

SOROS: FUNDING CATALAN SEPARATISM

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University professor Antonio de Castro mapped a

network of foreign entities he saw as responsible for promoting Catalan separatism, with factions within the establishment foreign super powers weakening Spain to further their interests.

Category: [Essay](#)

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n the context of recent revelations concerning George Soros' continued [involvement](#) in promoting Catalan separatism, it is worth drawing attention to some of the documentary research that has been done in this area.

[Elsewhere](#), I [explored](#) the [causes](#) of separatism in Catalonia, namely: *fading eminence*, or the regional bourgeoisie's loss of economic privilege and the consequent use of separatism to extract concessions from the Spanish government; the *force of mimesis* (in René Girard's sense), meaning "the effects of a foreign agent's soft-power or cultural attraction, which can be deliberately deployed in order to destabilise a geopolitical rival;" the subsequent promotion of *false memory*, a historical narrative of invented grievances to generate support for separatism; and, finally, *foreign money*, which is self-explanatory.

The present piece focuses on the last of these.

Soros and UK/U.S. Involvement

In their 2018 book, *Soros: Breaking Spain*, university professor Juan Antonio de Castro and

journalist Aurora Ferrer map what they see as a network of mainly Anglo-American entities responsible for promoting the creation of an independent Catalan state.

In this context, we may understand Soros as something of a hedge fund manager at the service of particular geopolitical interests (as well as ideological projects).

The authors detail the billionaire's facilitation of pro-separatist activities in Catalonia. He sees these as conforming to Gene Sharp of the Albert Einstein Institute's "[198 methods of nonviolent action](#)," which have been described as something of a blueprint for U.S.-sponsored '[colour revolutions](#),' of which the fraudulent 2017 Catalan independence referendum on the 1st of October would, following Antonio de Castro, have been a botched attempt. ([International observers found this referendum to be invalid](#) and, in any case, it was boycotted by the opposition to the separatist party that organised it.)

The lead-up to this referendum appears to go back at least to October of 2012, when an 'Open Society Foundations' (OSF) delegation established itself in Barcelona. Months later, Artur Mas, the then head of the regional government, hired the OSF-funded 'Independent Diplomat.' It was at this time that the Catalan government founded Diplocat (The Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia), to help promote separatism. Soon after, in 2013, the local OSF representative, Jordi Vaquer, ex-director of the prestigious CIDOB think-tank, delivered a conference with George Soros in Barcelona. [DCLeaks](#) would eventually publish documents revealing George Soros's contribution to DiploCat and CIDOB.

Antonio de Castro also refers to the OSF's funding of the Barcelona Center for Contemporary Culture (CCCB) to carry out pro-independence activities, and of the New America Foundation, which also expressed favourable opinions regarding the viability of an independent Catalonia.

Examples of western financing being used to signal sympathy for the separatist cause also include an 8 September 2017 statement by Goldman Sachs:

Despite government opposition, we expect there will be a vote on October 1. We believe that a majority of those voting in the referendum will support Catalan independence from Spain, due to a lower turnout ... a lasting remedy requires greater autonomy for Catalonia.

The same is true of the Atlantic Council, which has received money from the Soros-funded Ploughshares Fund. The Council's position "coincided with that of an open letter promoted by Soros, through his Open Democracy." Titled "The Defense of the Rule of Law in the European Union," this letter was published on November 8th, 2017. Addressed to "the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and copied to Vice President Frans Timmermans," it questioned the rule of law in Spain and legitimised the October 1st referendum.

Another interesting case involves a company called DXC Technology, which was responsible for setting up the Cerdá Platform, an app from which Catalonia's electronic voting system could be managed, and which facilitated the illegal 2017 referendum:

According to the Nasdaq, Soros sold DXC Technology Co. on Sept. 12, 2017, just weeks before the attempted rebellion. This seems too timely to be a coincidence. One of DXC Technology's employees told the police that the company had signed framework agreements with the Catalan regional government involving the management of more than 700 servers, 350 projects, and 276 applications annually.

In March 2018, "Spain's Treasury required that the Catalan government detail its payments to companies linked with the independence process ... These included DXC Technology."

Antonio de Castro also traces the involvement of the Norwegian government and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee: “All said, the government of Norway seems to have provided about half a million euros to separatist-related groups and persons in Catalonia.”

Russian Involvement

In terms of disinformation, Antonio de Castro points to the British ‘Institute for Statecraft’ and its ‘Integrity Initiative,’ linked to the UK Foreign Office and U.S. Congress-funded National Democratic Institute. The Integrity Initiative was responsible for creating national clusters in various countries, with the stated purpose of fighting Russian disinformation. In Spain, however, according to the group’s Progress Report of 2018, its cluster included the Soros-linked CIDOB.

Given apparent links between the OSF and the Integrity Initiative, together with CIDOB, Antonio de Castro interprets this cluster as a disinformation operation meant to hide the involvement of Britain, the U.S., and OSF, and instead promote the idea that Russia is to blame. However, even if we reconcile promoting an initiative while also discrediting it by linking it to (what you present to be) a bad-faith foreign actor (Russia), the problem with the above conclusion is that Russia did, quite clearly, support Catalan separatism. The Spanish and English language versions of the public *Russia Today* television news channel have been quite straightforwardly sympathetic to separatism in Spain. (It is also the case that some separatist groups in Catalonia tend to be more Atlanticist than others.)

Claims of more concrete Russian support for separatism in Spain abound (although, as ever, one should be wary of possible disinformation). We have, for example, the Volhov Case.

The Volhov Case revealed contacts between pro-independence Catalan government members and the Russian government, but one of the more alarming pieces of evidence thereof involved a phone call between ex-minister for the leftist separatist party ERC,

Xavier Vendrell, and Victor Terradellas, former head of international relations for the liberal Catalan nationalist CDC. In a conversation following the events of 1 October 2017, the two politicians discuss “Russians” who could have arrived in Catalonia.

During the exchange, which, it would turn out, was being recorded by law enforcement, Vendrell asks, “How would ten thousand guys get here?” to which Terradellas answers that it would be a question of infrastructure and commandeering an airport.

He then muses on ways to get the police to kill separatist protestors in order to spark the kind of conflict that might lead to independence, “the cost of independence is one hundred dead,” presumably tying this to the arrival of the aforementioned “ten thousand” Russians, whose intervention could only be justified by some prior violence.

Vendrell strikes a melancholy note when answering that they lost their chance, that they weren’t brave enough to push things to that point (“*se nos paso el arroz, no hubo cojones*”).

The investigation also apparently revealed that on 26 October 2017, the then head of the Catalan government, Carles Puigdemont, met with Russian businessman Nikolay Sadovnikov, who was allegedly acting as the Kremlin’s unofficial ‘emissary.’

The notion that Russia was ready to send “ten thousand” people to Catalonia, in whatever capacity, to confront the Spanish state, seems implausible. All the same, it may well indicate that promises were made, if only to push the separatists to go further and so destabilise Spain as much as possible (promises Vendrell and Terradellas apparently took seriously).

Separatism as Bargaining Chip

Support for separatism, however, is not necessarily support for actual independence: promoting instability in a country by funding a separatist movement in one of its regions can serve ends other than that of actually establishing a new state. Consider [the case](#) of the Canary Islands:

José Manuel Otero Novas, Minister of the Presidency and Education in the 1970s, serving under Spain's first democratically elected head of government, Adolfo Suárez, [claimed](#) that during his tenure, a CIA communiqué was intercepted making it clear that if Spain did not join NATO, the U.S. would continue strengthening separatists in the Canary Islands.

Domestically, the mainstream messaging coming from Spanish establishment Left voices following the 2017 makeshift referendum in Catalonia was frequently that, given the rise of separatism, an accommodating, socialist-led coalition was the only way to prevent the country's breakup, as the Right and explicitly patriotic Spanish politicians would only polarise the situation further, precipitating Catalan independence. At least in the medium-term, the gambit seems to have been to shift the Overton window and bully the electorate into accepting its options were between a national Left willing to sell out Spanish interests at every turn, or a full-blown breakup of the country.

Insofar as promoting separatism destabilises Spain, foreign entities benefit, regardless of whether actual independence is obtained. Soros, for example, can fund separatism while supporting at least nominally non-separatist leftists.

This mimics the historical dynamic according to which separatism constituted a bargaining chip for the post-18th century Catalan bourgeoisie to retain privileges beyond those of other regions, and get concessions out of Madrid, without (initially) actually wanting independence.

Conclusion

That Soros has been involved in promoting Catalan separatism is clear, and Russian involvement appears very likely as well. It seems that Spain happens to be a theatre in which geopolitical rivals have common ground, with factions within the UK and U.S. establishments, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, seeing this country's weakness as a boon to their interests.