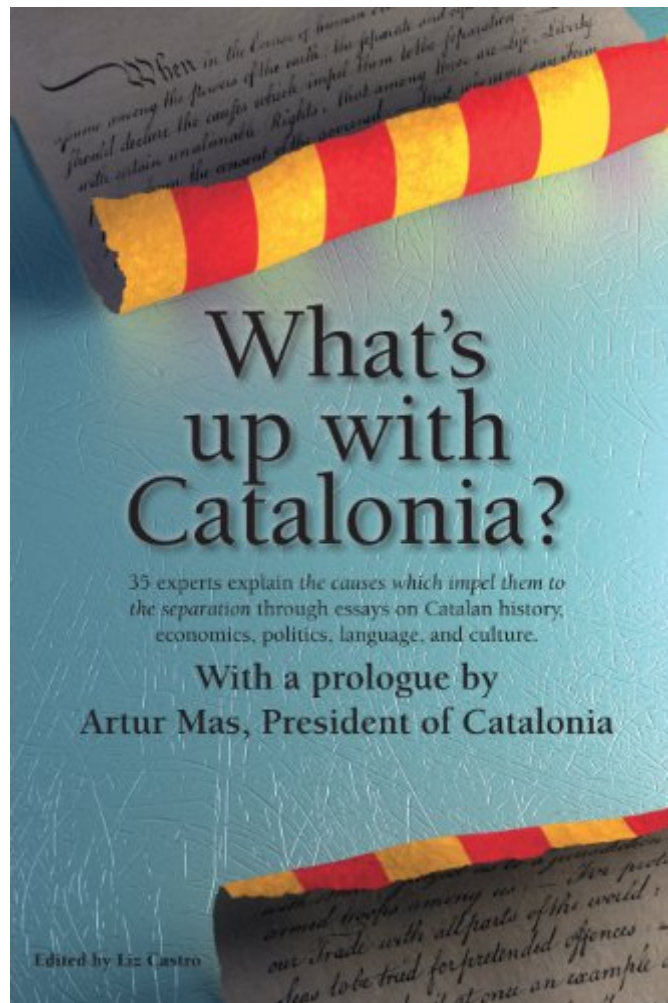


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What's Up With Catalonia?



Synopsis

On September 11, 2012, on Catalonia's National Day, 1.5 million people from all over Catalonia marched peacefully and joyfully through the streets of Barcelona, behind a single placard: Catalonia: New State in Europe. Fifteen days later, President Artur Mas called snap elections for the Parliament of Catalonia, in order to hold a referendum that would let the people of Catalonia decide their own future. The rest of the world and even Spain were caught by surprise, but the events unfolding in Barcelona have been a long time coming. In this new book, 35 experts explore Catalonia's history, economics, politics, language, and culture, in order to explain to the rest of the world the fascinating story behind the march, the new legislature, and the upcoming vote on whether Catalonia will become the next new state in Europe. With a prologue by Artur Mas, President of Catalonia, and contributions from: Ignasi Aragay, Laia Balcells, Germà Bel, Laura Borràs, Alfred Bosch, Núria Bosch, Roger Buch i Ros, Joan Canadell, Pau Canaleta, Salvador Cardús, Muriel Casals, Andreu Domingo, Carme Forcadell, Lluís J. Ganyet, Salvador Garcia-Ruiz, Alex Hinojo, Edward Hugh, Oriol Junqueras, M. Carme Junyent, J.C. Major, Pere Mayans, Balcells, Josep M. Muñoz, Mary Ann Newman, Elisenda Paluzie, Vicent Partal, Cristina Perales-García, Eva Piquer, Enric Pujol, Casademont, Marta Rovira-Martínez, Vicent Sanchis, Xavier Solano, Miquel Strubell, Matthew Tree, Ramon Tremosa, F. Xavier Vila

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Customer Reviews

The book is an good read on the topic of Catalonia and the growing movement for its independence - this is an issue that is going to get more important. Prior to reading the book was aware of Catalonia as a region and that they had desire for independence but not in any great depth -- the book does an excellent job of providing historical context for Catalonia and traces back the long history of the desire for independence. The economic arguments are well thought out and articulated. Good thoughts on the positioning of Catalonia as an independent nation state, but would have liked to see some more on the costs of independence e.g., if you do not get EU membership for a while what does it meanAs a collection of articles there is some repetition but it is an easy read and the articles do try to cover various different aspects of the topic.

In response to Yannis's "unbiased" review in which he goes so far as to say that while Catalonia is "still very different from the rest of Spain, but (a) so are all other regions, since "Spain" is just an average; and above all (b) Catalonia is not anymore that single, uniform, and single-minded nation it might have been once upon a time", I'd like to retort that (a) is simply not true, as borne out by the fact that no other "region" in Spain -leaving aside the terrorist ETA group in the Basque Country- has ever rebelled against Spain's central power -with the exception of Portugal in 1640. 1640 was also the first time the Catalan Republic was proclaimed out of a total of five times.While present-day Catalonian society is indeed very diverse -few places in Europe have seen their population double in the space of fifty years due to an influx of population from other places -southern Spain, but also North Africa, South America and Eastern Europe in the case of Catalonia- even Yannis must admit that Catalan society is remarkably cohesive in spite of its plurality. So while approximately 20% of the population feels exclusively Spanish, a high percentage of the population of non-Catalan origin has joined the mainstream grass-roots movement of civil society for independence. This movement

-which is unprecedented in scale and drive in recent European history- is fuelled by a peremptory need for dignity, fair treatment, and equal representation as citizens of a free state. This runs against the course of events in the history of the Spanish State, still today dominated by a Castilian oligarchy permeating all spheres of power and holding a supreme disdain for the Catalan identity, language, and socioeconomic structure. The illusion of a plural, federal, democratic Spain has vanished over the last thirty years as it has become gradually more evident that Catalans are nearly absent from the Central Government, the judiciary, the military, the extractive elite at the head of the major corporations created after the privatisation of former state monopolies, the industrial-military complex, and the major banks -all based in Madrid, except for La Caixa. While the Spanish parties on the left (PSOE) and the poorer Spanish regions have been bought out by these extractive elites with enormous investments of public funds -including EU aid of which Spain as a whole, but not Catalonia, has so far been a net beneficiary-, the entrepreneurial and middle classes in Catalonia have been starved of funds, left out in the cold with obsolete infrastructures, and to add insult to injury, accused of insolidarity and of being lacking in patriotic feeling. Coming from the ruling class of the wealthy megalopolis Madrid has become over the last 30 years, this is cynicism to the utmost degree. Rather than the 2008 economic and financial crisis, the present situation in Catalonia is the result of the lack of recognition as a distinct nation with cultural, linguistic, and political rights, as well as of 30 years of systematic looting amounting to 8% or 9% of its annual GDP by the Spanish Government, and the humiliation of seeing the very modest Statute of Autonomy of 2006 struck down in 2010 by the Spanish Constitutional Court after it having been approved by the Catalan and Spanish Parliaments and by the population in a referendum.

The book presents individual writings about the independence movement in Catalonia and its background. The individual writings are understandable and contain contrasted information and in many cases are written by experts in every field. The book presents a positive and realistic face of the conditions previous and after the case of reaching the independence. In general it is very suitable for all people who wanted to know more about Catalonia and the independence process under a balanced and rigorous point of view.

Being from Barcelona and living in the US for the last 18 yrs, I'm finally able to show friends why the independence vote

One who doesn't know much about the Catalonia matter can find this book precious!

This summer I spent a month in Catalonia and lived with a host family. I learned a lot about the Catalan culture but I never fully understood why they didn't want to be a part of Spain. This book really helped me gain more knowledge into the problems that cause the conflict. This is a great read for people interested in their culture and wants to learn more from their perspective.

This book is about an ancient people's struggle for freedom from intolerant, and historically violent, cultural and linguistic oppression. It's a heart-breaking, maddening, and inspiring story, all at the same time. I was at that march on September 11th, 2012, and I was inspired by the excitement, defiance, and dignity of it all. Looking forward to a great new life for myself, my wife and my two Catalan children in an age old, but brand new European country.

A fascinating collection of essays about Catalan independence. There were a few too many academics and bureaucrats writing, rather than literary writers and journalists, but overall I learned a lot.

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