

1812: National Identity and Political Education in the Cadiz Constitution

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If, as in other modern states, the discussion on political education is intended to shape national political identities and to create unity among members of the nation, in Spain that discussion has to take into account the role of the Catholic Church. This is because of its leading role precisely in the formation of Spanish national identity. Traditionally, Spanish governments paid little attention to the people's education, and this is especially noticeable in the field of political education building national cohesion. This gap has been covered by the Catholic Church, which led to the repudiation of secular schools of thought, such as rationalism or liberalism, and political systems such as democracy. Conversely, it established the idea that they all were contrary to Spanish identity and considered them to be anti-national foreign heresies. It can be concluded that for centuries there has been an overlap between the Spanish nation and the Catholic religion.

Therefore, modern Spanish national identity is not consolidated around a democratic state and citizens' participation in public life, in which civic virtues could have been fostered. And this dynamic was maintained by the 1812 Constitution, considered one of the first attempts to create a democratic state. It incorporated many democratic principles from French constitutionalism. However, at that time, France was invading Spain and was its enemy, so it seemed inappropriate to identify the Spanish nation with those values. This may explain why the identification of the population with the crown, representing the Spanish nation was stronger than the aims of democratization in the Cadiz Constitution. This also explains two other circumstances: firstly, the presence of the Catholic religion in Spanish political identity, as in Article 12 which states, "The religion of the Spanish nation is and will forever be the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman, the only true religion. The nation protects it by wise and just laws and prohibits the exercise of any other". And secondly, the role of the Catholic Church as a political educator through the catechism, set out in Article 366.

What we analyze in this paper is the social, political and legal debate around this issue, considering the influence of Utilitarianism and Liberalism on it.