

Activities Of Separatist Movements in Western and Southern Europe in The Xxi Century: A Comparative Analysis

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Annotation

In our time, separatism is one of the most pressing problems. Therefore, this problem is widely discussed. Ethnopolitical conflicts in the 21st century in various forms affect political, socio-economic, legal, intrastate and interstate relations almost everywhere. In recent years, ethnic, inter-tribal, nationalist, separatist conflicts that have been almost protracted before have flared up in many countries, and they concern an increasing number of states. This article compares separatist movements in Western and Southern Europe using the example of the most prominent representatives - France and Italy. Comparison of separatism in these countries is carried out for reasons, forms and strategies. The similarity between Italian and French separatism lies in the methods used by the separatists. Corsican and Italian nationalists have abandoned armed struggle and are working exclusively in the political arena using legal methods.

Keywords: separatist movements, separatism, Western Europe, Southern Europe, politics and international relations, causes, consequences.

Introduction

The problem of separatism is one of the most difficult aspects of ethnopolitical research, since the process has a pronounced emotional and political context, therefore, the parties opposing each other are faced with the most important questions about who to obey, according to what laws to live, how to distribute material wealth and many other issues directly related to the division or abolition of the state - one of the most powerful and all-encompassing forms of social coalitions of people that directly touch huge masses, thanks to which the problem becomes universal [1].

Separatism is a policy pursued by a certain social group and aimed at separating part of the country's territory in order to create a new state on a separate site, which would have political independence and autonomy.

Separatism, as a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the social order, is often expressed in harsh forms such as violence, terrorism, armed clashes, etc. It leads to a violation of the cohesion and territorial integrity of the state. The reasons for separatism are infringement or violation of human and peoples' rights, religious, national and racial minorities' rights.

Separatism is divided into several types. Under peaceful separatism, the disaffected population defends its position by non-violent methods, organizes rallies (Great Britain, Scotland). Under armed separatism, the disaffected population defends its position by violent methods. This leads to a deterioration of the country's economy, to the complete or partial

destruction of the infrastructure of the region in which the confrontation is taking place, to the death of people (Corsica, France). Under political separatism, specific political parties, organizations and movements of the country advocate secession from the country and recognition of independence (League of the North, Italy).

Ethnic separatism is the ideology and practice of actions of a social and political movement aimed at establishing the sovereignty of an ethnic community in the territory of its residence within the existing state, isolating the territory and creating its own state or its annexation to another country.

Its formation in our time is explained by the absence of a dominant ideology or external threat, because of this, ethnic groups do not need to cooperate with each other.

Economic separatism is the policy of the regional economy, the desire to create its own independent market, to obtain complete economic independence and independence from the center. The reasons for its appearance are the uneven economic development of the regions of one country.

Economic issues are also the backbone of separatist movements in Western and Southern Europe, especially in northern Italy. The separatists consider this part of the country industrially developed and therefore the “breadwinner” of the center of Italy, prone to corruption, first of all, this applies to the economically depressed and mafia’s south.

To date, European separatism is widely and fully covered by foreign and domestic researchers.

The theoretical foundations of separatism in Spain are considered in the works of J. Rouen and J. Todd, the peculiarities of Catalan separatists strategies within the EU are widely presented in the works of I. Calzada and R. Dayton. To study the historical causes of Spanish separatism, in particular Catalan separatism, the works of S.M. Henkin and A.V. Baranov have been used when writing this study.

The works of the Russian researcher I.V. Krivushkin should also be noted, as they touch upon the reasons for the rise of Catalan separatism in the first half of the 2010s. In addition, this author investigated the reasons for the process of separatism and characterized the social composition of the separatist electorate.

Particularly noteworthy are the works of K. Breen, S. McDowell and V. Forsitea, in which the authors analyze the relationship between the initiatives of the Catalan parliament and the promotion of separatist programs.

The ideas of Catalan separatists about EU membership after leaving Spain are examined in detail by A.G. Galan. The author also examined the position of the EU in relation to separatism in general.

The aim of the study is to identify the foci and causes of separatism in the countries of Western and Southern Europe at the beginning of the XXI century, to suggest the consequences and solution of this problem.

Methods And Materials

The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, consistency, and

the principle of objectivity.

Methods used

- 1) general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, comparison, juxtaposition);
- 2) specialized research methods (event analysis);
- 3) quantitative methods - mathematical.

Results and Discussions

First of all, let us consider the factors of the separatism origin in Italy.

Italy is a state in southern Europe, a parliamentary republic with a presidential form of government. The form of government is unitary with broad territorial autonomy for the regions that make up the state. The constitution, adopted in 1947, defines the state system, operates to this day with practically no amendments and is considered one of the most democratic in the world. Together with the main democratic principles, the Italian Constitution enshrines a wide range of rights and freedoms, as well as popular sovereignty. Twenty regions (of which 5 have a special status), including 103 provinces as an administrative-territorial unit [2]. Italian separatism is associated with five provinces that are endowed with a special status, only two of them are endowed with the right to informal communication and use the local dialect in correspondence (Tuscany and Calabria). It is worth characterizing the country's population in order to understand whether the demographic problem is a factor of separatism.

Over the past 55 years, the population of Italy has increased by a maximum of 0.99% per year. Italy is in 4th place among European countries in terms of population. At the same time, for a long time already, Italy has been characterized by a crisis of reproduction and a decrease in natural growth. Since 1960, the population has increased by only 10 million people (in 2021, Italy has 61.3 million inhabitants) [3].

The Italian nation has a complex history and the population of ancient Italy, in this sense, went through a difficult structural evolution. The formation of the Italian nation is directly related to the long-term political fragmentation of this country and the formation of the Italian language. The consequences of this development are still taking place. Initially, the population of Italy has various ethnic formations in its roots. According to the administrative regions in Italy, there are 21 indigenous sub-ethnic types. For example, Calabrians, Ligurians, Basilcans, Tuscans, Sardinians, Sicilians and many others are classified as different types. In addition, there are still smaller structures - ethnic diasporas. The places of residence of different ethnic communities are determined by the borders of the ancient provinces of Italy. There is no exact information about the number of people in a particular group. Historically, Italy was fragmented for a long time and did not represent a single state, so it can be argued that the unexpressed national identity is one of the main features of Italians. Each of the inhabitants of Italy is primarily Tuscan or Sardinian, and only then Italian. Each resident remembers his ancestry very well, does not miss an opportunity to emphasize his origin.

As already noted, the natural increase in Italians has a negative trend. The death rate in Italy is 10% per 1,000 inhabitants, and the birth rate is only 9% [3]. It is interesting how Italy manages to keep the fourth position among European countries with such statistics. Here the demographic picture of the composition of the population as a whole plays a role. The influx of population is created by foreigners settling for permanent residence in the northern and central regions of Italy. Thus, over the past few years, the migration gain for Italy is a positive phenomenon: the indigenous population has a reproduction crisis, but migrants are changing

the situation in favor of an increase in the population.

Migrants from other European countries, as well as Arabs and Asians, populate the Apennine Peninsula. The average population density in Italy is 200 people/km². For this indicator, Italy ranks fifth in Europe. For clarity, the ethnic structure of the population of Italy is shown in Figure 1.

In 2019, the number of resident foreigners in Italy is 5,014,437, which is 8.2% of the resident population. Children born to immigrant families (more than 600 thousand children) make a significant contribution to the demographic fund of Italy.

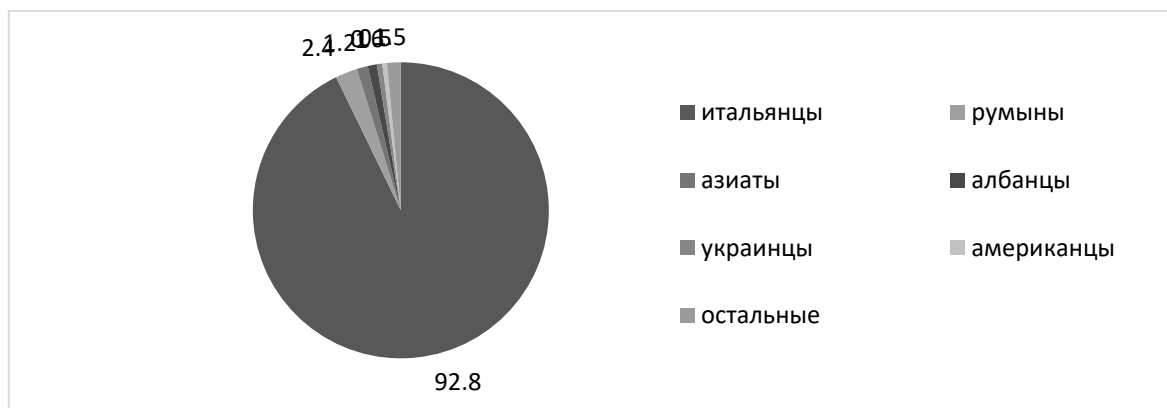


Fig. 1. Ethnic structure of the population of Italy [3]

The increase in the number of immigrants also has a negative side - the creation of an economic imbalance: population growth outstrips GDP growth. In addition, a significant part of migrants (namely 67%) are elderly people. Over the past 10 years, the average age in Italy has grown significantly (today it is 45). That is, the Italian nation is slowly growing and rapidly aging.

In general, separatism in Italy exists due to the division of the country into two large sectors of heterogeneous stratification systems. The opposition between small regional communities (cities, towns), constant confrontation between them, the problem of the industrial north with a developed middle class and the peasant south with an agricultural population and mafia groups, which represent a social rudiment of the feudal era, is the primary reason for the existence of separatism. Due to this, local patriotism in Italy, as before, prevails over national patriotism, and separatist movements receive their support not only through internal channels, but also from outside (France, Austria, the European Union as a whole). All this taken together casts doubt on the preservation of Italy as an integral state.

According to Bruno Coppeters, Ph.D. at the Freie Universität Berlin, separatism in Italy is also driven by the fact that the Roman bureaucracy is disconnected from the interests of the regions, as well as the penetration of mafia groups through lobbies into the structures of central government. [4].

Mafia groups that penetrated the city's space conducted, on the one hand, criminal and, on the other, power-political activity, which resulted in a number of socio-political consequences:

- pressure groups were created at the level of central and local authorities, which, in fact, provided the mafia with oversight over political elites;

- the penetration of the mafia into the trade union organizations of universities,

industrial enterprises and its merger with left-wing radical organizations made it possible to manipulate the industrial working class, students, attracting young people from small towns to its ranks and turning them against the central government.

The situation with mafia lobbies in power created the problem of its bribability, which ultimately led to civil discontent with political elites, and as a result, the emergence of separatist sentiments. Therefore, the economic aspect is still one of the most studied subjects of the development of separatism in Italy [10].

Since 1991, the driving force behind separatism in Italy has been the Northern League (The League of North) party, which advocates greater autonomy for northern Italy. The supporters of the League have developed a certain national ideology, within the framework of which the ethnosocial kinship of northern Italians with southern Italians is denied, and the origin of the former is allegedly from the Cisalpine Gauls. This party is not the only one, there is also the Venetian Independence party, the Sardinian Action Party and the South Tyrolean Riflemen's Union. Italian parties and movements actively and widely use modern information technologies to promote their strategies: online referendums, social media groups [5].

Veneto, South Tyrol, Sardinia, Sicily are the main regions of Italy with pronounced separatism. The peculiarity of Italian separatism is represented by factors that are superimposed on each other - the historical fragmentation of the population and the regional identification of "oneself", towering over the national one, which is associated with the late and fragile nation-building, the failure and corruption of the political leadership on the ground, the rivalry of the regions among themselves, the discontent of the population migration policy [12]. All this creates economic problems in the country, forms separatist sentiments in society.

Now let's turn to the peculiarities of separatism in France. France is a unitary secular democratic social state with a republican form of government. Administratively, France is divided into 22 regions, 96 departments, 36,565 communes. Largest cities - Paris (9.6 million inhabitants), Lyon (1.4 million), Lille (1.7 million), Nice (0.8 million), Toulouse (1.1 million), Bordeaux (0.7 million), Marseille (1.6 million). The Constitution is in force, adopted by referendum in 1958, with amendments 1962 (on the election of the president), 1992, 1996, 2000 (in connection with the signing of the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice treaties, respectively) and 1993 (on the issue of immigration) [6].

Ethnic groups are Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indo-Chinese, Basque minorities. The state language in the country is French. For some regions of France, other languages are characteristic: Basque (in the Pyrenees), Catalan (in Roussillon), German (in Alsace), Breton (in Western Brittany), Dutch (in French Flanders), Flemish (in the Durkenc region), Corsican (in Corsica, Italian dialect). The formation of the French nation historically consisted of the gradual merger of the Celtic and Germanic tribes, caused by a political factor - the state. First, the Roman Empire, then the feudal and absolute monarchy, and finally the republic, contributed to the formation of a common language, the fusion of culture, and the creation of legal norms of the French state.

The French administrative system has always been characterized by a strict centralized and uniform vertical, which played a significant role in shaping the economic and cultural life of society. It also helped to minimize differences between regions, where one could see the potential danger of separatism. In addition, any attempt at the indivisibility of the French state is punishable in accordance with the country's Criminal Code. The French state declared the country "one and indivisible", fundamentally not recognizing any options for autonomy. This

makes France significantly different from its neighbors in the EU (for example, from Germany, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland).

In France, such concepts as "nationality" and "citizenship" coincide even legally. The term "national minority" is absent in principle, all residents of the republic are officially called French, regardless of their ethnicity.

Of course, this attitude is very arbitrary, and sometimes artificial. With this approach, the multiple identities of a number of citizens are deliberately ignored, for example, Jews (there are about 600 thousand of them in France), Armenians (400 thousand), etc. [7].

The Bretons, Alsatians, Basques have a desire to preserve their language - Basque, the dialects of Els and German, to protect the cultural heritage and economic interests of their regions. But this is quite consistent with the patriotic self-awareness of belonging to a single nation. In this case, there is no talk of separatism.

An example is the French, who sympathize with the Spanish Basques' struggle for independence, while not going to follow their example. The Alsatians, whose territory passed from Germany to France and back three times, also do not consider it necessary to repeat the past experience and prefer European integration in the form of the EU, one of the "capitals" of which is Strasbourg.

The exception is Corsica, which has nationalist sentiments turning into separatism. This situation is due to historical characteristics and some socio-economic problems. Throughout history, Corsica has had many owners - it was owned by the Romans, Vandals, Byzantines. Since the XI century. it belonged to the papal throne, which transferred it under the control of the Pisans, then the Genoese. In 1768, the Republic of Genoa sold the island under the Treaty of Compiègne in payment of its debt to the King of France. The inhabitants of Corsica speak the Italian dialect and are distinguished by their independent character. Corsica rebelled more than once against Genoa, and then France. After the revolution of 1789, Paoli declared independence, which was quickly suppressed by French troops [11].

Currently, Corsica is the least developed region of the metropolis. Agriculture is the economic foundation of Corsica.

Due to the relatively low standard of living of the indigenous population of Corsica for France, there is a constant outflow of residents to the continent, a significant part of the Corsicans has already settled there. The difficulties encountered by the Corsicans due to the purchase of elite land plots on the coast by foreigners became the basis for the emergence of nationalist sentiments. In August 1975, residents' protests against the sale of the land of local winemakers resulted in clashes with the gendarmes [11].

The Parisian authorities preferred to take an ambivalent position, which combined some concessions and the preservation of a unitary state. Corsica, divided into two departments (Upper and Lower Corsica), has been singled out into a special region where the inhabitants elect a territorial Assembly. At the same time, the Constitutional Council rejected the use of the very term "Corsican people" as incompatible with the Basic Law. [8].

As a result, the Corsican separatists formed an underground and engaged in terrorist attacks - blowing up hotels and villas of foreigners, attempts on the life of law enforcement officials. More than 200 people became their victims. Nevertheless, over the past time, the

separatist movement has been steadily declining. The separatists were divided into two structures - military and legal.

Thus, the main factor of separatism in Corsica is a long and tough policy of centralization on the part of all states that have owned the island at different periods of history. In the modern period, the general "francisation" of national minorities, whose cultural and linguistic features and identity have never been recognized, leads to a disastrous economic situation of the local population, because the income of the Corsicans is almost three times less than the continental French.

All of the above allows us to compare separatism in Italy and France.

In the modern world, they often talk about the process of globalization, which gradually covers all spheres of society. It is generally accepted that the logical end of such a process is a society that perfectly exists in a new system, which would have a planetary character: everything is one, everything is common. However, one should not forget that within this emerging system there are factors that are quite possibly slowing down the process to some extent. One of these elements is the phenomenon of separatism, but it must be understood that separatism does not arise without reasons.

Key findings

The main conclusions that can be highlighted after comparing separatism in these countries for reasons, forms and strategies. Consider from a legal point of view the possibility of donating autonomy to any region in these countries. Italy is a unitary state with separate elements of federalism, sometimes this form of state-territorial structure is called "regionalist". Formally, according to the constitution, Italy was decentralized after 1945, only in the late 70s did the government manage to finally introduce legislation according to which regions and provinces were created, as well as the corresponding local legislative bodies-assemblies [9]. Five of the 19 regions in which ethno-linguistic minorities live or which have special geographic conditions (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Val d'Aosta, South Tyrol, Sardinia, Sicily) have a special autonomous status with broad legislative and administrative rights. Recent constitutional reforms have further strengthened local authorities in the regions. There is nothing like this in France, where the Constitution recognizes only one nation - the French, and national minorities do not have any official recognition.

France, in turn, has a strictly centralized and uniform vertical of the administrative system, which does not allow the creation of regions and provinces with local legislative bodies. According to the Constitution, France is a classic centralized unitary republic.

The Italian constitution protects the rights of linguistic minorities. Moreover, some of them are granted special rights through regional or provincial regulations. According to these acts, their language is used officially along with Italian in places of compact residence. In France, the constitution does not give such rights to other linguistic minorities, it simply does not recognize them and the state language, according to the constitution, is only French.

In Europe, a very flexible design of statehood has been developed with the granting of autonomy to problem regions. For example, in Italy, where the League of the North is in favor of secession from the South because it believes that the North feeds the South, there are five autonomous regions with a special status. But it is worth noting that, in this case, France, on the contrary, is an example of non-recognition at the legislative level of the regional Corsican

identity.

In addition, in contrast to the causes of Corsican separatism, which is caused by nationalist sentiments, the economic difficulties of territorial production units have become a fundamental factor in exacerbating the discontent of the Italian regions. Therefore, the economic aspect is still one of the most significant in the separatism of Italy [10].

As for France, the proclamation of the country "one and indivisible", significantly distinguishes France from Italy.

Another difference between separatism in Italy and France is that Corsica in France is fighting to expand the rights of autonomy. In this regard, French separatism in Corsica seeks not to secede, but only to gain greater autonomy while preserving the region as a part of the state. It should be noted that the Corsican nationalists, who abandoned the armed struggle, today look noticeably less radical than the Italian ones (League of the North).

The similarity between Italian and French separatism lies in the methods used by the separatists. Corsican and Italian nationalists have abandoned armed struggle and are working exclusively in the political arena by legal means.

Conclusion

In this study, a comparative analysis of separatist movements in Western and Southern Europe was carried out using the example of the most prominent representatives - France and Italy. So, distinct separatist movements take place in Sardinia, Sicily in South Tyrol (Italy), Corsica (France), however, in all these cases, they still face strong resistance from the central authorities of both Italy and France. The analysis showed that in Italy there is a danger of demands of regional movements to revise state borders, or at least more federalization with de facto decentralization.

French regional separatists are so far less decisive, however, if a new paradigm of intra-European relations is created, they can also play a significant role. France, which refuses to introduce any changes in the state structure, suffers from the presence of troubled territories, but the main thing is that legal equality is preserved and everyone is considered French. Italy, on the other hand, is trying to satisfy its autonomous communities, thereby intending to preserve the unity of the country, but, as you know, Italian separatists are making big plans for the future, implementing them in stages, and there is a high probability of secession of the northern part from the rest of Italy.

Thus, in general, over the past thirty years, many independent states have appeared in the European space, and this process will continue. In many regions, national identity and the desire for independence are growing. In the near future, it is possible that we will see new referendums on independence.

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