



# **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

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## **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

**By Reza Dehghani<sup>1</sup>**

**1 Associate Professor in the University of Tabriz, and interim Professor in the Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, reza-dehghani2017@gmail.com**

### **Abstract**

After the church's dominating influence waned in Europe and the idea of nationalism was developed by redefining church doctrines in the form of a set of shared beliefs, nation-states began to arise in Europe based on nationalism. Such developments that all had resulted from the socio-historical dynamics in European countries, led to the formation of powerful nation-states. However, this pattern was considered to be a weapon against religion when it was imported to the Middle East and countries like Iran and Turkey with basically no indigenous outcomes and solely based on their historical experience of dealing with the West. Nevertheless, religious traditions not only were not removed from the socio-political realms of life all at once, but contributed to the process of nation-state building as elements that can give identity. Such elements evolved differently in Iran and Turkey in spite of many similarities, such as Muslim nations, the moral system of Islam, the spirit of Islamic amity and brotherhood. The Republic of Turkey emerged from Western modernism due to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, while the Iranian modern state formed based on Iranian history and culture, indeed, with an archaic approach. The question that the present paper seeks to answer is, "how did the Islamic identity in Iran and Turkey influence the nation-state building process?" And given the fact that the process still exists, "how will be the impact of Islam on the new features of nation-states (citizen rights, civil society organizations, etc.)?" The study findings indicate that both Iranian and Turkish states have used Islam for the establishment and building of a nation-state based on the position of religious teachings and the clergy in their societies. The role of Islam was greater in Iran. In addition, the process of nation-building in Iran and Turkey has not ended yet, and it seems that there will be an Islamic conciliatory yet volatile approach to the new features of the nation-state building.

**Keywords:** Iran, Turkey, Islamic identity, Nation-state building



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## Introduction

Historically, the nation-state building processes were an important phase in the period of transition from the governmental traditions in Europe and the establishment of a legal and political foundation for the formation of European states and nations. The process resulted from the renaissance developments and the decline of the feudal system in favor of a social class including traders and owners in urban industry. This emerging class, called bourgeois, appeared after the French Revolution in most European countries as a growing and influential class. Due to the modern economic relations, the obsolete feudal system, the ineffectiveness of the church, and the history of Roman law, the bourgeois class supported the views and ideas of European thinkers about the necessity of forming modern centralized states.

Not anymore based on the divine laws of the Church, such states was derived from the will of the people. Hence, the relations between the state and nation were defined based on mutual rights, not coercive power. Although nation-states emerged after the Peace of Westphalia in the seventeenth century, it basically developed in the nineteenth century and became a dominant model for building modern communities. After the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empire, the model became a concern for those societies that had emerged after the collapse and dissolution, and was regarded as the only model for nation-state building. What drew more attention than the model, were centralization, bureaucracy, and regular army without considering the legal aspects of this phenomenon or even the characteristics of the native eastern communities. This ineffective use regardless of the governmental and religious traditions in Iran and Turkey, led to the emergence of dictatorships in both countries after the First World War, i.e. the states with military nature and leaders known as men of order.

Before those men of order began to implement the European model of nation-state building in their countries, the Islamic laws and traditions were the legal basis and the identity of the people was recognized and defined in the light of Islam and the Islamic Ummah. Therefore, the greatest contrast or even the major conflict that was created at the very beginning was the contrast between the Islamic and Middle Eastern identity and the modern model and man, which still exists. The present study aimed to examine the role and impact of Islamic identity, or more broadly the Middle Eastern identity, in the process of nation-state building in Iran and Turkey. The paper also includes



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a comparative study on the impact of the religious and western pattern on the phenomena of nation-states in Iran and Turkey. The present study is a descriptive analytical study with a comparative approach, while using a theoretical model, which is called imagined community coined by Benedict Anderson, to analyze the data.

## 1. Islamic Identity

Identity is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon first introduced in psychology, then sociology, political sciences, and other branches of humanities. Identity includes different meanings, from individual identity to group and collective identities and, indeed, human identity in a broader sense. In general, "Identity is the set of behavioral characteristics of an individual or group associated with self-awareness of our existence and awareness of the others' existence. We and others are two sides of a coin, and one without another is meaningless. In other words, comparing oneself with others makes one more aware of the differences between oneself and them or the differences between the own social group and others' social groups in order to build a unique and distinct identity." (Sharafi, 2001, p. 95)

Identity becomes a more important issue for researchers in various fields when taken into consideration not only on an individual level but also a social level. Social identity means recognizing oneself as a social being. Individuals achieve self-images in social processes through which individuals and "themselves" are shaped and distinguish themselves from other individuals and communities in their social relationships (Jenkins, 2002, p. 7). The social identity can be defined on both individual and collective levels. The first level includes the individual socialization, and the second level reports on the formation of social groups based on knowledge of common interests.

An individual's social identity is formed in the process of socialization. In social relationships, individuals become aware of their self-image by which they develop self-concepts, become aware of the expectations of others, and achieve a self-definition in a dialectical relationship. Thus, the individual's self-awareness reflects the others' image of him (Cosser, 2008, p. 410).

In addition to a large number of social identities, religion appears as a constructive element of collective identity as cultural memory in most societies. In social terms, there are various functions for religion, some of which play a key role in creating a common cultural identity. "Religion can



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create a common belief system for people in order to create a common cultural identity. The function of this system is to give meaning to realities by regulating the general concepts of existence. Accordingly, one can speak of religious knowledge as a source of ultimate meaning, which links diverse sociocultural elements to each other and provides identity and solidarity." (Ismaili, 2006, p. 8).

However, given the plurality and variety of Islamic social identities in terms of Islamic identity, it is worth-noting that there are a large number of different groups, races, ethnicities, and nationalities. An Islamic solution to resolving the differences among Muslim communities, a large part of which resulted from that plurality and variety in such communities, is the creation of cultural solidarity embodied within the concept of Ummah (community). The concept that is used in other divine religions, emphasizes the solidarity between such diverse groups based on common components. What is called "Islamic Ummah" in terms of identity, is based on, in fact, the characteristics of the individual's individual identity, in addition to what have been attributed to him by Islam. Then, here we will deal with the criteria with Islamic nature before which, however, it is necessary to mention the three main and common functions of the religion as follows:

1. The interpretation of the world, limitations, and human pain and suffering
2. The recommendation for a specific way of life
3. The use of the basis of traditions, mottos, institutions, and practices to provide the interpretation and recommendation (Sharafi, 1380, p. 95)

Accordingly, the Islamic criteria and identity are based on general aspects that include the three functions above. However, the second question is: "what is the particular aspect?" In other words, the question is what identity there is in Islam that not found in other religions. In fact, the "Islamic identity" includes a set of characteristics that are common between religions that an individual should have, and there are also other characteristics specific to Islam that a Muslim individual should have as well. Therefore, the study first needed to focus on those characteristics that are primarily specific to Islam and not found in any other religions, and then on those characteristics that are considered to be a criterion for being a Muslim with an Islamic identity. In other words, one is not considered a Muslim if not having them.



# **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

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This approach brings us closer to what is being interpreted in Islamic theology and jurisprudence as the necessities of Islam. The necessities of Islam are those things not having that means we are not really Muslims, and not that we are not just considered pious Muslims. A Muslim is never considered to be an unbeliever for committing a sin. Hence, Islamic theologians and jurists posed a question: "what are the necessities of Islam?" There are different answers to such a question among them. Some of them regarded the principles of religion, Tawalla and Tabarra, performing religious obligations etc as the necessities of Islam. According to Imam Khomeini, the necessities of Islam are limited to the source and resurrection (Akhundi, 2004, p. 64-65).

If this term is to be moderated, the characteristics of Islamic identity are never as broad as those of a pious Muslim. Belief in the source and resurrection is sufficient for an individual to be given an Islamic identity and become a member of the Islamic Ummah.

## **2. The Phenomena of Nation-States**

### **2.1. State**

The term "state" is derived from the Latin word status, meaning "condition" or "status", and used in English language in the same sense, i.e. position, prestige, and importance.

With regard to the root word of "state", there is a close relationship between social status, the stability of ownership and authority. Naturally, the highest social status equals the largest degree of authority and ownership (Vincent, 1997, p. 36). Hence, the authority and ownership were the two major factors in the formation of states in human history.

Tribal states, city-states, imperial states, territorial states, and modern states emerged based on the types of societies created. In medieval Europe, the territorial states gradually emerged in the late twelfth century; a state governed by kings within a specific realm.

From the Renaissance onwards, there were changes in the meaning of state. The term "state" in the modern sense was first used by Machiavelli, the father of modern political science. In Machiavelli's political view, the state means public power that is different from rulers and reactionary forces. After that, the concept of the modern state became prevalent as the only legitimate source of authority within a national and universal society, and the state was seen as elements composed of territory, people, and independent system.



# The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

Such a major change from feudal to modern states in Europe resulted from the developments in the continent and the historical dynamics, because the European counties were plagued by political divisions and power dispersion before the modern era. Within the Roman Empire, there was no territorial integrity and administrative centralism and the mode of production relied on feudal relations and the allocation of surplus agricultural products to the nobility. Such a situation changed in line with changes in the cultural and economic spheres in Europe. Protestantism was the symbol of cultural change and the emergence of capitalism, and the changes in feudal production relations was a symbol of economic change. It can be claimed that the emergence of centralized authority has been the result of the emergence of modern cultural-economic rationality, which is related, in essence and practice, to the rationality associated with the social and economic division of labor (Dalirpoor, 2006, p. 41).

This characteristic that, in fact, relates to the relationship between state and civil society, is a significant factor in distinguishing a modern state from ancient states, since the formation of civil society is linked to the capitalist economic system. Moreover, although it involves the economic sphere of private for-profit organizations, i.e. commercial and industrial enterprises, or market interest groups etc., it is linked with the civil institutions required to maintain the economic system (the institution that determines the legal and political boundaries, the freedom to conclude contracts for individual, and so on). This is where the key role of the state becomes clear as the representative of the general power or the supreme collective authority and this world becomes clear (Bartaran, 1991, p. 153).

## **2.2. Nation**

The term nation originates from the Latin word *natio*, meaning common ancestor. The current root word means birth, which mainly used as tribe and ancestor, and then people and nation in European languages (Rowland, 2001, p. 243). According to the above definitions, the nation can be considered as a consanguine group having the same ancestry or descent. This meaning was prevalent until the Late Medieval Period in Europe.

The division of the Roman Empire in 396 AD, the division of the Carolingian Empire under the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the formation of local churches in Russia, France, and the Britain, and the spread of the Protestantism in Europe laid the foundations for the emergence of national



## The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

territories. The first major political revolution in Europe, which spread the new meaning of the term “nation”, was the Glorious Revolution also called the Revolution of 1688. Then, it was spread to France. In 1694, the French Academy called the residents of a single state living under common law *nacion*. Finally, the modern meaning of nation was expanded into European political literature after the French Revolution. According to the new meaning, the term referred to those citizens of that a state was a political representative to exercise power. Thus, there was a balance between the concepts of state, nation, territory, and general will (Shams & Yazdani, 2005, p. 81)

Despite the different meanings and origins among European scholars, there are two main schools of thought on the subject in Europe:

1. Primordialism: the followers believe that nations are inherent, natural phenomena.
2. Instrumentalism: the followers believe that the development of concept the nation is the result of the accelerated urbanization process and the spread of education and mass media.

Primordialists also believe that nations are historical phenomena, i.e. they do not believe that the nation is a new concept. From this conception, a new concept was derived "historical nation". The historical nation are those people who are aware of belonging to a stable political entity (Bloom, 1990, p. 46).

The process of nation-building in Europe and North America was not formed in an abstract manner, but through test and experience. European intellectuals have gradually developed it without a specific pattern, the creation of a new social order after massive social changes in the traditional foundations of community. For example, German philosopher Hegel argued that civil society was the prelude to society's return to collective identity and progress towards a national state in the final stages of the transition to the nation-state building in Germany. Hence, he did not considered the political arena belonged to statesmen, but an arena for general wisdom which resulted in the concept of national state (Jalilpour, 2006, p. 40) .

Anthony Smith combined all these elements together, which led to five attributes:

1. historic territory or homeland
2. common myths and historical memories
3. a common, mass public culture
4. common economy with territorial mobility for members



# The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

5. common legal rights and duties for all members (Smith, 1991, p. 60)

In the political development literature, nation-building consists of several stages: the establishment of state power within a certain territory, cultural uniformity through educational systems, the promotion of public participation in politics, and the strengthening of national solidarity and identity through the policy of distribution of welfare services. Nation-building in this sense consists of two dimensions, including the expansion of the state general authority and civil rights of citizens. According to Stein Rokkan's model, the process of nation-building includes economic and cultural unification at elite level, conscription into the army and enrollment in compulsory schools, the burgeoning mass media created channels for direct contact between the central elites and periphery populations, the subject masses were brought into active participation in the workings of the territorial political system, and the administrative apparatus of the state expanded (Aminian & Karimi Ghahroudi, 2012, pp. 72-73).

Some other scholars believe that nation-building involves historical interaction of four series of factors: primary factors, such as ethnicity, script, language, religion; generative factors, including the development of communication and technology, the formation of cities, the emergence of modern armies and centralized monarchies; induced factors, such as language codification in official grammars, the growth of bureaucracies, and the establishment of a national education system; and reactive factors, that is the defense of oppressed identities and interests subdued by a dominant social group, triggering the search for alternative in the collective memory of people (Qavam & Zargar, 2009, p. 216).

In the nineteenth century, it was attempted to rely on cultural elements, language, history, and in general a unified national identity, but historical experience showed that such an identity does not exist and that nations are a combination of different ethnic and linguistic elements, especially in large geographic units, that are interconnected in a political and economic structure. Therefore, the nation began to exist during a political process in the modern times, and is more of a construct than a naturalist category (Brubaker, 1992, p.87).

### **3. The Concept of Nation-State**

Nation state, which is a hybrid word, is completely a new concept unlike nation and state. For Anthony Giddens, the nation-state is a relatively new political and historical construct and





## The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando*, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304

arrangement that dates back to the late eighteenth century, the imagined community and its representative, which derives its legitimacy from the concept of national sovereignty (Giddens, 2003, pp. 49-50). Throughout history, the ideal of having a powerful state has always had priority over the development of a nation-state, while a powerful modern state was established in the seventeenth century as the outcome of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The development of states occurred with a slight delay in the eighteenth century, and in particular the nineteenth. The spread of nationalist movements in Europe just resulted in the development of the concept of nation-state. The nation-state building is a process in which a political community strives to gain, maintain, and promote its sovereignty and independence through power accumulation and institutional capacity development. Achieving such a goal is entirely dependent on the increase of national-social solidarity and integration and political stability. The goal of such a process is the evolution of the state as a powerful construct and the nation as a unified social construct with a separate identity and the close relationship between these two. From an international point of view, they are intertwined and inseparable, that is, the nation considers the state to be of its own and belonged to its own (Qavam & Zargar, 2007, p. 48).

There is always a two-way relationship between the state and nation. The state needs its nation and solidarity to ensure consolidation and continuity, and the nation needs a powerful state for a better and more institutional power accumulation and for maintaining its distinct, separate identity. State-building is the creation and strengthening of the necessary institutions to support the long-term political, economic, and social development. Those institutions are the legislature, the judicial system, executive agencies such as education and transportation sector (ibid., p. 215). There are two models, European and American model, about the priority of state-building or nation-building. In the European model, the nation first forms and then the state is created. This model is top-down. In contrast, the state has priority over the nation in the American model, for which the formation of the United States is a prime example (ibid., p. 224).

### **3.1. Anderson's theory and the preconditions for the formation of a nation-state**

An imagined community is a concept coined by Benedict Anderson. As Anderson puts it, a nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their



# The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 2004, p.15).

From the perspective of Anderson, the imagined community is formed when true communities do not exist. The imagined community reflects the common wishes and ambitions of a nation that can fill their emotional void. People strengthen their ties with this community with a common sense of belonging. An imagined community is not always established with objective and specific objects, since a mysterious and vague memory of a common past, territory, and geography might be the source of the emergence of an imagined community. Anderson believes that the formation of an imagined community is a prerequisite to the formation of a modern nation-state. Those nation-states lack imagined communities will certainly face great difficulties in nation-building.

### 3.2. The phases of nation-state building

1. Establishment of the state power within the boundaries of a specific territory
2. Cultural unification through educational systems, promotion of public participation in politics
3. Strengthening national solidarity and identity through the policy of distribution of welfare services
4. Expansion of the administrative apparatus of the state
5. Compulsory conscription into the army and enrollment in schools
6. Burgeoning mass media for direct contact between the central elites and periphery populations

Territory			National solidarity and integration			Political stability		
Stabilizing national borders	Full national sovereignty	Solving border issues and removing any external threats	National identity	Citizenship	Centripetal convergence	Stable transfer of power	Efficiency of army	Progress of democracy and democratic Institutions



# The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

Power and rights	Nationalism	Efficient institutionalization
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Factors of a successful nation-state

## 4. Historical Components of the Nation-State in Iran

The historical components of nation-state formation in Iran are rooted in history and ancient myths. Myths, especially their political aspects, have generally become a means of contextualizing the political culture in communities, and are demonstrated as perfect examples and paradigms of nation-building processes/projects for future generations. What matters in this regard is how to use myths in national construction and, consequently, for conceptualizing the political values for the elite to shape the attitudes of people. Therefore, myths naturally, unawares, and sometimes deliberately play a decisive role in the process of nation formation.

However, this issue more involved the concept of Greater Iran and its transfer to the collective memory of Iranians than myth, language, or even race in Iran (Aminian & Mashhadi; 2012, pp. 28-29). The historical components of nation-state building in Iran are as follows:

- 1 The development of the concept of Greater Iran since the Sassanid era and its transfer to the collective memory of the Iranian nation, which played a significant role in unifying all Iranians of any race and religion.
- 2 The lasting reality of nation-state in the history of Iran (the Greater Iran/ Iran Zamin).The Safavids, who formed an Iranian central government after Islam, established a strong bond between Shiism and Iranian identity. Despite their tribal power structure, they gave their government an Iranian identity.
- 3 The need for both the nation and state in the process of nation-building without priority.
4. Iranshahr has always carried a territorial and geographic meaning, which carrying religious symbols (Mazdaism) and governmental symbols (Farah Izadi and bureaucracy).
5. According to Benedict Anderson theory, Greater Iran is that imagined community or common community, to which all humans belong throughout history, especially after the Sassanid.

### 4.1. Islam and Nation-state building in Modern Iran

The National Identity Building and Iranian Characteristic Change Program was a major aspect of Reza Shah's reforms. The reforms was not something that arose from his military spirit, but the



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*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

reflection of the intellectual ambitions dating from the Constitutional Movement. The intellectuals and modernists considered the only way to achieve European modernity to avoid the cumbersome traditions and religious culture. They believed that Iran could be renovated and they could pave the way for a nation-state building based on national and Iranian identity through the establishment of a powerful, centralized, and modernist government. They emphasized the importance of citizenship education, which resulted in the creation of a link between the militants and politicians who prepared many measures and plans for the citizenship education and nation-building. A major measure was national identity building based on Iranian identity with an archaistic essence, in contrast to the Shiite and Islamic identity of the Iranian people. An Iranian identity in contrast to a non-Iranian identity, indeed, of an Arabic-Islamic nature, was the issue of great importance in the government's cultural and educational programs. The compulsory and exclusive education for modern knowledge, self-refinement, and strengthening conscience and the sense of patriotism were what created a new educational system against the traditional system (Azari, 1995, p. 334). Identity building measures were taken through external features, national integration was brought against the idea of the Islamic Ummah, language and race were defined as the pillars of Iranian nationality, it was decided to ban using foreign scripts and languages in the press, the integrated education of the Persian language was promoted regardless of the different conditions in the provinces and regions with multicultural structures. Unlike in Turkey, it did not go so far as to change the alphabet. The Law of Sejel (the first Iranian identity document) was considered another step for nation-building for developing the concept of territorial identity and the sense of belonging to the country. Changing the month names to Persian names, the culture of ancient Persians was somehow revived. Unlike in Turkey where the clergy was dissolved in the governmental system, the Iranian clerical establishment was the subject of conflict between two schools of thought, i.e. secularism and religion. And, they both preserved their autonomy. Although Reza Shah made great efforts to weaken the position of Ulama (Islamic scholars) and reduced the religion's scope to personal matters and individual beliefs by adopting the Western civil law system, the Islamic Shari'a and Shiite jurisprudence were the basis of legislation in personal lives, in contrast to Turkey. As a result, the Iranian society never became completely secular unlike the Turkish (Deilemi Moezi, 2007, pp. 23-24).



## **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

In the nation-state building process led by Reza Shah's contemporary scholars, a link was created between this subjective conception and the concept of pre-Islamic monotheism by considering the Shi'a as Iranianized Islam as the product of Orientalists and Islamologists' theoretical ideas. Similarly, there were comparisons made between the modern Pahlavi State and ancient Persian states. What stirred up fierce controversy was the Islamic orientation "God, the Shah, the Homeland" coined by the Imperial system as an Ahura-based principle against the Islamic orientation and the Iranian people.

Despite all the efforts, Reza Shah's National Identity Building Program, which was the basis of nation-state building, failed to completely eliminate the Iranians' religious and ethnic principles. In practice, he only succeeded in building a specific identity in the identity hierarchy in Iran by relying on the Pahlavi absolute rule (Hambley, 1992, p. 36). In fact, the Iranians maintained their religious and historical identity.

### **5. The Historical Components of Nation-State in Turkey**

Although Turkey is a political unit of Ottoman remains, the Turkish history lies in the Eurasian plains, the ancient myths, Asian Turkish communities from the perspective of historical identity. Therefore, there are many similarities with the historical components of nation building in Iran. But Iran's territorial identity feature, Greater Iran, what Turkey lacks can be considered as the main difference between the two countries in this regard. However, the historical components of nation-state building of Turkey are as follows:

1. In Turkey, the historical nation formed based on the common descent of the Turks, which lacked a territorial geography unlike Greater Iran, but rather with expanded borders based on nomadic life. If once there was some claims about the land of Turan in the process of nation-building in Turkey, it has its origins in Greater Iran and is derived from a literal phrase derived from Shahnameh, which was used by Ziya Gokalp, the father of Turkish nationalism, in the contemporary era (Gokalp, 1972, p. 32). The term was then commonly used by pan-Turkists as their original and legendary homeland. But, Turan or Turkestan located in the heart of Central Asia had never been an intrinsic and historical feature of Turkish identity, and has been made up by Turkish nationalists in the modern era, contrary to the Iranian concept of Great Iran. Hence, it cannot be considered to be an element contained in the historical memory of Turks.



## **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

2. Tribal state was the pre-modern form of nation-state building in Turkey, which originates from the main characteristic of the Turks as they were always in power and in control of vast areas in Asia, Europe, and Africa. The Ottoman regime established after the First World War and collapsed with the emergence of the Turkish Republic, was originally a tribal state whose basis of legitimacy and citizenship system was derived from the Ottoman dynasty.

3. In the process of the nation-state building in Turkey, the state has priority over the nation.

4. According to Andersen's theory, the Turkish imagined community is a large part of the global geography with two distinct features: the historical Turkish rule in different parts of the world, and the Turks' power and military force what always brought them in power as the men of sword. This imagined community redefined and rebuilt itself through civilization, linguistic and historical elements and virtues in the Turkish republic era.

### **5.1. Islam and Nation-state building in Modern Turkey**

To understand the complexities of religious identity and the nation-state building in the Turkish community, there must be a conceptual-historical distinction between the two terms “secularism” and “laicism”. Laicism gradually emerged after the secularism of the early decades in the republic period since the 1950s to the twentieth century. In particular, the 1970s which was, on the one hand, the years of public silence (the silence of the tradition, the rejection of the Ottoman heritage) and, on the other hand, the hopeful period due to warm relations with the West and Western powerful states, was a promising period for future development and progress (Tahaei, 2001, pp. 121-22).

The first republic period in Turkey was directly inherited from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, which included the intellectual and institutional traditions and structures, in particular the modernist influence of Tanzimat (1829-1876). This period of reformation created a big gap between the main elements of the government, i.e. Ulama, with the bureaucratic and military groups. Nonetheless, the reformation provided the necessary context for the reunification of the Ulama with the masses. This combination of Sunni scholars and ordinary people was in direct contradiction to the caliphate political model, according to which the Ulama were considered part of the government. But more importantly, the cause of concern for the government was the followers of Sufism, and this was due to their political role in the community. Sufists showed



## **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

hostility towards the government. Another objective the government was pursuing was to prevent the Alawites from engaging in political activities (Uluç, 2012, p.7).

In the Turkish Constitution of 1928, Islam was declared the official religion in Turkey. But, it changed to secularism in 1937. The first strategy of the Republic of Turkey to manage and reduce Islamism was the establishment of Dianat Organization within the prime minister's apparatus in order to interpret and implement an intellectual narrative of Islam, which can be called "Governmental Islam".

From the very beginning of the establishment of the Republic, there was a fundamental difference between Turkish nationalism and Islam do to opposite positions on Western modernization. For the government, nationalism was a means of nation-state building. The Turkish nationalism were based on modernization and control, and found a military-political character from the very beginning (Caymaz, 2007, p.57).

Modernization presented a simple and primitive conception of nationalism that everything is unifying through describing the nation as a homogeneous, monoracial, monolingual, and monoreligious (Sunni) entity. According to Anderson, the nation-state building was developed with an emphasis on cultural elements such as language and nation, which is somehow the legacy of the Enlightenment in Europe. From the perspective of the leaders in Modern Turkey, the nation-state building needed to be based on no legacy from the past, the strongest of which was the notion of being a Muslim. Accordingly, the government began to promote the separation of affairs of sociopolitical nature, and at the personal level in some cases, and Islam. Nevertheless, the only source of collective identity that was replaced was the abstract meaning of nation. Islam and Islamic identity were viewed as a small cultural characteristic in comparison with the modern Turkish identity, which was based on the principle of citizenship that itself was based on the belief in universal human rights. And, the gap caused by this reductive view of Islam was meant to be filled through the spread of modern values (Alakel, 2011, p.12).

Therefore, culture was correlated with nationalist government policies. Such a correlation was very important for the government because it created a kind of general legitimacy. During the Turkish War of Independence, the religion effectively resulted in accomplishing the pragmatic objectives of nationalist secularists, united Anatolian elders, religious leaders, and peasants against



## **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

aggression and occupation of the enemy. And, the religion was used as a means of legitimacy to confront the Western invaders, which secularists called “Jihad” (Berkes, 1964, p.96)

The threat posed by Sufists was the Turkish government’s another challenge of unifying people through nationalism and secularism from the very beginning. Such groups, not absorbed into the Dianat Organization, triggered the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 as an instance of ethnic separationism. Since 1930, the government adopted a more radical approach to dealing with them, and turned to military-based secularism. In this regard, Ataturk said, "the Republic of Turkey will never be a country for sheikhs, dervishes, and lunatics. The best and credible doctrine is civilization." (ibid., p. 102)

The period before the 1950s, we call it the age of secularism in Turkey, the Republic of Turkey adopted a more positive attitude to the worldly interests of faithful religious faith through enjoying a greater degree of public national originality and cultural life, despite the principles of laicism established in the next period. This orientation that was based on a principle “religion for us”, including individuals, groups, and governmental elites, and not necessarily “we for religion”, included the principle of political stability and the doctrine of "reason of state" in the first years of the republic.

In 1932, the period of laicism began in Turkey with two approaches to Islam. According to the first approach, Islam was a superficial, delusive, and superstitious religion. In the second approach, Islam was regarded as a religion that was not against knowledge and progress. The latter was called republican tradition, in other words, Islam was considered as a gentle religion that confirmed republicanism serving a secular state. According to Ataturk, Islam was a religion adaptable to the modern civilization that could be useful for the Republic of Turkey. "Our religion, Islam, is fully compatible with the reality of thought and logic and is the most reasonable and natural religion." (Mardin, 1998, p.66)

In such an atmosphere, the masses and their emotional power derived from religious beliefs were assumed as an arable land for sowing modernist policies. The situation ultimately could have led to the belief that there would be no need for religion in national policy-making process in Turkey for international benefits. This laicist attitude mainly includes the belief in the possibility of learning from Islamism (Tahaei, 2001, p. 130).





# The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

After the Second World War and the emergence of a multi-party political system in Turkey, the general public focused on a nationalized Islam in order to legitimize official policy. Since secular nationalism lacked historical background, Islam was used to provide the background and legitimacy. After the 1960 Turkish coup d'état, Islam developed another function as a tactic to counteract the leftist opponents and enemies. Thus, it went beyond the Western meaning of secularism. The years after the coup was the accelerating phase of the weakening of laicist views in the Turkish political arena due to the establishment of civil religion (in order to confront socialism) and strategic attention to religion as the most important means of decision-making and obtaining legitimacy (Kellas, 1998, p. 234).

In summary, Islam was in the middle levels of Turkish political arena, rather than being banned from entering the public domain. And, the modern elites were those who took part in religious politics in Turkey with a modernizing motivation.

## 5. Comparative Study of Nation-State Building Based on Islamic identity in Iran and Turkey (Similarities)

Iran and Turkey
The state Islamic identity of before the establishment of the modern state: the Protected Provinces, Dar al-Islam, Dar al-Khalilah
The transition from empire to national government
Imperative nation-state building
Nation-state building as a type of reaction to foreign occupation and domestic insecurity
Underestimating transnational identities and an emphasis on cultural integration, especially in the linguistic arena
Using religious elements like social ethics and the concept of jihad for strengthening and unifying the nation and defending the national territory
An emphasis on both the ancient heritage of the nation and modern values
The priority of economic and industrial development over political-cultural development, do to which modernism was characterized as anti-religious



## The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

### 6. Comparative Study of Nation-State Building Based on Islamic identity in Iran and Turkey (Differences)

Turkey	Iran
Considering the Turkish religious identity the same as Islamic identity due to the lack of a monotheistic religious system in the pre-Islamic Turkish history. Thus, the concept of Turks and Muslim were melded.	The transfer of the most of the religious elements of Iranian identity to the Islamic era, and building an Iranian-Islamic identity. In some cases, there are equivalents such as Ahriman is equal to the devil or the giving Nowruz a religious identity.
Abandoning the tradition of the Ottoman caliphate-monarchy and establishing the new Republic of Turkey	Continuation of the Imperial tradition in Iran and Farah Izadi
The collapse of the sultanate and the emergence of the republican system	Continuation of patriarchy
The establishment of a religious institute (Dianat Organization) within a secular political system	Maintaining the independence of the religious institute from the central government
The rule of positive laws and the reduction of religion to a national common sense to support and confirm republicanism	Continuation and formalization of Islam and some of the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence and sharia in the structure of the constitution and individual rights
The priority of technocracy over religious intellectualism in the intellectual space of the community, the result of which was the weakness and ineffectiveness of religious intellectual literature and, in contrast, the growth of technocrats)	The priority of religious intellectualism over technocracy in the intellectual space of the community, the result of which was the production and the development of religious intellectual literature)



## The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

Islam became a small cultural characteristic and was not considered as a general issue, but correlated with nationalist policies.	Shia became a characteristic feature of Iranian culture, which strengthened its Iranian nature despite of the archaistic government policies.
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### Conclusion

Although the phenomena of nation-states originate from the sociohistorical developments in the Western Europe, which led to the formation of modern national states, it was used as a model for nation-state building all over the world since the nineteenth century. The uses of the Western model were often made without carefully considering the Western political, cultural, and historical experiences. As if there is only one model and that is the Western model. The spread of this model has gradually led all countries, including emerging states in the Middle East, to get involved in the nation-building projects.

Iran and Turkey were no exception, as the process of nation-building were pursued with similarities and differences in both countries. This is what was related to the establishment of a centralized national government, a modern army, and the adoption of Western modernism. Both governments adopted one approach. There was, however, differences in the way of dealing with the main identity feature in Iran and Turkey, i.e. religion. Due to the authority and independence of the Shiite clerical class, the Iranian government accepted the principle of Islam and Shi'i jurisprudence as an integral part of the nation-state building process, with other elements like history. By accepting laicism in Turkey, Islam reduced to a factor in social solidarity for to be used by the secular republic. The Turkish state thus pursued nation-state building based on nationalism, the principles of Kemalism, and Western values. The process of nation-building in these two countries has not yet been completed and is regarded as an unfinished project, for which there are a number of causes. The causes generally originate from the early phases of the nation-state building process, which continued to exist even in the next phases. The major causes are the emphasis on the cultural similarity of elements in nation-building such as language and history, and not taking into account other elements like the rule of law, civil rights, and civil order. On the other hand, romantic nationalism with symbolic, virtual, and emotional dimensions was used to unify the nation instead of the common will of the people as the legal basis. Given the historical background of nation-states in Europe, the reliance on the popular vote can be taken into



## **The Role and Impact of Islamic Identity in the Process of Nation-State Building in Iran and Turkey**

*Revista Publicando, 5 No 15. (2). 2018, 1537-1558. ISSN 1390-9304*

consideration for the last phases of the process. However, there was a military rule instead of a legal basis for the relations between state and nation in the Iranian and Turkish governmental structures. In addition, there are other factors affecting the process of nation-building in Iran and Turkey resulting in an extended period of time, including the tumultuous environment of the Middle East, the artificial political units created through colonialism, states with dynastic and rentier nature.

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