatization and outsourcing of secondary processes.

That is why *military culture* seems to be the basic construct to be explored in disclosing the potential relationship between culture and the defense sector. According to a useful definition military culture “represents the ethos and professional attributes, both in terms of experience and intellectual study, that contribute to a common core understanding of the nature of war within military organizations” (Murray, 1999). The aforementioned construct is intended to be differentiated not only at group, organizational and professional levels (Buckingham, 1999; Murray, 2003; Nuppenau, 1993), but also at national level, i.e. German, American, Italian, Russian, etc. (Adamsky, 2010; Murray, 1999) and international (NATO) level (DeViney, Buckley, 2012). Military culture is widely accepted as an “overarching label for the military’s personality, way of thinking, or values”, but its etymological study, forms of expression and methods or techniques to change it still do not attract sufficient interest by researchers (Gerras, Wong, Allen, 2008). This fact explains the approach, applied by Snider (1999) who adapts Edgar Schein’s

original definition of organizational culture for the specific context of military culture (Schein, Schein, 2017), i.e. “the deep structure of organizations, rooted in the prevailing assumptions, norms, values, customs, and traditions which, collectively, over time, have created shared individual expectations among the members. Culture includes both attitudes and behavior about what is right, what is good, and what is important among the members”.

*Leadership efforts in deliberate changing the dominating traditional military culture in the USA may be also identified*, utilizing the aforementioned crises as key marker events, requiring the solution of pending core activities issues, including the business related ones. The inevitable change initiatives in the military processes are planned to be realized while taking account of any arising cultural obstacles to transformational leadership (Combs, 2007). For example president Bush proclaimed new desirable characteristics of military culture as „new thinking, innovation, and experimentation“ that should reflect USA defense external adaptation to the influences of environmental factors as rapidly changing technology and an increasingly changing enemy (Bush, 2001). In his turn the Secretary of defense Rumsfeld (2002) logically supported the aforementioned statement and even contributed new coveted characteristics of military culture such as (Rhoads, 2005; Rumsfeld, 2002):

- entrepreneurial thinking, marked by demonstrating proactivity; adhering to venture capitalist behavior; orientation to anticipation, dissuasion and deterrence of (potential) threats.
- tolerance to an acceptable level of failure across the military in order to ensure the adoption of innovative and flexible approaches to organizational issues and challenges.

Driessanck (2003) even goes further by formulating concrete military beliefs and values, oriented to embedding innovativeness in this professional sphere, as follows: building external sensitiveness; relying on rapid short-term strategic planning; adhering to flexibility and diversity; transforming personnel members into better, faster learners; developing rich network of relationships; designing organizational vision, mission, and values.

*An extreme opposite position to the current state of military culture* is presented by Watson (2006) who considers the opinions of USA government officials, declaring the end of the existence for the separate and unique military culture due to its blending with contractors and interagency workers or civilians. *A milder support to the stance of some convergence between military culture and business culture is substantiated by Tinoco and Arnaud (2013)* who indicate the intensive cultural transference in the process of realizing the necessary business interactions between DoD<sup>1</sup> and contracted business organizations from the defence industry as a main reason for blurring the organizational boundaries between government and the private sector. The researchers emphasize the higher impact of military culture, spreading out some of its characteristics from DoD to other untraditional organizational settings, i.e. the world of business. The strength of military culture is explained by the existence of one complex characteristic – “the sense of duty”, described in four perspectives (Tinoco and Arnaud, 2013):

- a set of values like integrity, subordination, unbending obedience, fervent loyalty, duty, selflessness and strict discipline (Trainor, 2000),
- a “set of normative self-understandings”, deeply held by personnel members,

directing their formulation of professional identity, code of conduct, and social worth (Snider 1999),

- an integral and the innermost component of the military culture, containing cultural attributes as honor and commitment to duty, unconditional service and allegiance to the nation, achievement of the greater good to the sacrifice of self, and unqualified authority to those in command (Breslin, 2000; Riccio et al., 2004), and
- a set of attitudes and behaviors for personnel members, defining what is considered right, good, and important (Breslin, 2000).

Furthermore, Tinoco and Arnaud (2013) outline *key nuances of military culture* by means of applying the seven dimensions of organizational culture profile (OCP), developed by O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991), as follows:

- Traditionally military culture is characterized by a low tolerance for uncertainty, risk taking and innovation. Recent appeals for changing the organizational behavior in the opposite direction are detected (innovation dimension).
- Reductions in perceptions of stability and predictability are ascertained, because of government spending fluctuations and continuously changing military assignments (stability dimension).
- Traditionally, it is widely accepted that the needs of society and country exceed individual rights, but recently the military culture is characterized by higher level of tolerance towards individuals (respect for people dimension).
- Strong orientation towards achievements and results (result/outcome orientation dimension).



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- Obligatory unit cohesion and teamwork in the most difficult circumstances (team orientation dimension)
- The use of specific machines and equipment requires serious employees' orientation to detail and precision (attention to detail dimension).
- Aggressiveness is considered to be an essential behavioral response to "management of violence" (aggressiveness dimension).

Moreover, Tinoco and Arnaud (2013) state that the preservation of life and society is not represented in the bundle of cultural attributes, identified through the use of OCP dimensions, describing military culture.

By reviewing official USA army organizational documents Redmond et al. (2015) disclose *important aspects of military workplace culture, i.e. the professed culture*, providing cultural overview of diverse military professional groups (table 1).

**Table 1.** Cultural overview of different military professional groups

SERVICE MEMBERS	MISSION	CORE VALUES
<i>Soldiers</i>	Fight and win our Nation's war by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders	Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage
<i>Airmen</i>	Fly, fight, and win . . . in air, space, and cyberspace	Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do
<i>Sailors</i>	Maintain, train and equip combat ready Naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas	Honor, courage, and commitment
<i>Marines</i>	Train, organize, and equip Marines for offensive amphibious employment and as a force in readiness	Honor, courage, and commitment
<i>Coast Guardsmen</i>	Safeguard the Nation's maritime interests	Honor, respect, and devotion to duty

**Source:** Redmond, Wilcox, Campbell, Kim, Finney, Barr, Hassan (2015).

*Army culture* is another almost synonymously used construct in this field (Ault, 2003; Winslow, 2000) that is concisely defined by Ault (2003) as "the collective education, training and experiences that make up the mindset of active duty army leaders and subordinates". It is also considered closely related to organizational (social) innovation, but deliberately pursued through certain means as establishment of new organizations, implementations of (new) business practices ("doctrine, training, and winning the nation's wars") and adopting new management paradigms and appropriate organizational behavior (Carpenter, 2006).

*The lens of observed reluctance to production conversion, demonstrated by senior managers from defense companies in the USA, is applied as an efficient means of outlining key nuances of the construct "Defense Company Culture".* In this way important differences between dominating organizational culture characteristics of defense contractors and traditional business organizations are revealed (U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1992), based on their great potential to hamper the emergence of pursued synergies from combining defense and commercial business in a single entity (see table 2).

In his turn Schneider (1999) labels defense manufacturing companies as “control cultures” while attributing certain common cultural characteristics to them, i.e. domination of highly detached and impersonal decision-making processes, highly prizing objectivity, expression of emotions, subjectivity, and ‘soft’ concepts is considered as deeply problematic, highly valuing empiricism and the systematic examination of externally generated facts, keenly appreciating certain values as order, predictability and stability.

*The snapshot illustrating the efforts that companies have to exercise in order to establish and maintain sustainable business collaborations with the contemporary military, adds a useful new nuance in the disclosure of the relationship “organizational culture – military culture”, expressed by a set of seven principles for doing business with the military (Apgar IV, Keane, 2004), as follows:*

- As a DoD supplier a business organization should occupy a leading role in a continuous interaction process with the client, i.e. identifying and interpreting in business terms the client’s necessities, and proposing appropriate ways of deliveries (“Kick-start transformation”).
- Considering the existence of strong

culture (“military’s ethos”) within military professional group, retirees included – due to observed employee adherence to military organizations, togetherness in working and living, efficient teamwork in combat environments (“See through soldiers’ eyes”).

- Demonstrating patience in developing a solid relationship between a business organization and the military by building trust, maintaining openness, and becoming a reliable partner by putting customers first, sharing necessary knowledge and capabilities, solving problems with innovation (“Prove you are a partner”).
- As a DoD supplier a business organization should become familiar with its organizational structure (units, levels) of purchasing authority, seeking contacts with higher ranks when innovative products or deals are negotiated (“Look up, down, and across”).
- Becoming aware of the nature and specific challenges faced by different military clients, forming the bases of their needs and necessities (“Know the difference”).

**Table 2.** *Cultural characteristics, outlining differences between defense contractors and business organizations*

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS	DEFENSE CONTRACTORS	BUSINESS ORGANIZATION
1. Different attitudes to establishment of production processes	1.1.1. Heavy reliance on low-volume production of highly specialized and expensive equipment. 1.1.2. Product design emphasizes technical performance 1.1.3. Observed imbalance of the stakeholder interests, i.e. with a main emphasis on meeting DoD requirements 1.1.4. Producing under the conditions of longer production cycles 1.1.5. Strictly complying with the rigid, detailed specifications and standards throughout procurement, imposed by DoD which hampers technological progress	1.2.1. Deliberate orientation to combining reliability and affordable cost with high-volume manufacture in commercial product management 1.2.2. Adopting shorter production cycles for delivered commodities 1.2.3. Balancing the interests of all stakeholders 1.2.4. The construction of some technologies and applications may seem unattractive to them because of the unreasonably higher cost price

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS	DEFENSE CONTRACTORS	BUSINESS ORGANIZATION
2. Existence of diverse management practices	2.1.1. Accepting detailed government supervision 2.1.2. Complying with DoD reporting requirements and undergoing extensive reviews and audits in addition to traditional environmental, health and safety, and fair labor regulations 2.1.3. Incurring large overhead costs (hiring personnel, accepting inspections, scheduling audits, etc.) 2.1.4. Abstaining from marketing and distribution efforts	2.2.1. Abiding only to environmental, health and safety, and fair labor regulations 2.2.2. No administrative interactions with DoD 2.2.3. A heavy reliance on organizational marketing and distribution activities for selling the manufactured products and services

Source: U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment (1992).

- As a DoD supplier a business organization should comply with specific laws and regulations, i.e. avoid conflicts of interest, continuously clarifying its supportive role, adapting its information and control systems to customer's requirements, developing readiness for audits and public scrutiny, etc. ("Embrace life in the fishbowl").
  - Becoming familiar with the nature and specific needs of diverse military customers and further customizing your proposals to them. Strict adherence to official military etiquette is considered obligatory.
- Furthermore, Apgar IV and Keane (2004) differentiate traditional versus modern military culture by comparing useful cultural attributes, outlining the undertaken military transformation at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (table 3). The deliberate avoidance of distortions in transmitting information upward through management levels of Defense Intelligence Agency after the 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States of America is used as a key core activities related issue for initiating a culture shift for the organization whose culture may be characterized as a military one, moving it "away from its control-based environment toward becoming a knowledge-based one" (Wolfberg, Dixon, 2011).

**Table 3.** Attributes of traditional versus modern military culture

CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	TRADITIONAL MILITARY CULTURE	MODERN MILITARY CULTURE
<i>The applied model</i>	Government monopoly on every aspect of national security.	A more businesslike model in which DoD's warfighting capabilities are supported through outsourcing and business alliances for numerous noncombat functions.
<i>The main aim of the military</i>	Fighting predictable threats (armies of countries)	It can fight unpredictable threats (terrorism, disasters, etc.) while sustaining the infrastructure needed to support and train forces
<i>Dominating attitude to people</i>	New people may be easily attracted	People are no longer in unlimited supply
<i>The role of information technology</i>	Supportive	It covers the spectrum from networked systems to laptops
<i>Preferred organizational structures</i>	Multi-level organizational structures; maintaining high volume of supplies (inventories)	Force structures and support organizations are becoming flatter and leaner



CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	TRADITIONAL MILITARY CULTURE	MODERN MILITARY CULTURE
<i>Hired personnel in non-combat role</i>	Military personnel	Civilians
<i>Attitude to military functions with corporate equivalents</i>	Held inside the military organizational settings for high security, quality and reliability reasons	Potential candidates for outsourcing and privatization
<i>Attention to speed and flexibility</i>	Little attention: orientation to heavy customization, high-cost, inflexible contracts	Great attention: orientation to market standards, cost savings, efficiencies and contractual flexibility

Source: Apgar IV, Keane (2004).

Security culture represents another facet in the relationship between culture and organizations in the defense industry, disclosing the ways of „thinking and acting in regard to threats and dangers to organizational interests“ of both military entities and business ones (Poudin, 2019). Roer (2015, pp. 12-13) uses three other cultural forms to explain the meaning of the aforementioned term as „ideas, customs and social behaviours“, stretching its specific realizations on group, national and societal level. There also may be observed industry specific interpretations of security culture as the nuclear security culture and information security culture. The first one matters to organizations, operating with nuclear and other radioactive materials (nuclear facilities, healthcare institutions and businesses). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) defines the nuclear security culture as “the assemblage of characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of individuals, organizations and institutions which serves as a means to support and enhance nuclear security” (IAEA, 2008, p. 2). The information security culture is defined “as values and assumptions which are presented in the security behaviors exhibited by users of information and communications technology within the organization” (Da Veiga, Eloff, 2010). Its desired state of being is presented by a basic cultural form as “good security-related human behavior” embedded

by means of teaching (and learning of) specific “knowledge, artifacts, values, and assumptions” (AlHogail, 2015, p. 567) in order to mitigate risks, resulting from information and communications technology use.

The performed etymological study reveals diverse stances of different stakeholders in the defense sphere (government, military, business organizations, quasi-state organizations, etc.) to the cultural phenomenon impact on their independent and collaborative activities, emphasizing the existence of numerous unresolved issues, sharp or recurrent contradictions, lack of distinctness, some processes in the state of becoming and others in the state of fading away, but not entirely.

## 2. AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE LEVEL OF PROFESSED CULTURE IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

The depth perspective in studying organizational culture issues in diverse and complex (business or business-related) environments seems to have been widely used by a great number of scientists for the achievement of their specific research aims (see Dimitrov, 2013a, 2013b, 2012a, 2012b). But the level of professed culture in business organizations is not dwelled on thoroughly in most of these theoretical frameworks and empirical instruments related to them.

This scientific gap is identified and partially addressed by Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov (2018) and Dimitrov, Geshkov (2018) who prudently rely on Edgar Schein's contributions in the organizational culture analysis

(Schein, Schein, 2017; Schein, 2010, 2004, 1992, 1985), i.e. adopting his definition of organizational culture and applying his model of organizational culture levels (see table 4).

**Table 4.** *Edgar Schein's basic contributions to the analysis of organizational culture*

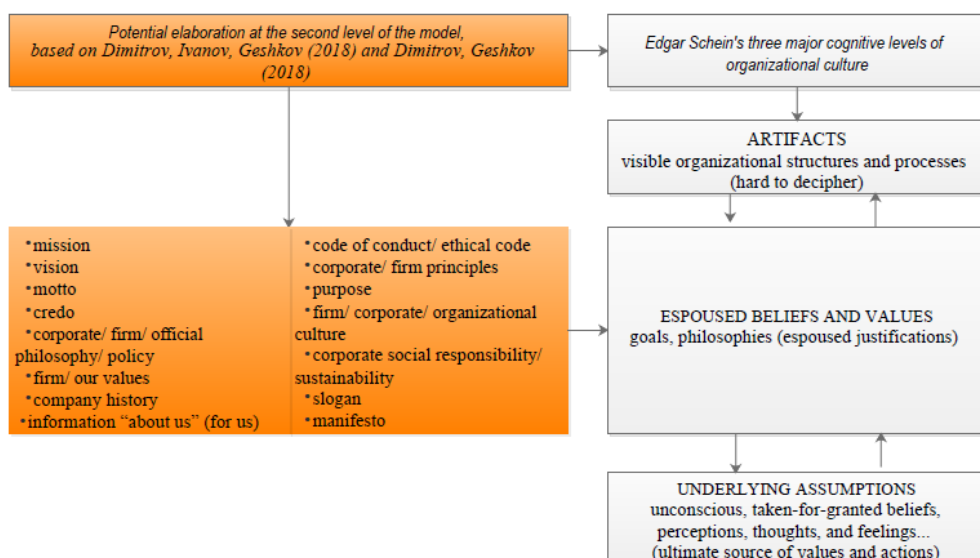
CONTRIBUTIONS	DESCRIPTION
1. Definition of organizational culture	"a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."
2. Model of organizational culture levels	2.1. artifacts: visible organizational structures and processes 2.2. Espoused beliefs and values: goals, philosophies (espoused justifications) 2.3. Underlying assumptions: unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings

**Source:** Schein, Schein (2017); Schein (2010, 2004, 1992, 1985).

In this way by means of an in-depth literature review and solid empirical survey of 660 business organizations that operate in Bulgaria and belong to diverse sectors of the economy (both local and foreign owned companies), Dimitrov, Ivanov and Geshkov (2018) succeed in filling with additional

specific and tangible content the so called second cultural layer "espoused beliefs and values", thus elaborating a bit the analytical instrument, proposed by MIT Emeritus professor (see Schein, Schein, 2017; Schein, 2010, 2004) (see figure 1).

**Figure 1.** *The essence of professed company culture and its insertion into Edgar Schein's model of organizational culture levels*



In this way the scientists ground their proposed definition of “professed organizational culture” as a set of official firm documents used to communicate the professed culture of a target entity as a coherent, comparatively stable, but amorphous whole of multi-faceted and interrelated norms, accepting civilization statute in numerous forms (e.g. the aforementioned official company documents) – mission, vision, motto, credo, corporate/firm/official philosophy/policy, firm/our values, company history, information “about us”, code of conduct/ethical code, corporate/firm principles, purpose, firm/corporate/organizational culture, corporate social responsibility/sustainability, slogan and manifesto. The chosen items from the set of the aforementioned company documents, frequently disclosed on the Internet, may contain the term “strategy”, characterized by five specific features (Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov, 2018):

- Being a part of the corporate vision or a stand-alone component of the unique culture of a particular business organization that is proclaimed when even the vision is not formally defined, but nevertheless its components are presented on the relevant website.
- Embedding in itself: (a) the logic that must be followed steadily to achieve organizational goals with high probability; (b) the basic approach to achieving the company’s mission; (c) distinctive competence for the company; and (d) a competitive advantage held or pursued.
- Summarizing only unique basic characteristics, directions and sustainable basic rules to justify the choice and realization of the strategic moves undertaken by senior management. The strategy can successfully integrate key perspectives, belonging to various schools of strategy perception (design)

in order to ensure the lasting success of the business organization.

- Containing only information that does not represent a business secret, but on the contrary it has been intentionally proclaimed on the Internet (i.e. the public domain of the entity) in order to stimulate the constituencies to potential realization of mutually beneficial collaboration with the target company.
- Justifying its possible implementation at two levels within the business organization, i.e. the corporate level or the strategic business unit level.

The simultaneous initiation of the aforementioned three constructs (i.e. organizational culture, professed firm culture, strategy) secures the needed discipline in thinking and actions, regarding the performed research. The last situation represents an important prerequisite for efficient consideration of the specific necessities of separate business entities from at least three perspectives – cultural, strategic and a communication one, which enriches the performed analysis.

The proposed array of company cultural attributes to occupy the level of espoused values and beliefs may be further classified into three groups, based on their popularity in scientific and professional publications, among senior managers and other important stakeholders, as follows:

- The formation of the first group results from the fact that the scientific and professional education literature (articles, conference proceedings, dissertations and textbooks) and the company practices disclose that greater attention among researchers and senior managers is paid to specific information, related to “mission”, “vision” and “firm/our values” (Van Nimwegen, Bollen, Hassink, Thijssen, 2008;

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Campbell, Shrives, Bohmbach-Saager, 2001; Leuthesser, Kohi, 1997; Campbell, 1995; Collins, Porras, 2002; Joachim, 2010; Leggat, Holmes, 2015; Campbell, 1994; Klemm, Sanderson, Luffman, 1991; Schermerhorn, 2012; Daft, 2016; Zlatev, 1999). Because of the greater etymological complexity observed in relation to the aforementioned items from this group, these are about to be analyzed deeper in order to map the terrain, outline any useful differences, thus (re-)(ab-)(dis-)solving any potential issues or disagreements around perceiving and applying them in business organizations.

- The second group of items from this array is characterized by a narrower

diffusion in the scientific and professional education literature and a limited proliferation in company practices, in some cases even restricted to a single publication or one real world example – i.e. company “motto”, “credo”, “corporate/firm/official philosophy/policy”, “corporate/firm principles”, “slogan”, “purpose” and “manifesto” (see Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov, 2018). Since a great extent of unanimity exists among the constituencies in relation to the dominating embedded meaning in these constructs, these would be succinctly described in the current survey (see table 5).

**Table 5.** *The second group of official company documents, disclosing a target proclaimed organizational culture*

Item	Description
<i>Motto</i>	A succinct expression by means of a phrase or sentence that discloses a belief or an ideal, in what way a company describes itself in how the senior managers feel they should do business (***, 2008).
<i>Credo</i>	Overexposed example for credo by Johnson & Johnson (***, 2019a).
<i>Corporate/ firm/ official philosophy/ policy</i>	This professed organizational culture document is described by presenting a list of four topics to be discussed (Paunov, 1995): (a) the essence of the desired relationships between the company and its constituencies, (b) formulated purpose with respect to growth and profitability, (c) design of key corporate policies in certain functional spheres in business organizations and (d) declaration of basic firm-level values.
<i>Corporate/ firm principles</i>	Generally accepted doctrine that guides the thinking and everyday entrepreneurial activities of managers in business organizations. (Donnelly, Gibson, Ivancevich, 1987)
<i>Slogan</i>	A catch phrase or small group of words that are combined in a special way to identify a product or company. (***, 2019b)
<i>Purpose</i>	It is the basic function of the organization, organizational unit or position in the implemented organizational design and/or directs the efforts of the people, working in the company. (Zlatev, 1999, pp167-172)
<i>Manifesto</i>	An official company document, characterized by stated deep emotional principles, captured core values, truthfulness, linking business life to personal life, inclusiveness and differentiation in the competitive arena. (Bell, 2015)

- The last group of items consists in cultural attributes, almost neglected in the scientific and professional education literature. But the last are widely applied

by the surveyed companies that is ascertained by means of the performed empirical study (Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov, 2018), i.e. “company history”,

“information about us... (for us...)” and (key characteristics of) “firm/corporate/organizational culture”, “corporate social responsibility/sustainability” and “code of conduct/ethical code”. This is the

reason why each of these professed firm culture attributes needs acquiring its own definition, based on the research results, generated by Dimitrov, Ivanov and Geshkov (2018) (see table 6).

**Table 6.** *The third group of official company documents, disclosing a target proclaimed organizational culture*

Item	Description
<i>Company history</i>	It includes a summarized information of several paragraphs, disclosing key marker events from an organization's life stages that may be presented even graphically - on an axis and marked by specific time units with certain elucidations.
<i>Information about us... (for us...)</i>	A general company-related information, semantically grouped under this summarizing label, describing a mix of activities, main products and related services, performed (provided) by target business organization.
<i>(Key characteristics of) firm/corporate/organizational culture</i>	Succinct describing senior management aspirations of how things should be done in the respective company. The items from the list should be carefully selected that is not often the case.
<i>Corporate social responsibility/sustainability</i>	Detailed, deliberate and dignified disclosure of company initiatives undertaken in the sphere of corporate social responsibility and sustainability orientation. In many cases the differences between the two constructs are not discerned.
<i>Code of conduct/ethical code</i>	A written rulebook of about desired typical behaviors of company employees in the process of performing the needed business-related interactions.

**Source:** Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov (2018).

A clear definition of company mission is formulated by Pearce (1982, the first page) who determines it as “a broadly defined but enduring statement of purpose that distinguishes a business from other firms of its type and identifies the scope of its operations in product or market terms”. The concreteness here is provided further by the introduction of five interconnected components for the mission construct, i.e. product or service, market and technology; company goals (in terms of survival, growth and profitability); company philosophy; company self-concept; and public image. But depending on its morphing structure, changing nature and specific stances to its creation by diverse constituencies, the written statement of company mission seems to resemble a set of tough and ambiguous activities, provided the existence of differences in a great array

of aspects, even the applied types and numbers of the aforementioned components, forming an interval with a lowest limit of 3 and highest limit of 9 components (see Bart, Baetz, 1998; David, 1989). Other important aspects of potential differences that might be observed in the generated company missions may come into being due to: (a) degree of inclusion for diverse stakeholders in mission statement content (Campbell, Shrives, Bohmbach-Saager, 2001), (b) basic reasons for its creation (Bart, Tabone, 1998), (c) orientation to process approach (Cochran, David, Gibson, 2008), (d) adoption of problem approach to mission statement consideration (Radtke, 1998), (e) the simultaneous use of several criteria to design a mission statement of a target company (i.e. incorporating special characteristics; revealing special attitudes to key constituencies; proclaiming the underlying



reasons for organizational survival and successful development; leading participation by senior management; a thorough analysis of key factors; language specification by means of key adjectives) (see Zlatev, 1999).

A useful definition for the second most popular construct in the sphere of professed firm culture, i.e. the company vision – is proposed by Lipton (1996), based on an in-depth empirical research. It reads that „a vision must focus on the future and serve as a concrete foundation for the organization... It does not fluctuate from year to year but serves as an enduring promise. A successful vision paints a vivid picture of the organization and, though future-based, is in the present tense, as if it were being realized now. It illustrates what the organization will do in the face of ambiguity and surprises. A vision must give people the feeling that their lives and work are intertwined and moving toward recognizable, legitimate goals“ (Lipton, 1996, p.85). But the attitude to company vision in reality is characterized by great diversity due to: (a) researchers' preferences to unique structuring of the construct by means of choosing and justifying the use of target components by Lipton (1996) – three components: mission, strategy and culture, and by Collins and Porras (2002, 1996) – two components: core ideology (core values and core purpose) and envisioned future, gaining delineation through formulating of a big hairy audacious goal and generating its vivid description, (b) the accepted attitude to the dominance, embedded nuances of meaning and semantical overlapping or orientation to the future of vision over mission and vice versa (Lipton, 1996; Zlatev, 1999; Taiwo, Lawal, Agwu, 2016; Bowen, 2018).

Concerning “firm/our values” the order in the jungle of business-related human values is adequately set out by Milton Rokeach (1973) by providing (Rokeach, 1973; Zlatev, 1999):

(a) a clear definition of a basic management term for values, defined as “enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence”, (b) adopting the system approach in structuring the array of existing and professed values, (c) useful categorizations of labor-related values not only by the unit of analysis (the working individual or the organization as a whole), but also by inherently applying the management by objectives, thus differentiating between instrumental values – the means to attain certain end-state of existence (i.e. the price an achiever has to pay for the result), and terminal values – the target end-states of existence.

But observed practices in the surveyed companies disclose that predominant part of senior managers do not discriminate different types of values and even mix them up with “corporate/firm principles” (Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov, 2018). This is the reason why a great diversity in approaches to formulating missions, visions and values are identified in the contemporary companies, making the impression of managers demonstrating confusion, ignorance and strong disengagement in the first step in the strategic management from the important business activities that should be performed by the entity.

The performed outline of important cultural reverberations in defense business by reviewing and critically analyzing a number of appropriate scientific publications in this field and presented circumstantial structuring of the professed culture level in business organizations that was accomplished in these two sections from the current article, ensures the base needed for exploring this ambiguous phenomenon of professed culture existence in defense companies – first theoretically,

based on the already accomplished literature review, and second, based on an empirical survey of the web-sites, associated with Bulgarian defense companies. As far as the

theoretical survey is considered, it may be stated that the aforementioned subsphere seems to be insufficiently investigated by researchers'community (see table 7).

**Table 7.** *The relationship between defense sector and professed firm culture, identified by the performed literature review*

Publications, exploring cultural issues in defense sector	Mentioned professed firm culture attribute
Buckingham (1999)	Mission as a task to perform
Combs (2007)	1. Mission – in terms of an operation that is assigned by a higher headquarters 2. (Shared, motivational) vision
Carpenter (2006)	1. Vision of Department of defense, USA; strategic or long-term vision; 2. Missions in terms of operations, assigned by higher headquarters
Driessanck (2003)	Organizational (long-term) vision, mission and values
Grant (2014)	1. "Creating a vision of the future" (adhocracy culture), p.26 2. Business's strategic vision – p.32 3. Security mission of information users in organizations – p.10 4. Values, p.3
Murray (1999)	1. Mission (is performed) in terms of an operation that is assigned by a higher headquarters 2. (Joint) vision
Murray (2003)	1. (Tactical, combat, trivial) missions in terms of an operation that is assigned by a higher headquarters, p.2, 5, 13. 2. Fundamental mission of the army, p.8. 3. Organizational mission and values, p.15.
Nuppenau (1993)	1. Mission, values and guiding principles for the organization, p.21 2. Founder's vision, p.22
Redmond et al. (2015)	Missions and core values of diverse military professional groups
Tinoco, Arnaud (2013)	1. Company motto: "We Never Forget Who We Are Working For", Lockheed Martin (2012) 2. (Core) mission – in terms of an operation that is assigned by a higher headquarters; or internal structure and required resources 3. Mission – as a component, explaining the term sense of duty for the military, p.39 4. Code of conduct
Watson (2006)	Military's mission and culture, p. 27 2. (Domestic) missions - in terms of operations, assigned by a higher headquarters, p.7, 9
Winslow (2000)	(Espoused) values of the army

That is why only few cultural attributes of professed culture (i.e. mission, vision, values, motto and code of conduct) are peripherally mentioned without being etymologically explained or empirically surveyed in the reviewed scientific literature. In some cases the construct of „mission“ is applied with a

different shade of meaning, typical only for the defense sector. In other cases the same construct is used to explain other specific attributes of military culture and defense business culture in general (i.e. a sense of duty or code of conduct). Furthermore, since many of the production facilities, supplying the

armies still belong to respective governmental bodies (i.e. defense ministries), numerous authors do not make a difference between military culture and defense business culture. Finally, the arising contradictory issue of potential two-way cultural transference between the world of business and the military sphere additionally complicates the context in terms of increased orientation to democratic governance and market economy by more countries, undertaken privatization and restructuring initiatives in national defense sectors to increase their efficiency, effectiveness, agility, and responsiveness, coping with the urgent challenge to keep peace all over the world and even mitigating the influence of terrorism.

### **3. NUANCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BULGARIAN DEFENSE, TECHNOLOGICAL AND INDUSTRIAL BASE (BDTIB)**

In Bulgaria during the 1990s the need for transforming the existing socio-economic system slowly but surely became clear for everyone. The economic transformation as an absolute necessity was the only chance for the country to exit the permanent crises, arising after the end of the socialist period in 1989. The chosen way of national economy transformation was a liberal market economy, enacted by privatization and structural reforms that were implemented effectively but not efficiently. The contemporary development course of Bulgarian economy was predetermined by the lack of holistic vision and strategy of the transition measures design and implementation. During the transition period Bulgarian defense industry was also dramatically affected by change of the ownership and transformed to some extent. But senior managers in these companies and governmental bodies still confront various issues, hampering the successful

development of local BDTIB that sometimes divert their attention from the strategic task of outlining the horizon ahead this important industrial sector for the Bulgarian economy, because it has a chance to become again an engine for the whole industrial business development in the country, especially against the background of the integration processes and defense cooperation across Europe (Mihaylova, 2018).

An important terminological clarification is needed. In this paper the term "Defense Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB)"<sup>2</sup> is used predominantly. The unprejudiced reader has to be aware that DTIB is a more complex and comprehensive term than the classical examples like Military Industrial Complex (MIC) and Defense industry etc. DTIB may include all the industries whose products and services are at disposal not only for defense needs, but mainly for security ones. The DTIB appearance in the theory and the practice is a result of the enormous transformations in the defense industries, started at the end of 1980s, and accelerated sharply in the 1990s. These transformations are determined by the fundamental changes in the international military and political situation, military-technical and economic factors. From the historical point of view the term Bulgarian military industrial complex (BMIC)<sup>3</sup> is also used in the present paper.

The changes in the national defense industries across the European Union (EU) impose this new philosophy in the Bulgarian practice, too. The main activities are oriented to the restructuring and development of the competitive national defense industries in the EU framework, an integrated European market for defense products, and the consolidation of a robust European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) (Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, 2012). The maintenance of a strong and

competitive DTIB in Europe is fundamental for the European Security and Defense Policy (European Defense Agency, 2007). The European Defense Fund announced by President Juncker in September 2016 (State of the Union Address, 2016), and backed by the European Council in December 2016, is already a fact (European Commission - Press release, 2017). That ambitious European Defense Fund will contribute to a European Union that protects and defends its citizens, complementing other ongoing work strands, namely the Global Strategy's Implementation Plan on Security and Defense, which sets out a new level of ambition for the Union and identifies actions to fulfil it, as well as with the implementation of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission and the Secretary-General of NATO. It is too early to foresee the effects of the Fund but its influence over the Defense industry in EU is inevitable.

Three tendencies in DTIB development deserve to be outlined, because of their potential to exert strong influence on the development of the contemporary DTIB simultaneously on global, regional and national level. *First*, after the end of the Cold War an intensive and deep reorganization of the so called "military sectors" of all economies followed. The structural changes in the economy could be described with new ratios between the military and civil production. The military/defense sectors of the national economies are reorganized in a course of convergence between defense and civil production. This process is based on the flexible dual use of technologies.

*Second*, as a whole, the defense industrial transformation processes at the end of XX and the beginning of XXI century followed the general trend of the industry and technology development. The new challenges of the

environment – the terrorism and the other asymmetric threats, created brand new needs. The demand for goods and services from the defense industry has changed. The new challenges have led to defense strategy transformations in most of the countries – from the preparation of policy based on struggle against a distinctive enemy to policy based on capabilities development for coping with the threats of the present-day.

*Third*, the result of that serious transformation affected significantly the international defense economic relations. The difference lies in the refusal of one national R&D and production model of modern armaments and equipment. The globalized defense industry is acquiring a clear form of interlinked company nets with distinct strategic centers.

The existence of BDTIB may be decomposed into three phases – the socialist period, the collapse and the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *As far as Bulgaria's socialist period is concerned (the first phase)*, it may be stated that BMIC came into being in the late 1960s, incrementally took its shape in the 1970s, when dozens of enterprises were built and modernized with significant Soviet help. At that time the enterprises, constituting BMIC, might be characterized by (Ivanov, 1998, p. 95):

- Combined production capabilities with a technological division of labor.
- Production process - designed for mass production with high levels of technological specialization.
- Defense production – organized as a state-owned monopoly as the enterprises were fully state owned, with very high centralization of the overall management, including planning, investment, supply of raw materials, production equipment and trade realization of the production.

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- A production cycle, realized under the conditions of centralized planning and financing of R&D and all necessary patents and licenses.

All these strategic decisions in an organization's functional areas were made in congruence with the frameworks, imposed by The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)<sup>4</sup> and subordinated to the strategic needs of the Warsaw Pact (WP)<sup>5</sup> (Dimitrov 2002, pp 10-16). A highly specialized production base in metal-working, machine-building and electronics was developed. This specialization included SALW<sup>6</sup>, armored vehicles, and electronics (Dimitrov 2002, p. 13). During the communist period, the BMIC was characterized by a clear focus on manufacture for export (about 90 percent of its output), advanced production technology and efficient production structure. Its product range was oriented towards market niches and Bulgaria's specialization within the WP (Dimitrov and Ivanov, 1993, p 94). Bulgaria supplied arms to countries from the WP, the Middle East, North Africa, India and other smaller markets (Brauer and van Tuyil, 1996, p 128.) A relatively large share, between 30 and 40 percent of the exports, depended on the political relations that Bulgaria had with these partner countries. This trade was worth several hundred million US dollars per year.

*The second phase, labeled as the collapse,* is marked by the political changes at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the breaking up of the WP, the disintegration of COMECON that brought with them lots of common and special economic problems for BMIC. According to the Bulgarian Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD, 2004) "The difficult process of transition to democracy and a market economy, characterized by financial and economic crisis, a weakening of state control, and political instability, had a huge impact on the Bulgarian defense

industry. Bulgaria's traditional export markets declined rapidly, for at least four reasons:

- On a global level, an increased demand for modern armaments hurts exports of some of Bulgaria's relatively low-tech items, such as SALW.
- The increased export control measures, at the national and international level, restricted exports to a number of countries that Bulgaria had previously supplied, some of which came under United Nations (UN) embargoes.
- Some of Bulgaria's traditional clients developed their own basic production capabilities, reducing their need for imports.
- The most arms importers, especially those from former communist countries, shifted demand to weapons produced in compliance with NATO standards, thus reducing the demand for old Soviet-style weaponry (CSD 2004, pp 9-10)

So, it became crystal clear that Bulgarian defense industry needed a new development direction and models on the global defense market, far away from the frameworks of COMECON and WP. After 1989, the MIC underwent broad structural reforms that reorganized the MIC branch structure, reduced production, stopped technological upgrades and brought the reconstruction and modernization of company plants to a virtual halt. In the early 1990s, the management and the large bureaucracy of the defense companies still carried the mentality of the command-administrative economy. An urgent need for a new business culture and a new type of relationship with the state was felt, as the MIC was still state-owned. But the state did not succeed in formulating a consistent defense industry policy or guidance for long-term development. Reforms were often simply imposed or took shape on an ad hoc basis, in response to severe crises within



the industry (CSD 2004, p.19). Furthermore, the total production of the enterprises, comprising BMIC, was sharply reduced and technological renovations were also stopped. There were no possibilities for reconstruction and modernization of the assets available. A number of Bulgarian governments failed in their efforts to elaborate a defense-industrial policy and did not succeed in drawing a long term plan for the entire industry development as a whole. In its way of transition to market economy the Bulgarian industry entered deep crises with lots of dimensions – structural, market, resources, lack of human resources, insufficient financing and lack of technologies. On the one hand, the processes of demopolization and decentralization tore up the existing technological relations between the enterprises. As a result many of them dropped out from the BMIC due to bankruptcy, liquidation and privatization, corruption, buying out with the intention of closing down the entity and production line changes. In the process of restructuring the existing BMIC the production and commercial relations between the participants in that system were destroyed. In those days the collapse of the system was predetermined by external factors and tendencies in the world defense market and by the slow and inadequate transition to market economy in Bulgaria.

On the other hand, the export from BMIC also decreased. The new political conditions restricted the access to the needed technologies which had been received in the past from former USSR or indirectly from the West. In the existing new competitive conditions the lack of technologies made the situation impossible for BMIC to create and sell market demanded products. The problem of intellectual property was never solved properly. Especially the relations with the Russian federation were not settled. The general crisis in Bulgaria did not enable new

technologies to be nationally developed or bought from abroad. The input of BMIC as a system may be characterized by unavailability of basic resources, needed technologies and the former markets. Under the new market driven conditions most of the enterprises failed to define their own production and market policy. The end was inevitable – systemic crisis of BDTIB. The crisis found its expression in systems falling apart. The available resources such as personnel and means of production were on a world level. But the lack of the other internal resources which were needed for self-organized saving of the system, prevailed. The external conditions did not allow the realization of products – the most important markets were lost. So, the input of the system was closed – no earnings, no resources available. The system BMIC had no option to achieve its goals. Because of lack of new products at the exit and some internal conflicts in the system (economic, social, political and managerial) the BMIC stopped to exist.

Furthermore, privatization executed through employee/management buyouts did not contribute to successful company development (CSD 2004, p.11). Some companies remained in poor conditions, with limited access to fresh capital, unable to invest in new technologies and lacking marketing, trade, logistics and business planning skills. Several conversion programs were developed during the transition to the free market economy, but they generated minimal or no impact. The hard process of conversion was transferred under the power of senior management in the companies, rather than purposefully pursued by the government. Neither investments for restructuring and/or conversion were made, nor were tax incentives or subsidies enacted by law. It may be concluded that the aforementioned global tendencies and processes in conjunction with

the local ones predetermined the present state of the Bulgarian defense enterprises and their transformation in BDTIB.

*The potential of the third phase, marked by the formation of BDTIB*, has not yet been utilized to solve (resole or absolve) most of the outlined problems, confronting the Bulgarian defense enterprises, although now an important classification of these issues appeared, i.e. the impact of these with financial, human resources and managerial origin on the market performance of the respective companies prevail over others. An important developmental stimulus in this industry was generated in 2004 when the leading enterprises in BDTIB created a Bulgarian Defense Industry Association (BDIA)<sup>7</sup>. Within the association there are lots of initiatives for consolidated solutions of the problems already outlined. The participation of the Bulgarian state in seeking solutions to the problems concerned is limited to its support and regulatory role in the economic activities on its territory. In this case the role of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Economy is to provide an institutional support to different activities which aim at promoting the capabilities of the BDTIB. The formula for industry participation in the processes of modernization of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BAF) is still not elaborated. Armed Forces Modernization Plan has been more than ten years in progress, and the relevant participation of the Bulgarian industry in its implementation is still uncertain. In the principal documents on national security and defense, the role of the Bulgarian defense industry is peripherally mentioned. To some extent this unfavorable situation is due to the agreement of BDIA to take part in the modernization of the army, applying existing, unelaborated, administrative mechanisms, confronting the accepted management principle, reading that "the Army supplies have

to be done in the most cost efficient way". So, Bulgarian producers tend to do everything possible to guarantee their monopoly in their defense supplies to BAF. In its strategic documents, available only in Bulgarian language on BDIA's website, the association even goes that far as to suggest, in case taking part as main subcontractors in some modernization projects, to deliver and support products and services independently of the main contractor. BDIA leaves the impression that its members strive for gaining access to BAF modernization projects resources by all means. It may be assumed that a part of the Bulgarian enterprises that could be involved in those projects as subcontractors, see them as one possible way to gain technologies from some of the prime contractors.

The adoption of a Strategy for development of BDTIB in 2012 represents another key moment for the development of the local defense sector, because this strategy represents mainly the viewpoint of BDIA. It would be very difficult to realize this strategy. That is because there are lots of contradictions with the legislation and regulation at European level. Especially with the 'Defense Package' which included a Communication entitled "Strategy for a stronger and more competitive European defense industry" (COM, 2007, 764 highlighting the need for regulation at European level, and legislative proposals for two Directives: Directive 2009/43/EC on transfers of defense-related products within the EU; and Directive 2009/81/EC on Defense and Security Procurement). The implementation of this strategy is still not a fact. Finally at the end of 2015 a program and a plan for its realization were accepted. But now the time for its reconsideration (re-design) has come, bearing in mind the turbulent and dynamic changes all over the world.

The production of SALW is still the main driving force for BDTIB. But this is an

increasingly competitive market, characterized by heavy dependence on regional conflicts. Mainly the conflicts in the Middle East and some others local conflicts (in Ukraine, Nigeria, Algeria, Afghanistan etc.) are the engine of the increasing export of defense production from Bulgaria. As stated in a Rand Corporation European report (2016, p.6) for the European Defense Agency the sector is active in exports to non-EU third markets, including Afghanistan, Algeria, India and Iraq, with the country looking to expand its arms exports to China and Vietnam. The defense output and export trends are hard to analyze in detail since the information for most of them is classified. Revealing information on arms production and trade that does not jeopardize the financial situation of the companies is not a common practice in Bulgaria. At the traditional Hemus defense industry exhibition, held in Plovdiv in May 2016, it was announced that the country's exports of ammunition and military equipment totaled EUR235 million for 2013. For 2014 the export totaled EUR403 million. The expectations for 2015 were estimated at EUR 642 million. The tendency in SALW production was to produce and export ammunition rather than small arms (Milev, 2016). Furthermore, government officials often formally announce significantly higher export figures without information about the volume of re-exported production and deals from the BDTIB. Most of the exporters are only traders and that fact additionally hinders the work of the analysts.

Several challenges, confronting the BDTIB, may be outlined:

- *Adoption of long-term management orientation concerning the local defense sector by respective constituencies.* The long term success of BDTIB is possible, if all constituencies became aware that the present situation on the markets could not continue in the long run. The possibilities for sustainable dynamic development of that industry could be created only on the basis of consolidated state policy, founded on uninterrupted technological, market, scientific development and innovation.
- *The establishment of successful strategic partnerships with leading enterprises and consortiums – suppliers of equipment and services for NATO and EU countries.* These are the most likely decisions for guaranteeing long-term competitiveness of BDTIB. That is the way to enhance innovations, product and technology modernization. Unfortunately the absence of adequate strategy, appropriate industrial policy and key priorities on national level in Bulgaria represent serious obstacles. In such a situation it would be very hard for BDTIB to enter target market niches, to develop superiority specialization and adequate capabilities or to take part in BAF modernization process.
- *Recurring financial, human resources related and other management issues for the companies in the local defense sector* (CSD, 2004, p.22). Most of the enterprises still have limited access to financing and are not able to invest in new technologies, and are thus compelled to rely on old products. The state has distanced itself from research and development (R&D). Human resources in the research field are in constant decline due to low pay, better opportunities in other industries, or better offers from the defense sectors of other countries. This leads to permanent decline in the defense industry R&D, and dependency on SALW production and export, which involves less technological sophistication. The arms trade (as a main result from the activities of BDTIB) is dependent on both

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the political framework reflected in the national defense-industrial policy and the capabilities of the defense companies. Unfortunately there is no such policy, created and implemented in Bulgaria. The role of the Industry as a whole in the BAF modernization process has not also been determined yet. BDTIB is heavily dependent on the national economy and the modernization process of the BAF.

- *Recurring issues, related to organizational behavior and attitudes to business in the local defense industry* (Rand Corporation European report, 2016, p.5). In the Technical annex to the report - "Country Profiles and Appendixes" – a part of the serious cultural problems are revealed. Almost all of them are related to the organizational behavior and attitudes to business. Cases in point on national level are the lack of a cultural orientation to cooperation, dialog and mutual understanding between the MoD and national industries. The need for near-immediate financial returns on investment does not support a culture open to cooperation and innovation that requires longer time horizons. The 'soft skills' in spheres such as marketing, business planning or foreign languages present a challenge for the sector, while a reported lack of understanding of international procurement chains (processes) and dominating management culture exacerbates the current situation in these organizations.

## 4. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The performed empirical survey may be succinctly described by the following features<sup>8</sup>:

- *Research object* – the published content on the websites of business organizations from the defense industry in Bulgaria, used for the public disclosure of the strategic intentions of the management, expressing the dominant cultural perceptions among the senior decision-makers in them.
- *Research subject* – the visible manifestations of the cultural attributes on the Internet, characterizing a specific organizational culture and in particular – the creation and structuring of official corporate documents - mission, vision, motto, credo, corporate/firm/ official philosophy/policy, firm/our values, our history, about us... (for us...), code of conduct (ethical code), corporate/firm principles, purpose, firm/ corporate/ organization culture, corporate social responsibility and/or sustainability, slogan and manifesto. These official documents are used by senior managers in the company for disclosing their shared attitudes to the world of business, the universe and all other stuff.
- *Main aim of the survey*: to explore any nuances and special features in structuring and expressing the professed culture in the virtual realm in the group of companies, belonging to the defense industry in Bulgaria<sup>9</sup>. The list of official company documents, disclosing professed firm culture, is created by reviewing and critically analyzing the scientific results of prominent figures in this field (see Van Nimwegen, Bollen, Hassink, Thijssens, 2008; Leuthesser, Kohi, 1997; Campbell, Shrives, Bohmbach-Saager, 2001; Darbi, 2012) and empirically surveying the content of target websites that belong to business organizations in the defense industry in Bulgaria.
- *Limitation of the survey*: no financial data for the companies from the defense sector was publicly accessible that hampered

the analysis of the relationship between the possession of professed firm culture attributes and the financial performance of the target business organizations.

## 5. EMPIRICAL SURVEY OF PROFESSED CULTURE ATTRIBUTES AMONG THE BDTIB MEMBERS

Within BDTIB, the preferred documents for describing the professed culture of the companies are “For us” (100%) and “Our

(organization’s) history” (69.2%). That can be explained by the fact that for a long period of time in the course of ownership transformation in the 1990s, the individual companies were formed as a result of the breakdown of the state owned inter-organizational economic unions of which they were part by seeking for their emancipation and separate market presence. Negligible attention was paid to “Mission” and “Vision” as the main expressions of the proclaimed culture (see table 8).

**Table 8.** *Professed culture – documents*

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Professed culture documents	<b>Mission</b>	1	4,0%	7,7%
	Corporate/firm/official philosophy/policy	1	4,0%	7,7%
	<b>Our (organization’s) history</b>	9	36,0%	<b>69,2%</b>
	<b>For us...</b>	13	52,0%	<b>100,0%</b>
	Corporate/firm principles	1	4,0%	7,7%
<b>Total</b>		25	100,0%	192,3%

Only one company of the surveyed ones unequivocally declares its “Mission”. In this line of thought, the concentration of the presence of the attributes “For us” (100%) and “Our (organization’s) history” (69.2%) among the independent organizations without strategic business units is full-sized. The small number among businesses that appear strategic business units of the local holding structures makes it impossible to

make concrete conclusions about the impact that the parent companies exercise on the development reflection and overarching of specific corporate culture characteristics. All surveyed companies fall within the scope of producers of industrial goods, which also contributes to some uniformity in approaches used by companies in the development and presentation of their specific corporate cultures (see table 9).

**Table 9.** *Cross tabulation of professed culture documents and the type of company*

Professed culture – documents		What is the type of the company?			Total
		Local holding company	Independent organization without SEEs	SEE of a local holding company	
Mission	Count	0	1	0	1
	% within \$x_1m	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	
	% within x_18	0,0%	5,3%	0,0%	
	% of Total	0,0%	4,0%	0,0%	4,0%



Professed culture – documents		What is the type of the company?			Total
		Local holding company	Independent organization without SEEs	SEE of a local holding company	
Corporate/ firm/ official philosophy/ policy	Count	0	1	0	1
	% within \$x_1m	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	
	% within x_18	0,0%	5,3%	0,0%	
	% of Total	0,0%	4,0%	0,0%	4,0%
Our (organization's) history	Count	2	7	0	9
	% within \$x_1m	22,2%	<b>77,8%</b>	0,0%	
	% within x_18	40,0%	36,8%	0,0%	
	% of Total	8,0%	28,0%	0,0%	36,0%
For us...	Count	3	9	1	13
	% within \$x_1m	23,1%	<b>69,2%</b>	7,7%	
	% within x_18	60,0%	47,4%	100,0%	
	% of Total	12,0%	36,0%	4,0%	52,0%
Corporate/ firm principles	Count	0	1	0	1
	% within \$x_1m	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	
	% within x_18	0,0%	5,3%	0,0%	
	% of Total	0,0%	4,0%	0,0%	4,0%
Total	Count	5	19	1	25
	% of Total	20,0%	76,0%	4,0%	100,0%

As to “Stakeholders” that companies indicate, great importance is attributed to “Employees” who with the “Managers” occupy a key role (83.3%). These priorities

reaffirm the tendencies of the growing need to address the tangible personnel problem not only in the BDTIB, but also in the Bulgarian economy as a whole (see table 10).

**Table 10.** *Proclaimed firm culture and mentioned Stakeholders*

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Constituencies	<b>Government/ Regulators</b>	7	17,1%	<b>58,3%</b>
	Suppliers	3	7,3%	25,0%
	<b>Clients, customers</b>	9	22,0%	<b>75,0%</b>
	Investors & shareholders/ stockholders	1	2,4%	8,3%
	Ecologic movements	1	2,4%	8,3%
	<b>Managers</b>	10	24,4%	<b>83,3%</b>
	<b>Employees</b>	10	24,4%	<b>83,3%</b>
Total		41	100,0%	341,7%

It is also easy to explain the fact that the focus of the companies' attention is on "Clients, Customers" (75%) and "Governments/Regulators" (58.3%). The nature of the business is such that in most cases the main customers are predominantly the Governments of independent states. Companies pay negligible attention to the "Local community" and their "Competitors", which is in clear contradiction with the personnel problems that are found in the sector. And if the attention to the "Competitors" is dampened by the good market situation at the moment, it is strange that there is a lack of attention to the "Local communities" in view of the growing cadre vacuum.

In 100% of the cases, BDTIB companies communicate with the outside environment and provide information about themselves through their business sites using the global business language - the English

language. Only in 14.3% of the cases there is a difference in applied language versions on company websites and the information content in English is richer in relation to the proclaimed organizational culture. This fact should lead to the conclusion that the examined Bulgarian business organizations do not pay significant attention to cultural issues, as it is often of great importance to their survival and long-term prosperity and potential partners from developed countries. This is understandable as far as the production currently manufactured and sold is basically designed for underdeveloped countries.

Only three of the *Professed firm values* are once mentioned among the members of the surveyed employer organization. These three firm values are clearly declared by a very small part of the companies. All three are evenly distributed – "Excellence" (33.3%), "Loyalty" (33.3%) and "Dedication" (33.3%).

**Table 11.** *Professed firm values of surveyed defense contractors*

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Professed firm values	Excellence	1	33,3%	50,0%
	Loyalty	1	33,3%	50,0%
	Dedication	1	33,3%	50,0%
Total		3	100,0%	150,0%

The situation regarding **management principles** that companies claim are governing their actions, is interesting, too. The majority of them (57.1%) pointed out certain company management principles on their firms'

websites and documents. The remaining 42.9% of business organizations abstain from defining explicitly the guiding management principles they apply in their management activities.

**Table 12.** *Management principles - distribution*

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
\$x_8ma	8	57,1%	6	42,9%	14	100,0%

100% of the respondents identified the principle of "Quality" as the leading one in the implementation of their activity. In 37.5% of cases, importance is attributed to "Reliability". Business organizations also apply "Continuous improvement" (25%) and "People (orientation)" (25%). "Safety", "Innovation (innovative spirit)", "Professionalism", "Collaboration/partnership (with clients)", "Competitive pricing" and "High technology orientation" are mentioned only once (see table 13).

When it comes to the components of the company mission that can be highlighted in the content presented by the companies concerned, in 100% of the cases, they

are directed to "Principal products and/or services". 23.1% of the cases indicate "Specification of target markets" and "Purpose / goal of organization". Other components like "Geographic domain", "Commitment to survival, growth and profitability" and "Clear competitive advantages" are mentioned twice. Only in single cases the companies deal with the key elements as "Company philosophy" (7.7%), "Values/beliefs" and "Clearly defined interests of the organization". The rest of the essential components of the company's mission remain out of sight for the companies - a part of BDITB (see table 14).

**Table 13. Principles of management - distribution**

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Principles of management	Innovation (innovative spirit)	1	4,8%	12,5%
	<b>Quality</b>	8	38,1%	<b>100,0%</b>
	<b>Continuous improvement</b>	2	9,5%	<b>25,0%</b>
	<b>Reliability</b>	3	14,3%	<b>37,5%</b>
	<b>People (orientation)</b>	2	9,5%	<b>25,0%</b>
	Professionalism	1	4,8%	12,5%
	Collaboration/ partnership (with clients)	1	4,8%	12,5%
	Competitive pricing	1	4,8%	12,5%
	Safety	1	4,8%	12,5%
	High technology orientation	1	4,8%	12,5%
Total		21	100,0%	262,5%

**Table 14. Observed Components of firm mission**

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Components of firm mission	Specification of target markets	3	10,7%	23,1%
	<b>Principal products and/or services</b>	13	46,4%	<b>100,0%</b>
	Geographic domain	2	7,1%	15,4%
	Commitment to survival, growth and profitability	2	7,1%	15,4%
	Key elements in company philosophy	1	3,6%	7,7%
	Values/beliefs	1	3,6%	7,7%
	Purpose/goal/aim of the organization	3	10,7%	23,1%
	Clear competitive advantages	2	7,1%	15,4%
	Clearly defined interests of the organization	1	3,6%	7,7%
Total		28	100,0%	215,4%

## 6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The specifics of the defense business require a more careful attitude towards the design of the unique professed corporate culture for each of the members of the Bulgarian Defense Industry Association. This is perhaps the only sector of the economy where the richer cultural disclosure of business organizations on the internet cannot be assessed unequivocally, based on the logical identification of at least two reasons:

- The increased transparency concerning defense contractors' market performance, incited by key constituencies as society, domestic and foreign governmental regulators, certain quasi-state organizations, international human rights NGOs and even potential clients. The aforementioned business environment factors force all these stakeholders to some extent and for attaining specific objectives to be (become) aware of the basic aspirations of the top management in a target company, operating in this field, in relation with compliance to generally accepted written rules (i.e. concluded international agreements), forming the so called global culture layer and ethical norms in different regions of the world.
- The traditional secrecy, surrounding defense business transactions, frequently initiated by clients or mediators who do not want to attract publicity to their activities in this field or even defense contractors that do not want to disclose directly existing large customers or to imply the existence of any relationships with them by creating relevant language versions of producer company websites, especially if the respective business partners originate from different troubled countries and regions around the world. Such organizational behavior

is sometimes supported by local governments who in this way are able to seamlessly modify their international interests in time without attracting political tensions or specific undesired economic treatment by other key players from all over the world. That is why Bulgarian defense companies disclose their official cultures in a very succinct way, even missing the opportunity to utilize the potential power and impact of the most popular firm documents in this field as mission and vision or relying on small number of their simpler building elements.

Nevertheless, paying closer attention to business-related cultural issues may improve the market performance of defense contractors not only on the domestic market, but also in elaborating and strengthening their relationships within the frameworks of NATO and EU (especially in European Defense Agency format), based on mutual consideration and some convergence of values, principles and interests while solving (resolving or absolving) business related issues, thus ensuring seamless two-way information flows among different cultural levels in and beyond organizational settings, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their own performance and the performance of the higher rank systems. Extending the number of constituencies whose interests are considered and balanced, while coping with the recurring issues of organizational survival and external adaptation, and internal integration among the personnel members, not only complicates the business environment for the respective defense contractor, but also provides unbelievable opportunities for its creative categorization, thus gaining the chance of:

- Reformulating or broadening its main existential purpose (i.e. to collaborate

in the defense of a certain country; to share peacekeeping efforts in troubled regions of the world; to mitigate arising tensions due to natural disasters, climate changes and sharp cultural clashes or to decrease the number of the affected groups of people by such events),

- Opening new markets for existing products and services, and
- Developing and delivering new products and related services.

Only the participation in such sustainable partnerships would become a prerequisite for the long-term and successful development of BDTIB. But the first step in these strategic management endeavors is officially formulating key characteristics of their desired cultures to pursue rigorously and consecutively acting on a common ground with the preferred partners. Of course, this does not mean that each entity from the surveyed business organizations should not pursue its developmental uniqueness through deliberately differentiating its nature and identity by means of exercising continuous (un-)learning process, generating specific cultural attributes (forms), carefully selected to acquire civilizational statute as official firm documents. Legitimately, it may be concluded that the main challenge, confronting senior managers of Bulgarian defense business organizations is to wisely position the characteristics of their professed cultures within the triangle, limited by the three extremes of (1) evident hypocrisy, tolerating great differences between what leadership says and what they do in their everyday business life, (2) unconscious attitude to professed firm culture or direct neglect of its importance for attaining and retaining of company advantage, and (3) deliberate and precise design of a system, consisting in professed firm culture elements to solve pending, important business-related issues.

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## Endnotes

- 1 (DoD) Department of Defense in the USA
- 2 Defense Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB) - Industrial assets that are of direct or indirect importance for the production of equipment for a country's armed forces.
- 3 Bulgarian military industrial complex (BMIC) – The existing technology and production structure of the Bulgarian defense industry during the Cold war.
- 4 COMECON - The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an economic organization from 1949 to 1991 under the leadership of the Soviet Union that comprised the countries of the Eastern Bloc along with a number of communist states elsewhere in the world.
- 5 WP – Warsaw Pact is the short name of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, a collective defense treaty signed in Warsaw among the Soviet

## Articles

Union and seven Soviet satellite states of Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

- 6 SALW - Small Arms and Light Weapons
- 7 Information for the participants in BDIA could be found on the association's website: [http://www.bdia-bg.com/index\\_en.html](http://www.bdia-bg.com/index_en.html) (\*\*, 2019c).
- 8 This survey represents a specific elaboration of a larger scientific project. Detailed description of this survey

methodology is presented in Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov (2018, pp181-190). The applied survey questionnaire by the researchers may also be found in Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov (2018, pp357-364).

- 9 This survey is a part of a larger scientific project, aiming at identification of dominating professed firm culture characteristics among business entities, operating in Bulgaria (see Dimitrov, Ivanov, Geshkov, 2018).