

Separatism — the Main Threat for Internal Security

Tetiana Berkii

ORCID: 0000-0002-5816-9680

Lviv State University of Internal Affairs, Ukraine

Abstract. This article is devoted to separatism as a global phenomenon of modern times. Separatism is considered a large-scale phenomenon of the present, which can cause irreparable consequences for state independence. The concept of separatism is analysed in accordance with different dictionaries that interpret this phenomenon. The concept of separatism is analysed using the comparative method, namely, separatism is compared with the solar system. The main types of separatism are analysed, depending of the region, country and the sphere of its expression. Examples of each of them are given in the article. If we consider separatism as a movement or a process that wants to separate from the state, then, depending on the purpose, the following forms of separatism are distinguished: secession, irredentism, and devolution. The positions of the representatives of the scientific world community about secession are highlighted, its main advantages and disadvantages are revealed. The article highlights the interesting positions of scientists who consider separatism as a positive phenomenon in the process of nation-building. As an example of irredentism, the situation with the Crimea is described. Crimea was an autonomous region within the nation of Ukraine until March 2014 after a shady referendum it was taken over by the Russian police.

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0013.8210

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0013.8210>

Keywords: conflict, secession, irredentism, devolution, Catalonia, Crimea.

'When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you.'

Winston S. Churchill

Introduction

Today there are almost no completely homogeneous countries in the world. Most states have national minorities who have their own history, culture, traditions, and language, and some of them require independence and their own state. This is perhaps the main cause of the disintegration processes taking place in the world. One of these processes is separatism.

Today separatism is probably one of the most difficult problems of the international community. The main object of the study is separatism as a phenomenon that jeopardizes national security and the internal stability of the state.

The main methods used in this article are the methods of analysis, comparison, the historical method, and others.

The main purpose of this article is to analyse the most common forms of separatism and the forms of its display, as well as the influence of separatism on the internal politics of each state in particular, as well as on the world geopolitical state.

The phenomenon of separatism was studied by different scientists such as R. Burbach, W. Robinson, W. Beck, J. Kellas and others. In these and other writings, for the most part, the right of peoples to self-determination and the comparison with separatism, as well as the negative or positive changes taking place in the states that have faced separatism have been described.

Main Part

What are the forces which bind together the different elements of a state? Why do some disintegrations occur by stages over several centuries whereas others occur suddenly? Such questions have aroused the curiosity of numerous sociologists and historians.

The spectre of separatism seems to be hovering over Europe these days. From Belgium, Britain and the Balkans to Catalonia and the Caucasus, regional independence or autonomy movements are gaining strength everywhere. And unless the European Union comes to grips with its current existential crisis, history suggests they could become even stronger and more successful, transforming Europe we have known for the past twenty years¹.

What is separatism? According to the Oxford dictionary separatism is the advocacy or practice of separation of a certain group of people from a larger body on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or gender².

According to the Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603–1689, the name separatism was given to those English Protestants who rejected the Church of England as unreformed and separated themselves from it during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries into 'gathered' congregations, voluntary associations of like-minded believers living under a Christian covenant³.

We can also compare separatism with the solar system — the sun's attraction being replaced by the central government and the planets by the various regional components which make up a nation-state. If the central government weakens, some regional components will demand autonomy or even independence. The most peripheral groups will detach first, followed by groups which are closer to the core of the nation-state⁴.

Generally speaking, in contemporary politics separatism amounts to the unwillingness of a group of people or of a region to feel an integral part of the community or of the state to which it belongs. In other words it applies political alienation or lack of national identity and loyalty⁵.

¹ Bardos G.N, Spectre of separatism haunts Europe, January 13, 2013. *Electronic source:* <https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/spectre-separatism-haunts-europe-7979>, accessed: 5.06.2019.

² English Oxford Living Dictionary. *Electronic source:* <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/separatism>, accessed: 15.07.2019.

³ Fritze R.H, Robison W.B, Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603–1689. *Electronic source:* <https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=8goko0Lpr5sC&pg=PA483&lpg=PA483&dq=separatists+dictionary&source=bl&ots=JFEq4BSu9O&sig=xFOtff3xfMwbsSb2YkM5d78bKKM&hl=uk&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewii5cLXkZ3eAhWIKCwKHZYvCjc4ChDoATADegQIBBAB#v=onepage&q&f=false>, accessed: 5.06.2019.

⁴ Abedin N, The politics of separatism: Some reflections and questions. The Round Table. *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*. *Electronic source:* <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00358538908453928?journalCode=ctr20>, accessed: 15.07.2019.

⁵ Tsebenko O, The main forms of separatism: theoretical and methodological aspect, 2014. *Electronic source:* <http://ena.lp.edu.ua/bitstream/ntb/24536/1/9-44-51.pdf>, accessed: 17.07.2019.

Apparently, separatism has its own features depending on the country or region. Depending on the sphere of separatism, it is possible to distinguish political, economic, legal and ideological separatism.⁶

Economic separatism. This type is characterized by the attempt which may be accompanied by self-isolation or reorientation to foreign economic partners, the region's exit from the national economic system, and the breach of all economic ties which may be accompanied by self-isolation or reorientation to foreign economic partners.⁷

Catalonia is probably one of the most appropriate example of this type of separatism. A central complaint among Catalans is that they are massively subsidizing the rest of Spain. They see the central Madrid government as a money pit where their taxes go and never return. They are tired of floating the rest of the country while their provincial bridges, roads, and physical plant go unmaintained. The Catalans want out.⁸

The funds that were given back to Catalonia are much lower than the taxes that were taken. For every Euro that Catalans pay in taxes to the Spanish government, 57 cents are remitted back to Catalonia.⁹

There is no single position about the reasons of economic separatism. Some authors argue that poorer regions are likely to break up and others — that secessionist's sentiments develop in regions that are wealthier than the rest of the state. Poorer regions may feel a greater sense of grievance and blame the state for their failure to develop, or they may fear competition with their neighbors. There are examples of both rich and poor groups seeking to secede: Bangladesh and Southern Sudan figuring among the relatively poorer separatists and Congo's Katanga among the relatively richer ones¹⁰.

Political separatism. As Catalonian poet Salvador Espriu so eloquently put it in his 1968 book *La Pell de Brau* (The Bull-Hide), '...men cannot exist if they are not free.' Freedom to most people is the ability to choose the course of their own life without the interference of others, be it other people or a larger governmental body¹¹.

According to the definition that is given by 'Politological encyclopedic dictionary' separatism is the movement for territorial secession of this or that part of the country with the purpose of formation of a new state or receiving a certain degree of autonomy as for language, religion and national issues¹².

⁶ Ross D, Separatism, Globalization, and the European Union. *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series*, 2015, Vol.15, Issue 1. *Electronic source*: http://aei.pitt.edu/74525/1/Dayton_SeparatismGlobalizationEU.pdf, *accessed*: 5.06.2019.

⁷ Lytvynenko K.O, Separatism As A Subject Of Social And Political Philosophy, [in:] *Fundamental and applied researches in practice of leading scientific schools*, 2015, Vol. 6, Issue 12.

⁸ Boyle K, Englebert P, The Primacy of Politics in Separatist Dynamics, 2006. *Electronic source*: http://cega.berkeley.edu/assets/miscellaneous_files/wgape/10_Englebert.pdf, *accessed*: 5.06.2019. Ryabinin Y, The basic causes of the temporary separatism. *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society*, 2017, Vol. 7(1), pp. 5–9.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Lytvynenko K.O, Separatism As A Subject Of Social And Political Philosophy, [in:] *Fundamental and applied researches in practice of leading scientific schools*, 2015, Vol. 6, Issue 12.

¹¹ Boyle K, Englebert P, The Primacy of Politics in Separatist Dynamics, 2006. *Electronic source*: http://cega.berkeley.edu/assets/miscellaneous_files/wgape/10_Englebert.pdf, *accessed*: 5.06.2019.

¹² Ryabinin Y, The basic causes of the temporary separatism. *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society*, 2017, Vol. 7(1), pp. 5–9.

For example, the European Union's institutions have enabled separatist movements. European regionalization has decentralized authority from nation-states to regional governments and centralized authority to supranational institutions. This devolution of authority gives sub-state regions more autonomy and enables them to pursue their own interests over national interests. Separatist movements have already benefited from the European Union by creating transnational networks through it. Separatist regions, such as Catalonia and Flanders, have promoted the spread of their culture and economic relationships with other regions in the EU.¹³

Ethnic separatism. Almost all states of the world are multiethnic that creates the grounds for potential conflicts.

Michael Brown attempted to distinguish between 'natural', social and political factors responsible for the beginning of the conflict, among them: weakness of the state, problems with ensuring internal security, economic discrimination, etc.¹⁴

Ethnic conflicts are not caused directly by inter-group differences or the stresses of modern life within a global economy. But intense ethnic conflicts are most often caused by collective fears for their safety, danger of denial to resolve their strategic dilemmas. With information failures, problems of credible commitment, and the security dilemmas, groups become apprehensive, the state weakens and conflicts become more likely to occur. Ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs, operating within groups, build upon these fears of insecurity and polarize society. Political memories and emotions also magnify these anxieties, driving groups further apart. Together, these between-group and within-group strategic interactions produce a toxic brew of distrust and suspicion that can explode into murderous violence.¹⁵

The example of ethnic separatism may be the dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR) into various ethnic nationalities such as Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine; Basque, Galician and Catalan separatists in Spain as well as France; debated separation of French-speaking Quebec from the State of Canada, etc.¹⁶

Racist separatism. Discrimination against people and their oppression solely due to their race, leads to the eventual advocacy of a separatist movement in order to provide a means to escape the oppression. They seek separate educational and corporate institutions as well as separate societies. Here are examples of racist separatism: black separatism movement in the U.S.A questions the efficacy and merit of government-enforced integration, when racial discrimination is still widespread among the populace; Hawaiian populations seek a sovereign status.¹⁷

The following forms of separatism are known as secession, irredentism, devolution.

Secession is a process of separation in order to create its own, separate state. The idea of secession has been around ever since there have been governments.

¹³ Ross D, Separatism, Globalization ..., *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Mosora M.A, Ethnic separatism: theoretical basis of causes. *Prekarpathian bulletin of the Shevchenko scientific society*, 2016, Vol. 3(35).

¹⁵ Rothchild D, Lake D.A, Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict. *International Security*, 1996, Vol. 21, No. 2. *Electronic source*: <http://users.metu.edu.tr/utuba/Lake.pdf>, accessed: 17.07.2019.

¹⁶ The Evil of Separatism Explained with Examples. *Electronic source*: <https://opinionfront.com/what-does-separatism-mean-with-examples>, 18.07.2019.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Scientists, experts still cannot reach a common conclusion about secession. Some people consider secession to be a positive phenomenon, compared with the right to self-determination, while others, by contrast, act as confident opponents of secession. For example one of the strongest arguments in favor of secession is in the US — Declaration of Independence. According to the Declaration of Independence governments that do not have the support of the people may be altered or abolished and replaced with a new government that more closely corresponds to their wishes. When is secession justified? In a word — always. There is no legitimate reason for preventing people from having the government of their choice, even if their choice is a poor one. Government is legitimate only to the extent that it exists by the consent of the governed. To argue against secession is to argue against the right of individuals to have the government of their choice.

The second side of the secession is described by Harry Beran, a twentieth-century political theorist. He thought that secession should be prohibited if the group wish to secede. But how, exactly, is secession to be achieved? Should it be unilateral or must all parties agree, those leaving as well as those who are being left? Which unit is appropriate? A state? A portion of a state? A county? A village? A house-hold? An individual?

Part of the difficulty in applying the theory of secession is that most states do not accept the general principle that those who are dissatisfied with the present regime have the right to abandon it. Indeed, governments typically feel threatened when a faction in one country attempts to secede, fearing that the sentiment could spread to a portion of their own population. Even constitutional protection of the right to secede may not be sufficient. The Soviet Constitution permitted secession, yet Gorbachev sent troops to several Soviet Republics to prevent the citizens from exercising this constitutional right. If the right to secede is violated in a state that guarantees the right in its constitution, how much more difficult would it be to exercise the right in a state that does not guarantee the right? Another problem is how to protect the rights of groups that become minorities in the newly created states.¹⁸

The term irredentism refers to any political or mass movement intended to claim a territory on national, historical, or ethnic grounds. The word's origin lies in the Italian term 'irredento' which means unredeemed, and it initially denoted an Italian political movement which gained popularity in the late 1800s into the early 1900s which intended to detach mainly Italian-speaking regions from Switzerland as well as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The movement sought to include these areas in the new Italian State. An irredenta is a term given to an area that may be potentially claimed.¹⁹

Irredentism is associated with secessionism, but the two concepts are distinct. Merging does not take place in secessionism, whereas irredentism involves the separation of a territory from a state and its subsequent inclusion into an existing state. Research on the two concepts suggests that irredentism is more likely

¹⁸ McGee R.W, Secession reconsidered. *Journal of libertarian studies*, 1994, Vol. 11, Issue 1. *Electronic source:* https://mises-media.s3.amazonaws.com/11_1_2_0.pdf?file=1&type=document, accessed: 5.06.2019.

¹⁹ What is Irredentism? *Electronic source:* <https://www.worldatlas.com/what-is-irredentism.html>, accessed: 17.07.2019.

to turn violent than secessionism. Secessionist conflicts are more often than not advanced by minority groups who because of their marginalization may lack sufficient military resources. Irredentism conflicts, on the other hand, are championed by sovereign states who boast the kind of military strength required to participate in full-scale wars.²⁰

An example of irredentism can be analysed in the situation with the Crimea. The Putin-led Russian government objects to the term 'annexation' being applied to the Crimean situation, since they only sought to reclaim a region that was originally a part of the former Russian Empire. Crimea was an autonomous region within the nation of Ukraine, until March 2014, after a shady referendum it was taken over by the Russian police.

With one brazen move, Russia had taken over Crimea, leaving the United Nations, NATO, and G8 members red-faced. While the Russian government billed the takeover as being ethnically-motivated — respecting the wishes of ethnic Russians who voted on the referendum — political observers gladly reminded the world of Crimea's strategic position in the Black Sea, and its potential benefits to Russia. In the resultant mêlée, the Crimean Tatar community ended up getting a raw deal. Though, originally, this tribe comprised a major part of Crimea's population, the former USSR banished the Tatars from the region after WWII. Today, the Crimean Tatar community amounts to 12% of Crimea's population, which has now been relegated to the periphery for having opposed the Russian takeover. With the new 'anti-extremist' amendment to the Criminal Code of Russia, coming into force in Crimea, it is a criminal offense to 'violate' the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. Thus, the ones opposing Russian rule have been effectively rendered voiceless, adding to Russia's long list of human rights violations.²¹

The devolution is the process during which the regions within the state require political power and increasing autonomy from the central government. Examples of centers of de-revolutionary pressure are Transnistria as a part of Moldova, the Kaliningrad region in the composition of Russia.²²

So as we can see, some researchers believe that separatism also has positive qualities that articulate the interests of the population of the region in the political, socio-economic, and cultural spheres.²³

Another issue that arises now is the role of scientific and technological progress in the development of separatist movements. An interesting idea is expressed in the book 'Separatism and disintegration a comparative investigation' written by Bertrand M. Roehner with the collaboration of Leonard J. Rahilly. According to the book, networks of computers or digital television via satellite, will fundamentally change the processes of diffusion. It seems to us highly improbable that these technologies will greatly accelerate integration and disintegration processes.²⁴

²⁰ What is Irredentism? ... *op. cit.*

²¹ How Irredentism Influenced Various Countries of the World. *Electronic source:* <https://opinionfront.com/how-irredentism-influenced-various-countries-of-world>, accessed: 21.08.2019.

²² Tsebenko O, *op. cit.*

²³ Lytvynenko K.O, Separatism ..., *op. cit.*

²⁴ Roehner B.M, Rahilly L.J, *op. cit.*

Conclusions

Separatism takes its origins from ancient times. The most widespread opinion is that separatism is the desire of part of the population of the state to separate and create its own state or to expand the boundaries of its autonomy and to provide greater powers in all spheres of state life.

Several examples of separatist conflicts are presented in the article, each of them has its own peculiarities of emergence, spread and further development and completion.

The characterization of each form of separatism will help to better understand its essence, and may help to prevent such conflicts from arising in the future. Now this phenomenon is at an active stage of research by scientists. Each of them tries to analyse this phenomenon as deeply as possible in order to develop an effective mechanism to combat separatism.

References

1. Bardos G.N, Spectre of separatism haunts Europe, January 13, 2013. *Electronic source*: <https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/spectre-separatism-haunts-europe-7979>.
2. Roehner B.M, Rahilly L.J, Separatism and disintegration: comparative investigation, LPTHE, University of Paris 6 (Pierre and Marie Curie), 2016. *Electronic source*: <https://www.lpthe.jussieu.fr/~roehner/separatism.pdf>.
3. Boyle K, Englebert P, The Primacy of Politics in Separatist Dynamics, 2006. *Electronic source*: http://cega.berkeley.edu/assets/miscellaneous_files/wgape/10_Englebert.pdf.
4. Ross D, Separatism, Globalization, and the European Union. *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series*, 2015, Vol. 15, Issue 1. *Electronic source*: http://aei.pitt.edu/74525/1/Dayton_SeparatismGlobalizationEU.pdf.
5. English Oxford Living Dictionary. *Electronic source*: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/separatism>.
6. Fritze R.H, Robison W.B, Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603–1689. *Electronic source*: <https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=8goko0Lpr5sC&pg=PA483&lpg=PA483&dq=separatists+dictionary&source=bl&ots=JFEq4BSu9O&sig=xFOtff3xfMwbsSb2YkM5d78bKKM&hl=uk&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwii5cLXkZ3eAhWIKCwKHZYvCjC4ChDoATADegQIBBAB#v=onepage&q&f=false>.
7. How Irredentism Influenced Various Countries of the World. *Electronic source*: <https://opinionfront.com/how-irredentism-influenced-various-countries-of-world>.
8. Konrad M, Economic Separatism in Europe: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, November 4, 2012. *Electronic source*: https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2012/11/economic_separatism_in_europe_the_good_the_bad_and_the_ugly.html.
9. Lytvynenko K.O, Separatism As A Subject Of Social And Political Philosophy, [in:] *Fundamental and applied researches in practice of leading scientific schools*, 2015, Vol. 6, Issue 12.

13. McGee R.W, Secession reconsidered. *Journal of libertarian studies*, 1994, Vol. 11, Issue 1. *Electronic source*: https://mises-media.s3.amazonaws.com/11_1_2_0.pdf?file=1&type=document.
14. Mosora M.A, Ethnic separatism: theoretical basis of causes. *Precarpathian bulletin of the Shevchenko scientific society*, 2016, Vol. 3(35).
15. Abedin N, The politics of separatism: Some reflections and questions. The Round Table. *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*. *Electronic source*: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00358538908453928?journalCode=ctr20>.
16. Rothchild D, Lake D.A, Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict. *International Security*, 1996, Vol. 21, No. 2. *Electronic source*: <http://users.metu.edu.tr/utuba/Lake.pdf>.
17. Ryabini Y, The basic causes of the temporary separatism. *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society*, 2017, Vol. 7(1), pp. 5–9.
18. The Evil of Separatism Explained with Examples. *Electronic source*: <https://opinionfront.com/what-does-separatism-mean-with-examples>, 18.07.2019.
19. Tsebenko O, The main forms of separatism: theoretical and methodological aspect, 2014. *Electronic source*: <http://ena.lp.edu.ua/bitstream/ntb/24536/1/9-44-51.pdf>.
20. What is Irredentism? *Electronic source*: <https://www.worldatlas.com/what-is-irredentism.html>.

About the Author

Tetiana Berkii, Postgraduate student of the second year of Lviv State University of Internal Affairs. She works at Frankivsk district court of the city of Lviv. Her research interests include: criminal law, criminology, theory of state and law. E-mail: berkii92@ukr.net

Streszczenie. Niniejszy artykuł jest poświęcony separatyzmowi jako globalnemu zjawisku we współczesnym świecie. Separatyzm uważany jest za współczesne zjawisko o dużej skali, które może powodować nieodwracalne konsekwencje dla niezależności państwa. Pojęcie separatyzmu analizowane jest zgodnie z różnymi słownikami, które interpretują to zjawisko. Zastosowano metodę porównawczą, a mianowicie porównano separatyzm z Układem Słonecznym. Ponadto, analizie poddano główne rodzaje separatyzmu, w zależności od regionu, kraju i sfery jego ekspresji, podając przykłady. Jeśli rozważamy separatyzm jako ruch lub proces, który chce się oddzielić od państwa, wówczas w zależności od celu wyróżnia się następujące formy separatyzmu: secesję, irredentyzm i dewolucję. W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono stanowiska przedstawicieli światowej społeczności naukowej na temat secesji, ujawniono jej główne zalety i wady. Artykuł zwraca uwagę na interesujące stanowiska naukowców, którzy uważają separatyzm za pozytywne zjawisko w procesie budowania narodu. Jako przykład irredentyzmu opisano sytuację na Krymie, który był autonomicznym regionem w obrębie państwa ukraińskiego do marca 2014 r., kiedy po wątpliwym referendum przejęli go członkowie rosyjskiej policji.

Резюме. Данная статья посвящена сепаратизму как глобальному явлению в современном мире. Сепаратизм считается современным явлением, распространенным в широких масштабах, которое может иметь необратимые последствия для независимости государства. Понятие сепаратизма анализируется в соответствии с различными словарями, которые объясняют данное явление. Автором использовался сравнительный метод, а именно сравнение сепаратизма с Солнечной системой. Кроме того, были проанализированы основные виды сепаратизма в зависимости

от региона, страны и сферы его проявления, приведены примеры. Если рассматривать сепаратизм как движение или процесс, который хочет отделиться от государства, то в зависимости от поставленных целей различают следующие формы сепаратизма: сепаратизм, ирредентизм и деволюция. В статье представлены взгляды представителей мирового научного сообщества на тему сецессии, раскрываются ее основные достоинства и недостатки. В статье обращается внимание на интересные мнения ученых, считающих сепаратизм позитивным явлением в процессе создания нации. В качестве примера ирредентизма приведена ситуация в Крыму, который был автономной областью в составе украинского государства до марта 2014 года, когда после сомнительного референдума он был взят под контроль российской полицией.

