

## **GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS OF SPACE-TIME EVOLUTION OF INDEPENDENT STATES**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the space-time evolution of independent states as a support for the assertion of regionalization as an integral part of the larger phenomenon called globalization. In this context, the results obtained aim to highlight the role and importance of proclaiming and asserting independent states in shaping regionalization.

**Key words:** sovereignty, independence, national state, regionalization, globalization

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The system of international relations is defined by the total relations between the actors of the international market, represented by the national states, the organizational relations between them (regional and international), the multinational companies, the terrorist groups, the mafia organizations etc. All these components (subsystems) are an integral part of the complex system of globalization, each of them has its own life cycle marked by the following stages: birth, space-time evolution, apogee and decline (Herman et al., 2017).

States are functional and organizational units that have been imposed in a certain place at some time on the background of technological advances made by human society, with a direct effect on the diversification of production forces, the emergence of social classes, economic development and the spirituality of humanity. Just as globalization is self-imposed due to economic, social, political and cultural progress, the state has also imposed itself as a form of organizing human society, following other forms of inferior organization such as gens and the tribe. Gens was a community of people based on blood relativity, being the main form of public organization in the primitive age. The tribe was a form of primitive economic and social-political organization, consisting of a group of

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several gentes or related families, having common tongue and beliefs, living the same territory and subjecting the authority of an elected leader. So the state is a superstructural institution, a main instrument of political and administrative organization through which social system functionality is exercised and relations between people are regulated; the territory and population over which this organization exercises its authority.

National states are independent political units that "occupy a well-defined, permanently populated territory with total sovereignty over its internal and external affairs" (Bodocan, 1997, p. 58 quoted by Ilieș, 2006, p. 31). The main defining features that "individualize, outline and consolidate" the state as a form of political organization are: the existence of a clearly defined territory, a form of governance characterized by order and hierarchy, and a permanent population (Ilieș, 2006, p. 31-32). The motives that train and fuel the proclamation and affirmation of state independence (obtaining state independence) are economic, social, political etc. The idea of territorial separation and the proclamation of the independence and sovereignty of some territories comes in consolidating and affirming the concept of regionalization. It should be noted that "globalisation and regionalization are two complementary concepts that can not exist independently. Both concepts reflect an economical, political, social and cultural phenomenon" (Herman et al., 2016a, p. 50) which have the whole terrestrial globe as coverage (Baylis and Smith, 2001; Held et al., 1999; Holm and Sorensen, 1995; Lechner, 2009; Indra, 2016; Rodhan, 2006; etc.), respective parts thereof (Clark, 1997; Ghena, 2015; Indra, 2016; Kacowicz, 1999; Grama, 2011 etc.). In this context, we can emphasize that the proclamation and affirmation of the independence and sovereignty of national states contributes to the assertion of regionalization as an integral part of globalization. In this context, the present study aims to emphasize the role of national states "in strengthening the concepts of globalization / regionalization as distinct and complementary at the same time" (Herman et al., 2016a, p. 50).

### **WORKING METHODOLOGY**

From a methodological point of view, the present study aimed at analyzing the evolution in time and space of the states that have gained their independence. The temporal analysis focused on the evolution of the number of independent states at the level of the century or decade, while the spatial analysis focused on the distribution of independent states at the continent and globe. The database was composed of textual information (continental names, hydronimes etc.), graphs (shapefiles, graphs) and numerals (Buhaș et al., 2017; Herman et al., 2016a, 2016b; Ilieș et al., 2014, 2016, 2017; Tofan et al., 2016, Tofan and Niță, 2017). In the 4 analytical maps on the space-time distribution of the states that have gained their independence, the "World Topographic map" was used as a background, over which there were overlapping textual, numerical and patternfiled information and polygon) (figures 1-4). Their processing was done in ArcMap Version 10.6.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Currently, according to the Information and Research Office of the "U.S. Department of State, Diplomacy in Action" there are 195 sovereign <sup>1</sup> and

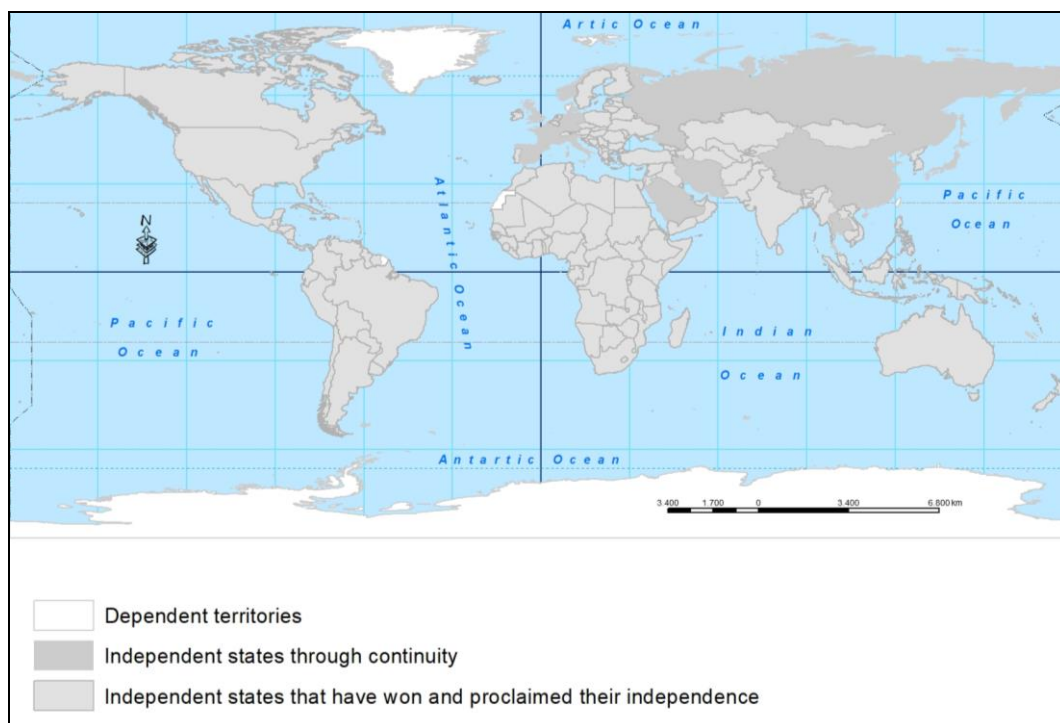
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.state.gov/s/inr/rls/4250.htm>

independent states and 66 dependent territories globally.<sup>2</sup> Sovereignty is an inherent, indelible and indivisible attribute of the state, which consists in the supremacy of state power within its borders and in its independence in relations with other states. Independence is a "situation of a state or people enjoying national sovereignty; a state of affiliation and the right to freely resolve its internal and external problems without interference from the outside (with respect for the rights of other states and the principles of international law).

The analysis of the world states reveals that most of them have won and proclaimed state independence as a result of bloody events. An argument in this respect is also the situation of Romania, which won and proclaimed its independence in 1877, following the Russian-Turkish conflict.

Thus, the formation of states and the gaining of their independence was a long-lasting process that began in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and has not ended yet (figure 2). The analysis of the evolution of the number of states that have gained independence reveals that this phenomenon had an upward trend over time, with nine moments of maximum intensity, overlapping over the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries (figure 2).



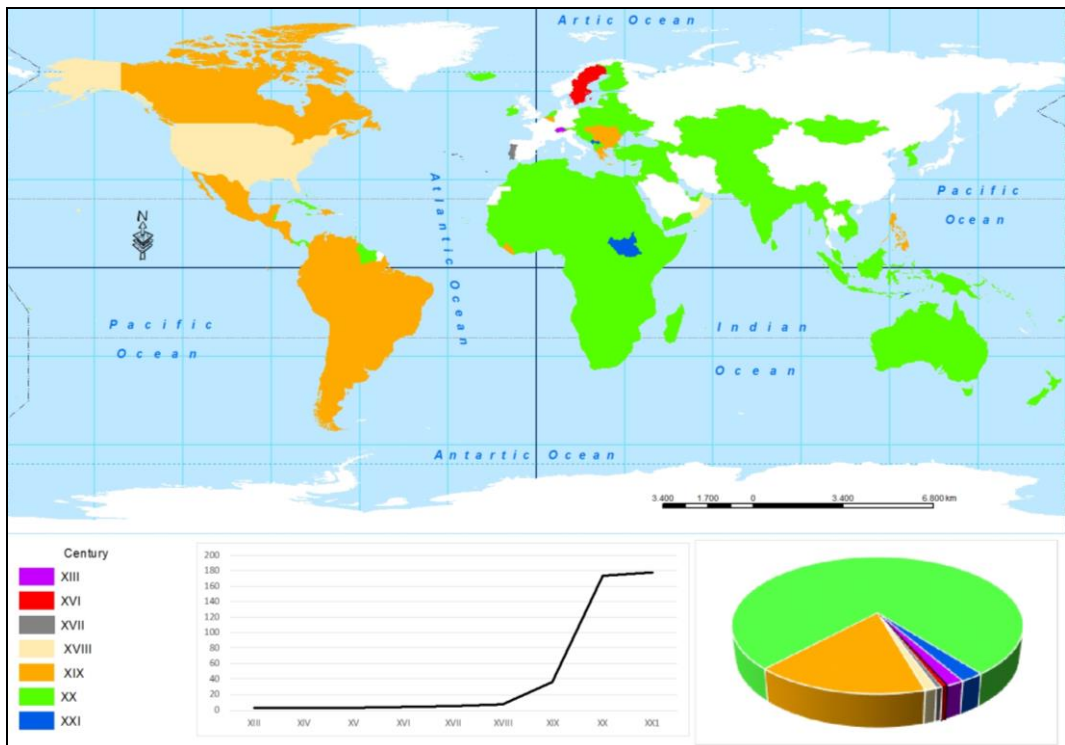
**Figure 1.** Spatial distribution of the world states

Thanks to the extent to which the phenomenon of the consciousness of national states was known in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it can be called the century of nations. The evolution of the way in which the nation states appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is closely linked to the main events that have shaken the system of international relations, the two world wars between 1914-1918 and 1939-1945

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.state.gov/s/inr/rls/10543.htm>

respectively. Although the trend presents an upward trend may be given to the seventh decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when 45 states have gained their independence (figure 2).

The analysis of the independent states highlights the existence of two categories of states, namely: independent states through continuity and independent states that have won and proclaimed their independence in the context of events in a favorable context. In the first category are the successor states of the old state formations, which are characterized by a relatively advanced age and continuity in time. In the other category, that is, the states that have gained independence belong to the young states that have detached from the old state formations following historical events that created an international context favorable to the declaration of state independence and sovereignty. From a numerical point of view, the higher share of states that have gained independence is the ratio of 178 states that have gained independence, compared to only 17 independent states through continuity (figure 1).

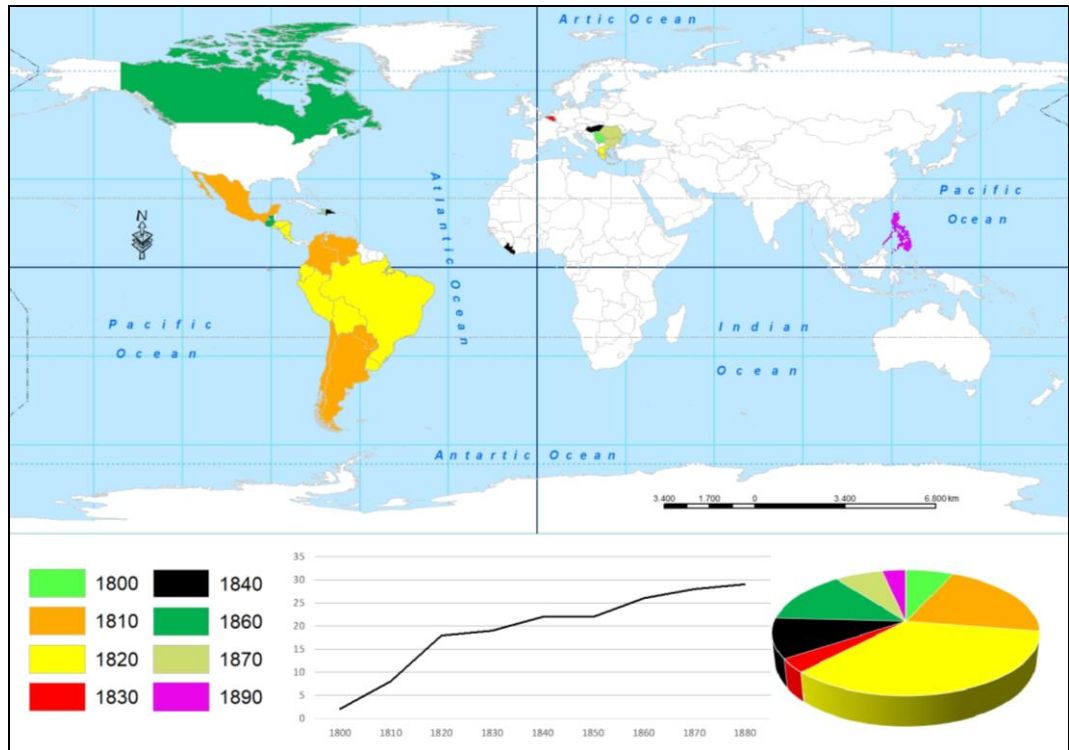


**Figure 2.** Space-time division of states that have gained their independence

The spatial distribution of the independent states of the world reveals that they have a global character, being extended to the entire earth globe. From the analysis of the spatial distribution of the independent states, it is clear that the independent ones by continuity are located in the Euro-Asia, being the successors of the old empires, while the states that have gained their independence are located everywhere and they are separated from the structure

of the old state empire formations or emancipating themselves from their influence, domination and suzerainty (figure 1).

Forming national states and winning their state independence has been and is a slow, long-lasting process that contributes to building and strengthening globalization. The analysis of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - in the light of this aspect, reveals that this century was a century of nationalism for the American continent, and now 19 states were proclaiming their independence, except for the US that proclaimed independence on July 4, 1977.

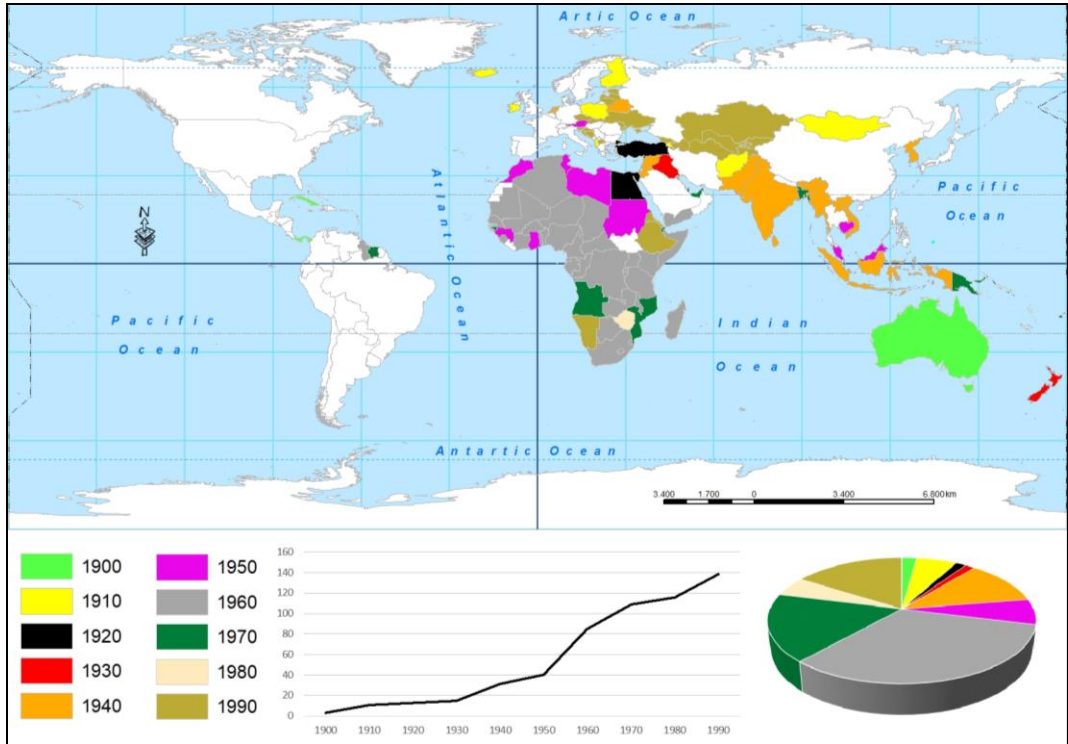


**Figure 3.** Space-time division of states that have gained independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Eight states in Europe (Serbia, Greece, Belgium, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein), one in Africa (Liberia) and one Pacific island state (Philippines) have also proclaimed their independence in this century. The evolution of the number of states that gained their independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was relatively constant with two thresholds, discontinuities imposed by the second and third decades, when six and eleven states were declared independence (figure 3).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century, also called the century of great world conflagrations or the century of nationalities, was a decisive one in imposing national states in the world. The continents marked by the storm of nationalism were: Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia and Central and South America (figure 4). If in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century nationalism manifested itself shyly, now proclaiming its independence a number of 13 states in Europe, Asia and Australia, after the Second World War, from the fourth and fifth decades this activity intensifies, the seventh decade, also called the decade of nationalities

when 45 States, predominantly from Africa (figure 4), proclaimed their independence. In total, 138 states have proclaimed their independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, representing 77% of the total number of states that have proclaimed state independence over time.



**Figure 4.** The space-time division of states that have gained their independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, four states, two of them in Europe (Montenegro - 2006 and Kosovo - 2008), one in Asia (East Timor - 2002) and the other in Africa (South Sudan, 2011) proclaimed the independence and sovereignty of four states.

## CONCLUSIONS

National states, by way of space-time manifestation, are a major component of globalization, alongside organizational relationships, multinational companies, terrorist groups and mafia organizations, etc.). Within them, the man, through everything he defines, was and is the main beneficiary and determinant in the evolution and substantiation of the concepts of regionalization, respectively globalization.

From the space-time analysis of the evolution of states that have gained independence, it is clear that this phenomenon is not a recent date, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and still far from being completed. Arguments in this sense are the centrifugal events of the last period of time, among which are those that happened in 2017 in Catalonia, Spain.



Catalonia is considered part of a group of regions, “stateless nations” (Conversi, 1997; Gibernau, 2006), “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991) or “virtual nations” (Tubau, 1999) such as Flanders, Quebec, and Scotland, that have a strong sense of identity

In recent years the Catalan nationalist government has stepped up his self-determination claims with the announcement of plebiscite in the regions. These claims for self-determination can be seen as the next stage in the evolution of the regionally defined decentralization. From a Catalan nationalist perspective, the current political organization of Spain insufficiently recognizes the distinct historical and cultural rights of its nation, now that their treatment has again become similar to that of other Spanish regions. Opponents interpret the self-determination and independence claims as a manipulation by nationalist elites of their clientele in support of their own particular ambitions (Oskam, 2014).

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