

# The Multifaceted Origin of Separatist Sentiment in Catalonia: The Interdependence of Culture, Economy, and Politics.

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## The Multifaceted Origin of Separatist Sentiment in Catalonia: The Interdependence of Culture, Economy, and Politics

Mangan, Phaedra

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### Abstract:

On September 11, 2012, over one million demonstrators took to the streets of Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, Spain. Being Catalonia's "National Day," many were expected to be waving the Catalan red and yellow-striped flag, the Senyera. However, a new flag had replaced it: a separatist-inspired Catalan flag that included a white star on a blue background, signifying an independent Catalonia. Although there are several reasons for the rise of separatist fervor, many claim it is a direct result of the economic recession in Spain combined with a history based on the cultural unity of a people, with language playing a large role. This thesis argues that it is impossible to hold accountable only the weakened

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economy or a common identity as a reason for increased separatist sentiment. While each is important in its justification, a third aspect of Catalonia plays a significant role: Catalan politics. Catalan regional parties have been historically strong and have become an indicator of the strength of separatist sentiment in Catalonia. Due to a shared history and the repression experienced during the Franco regime, a unique Catalan identity has formed. These factors are presented as the basis for the strong cultural landscape that exists in Catalonia which has further increased separatist sentiment. Catalan social policies and political involvement in regards to the separatist movement have increased national identity, as well as the historically successful Catalan economy juxtaposed with the unstable Spanish economy, which has fed fire to the flame of perceived difference and the quest for independence.

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