

DOI 10.31558/2519-2949.2021.2.9

УДК 32.323.01:323.173

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7739-7232>

Amiran Khevtsuriani, Georgian Technical University (Georgia)

THE CONCEPT OF ETHNOPOLITICAL SEPARATISM, ITS PLACE AND ROLE IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PROCESSES

One of the most urgent ethno-political problems in our time is the growth in the number of separatist movements in different parts of the world. This phenomenon developed and gained strength in the second half of the 20th century simultaneously with the anti-colonial and national liberation movements. Moreover, it is worth noting that the movements that set as their main goal the separation of a certain part of the multinational state and the creation of an independent national-state entity in this territory, have intensified not only in the third world countries, where the colonial legacy has left a significant number of disputed borders, but also in the oldest western democracies – Great Britain, USA, Spain, Italy, France and a number of other states. The impulse to gain political independence through the proclamation of a separatist ideology is a clear sign of modern international relations. The wave of separatist aspirations of ethnic groups now and then manifests itself, and sometimes even increases in scale practically on all continents. However, until now ethno-political separatism remains one of the least studied and least understood political phenomena. In the most general sense, ethno-political separatism (otlat. Separatus – separated) is the striving of an ethnic group to isolate, separate and achieve autonomy or political independence by a certain area of the state. The complexity of the interpretation of this phenomenon is caused not only by the multi-factoriality of separatism itself, but also by the absence of established theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of separatist tendencies in political life. At the same time, the very forms of minimizing violence in the course of implementing the ideology of ethno-political separatism are studied within the framework of such an interdisciplinary direction as the "paradigm of conflict". Despite the fact that the conflict paradigm is often used to analyze ethno-political separatism, it cannot claim to be the only methodological approach to the study of this phenomenon.

Keywords: Ethno-political separatism; secession; irredentism; regionalism; nationalism; federalism.

There are two basic socio-philosophical ideas in separatism. Both ideas are interconnected and flow from one another. The first idea has to do with freedom, freedom from any coercion, the second – to the nation's right to self-determination. Virtually all modern politicians and scientists unconditionally recognize, to one degree or another, the democratic values of freedom (its understanding largely depends on the level of development of civil society in the state). In matters of the right to self-determination, one can clearly see the demarcation into two opposing camps. Some accept it unconditionally, while others also reject it categorically. The noted disagreement in views is connected not only with questions regarding the future of the ethnic group, but also more important aspects – the territorial integrity of the country. This is directly related to the vital interests of the national majority (state and national), as well as sometimes numerous other peoples living together. It should be emphasized that the responsibility for the observance of the rights and freedoms of the latter (often not participating or interested in the separatist conflict) is borne by the central government, which is represented, as a rule, by the ethnic majority.

The forms of minimizing violence in the course of implementing the ideology of ethno-political separatism are studied in the framework of such an interdisciplinary direction as "Peace and Conflict Studies" – "the study of peace and conflicts" [1, p. 71-97]. This direction has been developing since the 60s of the XX century. And it is a set of academic schools for the analysis of non-violent and violent behavior of groups in social systems [2, p. 74]. It should be noted that this direction uses as its basis the methodology for analyzing the settlement of ethno-political conflicts, developed in the bosom of the so-called classical "conflict paradigm". This term is usually understood as the concepts of the leading representatives of social thought, who recognized the primary significance of conflicts for the political life of society.

Why is the methodology of analyzing ethno-political conflicts so often used to study ethno-political separatism? The answer to this question is possible if we consider ethno-political separatism as a process in

which at least two opposing sides take part. It is known that the existence of a conflict requires the existence of the following key factors: two or more subjects, whose interests actually or presumably collide, and a scarce resource (a kind of "apple of discord") [3, p. 8-9]. In the case of ethnopolitical separatism, the participation of two potentially antagonistic groups, as a rule, is clearly present: one seeks to secede, the other opposes such secession. As for the scarce resource, then it is also evident here – the acquisition of greater political independence by obtaining a certain political sovereignty. In such a situation, the actions of one side, faced with the opposition of the other, impede the realization of its goals and interests, as a result of which there is conflict tension. Thus, if models of ethnopolitical separatism take the form of actions of participants in an ethnopolitical conflict (see [4, p. 165]), the conflict paradigm can serve as a necessary methodological basis for the study of separatist tendencies within the political system.

It should be noted that the conflict paradigm has developed certain strategies for managing ethnopolitical processes with a high potential for conflict. The mentioned strategies are based on the concepts of representatives of "classical" conflict studies. It seems that from the whole variety of scientific concepts, two key methodological paradigms of conflict research should be singled out: "dialectical theory of conflicts" (K. Marx, R. Dahrendorf) and "conflict functionalism" (G. Simmel, L. Coser).

The modern dialectical approach to the analysis of conflicts is largely based on the concept of the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818–1883), who, following Hegel and Heraclitus, continued the tradition of understanding conflict as a radical means of transforming the entire society. Marx's ideas about group polarization of social systems, struggle and resolution of class conflict in a revolutionary way influenced the development of the teachings of the Anglo-German sociologist R. Dahrendorf. He contrasted Marxism with the theory of social conflict, in which the main feature of classes is the relationship of domination and subordination [5, p. 145-147], not property. According to Dahrendorf, conflict is any relationship between elements that can be characterized through objective or subjective opposites [6, p. 141-142]. Note that the scientist gave a fairly broad interpretation of the conflict, believing that the conflict can take the form of a civil war, parliamentary debates, ethnopolitical separatism or negotiations.

Dahrendorf also saw a special role for the elite in the conflict, believing that groups can initiate changes in society only if their interests.

Will be embodied in the actions of the elite [7, p. 54]. In this regard, it is advisable to note that, while revealing the dynamics of the development of ethnopolitical separatism, one should also highlight the stages of formation and actions of political elites, which can either provoke conflict situations and induce groups to act in conflict, or go against the opinion of the majority. So, on the eve of the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, sociological polls showed that the majority of Czechs and Slovaks did not support the so-called "velvet divorce" and were not ready for national self-determination. Nevertheless, the political elites of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, contrary to the opinion of the majority, agreed to dissolve the federal state, which ultimately led to secession.

According to R. Dahrendorf, any conflicts in social systems can be controlled. In connection with the noted statement, the researcher analyzes three main strategies of conflict management: suppression, cancellation and regulation. Scientist, considering suppression an ineffective way of dealing with conflicts [5, p. 145], notes that totalitarian governments are in danger of being overthrown precisely because they often resort to suppression as a means of resolving conflicts and do not ensure the functioning of various "valves" in society (in the form of discussions, rallies and other ways of expressing the demands of various groups). Thus, attempts to suppress separatism in Kashmir by armed means almost never led to stability. Currently, Kashmir is still an area divided between India, Pakistan and China.

By the abolition of conflict, Dahrendorf understands any attempt to fundamentally eliminate contradictions. Such an attempt is always deceptive: specific objects of conflict can be "eliminated", but such regulation of the subject does not eliminate the conflict itself hidden behind it. Quite often, the existing danger of separatism is simply ignored. However, the silence of the problem and the absence of a definite reaction to it does not save the state from the presence of problems and their subsequent radicalization. The most striking example of this is the situation with ethnopolitical separatism in Thailand. The long-standing ethno-religious conflict between Thai Buddhists and the Malay Muslim minority often takes on forms of extremism here. It appears that the complexity of the situation was aggravated by the fact that the Thai authorities did not even recognize until 2002

Regarding the regulation procedure, according to Dahrendorf, it is a decisive means of reducing the violence of almost all types of conflicts. Based on the logic of the concept under consideration, the contradictions that have arisen in the case of ethnopolitical separatism can be resolved using the mechanisms of negotiations, mediation, arbitration, compulsory arbitration [5, p. 146-147]. For example,

most of these procedures were used to resolve the problem of separatism in the most conflict-ridden territory of Indonesia – in the province of Aceh in North Sumatra.

R. Dahrendorf's point of view about a conflict-free society as a utopian ideal of existence is similar to a similar concept of the German thinker G. Simmel (1858-1918), on which the American sociologist L. Coser (1913-2003), author of the theory of "positive-functional" conflict, is based. Koser substantiated the positive role of conflict in ensuring the integrity and stability of the entire social system, saw a positive value in conflicts [8, p. 169]. A conflict, according to Koser, is "... a struggle for values and rights to possess status, power and resources, in which the goals of rivals are to neutralize one another, harm him or eliminate each other ..." [8, p. 12]. Coser writes that some social processes are inherently finite, that is, they are determined by their transitory nature, and the methods for their completion are institutionally prescribed. But there are processes in which it is very difficult to determine a clear end point. These processes include, for example, conflicts that have arisen in the event of the implementation of the ideology of ethno-political separatism.

It is important to note that due to its multifactorial and complex nature, ethno-political separatism can acquire a double form, that is, change its character and move from institutionalized forms of protest to non-systemic ones. In particular, this can be traced to the example of Sikh separatism in the Indian state of Punjab. It is known that in the period from 1944 to 1966. The Punjab government demanded more political sovereignty, but did not back up its demands with any active actions destabilizing the status quo. The central government at that time simply ignored the existence of political separatism and did not respond to the threat that was contained in the institutionalized but latent separatist process.

Coser notes that the most effective strategy for extinguishing a conflict is one aimed at creating "rules of the game" that allows one to determine the mutual balance of forces. Agreements of this kind contribute to the very elimination of the conflict. Agreeing with the German sociologist G. Simmel, L. Coser notes that the conflict that usually proceeds within the framework of the norms connecting it to the parties already contains elements of the strategy of its own limitation and regulation [8, p. 150].

Representatives of the modern theory of conflict resolution (J. Burton, K. Mitchell, R. Fisher, W. Yuri) also provide a conceptual explanation of the strategies for managing ethno-political processes with high conflict potential. So, unlike the traditional approach, when the analysis of conflict relations begins with the study of social institutions, the American researcher J. Burton offers a different concept, which is based on the thesis that ethno-political separatism is a consequence of the infringement of the set of universal human needs [9, p. 11-12]. So, for example, the universal needs of an ethnic group include: 1) the need for originality or national-ethnic identity; 2) the need for a sense of security; 3) the need for independence in decision making; 4) the need for participation and recognition;

It can also be noted that, depending on what concept is taken as a basis, in modern science, various areas of research into the process of ending ethno-political conflicts are distinguished [10, p. 95]: 1). conflict prevention is a scientific direction, which is focused on the development of strategies related to preventing ethno-political conflicts from moving into an acute armed stage of development; 2). management of conflicts (conflict management) is a research approach that focuses on the construction of strategies associated with reducing the level of hostility in the relationship of the parties to the conflict; 3). conflict resolution – a concept that is aimed at creating strategies to eliminate the causes of the conflict and the formation of a new level of relationships between the participants.

Despite the fact that the conflict paradigm is often used to analyze ethno-political separatism, it cannot claim to be the only methodological approach to the study of this phenomenon. Like any theoretical toolkit, the conflictological methodology has its costs that need to be identified.

It seems that, firstly, the separatist process may not necessarily be expressed exclusively in the form of an open ethno-political conflict. On the contrary, when interacting, the parties can cooperate with each other to smooth out friction and minimize possible losses. In addition, the paradigm of the conflict does not allow the researcher to fully determine the trends in the development of latent processes. For example, despite the relative external stability of Belgium, the relationship between the communities does not always seem so friendly with a more detailed look at the internal political situation in this country: in addition to the fact that Flanders is an economically more developed region than Wallonia, there are nationalist separatist organizations here. This state of affairs could lead to an escalation of tensions in Belgium. So, in 2007 One of the Belgian TV channels published a comic information, which said that the Flanders parliament had decided to secede from Wallonia, which receives cash transfers from Flanders. Because of such a joke, a terrible commotion erupted in Belgium over the real embodiment of the separatist ideology in an act of secession.

Second, the conflict methodology itself can overly schematize and oversimplify the situation. For example, if a political group with a separatist ideology appears and proclaims a slogan for secession, this does not yet indicate that the group is likely to destabilize the political system. Discourse analysis in combination with the main provisions of the theory of groups in this regard can give a more precise definition of the intentions of the subject of the contradiction and indicate that, perhaps, the created group does not want to separate at all, but seeks to draw the attention of state structures to existing problems.

Thirdly, a researcher, carried away by the conflictological paradigm and trying to identify the main trends of the ongoing process, may come to inaccurate conclusions due to neglect of the role of political institutions, which can often not only create a suitable environment for the emergence of separatist tendencies, but also significantly influence on the dynamics of ethno-political separatism.

Fourth, the conflict paradigm, focusing mainly on the actions of the subjects of contradiction, often overlooks the fact of the influence of conflict processes on such a key element of the social system as economic relations. Thus, it is known that the incessant talk about the political separatism of Quebec has a detrimental effect on the investment attractiveness of the region.

Fifth, the conflict paradigm does not pay significant attention to the role of historical randomness in modeling possible scenarios for the development of the situation. For example, many sources often discuss the thesis that the Kosovo problem could have been solved long ago if during the existence of the SFRY, the Kosovar territory had the status not of an autonomous region within Serbia, but of an equal union republic with it. Perhaps, in this case, Kosovo would have gained independence without ethnic cleansing and at the cost of less losses.

References:

1. Groom A.J. *Paradigms in Conflict: The Strategist, the Conflict Researcher and PeaceResearcher. Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution* / Eds. J. Burton, F. Dukes. L.: Macmillan, 1990. P. 71-98.
2. Dugan M. *Peace Studies at the Graduate Level. The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science.* 1989. N 504. P. 72-79
3. Gluhova A. V. *Politicheskie konflikty: osnovaniya, tipologiya, dinamika.* M.: Jeditorial URSS, 2000. – 280 c.
4. Horowitz D. *Patterns of Ethnic Separatism. Comparative Studies in Society and History.* 1981. No 23. P. 165-195.
5. Darendorf R. *Jelementy teorii social'nogo konflikta. Sociol. issled.* 1994. No 5. S. 145-147.
6. Stepanenkova V. M. *Ponjatie social'nogo konflikta v teorii R. Darendorfa. Sociol. issled.* 1994. No 5. S. 141-149.
7. Dahrendorf R. *The Modern Social Conflict: An Essay on the Politics of Liberty.* L.: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988. 219 p.
8. Coser L. *The Functions of Social Conflict.* New York: The Free Press, 1956. 188 p.
9. Burton J. *Conflict: Human Needs Theory.* N. Y.: St. Martin's, 1990. – 358 p.
10. Lebedeva M. M. *Politicheskoe uregulirovanie konfliktov: Podhody, reshenija, tehnologii.* M.: Aspekt-Press, 1997. 272 c.

Бібліографічний список:

1. Groom A.J. *Paradigms in Conflict: The Strategist, the Conflict Researcher and PeaceResearcher. Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution* / Eds. J. Burton, F. Dukes. L.: Macmillan, 1990. P. 71-98.
2. Dugan M. *Peace Studies at the Graduate Level. The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science.* 1989. N 504. P. 72-79
3. Глухова А. В. *Политические конфликты: основания, типология, динамика.* М.: Эдиториал УРСС, 2000. – 280 с.
4. Horowitz D. *Patterns of Ethnic Separatism. Comparative Studies in Society and History.* 1981. No 23. P. 165-195.
5. Дарендорф Р. *Элементы теории социального конфликта. Социол. исслед.* 1994. No 5. С. 145-147.
6. Степаненкова В. М. *Понятие социального конфликта в теории Р. Дарендорфа. Социол. исслед.* 1994. No 5. С. 141-149
7. Dahrendorf R. *The Modern Social Conflict: An Essay on the Politics of Liberty.* L.: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988. 219 p.
8. Coser L. *The Functions of Social Conflict.* New York: The Free Press, 1956. 188 p.
9. Burton J. *Conflict: Human Needs Theory.* N. Y.: St. Martin's, 1990. – 358 p.
10. Лебедева М. М. *Политическое урегулирование конфликтов: Подходы, решения, технологии.* М.: Аспект-Пресс, 1997. 272 с.

Хевциуріані А. Концепція етнополітичного сепаратизму, його місце та роль у сучасних політичних процесах

Однією з найактуальніших етнополітичних проблем нашого часу є зростання кількості сепаратистських рухів у різних частинах світу. Це явище розвивалось і набирало сили у другій половині 20 століття одночасно з антиколоніальним та національно-визвольним рухами. Більше того, варто зазначити, що рухи, що ставили своєю головною метою відокремлення певної частини багатонаціональної держави та створення незалежного національно-державного утворення на цій території, посилились не лише в країнах третього світу, де колоніальна спадщина залишила значну кількість спірних кордонів, але також у найстаріших західних демократіях – Великобританії, США, Іспанії, Італії, Франції та ряді інших держав. Імпульс до набуття політичної незалежності шляхом проголошення сепаратистської ідеології є чіткою ознакою сучасних міжнародних відносин. Хвиля сепаратистських прагнень етнічних груп час від часу проявляється, а іноді навіть збільшується практично на всіх континентах. Однак дотепер етнополітичний сепаратизм залишається одним із найменш вивчених та найменш зрозумілих політичних явищ. У найзагальнішому розумінні етнополітичний сепаратизм (отлат. *Separatory* – відокремлений) – це прагнення етнічної групи ізолювати, відокремити та досягти автономії чи політичної незалежності певною територією держави. Складність інтерпретації цього явища зумовлена не тільки багатофакторністю самого сепаратизму, а й відсутністю усталених теоретико-методологічних підходів до вивчення сепаратистських тенденцій у політичному житті. У той же час самі форми мінімізації насильства в ході реалізації ідеології етнополітичного сепаратизму вивчаються в рамках такого міждисциплінарного напрямку, як "парадигма конфлікту". Водночас на те, що конфліктна парадигма часто використовується для аналізу етнополітичного сепаратизму, вона не може претендувати на те, що вона є єдиним методологічним підходом до вивчення цього явища.

Ключові слова: етнополітичний сепаратизм; відокремлення; іредентизм; регіоналізм; націоналізм; федералізм.