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Sasajkovski, Slavejko; Ljubica, Micanovska

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## THE IDENTITY OF THE MODERN TURKISH NATION-STATE: SEVERAL POLITICAL & SOCIOLOGICAL REFERENCES

**Slavejko Sasajkovski**

*Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research,  
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia  
bilbilef[at]isppi.ukim.edu.mk*

**Ljubica Micanovska**

*Independent Researcher, North Macedonia  
micanovskaljubica[at]gmail.com*

**Abstract:** The modern Turkish state is a typical nation-state, as it is originally defined by the Westphalian international political and legal order. This essential feature of the modern Turkish nation-state is the product of the theoretical concept and the fundamental political and ideological principles and postulates of Kemalism (Kemal Atatürk), that is, the paradigm of the modern Turkish constitutionality and the modern Turkish determination of its national identity. This national identity is the identity of a nation-state, that is, the identity of a nation as a political nation, as a citizens of the modern Turkish state (nation-state). The modern Turkish national identity in this sense does not have its own classical ethnogenesis, that identity is not an ethno-national identity, but it is identity of a true nation-state that includes in itself all the special ethno-national identities, united as a Turkish national identity of a nation-state. The ethno-national identity for the paradigm of the modern Turkish national identity is exclusively only private and personal determination of individuals citizens of the modern Turkish nation-state, which does not recognize, accept or admits the constitutional-legal order of the modern Turkish state. More over, these ethno-national identities have treatment of a factor of essentially jeopardizing the integrity and cohesion of the modern Turkish nation-state.

**Keywords:** *Ethno-National Identities; Treaty of Lausanne; Kurds; War in Syria*



## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Turkey today is a very attractive subject for studying practically of all social sciences. Within the framework of the modern global political and total social relations, the Republic of Turkey is emerging as an extremely relevant factor. Thus, Turkey has a very important regional geopolitical power and role, a role that is concentrated and in the concept, policies and ideology of Neo-Ottomanism; its army within the framework of the NATO Pact is in any case the second army in terms of its fighting power, just behind the US Army; it has an economy that fully deserves its place in the G20, despite the current problems it faces; the current political leadership of Turkey has built a completely clear autonomy within contemporary international political and economic relations, with unreserved advocacy and protection of Turkish state and national interests, and regardless of any opposition and reaction to such Turkish policies. In this context, one must emphasize the very large attractiveness for scientific research, especially for sociological research, of the concept of the identity of the modern Turkish nation-state. This identity is identity of a typical nation-state and its study represents an extraordinary opportunity in reality and empirically (it can be said "live") to study this type of identity. The results of these research on the identity of the modern Turkish nation-state are contained in numerous bibliographic units. Of course, these research, despite their necessary interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary, are basically and primarily sociological research. Indeed, in various such researches, the emphasis on the sociological interest of researchers is placed on various sociological aspects of the complex of identity of the modern Turkish nation-state.

In the continuation of this text, the research focus, as far as the length of this text permits, will primarily be put on the emphasis on the functionalist sociological theoretical basis and framework of the concept of the nation-state; the establishment of the exclusivity of the national identity of the people that constitutes its state as a nation-state and determines the name of the state as a derivative of its national identity, that is, as a derivative of the national name; the emphasis on the direct and fundamental conflict of this concept with the concept of multiethnicity, multinationalism and multiculturalism; the exclusion of the possible existing multiethnicity, multinationality and multiculturalism as factors and contents of the constitutional and total legal order of the state and their locating exclusively within personal and private, that is, domestic/house relations. And then, by analyzing the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and the Treaty of Lausanne, we will show how in the Republic of Turkey, just as in the Republic of Greece (and its concept of national identity and its concept of constitutional setup are concepts of typical nation-state), a significant level of ethnic, national and cultural homogeneity has been achieved, precisely as it defines and requires the concept of a nation-state. At the same time, very clearly, in this text, extremely elementally, the challenge and the problem with the Kurds facing the modern Turkish nation-state must also be contained, and inevitably, in this context,

it will be necessary, also elementary, to include the relevant aspects of the war in Syria, that is, the points of that war on which are expressed the fundamental Turkish national and state interests.

## THEORETIC MARKING OF THE CONCEPT OF NATION-STATE

It must be emphasized immediately that the whole of this theoretical elaboration devoted to the concept of the nation-state completely applies and to the particular Turkish model of a modern nation-state. It is a crystal clear functionalist theoretical and conceptual basis of the determination and functionality of the nation-state. In order for a community or body to function at least on an elementary level of optimum, then at least the elementary level of integration and cohesion of the community or the body must also be provided inevitably. All special parts or organs of the community or the body must be put into function to achieve the meaning of the existence of the community or the body. In reality they do not exist outside the community or the body, they do not have any function or some cause and purpose for existence if they are not integrated in the community or in the body in order to provide the required and necessary contribution for the optimal functioning of the integrated community or of the integrated body. The optimal level of integration and cohesion of the community or body as a fundamental and essential condition for achieving and providing the ultimate level of functionality of the community or body can by no means be achieved through retention, maintenance and development of the various types of differences, oppositions and conflicts that are real and objective within the community or the body. In order to achieve and ensure the optimal level of integration and cohesion of the community or the body, one must find, define and impose a single basis on which to build and develop the quality level of integration and cohesion of the community or the body, a basis that does not contain differences, oppositions and conflicts (Jaffrelot 2003).

This theoretical and conceptual elaboration fully applies and to the concept of the nation-state. The nation-state should overcome all differences on the basis of the ethnic, national, linguistic and all sorts of different cultural identities that actually exist within its framework, within the nation-state as a kind of community or as a kind of body, of course in order to lay the foundations of a real and objective maximum possible level of quality of its functionality as a community or as a body and within the framework of the existing total social relations and constellations. The overcoming of ethnic and national differences, oppositions and conflicts through the concept of the nation-state is done through the political and sociological concept of the nation as a political nation. This means that all citizens of the state as a nation-state are members of one and the same political nation, that is nation, regardless of their personal and private ethnic and national affiliation (Wimmer 2010).

This political and sociological construction has an essential and fundamental function—it should be the basic substance of the integration and cohesion of the community, community and as a state constitution and as a society, as a social community. According to this concept, according to this functionalist concept, this must be because integration and cohesion can not be grounded, built and developed by preserving, nurturing and deepening real-life social differences, oppositions and conflicts, regardless of what kind they are, including those who are ethnic and national. In any case, there must be found some basis for social integration and cohesion that will highly effectively and productively off all relevant conflicting social differences and oppositions, including ethnic and national differences and opposites.

This goal through the concept of a nation-state, generally and elementally speaking, is done so that the nation who constitute their own state as a nation-state, and which gives a name to that state that most directly and most immediate can express its national identity, that constitutive nation determines and identifies their national identity as a national identity of the entire social community, and promotes this identity to the strongest and consistent way, defends and strengthens it through the constitutional and legal order of the state and through its various policies, that is, literally through the whole set of possible state policies, including, of course, and through the policy of criminal law. The constitutional and total legal order of the state as a nation-state does not contain and does not recognize ethnic and national diversity. This diversity can exist only on a personal and private level, it can exist only in the home, in the family, and in any case the state has no obligation through the complex of its policies to promote, nurture, develop and deepen that diversity (Walby 2003).

Contrary to all this, the state as a nation-state with all its policies, as well as with all its resources and capacities, must promote, impose and defend the national identity of its constituent nation, nation who give the name of the state, as a public identity and as a state relation, the status and the characteristic of all separate ethnic and national identities. For the state as a nation-state, in this particular case for the modern Turkish nation-state, all its citizens are Turks, they all have a Turkish national identity as members of that Turkish nation-state. This means that all of them in their public life, that is, in relations with the Turkish nation-state should accept the national identity of the constitutive nation, because that national identity of the nation constituting its own state as a nation-state (and that state receives its a name as a derivative of the national identity of that constitutive nation) to the highest possible level of functionality must be the main substance of the integration and cohesion of the nation-state and of the overall social relations (Bayar 2014).

Because of all this, that is, in order to ensure the elementary functionality of the concept of modern nation-state, that nation-state, including the modern Turkish nation-state, must inevitably impose the new and modern national identity of the nation as a political nation on all separate ethnic and national identities, these separate ethnic and national identities are brought into a state of voluntary or involuntary adaptation and assimilation in

relation to the modern national identity of the nation-state (van Bruinessen 1997). Therefore, in this sense, the nation-state, including the Turkish nation-state, with all its capacities, resources and powers, as well as with appropriate decisive policies, must inevitably prevent any public promotion of minority national identities. It is by no means the existence of national minorities as public and as a state relationship, status and character, and as an obligation of the state, to promote, nurture and develop the identities of national minorities on the basis of accepting a concept of minority national rights.

In this context it is very important and interesting to point out that the modern nation-state, including the Turkish nation-state, in no case must accept, and does not really accept, that it is a multilingual state. This is something that is quite normal when it is known that one of the most fundamental principles and postulates of the nation-state is the non-acceptance of the existence of multiethnicity and multinationality within the state. The nation-state insists on its own only official language, because the nation-state language, as an essential and fundamental element of its national and total cultural identity, sets and treats that language as one of the most essential and most fundamental substances and factors of its integration and cohesion, as well as the integration and cohesion of the entire social community (Aydingun 2010).

This theoretical elaboration of the nation-state concept, among other things, inevitably shows and suggests that it must be constituted exclusively as a unitary state. In no case must it allow any forms and contents of its federalization - political, territorial, cultural, economic, fiscal etc. (Ozbudun 2011).

The modern Turkish nation-state is a secular state, with a concrete model of secularism that is very hard and excluded a model of a secular state. Islamism, or pro-Islamism, of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party is ideological and political (pro) Islamism that does not touch them, does not problematize and does not deny the basic constitutional and total legal principles, postulates and norms of secularism, just as he is set in Turkey's constitutional and legal order (Gormez 2012).

## CONVENTION CONCERNING THE EXCHANGE OF GREEK AND TURKISH POPULATIONS AND TREATY OF LAUSANNE

The Greek concept and model of a nation-state, just like the Turkish concept and model, is also a typical and classic concept and model of a nation-state. Therefore, for the purpose of achieving as much ethnic and national homogenization as possible of the two nation-states, the Convention (also known as the Lausanne Convention)<sup>1</sup> and the Treaty (and also known as the Lausanne Treaty)<sup>2</sup>, referred to in the above subheading, were adopted.

The Convention was signed between the governments of Greece and Turkey in Lausanne on January 30, 1923 (Turkey ratified it on August 23, 1923, and Greece two days later). With the Convention and the Treaty in reality ended the Greco-Turkish war fought in the period from 1919 to 1922. The convention agreed on a simultaneous exchange of population between the two countries-the resettlement of Orthodox Christians from Turkey to Greece and Muslims from Greece to Turkey, with the exception of Muslims from Western Thrace and Orthodox Christians from Constantinople, or Istanbul. These Muslims were concentrated in the north of Greece, along with Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia, of which one not very large part was previously resettlement from Greece to Bulgaria based on the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine. It is very easy to notice that the Convention does not speak of ethnic and national identities, but only religious, which will be specified and developed in the Treaty half a year later. The convention covered about two million people-1.5 Orthodox Christians and 500 000 Muslims.

The mentioned Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine<sup>3</sup>, in Bulgaria also known as the Second National Catastrophe, was imposed on Bulgaria as a defeated side in the World War I. The treaty was signed in Neuille-sur-Seine, France, on November 27, 1919, and with it Bulgaria lost significant territories. For us, this Treaty is important because it stipulates in Article 56 line 2 the adoption of a Convention<sup>4</sup>, which provides for emigration, determined as voluntary, on the part of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia to Bulgaria-the Convention between Bulgaria and Greece on the replacement and voluntary emigration of minorities. With this convention, in reality, (at least a formal legal) international-legal attempt was made for the legalization of the forced resettlement of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia in Bulgaria.

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<sup>1</sup> Lausanne Peace Treaty VI. Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations Signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/lausanne-peace-treaty-vi-convention-concerning-the-exchange-of-greek-and-turkish-populations-signed-at-lausanne\\_en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/lausanne-peace-treaty-vi-convention-concerning-the-exchange-of-greek-and-turkish-populations-signed-at-lausanne_en.mfa)

<sup>2</sup> Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923, [https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty\\_of\\_Lausanne](https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne)

<sup>3</sup> Treaty of Peace Between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria, and Protocol and Declaration signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine, 27 November 1919, <http://www.gwpda.org/1918p/neuilly.html>

<sup>4</sup> CONVENTION ENTRE LA GRÈCE ET LA BULGARIE RELATIVE A L'ÉMIGRATION RÉCIPROQUE SIGNÉE A NEUILLY-SUR-SEINE LE 27 NOVEMBRE 1919, [https://www.icj-cij.org/files/permanent-court-of-international-justice/serie\\_B/B\\_17/02\\_Communautes\\_greco-bulgares\\_Annexe\\_1.pdf](https://www.icj-cij.org/files/permanent-court-of-international-justice/serie_B/B_17/02_Communautes_greco-bulgares_Annexe_1.pdf)

On the other hand, and the Bulgarian interest was to get of the Greek population, through the alleged voluntary exchange of population, which was concentrated in Plovdiv and along the coast of the Black Sea, and they received pecuniary compensation for real estate. However, despite all the pressures on the population on both sides of the border, the number of population who moved was inadequate in terms of the state and national goals of the two countries - 800 people moved out of which no more than 250 Macedonians. What Greece did not achieve with this convention, it has significantly achieved it with the Lausanne Convention, which was imposed as a defeated part of Turkey in their mutual war between 1919 and 1922. Then Greece settled a total of 1 230 000 Orthodox Christians, of which 640 000 in Aegean Macedonia, changing the drastically ethnic and national composition of the population in Aegean Macedonia. In the homes of the Macedonians who still stayed in Aegean Macedonia, one or more refugee families were accommodated, of course, in order to make the life of the Macedonians unbearable. The forced accommodation was followed by the seizure of fields, inventars and other household utensils (Kiselinovski 2018).

The Lausanne treaty, at an extremely relevant international legal level, legalized and strengthened the provisions of the Conventions. The Lausanne treaty in this sense is a complete international legal confirmation and recognition of the concept and model of the modern Turkish nation-state, along with the same confirmation of the modern Greek nation-state. The treaty was signed in Lausanne on July 24, 1923 between the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and France, Britain, Italy, Japan, Greece and Romania on the other. The Treaty defines and guarantees the borders of the modern Turkish nation-state, the Republic of Turkey. At this point, it must be emphasized that the border in the Aegean Sea is the most neural point in the relations between Turkey and Greece. Erdogan recently even mentioned a possible request by Turkey to revise this border. The problem is basically the determinant of geography-the Greek coast is rich in islands in contrast to Turkish. In this way and in accordance with the existing international maritime law, the Aegean Sea for Turkey turns into an ordinary small lake, a fact that for Turkey there are quite large negative geostrategic, defensive and security consequences besides the economic and tourist consequences (Sasajkovski 2012 ). However, for the subject of this text, the most important thing is that the Treaty obliges the two countries, Turkey and Greece, to respect the minorities within their respective countries. But the Treaty, just like the Lausanne Convention, does not define these minorities as ethnical and national, but exclusively only as a religious-orthodox Christian in Turkey and Muslim in Greece. A determination that is fully in line with the concept of a nation-state with the concrete models of the modern Turkish and modern Greek state as nation-states.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE KURDS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE TURKISH NATION-STATE

The Kurds are the biggest challenge for the concept and the concrete model of the modern Turkish nation state. The challenge concerns both the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Turkey, as well as the concept and concrete model of the modern Turkish nation state, something that is even more challenging.

The Kurds are probably the largest ethnic group or nation that has not constituted its own national or home state. Estimates are that they have more than 35 million worldwide. The region where it is dominantly concentrated, and which is called Kurdistan, consists of interconnected areas of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Kurdish regions are also in Lebanon, Armenia and Azerbaijan, but these regions do not make a whole with the Kurdistan region, just as there is a Kurdish diaspora in the United States and several European countries. The estimation is that in the region that is called Kurdistan there are about 27 million Kurds living. In Turkey Kurds are 20% of the population, in Iraq 15-20%, in Syria 8% and in Iran 7%. The estimation is that in Turkey, 55% of the total number of Kurds living around the world live (Bajalan 2014).

It is crystal clear that if the geostrategic and geopolitical circumstances determine the formation of a Kurdish nation state, then the territorial integrity and sovereignty of these four states, in which historical region of Kurdistan is divided, will inevitably be disrupted. In Iraq, Kurds actually have their own state in a state that, among other things, controls rich oil resources. Therefore, the Republic of Turkey is willing to seriously destruct its relations even with the United States if the relevant geostrategic and geopolitical determinants suggest the possible establishment of a Kurdish nation state. And precisely because of this in the current geostrategic and geopolitical circumstances it is not realistic to form a Kurdish state (Sasajkovski 2018).

The Kurdish challenge for the modern Turkish nation-state is in the danger of being challenged by the concept and the concrete model of the modern Turkish nation-state. The Republic of Turkey at any price has not accepted it so far, and it is not realistic to expect that it will ever accept that it is not a nation-state. That is, it is a state and a society in which national minorities exist, including Kurdish, as public and as a state factor and determinant, and not only as personal, private and domestic determination and behavior. In this place it must be emphasized that the Justice and Development Party and Erdogan, unlike the hard, true or self-styled, heirs of Ataturk's vision of a modern (pro)western Turkish nation-state, have expressed and implemented several political measures in the direction of easier and safer expression of Kurdish national identity within their personal, private and house relations (Okuy 2017). The turnaround of Turkey's policy towards the war in Syria in the most obvious way shows and confirms that for Turkey it is less evil to accept the reality of the state of Syria in its current internationally recognized borders under certain conditions and to accept the

Assad's power as fully relevant regional geopolitical factors and competitors, than to enter military and political actions on the complete destruction of the state of Syria at the cost of that destruction to create a real possibility for the constitution of the Kurdish state.

## CONCLUSION

The concept and practical models of a nation-state, including the concept and practical model of the modern Turkish nation-state, should overcome various kinds of cultural differences - ethnic, national, linguistic, in order to set the cultural basis for building an optimal level on the integration and cohesion of the state as a kind of social community or as a social body. This level of integration and cohesion is necessary in order to provide the necessary level of quality of the functionality of the state as a nation-state, that is, of the social community.

The concept and practical models of a nation-state, including the concept and practical model of the Turkish nation-state, must, through the constitutional and total legal order, as well as through appropriate policies, establish exclusivity and full domination of the national identity of the nation who constitute its state as a nation-state and determines the name of the state as a derivative of its national identity, that is, as a derivative of the national name. That is why this concept and the concrete models of the nation-state, and of course the concrete Turkish concept and model of nation-state, enter the direct and fundamental conflict with the concept and concrete models of multiethnicity, multinationality and multiculturalism, and in no way should they be factors and contents of the constitutional and total legal order of the state as a nation-state. The nation-state sets the total cultural diversity of its population exclusively within personal and private relations, that is, within family and domestic relations, and in no way supports this diversity. 

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