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A Dissimulated Trade

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1- A commercial axis between Seville and Amsterdam developed during the first decades of the Eighty Years' War. North European migrants based in Seville and north European shipmasters played a crucial role in the construction of this axis.

2- The development of a market of Baltic and Scandinavian timber in Seville during the last third of the sixteenth century enhanced shipping activities in Andalusia, and contributed to the city's consolidation as a main operative centre of the Habsburg's seaborne empire.

3- The Spanish embargoes upon the Dutch during the Eighty Years' War should not simply be assessed in terms of a commercial policy that sought to undermine the enemy's economy. A main objective of these embargoes was the seizure of strategic provisions for the royal navy.

4- As the commercial embargoes proved ineffective in ensuring naval provisions, the commercial activity of north European migrants was promoted in Seville. The reliance on foreigners for ensuring access to imported timber should not be regarded as a problem for the Spanish monarchy, but as a solution which successfully responded to increasing challenges of Atlantic navigation and warfare.

5- Through its pressure on the Spanish king, Seville's oligarchy significantly contributed to ensuring toleration of north European migrants in the region. This example evidences the influence of local powers on Spain's international policy, highlighting the polycentric nature of the Spanish monarchy.

6- Business prompted family, rather than the other way around. Newcomers and established migrants created ties of kinship through marriage, motivated by opportunities for commercial cooperation. Besides kinship networks, the institutional development of the foreign community – the nation – and the availability of advanced contracting mechanisms favoured the integration of migrants in Seville.

7- The categories of belonging of foreigner and native were complementary. These categories mostly worked on a local level. While categories of belonging were important for individuals' reputations, they had little effect on migrants' juridical situation, given the existence of open-access institutions.

8- Local research can have a global scope, thanks to the richness of notarial archives. Early Modern notarial registers in Seville and other important commercial centres in Europe illustrate the increasing importance of the written word in long-distance trade.

9- The Francoist motto "Spain is different" has impregnated theological narratives about Spain's history, either glorifying or dismissing it. Current political debates in Spain and Europe are again reviving these essentialist views. Historians have a key role in their refutation, and the construction of democratic societies.