

## ***Train, Polish, Reform. The Education of Basque and Navarre Elites: from the Habsburgs to the Bourbons<sup>1</sup>***

**José María Imízcoz**

e-mail: [josemaria.imizcoz@ehu.es](mailto:josemaria.imizcoz@ehu.es)  
*Universidad del País Vasco. Spain*

**Abstract:** The reforms in recruiting policies within the ruling elites that the Bourbons carried out in the 18th century, accomplished through the launching of new strategies in the selection and formative systems, contributed to the transformation of the educational procedures followed by those families seeking to be part of the new political and military establishment. In this essay, I summarize the educational trajectories of the Basque and Navarrese elite families that participated intensively in this changing processes. In the first place, in this essay I explore the social foundation of the educational system: the contrast between belonging and globalization; and the social networks that guaranteed the educational trajectories of these families, all of it in global scale. Next, I disclose the different stages and levels that conformed the education of these elites: the teaching of Spanish and the first writing lessons; the secondary education in schools and Latin or grammar schools; and the partial decline of the university system after the initiation of these new recruiting policies that the Bourbons have sponsored, evidence of which is the prominence attained by institutions such as the royal seminaries, the military academies and the «Secretarías del Despacho». This part of the essay is completed with a study on how these families would seek to furnish their sons and daughters with a formation in good manners, usually by enrolling them in the royal seminaries or schooling them in France. In conclusion, I believe that these essay offers a revealing insight into the creation of a new elite of cosmopolitan, civilized and reformist enlightened families. But at the same time, it also exposes the cultural breach between these new «civilized» elites and those who remained loyal to the traditional paradigm.

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## 1. Introduction

Our focus is on a specific group within the Basque and Navarre elites: that of the groups which ascended especially under the Bourbons, in what has been referred to as 'the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> century' (Caro Baroja, 1969), in the villages and valleys of Green Spain, the former Basque Provinces and the Kingdom of Navarre, which were the main source of government cadres for the Bourbon crown. From the court and the government institutions, these groups amounted to a significant proportion of the Enlightened government elite that led Bourbon reformist policies, while other regional elite groups were side-lined by this process, maintaining a much more traditional profile.

This social group is interesting in itself, as representatives of the political and cultured class that drove Bourbon reformism. Its analysis is revealing of changes in the recruitment policies of the Bourbons and in the educational and professional strategies followed by those groups of the Spanish elite most closely related to the new reformist institutions. The examination of these groups is, however, also interesting from a comparative perspective. Indeed, it is maintained that education within this social group resulted in the crystallisation of a Modern elite, whose political and intellectual culture stood in sharp contrast with those of a majority of their countrymen, be them elites stuck in traditional ways or the common people, at both the national and the local levels (Imízcoz, 2011). The cultural contrasts observed within Basque and Navarre elites in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and, ultimately, the chasm that opened in their midst, had much to do with those educational and civilizational differences (Imízcoz, 2017a; Artola, 2017)

## 2. Social basis of education, between roots and globalisation

Villages and towns in Green Spain were dense social settings. Community factors were a significant variable of economic life (the family-core household model, the commons, the rights of residents, the *auzolan* or communal labour, the *batzarre* or open council), and the community was united by «strong ties» in which everyone – relatives, friends and neighbours – knew each other and shared knowledge, customs, opinions and opportunities and, therefore, tended as a collective to reproduce traditional mores (Granovetter, 2003). Cities and ports were always more open to the exterior, especially to merchants and seamen, but they were small (under 10,000 inhabitants), and many aspects of its political, guild and parish lives were also driven by community concerns. In this context, for most people education consisted in the oral and gestural transmission of consuetudinary knowledge at home, the church and the street. Children learned by sharing the life of adults, working with them in the farm, the workshop or the market from an early age; they heard their first prayers from the lips of their mothers, grandmothers and fathers, who took them to church to introduce them into the practices of the parish, and they learned the collective values and beliefs of the community (Altuna, 2012).

At the same time, especially from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the valleys of Green Spain became a land of emigrants. Those who left to venture into the open spaces of the first globalisation (the Spanish Monarchy, the American and Atlantic economy, and

finally, the European Enlightenment) underwent a profound educational and mental transformation. Caro Baroja already pointed out the significant contrast that existed between those that remained in the community – characterised by a strong tendency to reproduce tradition, resist innovation and follow the opinion of the collective – and those that left and – freed from the straightjacket imposed by the community – stood out for their commercial, industrial, cultural or political entrepreneurship. Larramendi's observations in Guipúzcoa in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century led him to argue that 'it is not to be believed that a country made of mountains, cliffs, rocks and woods could breed such noble wits as Guipúzcoa does' because 'in all these parts there are Guipúzcoa-born professors, canons, dignitaries, bishops, judges, *oidores* and royal and state councilors' (Larramendi, 1969, 192-193)

My research focuses on those members of the Basque and Navarre elite that, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thrived in the king's administrative, military, ecclesiastical or financial service, or in mercantile activities within the framework of the Hispanic empire. In previous works, I have presented the emergence, elevation and reproduction of these groups from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards; their privileged links with the government from the War of the Spanish Succession (Guerrero, 2012); their extraordinary social and geographical mobility throughout the empire; and, the reproduction of their power networks in the Monarchy's institutions during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Imízcoz y Bermejo, 2017b). The educational and cultural transformations that these processes implied have also been analysed; these were embodied by the families that formed the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País* and the *Real Sociedad Económica de los Deseosos del Bien Público*, and the leading role which these families played in the projects of the Enlightenment-inspired Bourbon reforms, and in the Spanish and American Enlightened circles (Imízcoz and Chaparro, 2009).

Educational policies in this sector of the Bourbon elites were determined by the resources made available by the Crown and the empire. The family strategies consisted on keeping one of the children as heir or heiress of the *mayorazgo* or central lineage, while bringing out as many males as possible to thrive at the king's service or the commercial world. Success largely depended on the influence of relatives already established in these careers and business concerns, and on the number of male children to be provided for.

In «El patrocinio familiar» we illustrated the integration of aspiring young men into the social networks woven by their families at different levels within the structure of the monarchy, and the central role played by their family links with officials, churchmen and merchants in their education, socialisation and professional promotion. In their letters to their families at home, these relatives – stationed in Madrid, Toledo, Cádiz, Segovia, Valladolid de Michoacán, Lima, Buenos Aires, etc. – directed the education and the professional trajectory of young men, according to their ability to 'shoe them in' more or less directly in the institutions or the business world. In these letters, they reported on employment opportunities for their children, advised about the sort of training they would need, contributed to pay for their education, and took them under their protection from an early age, in order to polish their education and introduce them in the royal administration, the army, the church and trade. This was the social basis and the drive of these dynamics (Imízcoz, 2001).

These youths came mostly from two groups, with very different social and cultural backgrounds. On the one hand, urban oligarchies for which sending their children to serve with the king, the courts, the army and the church, was a common practice going back to the Habsburg period. These families constituted the economic and cultural elite at the provincial level, spoke Spanish, they could read and write, having had a book-based education, and traditionally sent their children to secondary schools such as those ran by the Jesuits, and even, for those young men earmarked for a career at the courts or the Church, to the university to study law or theology. On the other hand, families of rural petty aristocracies, without a tradition of public service, which rapidly moved from agriculture to trade or careers at the king's service. They were boosted by the new recruitment policies inaugurated by Philip V, which largely relied on attracting new men without their own power base, making them entirely dependent on the king. This was the key of the success of numerous families of northern *hidalgos*, in this context a collective rather than a personal title, often nothing more than peasants and petty traders. These families lacked the cultural tradition that new careers demanded, and had to start by learning Spanish and to read and write, before they could access higher forms of education.

### 3. Learning Spanish and first letters

In a traditionally illiterate context, such as Basque society during the Early Modern Age, Spanish became the written language of the Basques. Until at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Spanish was the vehicle of literacy, reading and writing. Soon, Spanish also became the language of administration, so being literate in Spanish became a factor of social ascent and the key to access positions of power. At the local scale, speaking, reading and writing Spanish were basic skills to access municipal and provincial posts. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, local laws in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa determined that nobody who could not read and write in «Romance» should be appointed as mayors or procurators to the provincial assemblies. By becoming literate, the second-born sons of *hidalgo* families could access the «lettered power» of provincial administration, as well posts related to the administration of the monarchy. Other typical outlets for them were the Church and the university. For their part, merchants needed Spanish, reading and writing in order to be able to participate in the Atlantic and colonial economy (López Atxurra, s.f., pp. 422-424). In short, Spanish and literacy were necessary skills for those who wished to leave their native region and thrive in the rest of the Peninsula or America.

Cities had a long tradition of primary schools. Since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century, towns in Guipúzcoa hired schoolmasters, arranged places where they could teach and sought funds from benefactors (Azpiazu, 1998, pp. 156-157). Private foundations were created to keep schoolmasters who could teach their children the Christian doctrine, reading, writing and basic numeracy skills (López Atxurra, s.f., pp. 424 and 430). This was also the case in Navarre, where primary schools existed in cities, towns and populous boroughs, such as those in La Ribera (Gárriz, 2001). This was not so in small hamlets deep in the valleys.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a protracted, but highly significant for our purpose, proliferation of primary schools in the rural areas of Green Spain. This phenomenon

was linked with the strong migratory trends that saw people leaving the region to join colonial trade and careers at the king's service. The phenomenon was especially relevant in the areas in which the migratory trends were strongest, such as the Valley of Baztán; the region around the Bidasoa River, in the northeast of Navarre, (Imízcoz, 2013); the *Encartaciones* of Vizcaya (Martínez Borralló, in press); the Valley of Ayala, in Álava (Aranburuzabala, in press, pp. 213, 269, 281, 293-294, 305); and, the valleys in modern Cantabria (Gutiérrez and Soldevilla, 1999). The creation of schools in these small and poor hamlets was funded by emigrants who had thrived in trade, the Indies and the king's service. The examples posed by the Valley of Baztán and Cantabria are very illustrative. Some of the wealth amassed by these emigrants was used to fund schools in their native villages, especially in order to provide their relatives and other neighbours with the necessary skills to access these careers abroad, within the framework of the migratory chains organised by their social networks.

In the Basque countryside, learning Spanish and basic literacy was not, as has been claimed, an imposition by the state- and *diputaciones*-sponsored educational policies, which were not to crystallise until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was instead the result of the social demand posed by local families who wished to prepare their children for careers abroad. I have demonstrated this, with the aid of private letters, for the Valley of Baztán (Imízcoz, 2013). This social demand responded to the families' aspirations – at least those families connected with the resources on offer in the Monarchy's territories – to see their children access these careers. These aspirations were, ultimately, grounded on economic motivations: these peasant families hoped that their children, after becoming successful in trade and at the king's service, would revert some of their wealth onto their families. This was, in fact, often the case, and these, generally poor valleys, profited from the arrival of considerable foreign wealth.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, provincial laws stimulated the creation of schools, as shown by the decisions adopted by the *Juntas Generales de Guipúzcoa* in 1721, or by the *Cortes* of Navarre in 1780-1781 (Laspalas, 2001, 2002 and 2013). Public discourses reflect the old utilitarian vision (see above). In the words of a group of Enlightened Basques met in Bilbao in 1775: «It has been proven that no greater profit can be made in the small, mountainous and sterile Basque country than by sending our young to Andalusia and the Americas, ensuring that they have thoroughly learnt their letters and their numbers»<sup>2</sup>. In the late 1810s, representatives from San Sebastián put forward a similar argument: «Primary schools, which so profitable have been to this city and the Country in general, have been more numerous here than in any other province, and this has led to our children gaining the most profitable occupations in the Peninsula and Overseas» (López Atxurra, s.f., 430; Benito Pascual, 1990, pp. 108 and 110). The result of this social process was an increase in the number of both schools and students in the Basque provinces and northern Navarre. No quantitative analysis of this process exists, but sufficient proof lays in the fact that

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<sup>2</sup> Extractos de las Juntas Generales celebradas por la Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País en la villa de Bilbao por septiembre de 1775, Vitoria, 1775, p. 122.

these territories, which suffered from adverse economic and linguistic conditions, had one of the highest literacy rates in Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4. Middle school: schools, Latin schools and technical training

If learning the early letters was rare, secondary education was even more socially restricted. In fact, there was no established system for what we today refer as secondary education. This included the teaching of skills that prepared students for university, or that improved their professional capabilities. Secondary education was imparted in Latin schools and regular schools. Latin schools prepared the students for further studies in which the knowledge of Latin was required, especially university, where Latin was the key vehicle for teaching. There were various kinds of Latin schools: municipal, private and religious (ran by both regular and secular orders); many clerics also worked as private Latin tutors. Religious schools, on the other hand, also taught the humanities. This field was dominated by Jesuits, Dominicans and Piarists (Dedieu and Bregeon, 2013). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Crown showed special concern for educating the aristocracy, and founded schools for nobles with that purpose. In Castile, the two main such schools were located in Madrid (1725) and Vergara (1776), of which more later. The Jesuit schools in Barcelona, Valencia and Calatayud played a similar role (Fernández Díaz, 1993, pp. 925-951).

Technical training was outside the academic curriculum that prepared the students for university, and was directed towards different social sectors; university learning was restricted to the elite. The institution of technical training was an 18<sup>th</sup>-century phenomenon, especially in the second half of the century, and was related to Enlightened policies for the promotion of trade, navigation, agriculture and industry, which tried to go beyond the limits imposed by traditional guild education. The creation of professional schools was largely an initiative of trade consulates and *Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País*, although they did not always meet expectations.

In the Basque provinces, the Enlightened elites insisted, from the first *Plan de Sociedad Económica*, published in 1763, on the need to renovate the teaching of agriculture, sciences, useful trades and commerce<sup>3</sup>. Peñaflores's aim was to promote the teaching of practical skills for trade. Specifically, the plan put forward in the Basque Country was to create a school of farming, where new crops could be experimented with, and drawing schools in San Sebastián, Loyola and Vergara, to train masters and apprentices in mechanical arts, as well as promoting the teaching of maths (geometry, hydraulic architecture and machinery), medicine and surgery. Between 1774 and 1780 the Basque regions witnessed the creation of schools of drawing in Vergara, Bilbao and Vitoria in 1774, San Sebastián in 1777, and Placencia in 1780, which were successful in attracting a large number of students (Anduaga, 2013).

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<sup>3</sup> *Plan de una Sociedad Económica o Academia de agricultura, ciencias y artes útiles y comercio, adaptado a las circunstancias y economía particular de la MN y ML Provincia de Guipúzcoa (1763)*, J.I. Tellechea (ed.), San Sebastián, Diputación Foral de Guipúzcoa, 1985.

There were also new navigation schools: in Bilbao, in 1740, the result of the cooperation of the *Diputación*, the *Consulado* and the Council; and in San Sebastián, in 1756, on the initiative of the *Consulado*. Similarly, schools of pilotage and seamanship were created in Algorta, Santurce and Plencia. The *Real Seminario Patriótico* of Vergara, founded in 1776, focused on scientific disciplines, to a large extent in response to the military and engineering needs of the monarchy. The Crown funded the chairs in Chemistry and Metallurgy, and a project was put forward to create a mineralogical school. Peñafiorida asked the crown for all the directors of mines, foundries, royal factories and mints to be selected among Vergara graduates in chemistry, metallurgy and mining. The research centre, or *Laboratorium Chemicum*, of Vergara boasted spectacular results, such as the discovery of wolfram by the Elhúyar brothers or the purification of platinum by Chabaneau, in 1786.

Concerning trade, up to the end of the century most children of merchants and employees of trading houses received hands-on training, in their families or in the office. This training was limited to book-keeping, algebra and languages. Often, this training took place as interns in the houses of foreign partners (Angulo, 2000; Jiménez, 2013). The Bascongada presented a project, never to be fulfilled, to create a chair in commerce. Around 1800, the *Consulado* of Bilbao proposed offering courses in maths, geography and languages, following the example of other pioneering *consulados*, but the *Escuela de Comercio* did not come to fruition until 1820 (Anduaga, 2013). In short, despite the various projects conceived by the Enlightened elite, education for trade and technical professions continued being an eminently practical affair.

## **5. Universities: rise and decline, from the Habsburgs to the Bourbons**

In the context of the jurisdictional monarchy of the Habsburgs, ruled according to a legal order based on God's law and traditional corporate rights, theological and legal university training was key for the education of the political and intellectual elite, largely constituted by lawyers and theologians (Garriga, 2004, Hespanha, 1993). This situation was to change with the Bourbons. The bureaucratic, reformist and Enlightened monarchy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century aimed to fill its government cadres with different men, especially in the second half of the century. Probably, as noted, the new educational avenues and new forms of knowledge sought by the elites of Bourbon reformism were directly related to this. This would also explain the disaffection that existed between the major Castilian universities and the Crown during this century. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Enlightened politicians frequently criticised the universities, and the Crown tried to reform them (Polo, 2002; Peset and Peset, 2002; Torremocha, 2015). Before we analyse the role played by Basque and Navarre elites in this process, it is necessary to set the context by summarising the state of academia at the time.

Traditionally, universities represented the pinnacle of academic learning in Habsburg Spain. There were considerable differences between universities. Above them all, the three major Castilian universities, Salamanca, Valladolid and Alcalá, which were far ahead local «minor» universities, for instance those at Oñate, in Guipúzcoa, and Irujo, in Navarra, which were more accessible in both academic

and economic terms, but whose titles lacked the same prestige. The Basque and Navarre students of these universities had limited career options, and were largely absorbed by the local and provincial bureaucratic apparatus. Sometimes, a title from Oñate and Irache could be used as a lever to access one of the major Castilian universities (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002, pp. 69-70).

Academically, universities were organised by faculty. Each university had different kinds of faculties, each of which had their own teaching curricula. The most common types of faculty were Arts, Canon and Law, Theology and Medicine (Fernández, 1993, pp. 937-938). The main titles were Law and Theology. The faculties of «Canon and Law» taught Roman and canon law. By studying law at one of the major universities, the second-born sons of the families that constituted urban oligarchies, including those from the Basque provinces and Navarre during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, gained access to the high bureaucratic posts of the Monarchy and the Church.

The highest positions these students could aspire to were *corregimientos*, *audiencias* and *consejos* (Fayard, 1982; Molas, 2008). The highest tier of administration was dominated by the sons of major bureaucratic dynasties, which aspired to perpetuate themselves in their positions. Below this level were administrative posts in secondary population centres, or simply the undertaking of private legal practice. The third level was inhabited by subaltern lawyers without specific training, such as scribes, barristers and secretaries, for whom a modicum of legal knowledge was considered enough (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002).

Theology studies, on the other hand, catered for members of the secular and the regular clergy. Theology, the «study of God», was considered the most superior form of knowledge among Catholics, a subject with a great influence on all other subjects. Theology and Law studies could be combined to prepare students for prelatures, cathedral posts, canonries, and inquisitorial posts which required knowledge of canon law (Artola, 2013). At the bottom of the hierarchy, urban and rural parish priests and chaplains, whose knowledge was much more modest.

The most outstanding social feature in the three major universities was the distance that separated the students enrolled in one of the six residential colleges (four in Salamanca, one in Valladolid and one in Alcalá) and the rest of students, who were known as 'manteístas'. Residential college students were but a small percentage of the entire student roll, but included the children of the political and social elite. In the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, residential colleges became increasingly elitist, and their places were hoarded by members of the bureaucratic, aristocratic and urban elites; they became the seedbed of the theological and legal elite destined to populate the highest echelons of crown and Church (Carabias, 1986; Sobaler, 1987)

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the children of Basque and Navarre elites played a significant role in these residential colleges. Students from Vizcaya were particularly numerous and influential in the college of San Bartolomé, Salamanca, attended by 116 Basque students between 1417 and 1767. A large number of these students ended up taking up a position in royal councils, chancelleries, *audiencias*, bishoprics, cathedral councils, abbeys and religious orders (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002, pp. 63-66). Well known are the Guipúzcoa-born dynasties of the

Arce de Otalora, the Larreategui and the Ipeñarrieta (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002, pp. 62-63 and 75-76), or the Navarre Ramírez de Arellano, Salcedo, Íñiguez de Abarca, López Dicastillo, Marichalar, Remírez Baquedano, Pérez de Araciel and Camargo (Guerrero, 2012). In contrast, Guipúzcoa-born «manteístas» in the 17<sup>th</sup> century seemed not to have come from major dynasties, but second-order families: *mayorazgos* which controlled, or wished to control, municipal and provincial posts, and families which practiced the legal profession at the local level (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002, p. 74).

The evolution in the number of Basque and Navarre students enrolled in these universities seems to respond to broader patterns of growth and decline. The three main universities witnessed a spectacular increase in the number of matriculations in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially in its closing two decades, and also in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Afterwards, however, after a sharp drop, enrolment remained at very low levels throughout the rest of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The number of Basque and Navarre students followed similar trends. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were 800 «manteístas» from the dioceses of Calahorra and Pamplona (600 from Calahorra and 200 from Pamplona), to which we should add a much smaller number of «colegiales». By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, their number had dropped to 260 «manteístas», 200 from Calahorra and 60 from Pamplona.

The presence of Basque and Navarre students was especially important at the University of Salamanca, to which they were attracted by the university's legal curriculum. In 1614-1615, the number of students from the above mentioned dioceses was about 400, but by the 18<sup>th</sup> century this number had decreased to between 30 and 50. In 1614-1615 they amounted to 10% of the student role, while in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century they were a meagre 4%. The number of students from the diocese of Calahorra was to decline the most. In the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this diocese was fourth in terms of student numbers, with 300 students in 1614-1615. Thereafter, their number fell drastically, to between 15 and 20 matriculations in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of percentage, they declined from between 4% and 6% of 'manteístas' in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to 2% in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002, pp. 39-40).

This suggests that the Basque elites had little time for university studies, especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Larramendi's *Corografía de Guipúzcoa* (1756) seems to reflect this sentiment, when he explained that «in the past, with these rents, families had enough to get by decently and educate their children, sending them to university and residential colleges, which they attended in great numbers; nowadays this is seldom seen; few can go to university and residential colleges with the assistance of their parents» (Larramendi, 1969, p. 198).

The reasons for this decline are unclear. The general disaffection towards university studies, from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, has been related to the progressive demoralisation of common students or «manteístas», owing to the saturation of the job market following the sharp increase in the number of students in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the hoarding of the best posts by residential college students (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2002, p. 63). In fact, the number of students enrolled in residential colleges remained fairly stable over time.

Without rejecting these factors, the drop in the number of Basque students enrolled in Law studies during the 18<sup>th</sup> century could be related to the change in recruitment policies introduced by the Bourbons. It is likely that Basque and Navarre families which had a long tradition in taking high administrative posts continued sending their children to be educated in the major universities of Castile and, in fact, their numbers did not decline during the century. However, it seems that those families most closely related to careers associated to Bourbon reformism bypassed university education in favour of the new educational avenues created by Philip V with the express purpose of forming his new government elite. The evidence seems to confirm this contrast. While the traditional elite of the *Viejo Reyno* continued attending the university, to gain access to magistracies, specific sectors of the so-called «la hora navarra del XVIII», especially a number of families with ramifications in Baztán, Pamplona, Madrid and America (i.e. the Mendinueta, the Micheo and the Gamio), contributed with few such magistrates and, instead, led their children down new avenues to political elevation, such as the *Real Hacienda*, the army officer corps and the new ministerial and territorial administration (Imízcoz, 2014). More work is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

## 6. Political changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and new educational avenues for the Bourbon reformist elite

Philip V renovated the Monarchy's administrative, military and financial institutions, but also the profile and composition of the Spanish political class. He removed the high aristocracy from the relevant government posts, subjugating them to new, ministry-based government institutions. These were staffed by new men who lacked their own power base, and who, therefore, owed their position entirely to the king. The Bourbons also reformed the army and the navy, creating the Royal Guards and the military academies where, for the first time, the king controlled the training of army officers and the political-military officials (governors, viceroys and *audiencia* presidents) who were to lead the territorial governments in the Iberian Peninsula and America (Castellano, Dedieu, López-Cordón, 2000; Dedieu, 2001). This change triggered the elevation of numerous *hidalgos*, including a high proportion of Basque and northern Navarre *hidalgos* whose *hidalguía* was a collective, rather than an individual title (Guerrero, 2012; Imízcoz, 2016). Throughout the century, recruitment of ministerial and army staff remained an endogamous affair, channelled by client-patron networks, which allowed the families that had climbed up the new system articulated by Philip V to perpetuate themselves in these institutions (Imízcoz and Bermejo, 2017).

The children of these families focused not so much on the traditional magistracies resulting from the Monarchy's jurisdictional model, but on the new institutions created or reformed by the Bourbons: the ministerial *Secretarías del Despacho*; the *intendencias* of the new provincial institutions; the army and navy officer corps (created by the king through the Royal Guards and the military academies, especially the so-called 'wise arms' of the navy, the artillery corps, and the engineer corps); the *Real Hacienda*; and the management of public works. These new posts demanded equally new technical skills. Rather than the traditional topics studied at university

– law, scholastic philosophy, theology – they required technical knowledge and an open mind to European innovations.

In order to train and select their cadres, Philip V and his successors created or promoted institutions which were to be privileged gateways into them, such as the aristocratic schools, military academies, the Royal Guards and the *Secretarías del Despacho* (Dedieu, 2005). These institutions became the practical channels of promotion for the Basque and Navarre elites which, with the support of their powerful patrons in the royal institutions, wished to introduce their children in the new administrative apparatus (Imízcoz, 2010).

The innovative cultural and educational spirit of these Bourbon-promoted elites and agents of Enlightened reformist policies, stood in sharp contrast with the general attitude of most Spanish aristocrats. The Bourbon's will to educate the nobility as servants of the state, and the criticisms levelled by the Enlightened elite against cultureless aristocrats, are well known. In order to use a Basque example, the first director of the Sociedad Económica Matritense, Gaspar de Munibe y Tello (Huamanga, 1711-1793), Marquis of Valdelirios and member of the Council of the Indies, and of the Council of State, expressed himself in the following terms in a letter to his second nephew, Xavier María de Munibe e Idiáquez, Count of Peñafloreda and founder of the Bascongada: «Our aristocrats (...) only intend to continue their lineages down the generations, but not to acquire enough knowledge so as to be useful to the State, in the belief that birth compensates all the shortcomings of education» (Arocena, 1963, pp. 7-9).

It seems that, outside the elite group that participated in the new reformist institutions, Spanish regional nobility was in general reluctant to embrace the spirit of Enlightened renewal, judging by Santiago Aragón's description of the aristocrats from Extremadura in the 18<sup>th</sup> century:

Their limited culture, their hostility towards every novelty, their strong group prejudices, and their economic conservatism, puts them, with some exceptions, far apart from the Enlightened movement; they were much more at home at the local sphere (...) It is a highly symptomatic that, among state officials, preference was given to *corregimientos*, a position that depended largely on quality, birth and favours, variables that suited their personal qualities better, rather than on science, skill and the ability to adopt the new Enlightened principles (Aragón, 1990, p. 482).

This nobility was deeply immersed in the abundant filo-aristocratic literature, prone to panegyrics, funeral orations, poetry, dedications and pamphlets that exalted the value of traditional merit and value (Aragón, 1989, p. 298).

## **7. The school curriculum of the reformist elites: noble schools, military academies and *Secretarías del Despacho***

Bourbon reformism aimed to bring Spain to step with the scientific and material progress undergone by the main European powers. Universities did not teach the scientific skills that this required. New ministerial elites criticised university's obsolete

model, grounded in scholastic philosophy, theology and law. According to Cabarrús, Miguel de Múzquiz, Baztán-born Minister of Hacienda under Charles III, «mostly mourned over the sight of a badly-led youth which, neglecting the task of creating wealth, flocked to university, where one or two outstanding intellects (...) were surrounded by thousands of men wasting the best years of their lives, obscuring their minds with impertinent or ridiculous doctrines (...)»<sup>4</sup>.

In contrast to the classical university subjects, the Bourbon army was the stronghold of science (Lafuente and Peset, 1987). Modern experimental sciences, which had taken off in Europe during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, entered Spain through the Crown-sponsored institutions, mainly the military academies and the noble schools, such as the *Seminario* of Vergara, which trained students for these careers. Army and navy officer posts were abundant, prestigious and full of advantages, and became a coveted destination for the Basque and Navarre elites that wished to scale the social ladder through commerce, or to bind their families to king's service (Imízcoz and Bermejo, 2016). Given the role played by endogamy and personal favours in the selection of officers, it is hardly surprising that the families with good connections at court and the army high command hoarded many of the positions available through this channel.

The typical *cursus honorum* for these officers included attending the noble schools and the military academies. The minimum age to enrol in the noble schools of Madrid and Vergara was eight, and thirteen or fourteen to gain admittance to the military academies. In practice, the entry age and the duration of studies varied widely, but the average age of new entries was eleven, and those of graduates fourteen, the average time spent in these studies being approximately four years.

Young Basque and Navarre *hidalgos* began attending the *Seminario de Nobles de Madrid* from the date of its foundation, in 1725, and the *Real Seminario Patriótico de Vergara* from 1776. Entry requirements were stricter in the former. Between 1727 and 1808, 64 Basque and 31 Navarre students enrolled in the school, a small percentage of the 1058 students to attend the institution during this period (6.9% of Basques and 3.3% of Navarres), but a significant one considering the total population of these territories. This select group of attendees included founding members of the *Sociedad Bascongada*, such as Manuel Ignacio de Altuna, Joaquín María de Eguía, Pablo Epalza, Roque Moyúa and Pedro María de Unceta (Chaparro and Artola, 2013, p. 186). The number of Basque students in the Madrid school dwindled significantly after the foundation of the *Seminario* in Vergara.

The students of the *Seminario de Nobles de Madrid* belonged to a select section of the political elite, formed by families with close ties with the high administration of the state and the army. For the future career of these students, social capital was more relevant than their training (Andújar, 2004, 205). Founded in 1725 and managed by the Society of Jesus, it came under royal control in 1767 after the expulsion of the Society of Jesus, when the director of the school became a royal appointment. When

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<sup>4</sup> *Elogio de Excelentísimo Señor Conde de Gausa, que en la Junta General celebrada por la Real Sociedad de Amigos del País de Madrid en 24 de diciembre de 1785 leyó el socio D. Francisco Cabarrús, del Consejo de Su Magestad en el Real de Hacienda*. Publicado por acuerdo de la misma Sociedad. Madrid MDCCLXXXVI, por la viuda de Ibarra, hijos y compañía, pp. 38-39.

the school reopened in 1770, the military man and scientist Jorge Juan Santalicia became its new director. Under his directorship and in the context of Charles III's reign, during which the Crown promoted important educational institutions for the training of their cadres, especially in the military field, with the foundation of the academies of midshipmen in Cartagena and El Ferrol, the *Colegio de Artillería de Segovia* and the *Real Seminario Patriótico de Vergara*, the school renovated its curriculum in order to stress scientific and technical training (Solano, 2000).

In order to promote this channel of recruitment and training, the Crown granted privileges to the students of the *Seminario*, ordering that art graduates be given preference for employment, and those who wanted a career in the army be admitted as cadets in any regiment they chose, their time in the seminary counting as time in the service. Between 1770 and 1808, the students of the Madrid school came largely from families that worked in the king's service. Of the 47% of identified families, 34% had army connections, followed far behind by 9% of high government officials and 4% of court officials. The same applies to the school in Vergara, increasingly attended by children from military families (Andújar, 2004, p. 214).

The *Real Seminario Patriótico de Vergara* was created in 1776 by members of the Enlightened *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País*, as a 'workshop [aimed] to create skilled individuals who can be of immediate service to the state'. The school's curriculum had a marked scientific profile. Traditional scholastic learning, based on rhetoric and dialectic, was replaced by a practical, analytical and experimental methodology. The curriculum included the early letters, drawing, language, humanities (rhetoric, logic, geography, history and philosophy), maths (algebra, geometry, chronology), physics (experimental physics, agriculture, natural history), and social skills (dancing, playing music, fencing). Specific subjects were imparted to individuals who wished to follow civil, political, commercial, and practical careers, including commerce, metallic sciences (chemistry, mineralogy, metallurgy), public architecture (civil, hydraulic and hydrostatic engineering), agronomy (practical geometry, agriculture, botanical science) and politics or the science of government (Chaparro, 2013, p. 165).

Of the 542 students that attended the school at Vergara between 1776 and 1804, 26.2% were from the Basque provinces (136 students), 6% from Navarre (34), 50% from the rest of the Peninsula (especially Madrid and Cádiz) and 20% from América (Chaparro, 2011, according to figures confirmed at a later date). The role of social networks in Vergara was even greater than in Madrid; many of the students were the children of Basque or Navarre families living in different locations in the Iberian Peninsula and America. These families were characterised by their extreme geographical mobility, as a result of their commercial activities and their work at the king's service.

The socio-professional profile of the student's families included numerous army officers and high government officials. Professional endogamy was especially marked in the military: 81% of the children of military men who attended the school went on to have a military career. Another important group is represented by commercial families and members of Peninsular and American oligarchies, which saw the school – and the range and scope of its associated power networks – as a lever for the social and professional promotion of their children, chiefly in the

military. This possibility was especially appealing to the children of merchants and peasants from regions in which *hidalguía* was a universal condition; these schools and military academies provided them with the opportunity of scaling the social ladder, as members of the nobility. Overall, 46% of the students became army or navy officers, mostly after joining the military academies of the «wise arms», in which teaching focused on scientific disciplines: *Guardias Marinas*, in Cádiz, and *Artillería*, in Segovia (Chaparro, 2011).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the king began selecting and training his military officers, by creating the military academies (Dedieu, 2005, 502). The earliest ones were the *Academia de Ingenieros* in Barcelona (1715) (Galland, 2013) and the *Academia de Guardias Marinas* in Cádiz (1717), while in the army, cadets learned their trade in the regiments, until the creation of specialised academies during the reign of Charles III: the *Real Colegio de Artillería* in Segovia, founded in 1764, (Herrero, 2013), the *Academia de Caballería* in Ocaña, in 1775 and the *Academia de Infantería* in Ávila, in 1774-1776 (García Hurtado, 2013).

In the *Academia de Guardias Marinas*, founded in Cádiz in 1717, in addition to practical training, students were taught maths, geometry, trigonometry, geography, navigation, astronomy, naval construction, manoeuvres, seamanship, drawing and fortification. Midshipmen also learned ethics, dialectics, oratory, and social skills such as dancing and fencing. The academy branches in El Ferrol and Cartagena were created in 1776. From 1783, the Cádiz academy offered a course for the most outstanding officers. This academy turned into a beacon for the children of Basque elites, especially those coming from coastal regions. Between 1717 and 1821, 223 Basque (113 from Guipúzcoa, 86 from Vizcaya and 24 from Álava) and 66 Navarre students (5.5% and 1.6% of a total of 4,015) attended the institutions. A small number in absolute terms, but significant if compared with the total population of the territories in question (Bermejo, Esteban and Gorraiz, 2013; González-Ripoll, 2013).

The *Real Colegio de Artillería* in Segovia (1764) was another popular choice. Learning at this school also combined practical and theoretical training. In addition to military subjects, such as artillery, tactics, and fortification, the curriculum included scientific subjects such as arithmetic, trigonometry, geometry, cosmography, geography, statics, mechanics and drawing, perspective, architecture, machinery or science of movement, grammar and three foreign languages, as well as social skills such as fencing and dancing. The school had its own publishing house and became an important research centre, endowed with a first-rate chemistry laboratory, which specialised in metallurgy (Herrero, 2013).

The Basque and Navarre families at the service of Bourbon reformism were heavily involved in the direction and reform of these institutions. The Baztán-born Miguel José Gastón de Iriarte, navy general, was director of the *Real Academia de Guardias Marinas* de Cádiz between 1779 and 1786; during his term in office, the curriculum was renewed and scientific learning emphasised. The Bilbao-born navy general José de Mazarredo designed the curriculum of the *Real Seminario de Nobles de Vergara*, catering to the scientific needs of the navy. Manuel María de Aguirre, «the Enlightened soldier» was director of the *Real Academia y Picadero* in Ocaña, which trained cavalry officers. Many of the educational reform projects launched in América were promoted by officials with roots in these same socio-political circles.

The drive of 18<sup>th</sup>-century reformist policies was the ministerial system constituted by Philip V, with the creation of the *Secretarías del Despacho* at court (López-Cordón, 1996) and their regional branches, the provincial *intendentes* (Abad and Ozanam, 1992), viceroys and governors, captain generals and *audiencia* presidents, which were formed in the Royal Guards, which were the seedbeds of generals and political-military governors in the Peninsula and especially in America (Andújar, 2000). *Secretarías* offered fewer posts than the military career, but they were especially interesting owing to their position at the centre of the mesh of the monarchy's power networks. Basques and Navarres were very active in them. Up to 180 people born, or descended from, these territories occupied posts as secretaries and officials in the various *Secretarías del Despacho* throughout the century.

From the mid-century, the star action of ministerial governments were *fomento* policies, that is, the promotion of the economy, commerce, industry, agriculture, stock-breeding, science, education, urbanism, charity, etc., in short, everything that, according to Enlightened ideals, could contribute to the happiness of the government's subjects (González Alonso, 1995). These projects required ministerial officials to be qualified in these matters, to be able to seek information, analyse the background, study foreign models, propose solutions and implement the necessary legal formulas (López-Cordón, 1996).

This sort of knowledge was not acquired at the university, but through other channels, including hands-on training in the *Secretarías* and a good deal of self-teaching. Officials followed very different routes. Many learned the trade in the *Secretaría*, under the authority of older officials or the *Secretario* himself. Others attended the noble schools or the military academies, or acquired the necessary technical and scientific knowledge by other means (Nava Rodríguez, 2000 y 2013).

The education of ministry officials depended to a large extent on self-teaching, which reflected their hunger for information concerning the advances achieved by other countries. Often, we encounter the young would-be officials learning French and English, reading foreign books, learning about political economy, attending foreign schools, going on European study tours, playing an active role in *Academias Reales*, *Sociedades económicas* and Enlightened *tertulias*, sharing books and writings with one another, writing letters to prominent intellectuals of their period, and proposing multiple reforms in their own field of government.

## **8. Gentlemen and misses: polishing the Enlightened cosmopolitan elite.**

The careers of the second-born children of these families not only involved a strict education, but also had a significant civilizational component. The court, high government cadres, the army and the navy, all demanded polished habits and exquisite manners. This also applied to first-borns, who were to pose as civilized patricians, the Enlightened rulers of their local communities.

The civilizational change undergone by these families in such a short time was impressive, especially considering their background (Imízcoz, 2019). Village elites had a tradition serving the king, for instance, Guipúzcoa-born court members in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and as a result these families already possessed the

necessary social skills. However, turning polite gentlemen and refined misses must have been much harder a task for the new families, often peasants with no service tradition at all, that went from remote northern valleys to the court and the king's service in the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In order to understand what sort of a challenge this was, it is worth recalling Larramendi's descriptions of the wild habits of the youth from Guipúzcoa (Larramendi, 1969, p. 188). Based on the known examples, manners and refined courtesan habits were initially taught at home, by family members with experience at court; in their letters, these lessons are referred to as learning «the things of the Court».

The creation of noble schools, such as those in Madrid (1725) and Vergara (1776) systematised these teachings. As pointed out by the *Ordenanzas del Real Seminario Patriótico de Vergara* in 1778, «*seminarios* or schools are workshops where the youth are carved, polished and fortified, taking away their rough edges (...)»<sup>5</sup>. Among other functions, these schools were expected to turn the young men into polished gentlemen, worthy of occupying important posts at the service of the king or in the local and provincial administration. As such, they had to learn certain social skills: carving meat, personal hygiene, manners, discipline, dancing, fencing, horse-riding, languages, theatre music and other social abilities. Given the professional projection of the students, these were not decorative subjects, but crucial skills.

It is likely that the civilizational drive changed direction in the second half of the century. The comparison of the *Ordenanzas* that regulated life at the school in Madrid in 1730 with those in force in Vergara in 1778 and, especially, those published in the school in Madrid in 1799, sees the traditional ideal of the «Christian knight», which was dominant in the 1730 regulations, replaced by a civilizing ideal which incorporated such notions as urbanity, courtesy, manners and elegance, expressions of the model of sociability put forth by Enlightenment (Bolufer, Blutrach and Gomis, 2014)<sup>6</sup>.

The education of young women was also to undergo radical changes. Although women were not destined to the same careers as their male counterparts, Enlightened families tried to give their daughters an education to make them stand out from the rest of society. They needed to be educated for their social roles as cultivated wives and mothers; they must be literate and capable of helping to run the household and educating their children. Also, given the endogamic practices followed by these families, some of them would become the wives of court officials, royal administrators, army officers, ambassadors, crown bankers or, simply, provincial patricians, and they had to be provided with the necessary skills to represent their status in high circles.

These elites aimed for the education of their daughters to go beyond that traditionally received by provincial noblewomen in convents. As such, many of these families ruled out what at the time were highly prestigious institutions, such as the *Enseñanza* of Tudela or the *Soledad* of Vergara, which they considered inadequate, to send their daughters in French schools, such as the *Visitación* of Bayonne or

<sup>5</sup> Ordenanzas del Real Seminario Patriótico de Vergara, 1778, ATHA, Fondo Prestamero, C15, nº9.

<sup>6</sup> «Constituciones del Real Seminario de nobles, fundado en el Colegio Imperial de la Compañía de Jesús de Madrid, Año 1730»; «Constituciones del Real Seminario de Nobles de Madrid», Madrid, en la Imprenta Real, Año de 1799.

the *Enseñanza* in Pau, where they received a «refined education» including «that language [French], music, dancing, embroidering, drawing and some notions of history and geography». Young ladies graduated from these institutions «with composure (...) and the right presence», and in the possession of education and skills that made them suitable brides (Guijarro, 2016, p. 165).

However, a French education was expensive, and the leaders of the *Bascongada* came up with two projects for the education of young ladies, although none of them came to fruition. The first of these projects consisted in opening a convent for the order of the *Enseñanza* in Vergara, in 1774, the *Bascongada* contributing with the civilising elements that they wanted for their daughters<sup>7</sup>: «urbanity and manners, dressing and hair, and some skills such as dancing (“a skill that serves ladies well”), music and harpsichord». However, these mundane skills could not be taught by nuns, but only by secular teachers, an obstacle that proved insurmountable, and the project was abandoned (Urra, 2016, p. 179).

The second project, put forth in 1786, consisted in the opening of a school for ladies in Vitoria, to be put directly under the management of the *Bascongada*. The regulations were even written down and sent to the Secretary of State for approval<sup>8</sup>. The general aim of this school was quite traditional – «to bring up good mothers and housewives, since this is the fate that awaits most women»<sup>9</sup> – but they stood clearly apart from traditional nun-schools by the inclusion in the curriculum of important civilizing innovations. Specifically, hygiene and cleaning practices, time management, manners and posture, forms of amusement «that do not undermine the composure that becomes their sex and the modesty that goes with their quality», good habits, urbanity and social skills such as drawing and dancing, learning to «stand right and walk easily and with style, greet with grace and attention, carry their body, especially for dancing, with that modest looseness that distinguishes a well-bred young lady»<sup>10</sup>.

## 9. The effects of reformist educations in the Basque regions.

Elsewhere, I have examined in detail the effects that this civilizational transformation of the provincial elites had upon Basque and Navarre society (Imízcoz, 2011 and 2017<sup>a</sup>; Esteban Ochoa de Eribe, 2018).

As a result of their education, young members of the Basque elites underwent a significant cultural and ideological transformation, which became ever more acute as the century progressed; this change was to have far-reaching consequences in

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<sup>7</sup> «Cédula Real dada por Carlos III para que la Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País informe al Consejo sobre la fundación de un Convento de religiosas de la Enseñanza en la Villa de Vergara», Madrid, 15 de septiembre de 1774, 8 fol., ATHA, Fondo Prestamero, C8, nº 16.1

<sup>8</sup> «Copia del plan y Ordenanzas de un seminario o casa de educación para señoritas que se intenta establecer en la ciudad de Vitoria, bajo la dirección de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País», 31 de julio de 1786, 223 fol., ATHA, Fondo Prestamero, C8, nº 18

<sup>9</sup> ATHA, Fondo Prestamero, C8, nº 18, «Copia del plan y Ordenanzas de un seminario o casa de educación para señoritas que se intenta establecer en la ciudad de Vitoria, bajo la dirección de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País», 31 de julio de 1786, 223 fol., art. 2.

<sup>10</sup> ATHA, Fondo Prestamero, C8, nº 18, «Copia del plan y Ordenanzas de un seminario o casa de educación para señoritas...», título 4º, cap. 4º, art. 3º.

their communities (Imízcoz, 2019). Many of these young men inherited their families' *mayorazgo* and became the political leaders of their villages as mayors, *regidores* and representatives to the provincial assemblies. Sometimes, they had been apportioned this task from the start, and had been educated for it. In other occasions, family circumstances forced families to recycle a second-born, summoning one who had been destined to serve the king and had been educated accordingly; sometimes, these summonses came when their careers were already well advanced.

The desire to follow European scientific and educational models marked the education that first-borns received, including French schools (in Toulouse, Bordeaux, Pau and Bayona), the noble schools in Spain, and Grand Tour-like study trips to European capitals (Blutrach, 2016).

The educational institutions created by the Bourbons to shape their government cadres (noble schools, military academies, *Secretarías del Despacho*, Royal Guards) politically indoctrinated students to share a series of absolutistic concepts and values which emphasised regalism, obedience to the monarch, service to the state, the light of reason, and the reformist spirit; all of which ideas were necessary tools in overcoming widespread obscurantism and obsolete traditions. This was a decisive feature of the education of the Bourbon political class, whose ideals were in direct opposition to those of the traditional jurisdictional monarchy. This part of their education, however, has been neglected to date. What values were spread through these institutions? How? What was the history of Spain that they taught? What geography? What values? What Law?

The greatest historical consequence of this process was the dissemination of the reformist spirit. The new Bourbon-sponsored schools, the French schooling, the European study trips, they are all projections of the wish to overcome Spain's backwardness by promoting a new form of education, introducing science and adopting the reforms inspired by recent European advances. The effects of this spirit can be appreciated both in general at the Monarchy level – largely reflected in the great Bourbon reformist policies, especially in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – and in the provinces.

Reformist processes in the Basque regions had two faces. On the one hand, many alumni of the new institutions became patrician representatives of the Enlightenment in their provinces, acting as mayors, *regidores* and deputies to the provincial assemblies, from which positions they pushed for reformist policies. The most famous examples, but not the only ones, are those of the founders and rulers of the *Real Sociedad de Amigos del País* (Imízcoz and Chaparro, 2009; Imízcoz and Bermejo, 2017a), whose reformist projects, economic development policies (Astigarraga, 2003) and civilising influence are well known.

On the other hand, this reformist spirit was to open serious cracks in the bosom of these traditional communities, and increasingly distanced the local elites from these dense communities, which were firmly grounded on tradition, as noted at the beginning of this article. New economic practices, which tended towards the privatisation of economic activities, the linguistic and cultural chasm, the widening gap between these elites and collective expressions, and even the explicit disdain for secular customs, the idea that the community should be ruled by 'the most

knowledgeable and science-savvy' resulted serious conflict (Imízcoz 2017a), and internal divisions that, ultimately, were to lead to a bloody civil war (Artola, 2017).

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