

**RENEWAL AND PERMANENCY OF THE SPANISH
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (1977-1993)**

Reflections on the Institutionalization of the Spanish Parliament

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My main goal in these pages is to contribute to the knowledge of the constitution of a significant part of the new "political class" in democratic Spain, the members of Parliament, as well as some of their characteristics. I analyze the dimension of renewal and permanency of the Spanish members of Parliament. The period under study goes from the constitution of the Constituent Parliament resulting from the first democratic elections that took place on June the 15th 1977, to the last General Elections of June the 6th 1993.

I will try to prove throughout the following pages that the study of the renewal of what may be called the "parliamentary class" allows us a deeper comprehension of two relevant fields of work for the understanding of the political transition process and democratic consolidation in Spain. First, it allows us to progress in the study of the building up of the new democratic "political class". Twenty years have passed since Franco's death, and eighteen since the first democratic elections, and we are still lacking a systematic study of the characteristics, extraction and, above all, the patterns of renewal and change of the political personnel in Spain.¹[\(1\)](#FT1)[TX1](#)
Second, my interest in this subject is closely linked to my dedication in these past few years to the study of the Spaniard's political culture built up in the same period of time. The emergence, since the beginning of the transition, of feelings, values and attitudes towards the new political system, has aroused the interest of a wide number of sociologists and political scientists, resulting in a large number of works being published on the subject (Maravall 1982; Montero and Torcal 1990; Morán 1988; Morán and Benedicto 1995).²[\(2\)](#FT2)[TX2](#)
Studies of the culture or of the discourse of the political elite are, though, practically non-existent. The examination of the renewal and

permanency of Spanish MPs can be placed, then, within a wider interest in understanding changes in the members of this institution's own cultures, and their relation to the different political parties' cultures and political discourse.

All this justifies this work's link to some "classical" studies on parliamentary elites. In so many words, I cannot but refer to works by Sartori (1963), Cotta, (1979) and Herzog (1971), all of them a direct reference in my exposition, as they enter into the study of the Italian and German cases, both marked by the interruption of parliamentary democracy and, thus, by the democratic political system's reconstruction. Despite being published a long time ago, their hypotheses are still applicable to the analysis of the Spanish case. On the other hand, the interest aroused by this field of research has been recently undertaken by Von Beyme (1995), thus proceeding with a line of investigation that he has been undertaking for a long time.³[\(3\)](#FT3)[TX3](#)

[TX3](#) Justifying the choice of the parliamentary class as an object of study relevant to examining the construction of the political class in the transition and consolidation of democracy raises a problem. It is necessary to locate the Parliament inside the advanced societies' democratic systems that, inevitably, leads to questioning its centrality inside the political system, and to discussions regarding the appearance of new and more relevant actors and institutions in the political decision making process.⁴[\(4\)](#FT4)[TX4](#)
[TX4](#) Although it is hard to deny the existence of a certain "crisis" in parliamentary institution, it still fulfills at least two main functions that allow us to keep defending the importance of the "parliamentary class" as an essential component

of the political class as a whole (Cotta 1976).

In the first place, the Parliament still plays its role as a balancing and regulating structure of the democratic system's competitive dynamic. And, secondly, it is within the Parliament where the processes of balancing and regulation of the party system take place. Thus, the main point of reference is the parliamentarization of the different party organizations inside the political system; that is to say, the moment in which the parliamentary organization turns into the fundamental mechanism for the regulation of the democratic dynamic.

Classical studies of Parliaments have focussed mainly on two subjects. On one hand, they have considered the representativity of the MPs with respect to the citizenship that has elected them and, on the other, have emphasized the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their internal composition. This second dimension refers directly to the problems of the politicians' professionalization, and to the shaping of the political class.⁵ [\(5\)](#) [TX5](#) It is inside this second level where this exposition is situated, trying to establish the bond between the democratization of the Spanish political system and the parliamentary personnel's features.

Consideration of the parliamentary elite's renewal allows us to bring in some interesting considerations regarding the above mentioned bond, as well as on the role played by political parties in such a process. In a classic study, Polsby (1968), applying Huntington's (1968) thesis on the institutionalization of political systems, established some lines of work that serve as a guide for this exposition. Inside the general process of the political system's institutionalization, the Parliament's institutionalization has two different meanings. For one, there is an external or systemic-functional meaning, by which the Parliament confirms itself as an institution holding the central position in the political system. But, on the

other side, there is also an internal or structural meaning that regards the concept of institutionalization as a structural process in which the Parliament arises as a complex and autonomous institution that is self-regulating and self-sufficient.

On the basis of this second meaning, it is possible to create a series of indicators that allow for the substantiation of the degree of institutionalization of Parliaments (Polsby 1968; Cotta 1976 and 1979). The hypothesis that lies at the bottom of this operationalization is that of the existence of an optimal point between an excessively open and discontinuous parliament and an excessively closed and continuous parliament. Thus, the degree of the parliament's institutionalization becomes an extremely relevant indicator for evaluating the degree of creation of common authority patterns, the origin of a consensus of purposes inside the Chamber and, finally, the creation of the MPs' own institutional culture. The three main indicators of such an institutional process are the following:

(a) The institution's autonomy ("boundary definition") in relation to the adjacent political structures; that is to say, the evaluation of the ability of the Chamber to regulate its own development. This is defined by the renewal rates and the kind of recruiting of the parliamentary personnel.

(b) The insitutional complexity, translated into the development of a system of Commissions, in the emergence of a partisan parliamentary leadership and, finally, in an increase in the Chamber's resources.

(c) The institutional coherence, that is to say, the affirming of universal rules and of automatic procedures for the resolution of organizational issues.

As stated at the beginning, this exposition will center itself in the examination of the first of these indicators for the Spanish case.

The Particularities of the Spanish Case

Apart from the theoretical considerations stated above, for the Spanish case there are some additional reasons that make consideration of the way in which the new political-parliamentary class is built especially relevant. It seems that the transition's own nature has given a key role to the process of negotiation and pact between a segment of the Francoist political elite and the counter-elite associated with the main parties in opposition.⁶ In this setting of the search for a commitment, the political parties succeed in almost completely monopolizing Spanish political life. In the political parties' constitutionalization and in their financing system we can find good proof of this. Thus, it is impossible to separate the history of the constitution of the political class from the history of the vicissitudes of the party system.⁷

Nevertheless, before entering into the analysis of the Spanish case, I would like to comment on the characteristics of this work. Studies of elites are always rather ungratifying for the researcher as they mean an enormous effort of gathering information, that does not usually show through in the final result. In the Spanish case, in what is referred to as the political elite, these difficulties are greatly increased. Political parties have always been very reluctant to provide information on aspects affecting their internal organization, making organizational studies very rare up to this moment. Regarding the Cortes, information on MPs is not very abundant and, mostly, it is not very homogeneous, apart from being limited to strictly demographical data (age, place of birth,

political party, legislative terms, etc.).⁸[\(8\)](#FT8)[TX8](#)> Thus, it is very difficult, if not nearly impossible, to reach definite conclusions on the political "careers" of Spanish members of Parliament.

Leaving aside such obstacles, there are some features characteristic of the Spanish case to be considered before proceeding to a definitive analysis of this study's results. Above all, it must be pointed out that the long duration of the Francoist regime had, as a consequence, the almost complete discontinuity with the previous democratic-parliamentary tradition. In contrast with what happened in the German and Italian cases (Herzog 1971; Cotta 1979; Von Beyme 1995), there are no parliamentary careers beginning in the II Republic that continue after the democratic system's restoration.⁹[\(9\)](#FT9)[TX9](#)> The Spanish transition was established on the grounds of a "pact of silence", and the oblivion of both the civil war and four decades of Francoism, an agreement subscribed by both the political forces that represented a continuity of Francoism and those that had their origins in the opposition forces. Nevertheless, this collective effort aimed at erasing a significant part of the Spaniard's collective memory does not mean, in any way, that it did not play an important role in establishing the new democracy. In fact, this pact of silence is combined with the persistence of the memory of the civil war. This memory has a relevant weight in shaping the Spaniards' political universes as well as the political elites' strategies.¹⁰[\(10\)](#FT10)[TX10](#)> This complex interplay between the persistence of memory and the need to forget has, as a consequence, the fact that the construction of the new political organizations meant, in every case, breaking with the old ruling elites in those

parties with a history of their own, previous to Francoism, and the gradual disappearance of every character that could mean any kind of bond with the past in the case of organizations born with the beginning of political change.¹¹[\(11\)](#FT11)[In the construction of the new Spanish political elite there is, then, a true generational gap, reflected in the Spanish MPs' extreme youth, and their absence of "personal" bonds with the Spanish political reality previous to democracy.](#)¹²[\(12\)](#FT12)[NAME="TX12">](#)

[Once again, this pact of silence and oblivion is imposed, resulting in, and this is the subject we are interested in, a scarce presence in the new Parliament of the Francoist Procuradores en Cortes \(Table 1\). The old representatives of the Francoist regime are not only not very meaningful in number, but also quickly disappear during the first legislature. This double discontinuity, both with the tradition of democratic life in Spain as well as with the Francoist past, is an important element that should be taken into account in the process of creating the democratic culture of the new political class.](#)¹³[\(13\)](#FT13)[NAME="TX13">](#)

[The Parliament's institutionalizing process is also affected by the difficulties in the consolidation of the party system in Spain. As we see in the following pages, an important part of the parliamentary elite's renewal is due to huge changes taking place in party organizations during the 80's. Such an instability made some authors define the Spanish political system as "volatile parties and stable electors" \(Barnes et al. 1986\), and has affected almost every party with the exception of the PSOE. Although everything seems to point out that the great](#)

centre-right party (PP) has obtained an important degree of consolidation in the past years, at this very moment the situation has not yet definitively crystallized due to the continuous internal problems of the IU, the coalition situated to the left of the Socialist Party.

There are two other elements that also have a clear effect on the decreasing tendency in the Spanish parliamentary elite's stability during the period of time under study. In the first place, the existence of Autonomous Communities and the resulting celebration of elections since 1980 add further complexity. There are still no definite data to allow us to accurately draw the exchange rates between both groups of parliamentarians, but some general tendencies can be described. At an earlier stage, the introduction of the autonomous regime no doubt meant the "transfer" of some relevant members of the national Parliament to the autonomous parliaments. This is easily perceived in the cases of the nationalist parties' main leaders. But later on, the direction of this flow may have been reversed; that is, a meaningful number of MPs have previous political experience as autonomous parliamentarians.

Table 1. *Presence of Francoist "procuradores" in the Cortes (Congress and Senate).*

<i>1. Constituent Legislature (1977-1979)</i>						
Number of legislatures*	UCD	AP**	PSOE	Others	Royal Sen.	Total
1	21	3	-	3	2	29
2	17	4	-	-	4	25
3	5	-	-	1	4	10
4	1	3	-	-	2	6
5 or more	-	3	-	-	4	7
Total	44	13	-	4	16	77
% of group	16.3	72.2	0.0	4.0	39.02	-
% of total Cortes	-	-	-	-	-	12.9

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2. First Legislature (1979-1982)

Number of legislatures	UCD	AP	PSOE	Others	Total
1	17	1	-	2	20
2	11	1	-	-	12
3	5	1	-	-	6
4	3	1	-	-	4
5	-	3	-	1	4
Total	36	7	-	3	46
% of group	12.5	50.0	-	3.7	-
% of total Cortes	-	-	-	-	8.6

* Number of legislatures in which the member of Parliament or Senator was "procurador" in the Francoist Cortes.

** The figures corresponding to the AP for the first legislature are approximate, due to this organization lacking a parliamentary group in the Senate.

Source: Morán (1989).

In the Spanish case there is also another feature that should be taken into account, as it also has an effect on the consideration of the problem of the MPs' change and stability. Unlike other European countries, the application of the "ley de incompatibilidades" for high offices of the administration (in effect since January 1985) also directly affects parliamentarians. As a consequence, being a member of Congress or the Senate is considered to be incompatible with not only any other representative office at a local or autonomous level, but also with holding high offices in the Administration. The only exceptions are members of the country's Government, and the possible private professional activities undertaken by members of the Congress and Senate.¹⁴[\(14\)](#)

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NAME="TX14"> The development of the "Estado de las Autonomías" as well as membership of the European Community are two elements that further complicate the Spanish Parliament's rapid institutionalization, in what is referred to as the stability of its components.

Leaving aside the particularities mentioned up to now, one of the main theses I support here is that the study of the parliamentary class's characteristics and, above all, its "dynamic" dimension, is decisive in the analysis of the Spanish political parties' nature and functions. It is in this sense in which I am convinced that an analysis of this kind not only affects the study of the Parliament's institutionalization but also refers to the examination of the political parties' institutionalization process, putting forward some conclusions on the way in which "political careers" are designed inside these organizations.

My arguments are based, mainly, on two claims. First, the political parties appear as the main, or almost the only, elements on which Spaniards' political participation is vertebrated. The absence of a democratic tradition of associationism, together with the parties' tendency to obstruct the development of alternative channels for participation in political life, turns them into true "monopolizers" of Spanish political life. Nevertheless, this situation of hegemony created, in a sense, by the political elite's certainty that it was necessary to channel the high degree of mobilizations of the late seventies, occurred in a situation of weakness of the political parties - a weakness made evident not only by the difficulties in the consolidation of the party system, but also by the low rates of party membership and feelings of partisan identification.¹⁵ (15)

 On the other side, electoral law bestowes upon them a hegemonic role in the selection of candidates running for the Congress. The election of members of

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Congress is made through closed and blocked lists based on a system of corrected proportional representation (the D'Hondt formula).¹⁶ Consequently, the key moment in which the Parliament's composition is decided upon is not so much the election itself but the drawing up of the candidates' list made in each party's electoral committee appointed by its leading organ. The design of every electoral list for the different constituencies, then, turns into a struggle between the party's rank and file, its local and regional federations and the power of its central leadership. In this way, the renewal of the Parliament's composition reflects not only the problems of the party system's structure but also its own internal divisions, the power relations between their different factions, and the degree of autonomy of the different federations. Thus it offers key information on the institutionalization rate of the parties as organizations, as well as the weight of leadership in them. We cannot forget that the construction process of the party organizations was, in all cases, characterized by the resilience of the old organizational formulas based on the exaltation of hierarchies, discipline and party unity. In the case of parties with a long historical tradition (the PSOE and the PCE), adaptation to the new democratic context above all meant the need to rapidly become mass parties with a large rank and file membership, to extend their organizational structure at the national level, and to proceed with certain ideological transformations (the most significant changes were giving up Marxism and the acceptance of the monarchy), as well as embracing some new political demands (feminism, environmentalism, etc.). But even so, the process took place maintaining the previous organizational formulas.

The process is more complicated for the new center and rightist parties, as the difficulties of establishing a strong organizational structure persisted throughout the 1980s. In any case, the successful model (that of the PP) also fits

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into this old model of the hierarchical party, ruled by just one center and by a small leadership elite.¹⁷ (17) Within this framework the possibilities of getting to Parliament for those people with critical positions or, simply, peripheral positions, with respect to the parties' leadership groups, were minimal.

Analysis of Results

In my previous article (Morán 1989), I put forward a series of provisional conclusions, some of which have been corroborated by the data gathered in subsequent legislatures. The main ideas that are still in force can be very briefly outlined.

In spite of Francoism meaning a very harsh interruption of parliamentary careers, it cannot be stated that we have a political class lacking any kind of experience in Chambers of a representative nature. There is a relative presence of Procuradores of the Francoist Cortes, gathered in the center-right parties. Nevertheless, this presence is limited and, above all, very short, as it is practically non-existent in the Second Legislature. The electoral setback endured by the UCD (Unión de Centro Democrático) is the main reason for this disappearance.¹⁸ (18)

 The key moment that should be taken into consideration is the beginning of the IIInd. Legislature after the October 1982 elections. Three basic facts define this moment: (a) The UCD crisis (it loses 157 members in the Congress, and has no

parliamentary group in the Senate); (b) The beginning of the consolidation of a new party on the right wing: the AP, that after years of huge internal problems gives way to the appearance of the PP, and finally (c) the PSOE's electoral victory. This huge electoral turnover has, as a consequence, the abrupt end of the careers of a considerable number of the UCD's parliamentarians. Of the 168 that the UCD had, only 47 continue their parliamentary careers as members of Congress for other parties.¹⁹ (19)

 Data relative to the parliamentarians' survival in both Chambers (Congress and Senate) up to the IIIrd. Legislature show high renewal rates, although with a certain decreasing tendency after the 1986 elections. Between 1977 and 1986, when compared to members of Congress, there are more Senators without any experience before the beginning of every new legislature (Morán 1989: 79). Two facts may explain this remarkable difference. First, Senators' election through a variant of a plurality system has, as a consequence, the weight of the Senate's candidates being more relevant than that of the members of Congress. The parties tend to offer as candidates "notables" with prestige within the electoral constituencies. Thus, the "standard" type of Senator is rather different from that of the member of Congress: being rather older and having a professional life apart from his parliamentary career. This significantly decreases the Senators' degree of professionalization, and above all weakens their inclusion in the parties' life and their dependance on their organizational structures.²⁰ (20) On the other hand, since the beginning the Senate was conceived as a Chamber closely linked with the autonomies. Thus, we may find a larger flow of senators giving up their parliamentary careers to attach themselves to different aspects of the autonomies'

political life.

The PSOE is the only party not to suffer important internal breaches during the first legislative term. On the other hand, being a long existent party increases the chances of developing much longer interparty political careers than in other political organizations. This is only partly true due to the influence of two facts. First of all, breaking with the old party organization meant the arrival of a very young party elite, only one year before Franco's death. And, secondly, it must not be forgotten that the number of socialist militants was very small at the beginning of the political transition. The massive affiliation to political parties (albeit in the Spanish context) took place in the months immediately prior to the first elections in 1977, and it is only from this moment that the majority of political careers are built within the parties.²¹ (21)

 Examination of the data referring to the two last legislatures allows us to insist on some of these tendencies and, thus, present new conclusions. Following the 1983 socialist electoral victory, the party system seems to definitely crystallize. This does not mean that some parties' problems of autodefinition and internal leadership have been totally overcome, but it does mean that apart from the CDS's disappearance from the political scene during the early 1990s, there are no dramatic breakages as there were previously. This enables us to consider the parliamentarians' permanency and renewal rates in firmer terms, taking into consideration the impact of electoral results and their translation into seats. (Tables 2 and 3.)

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Table 2. *General Elections 1977-1993. Distribution of Seats in the Congress of Deputies.*

	15 June 1977 Constituent Legislature	1 March 1979 Ist. Leg.	28 Oct. 1982 IIInd. Leg.	22 June 1986 IIIrd. Leg.	29 Oct. 1989 IVth. Leg.	6 June 1993 Vth. Leg.
PSOE	118	121	202	184	176	159
PP	16	9	106	105	106	141
UCD	166	168	12	-	-	-
IU (PCE)	20	23	4	7	17	18
CiU	11	8	12	18	18	17
PNV	8	7	8	6	5	5
CDS	-	-	2	19	14	-
Others	11	14	4	11	14	10
Total	350	350	350	350	350	350

Table 3. *General Elections 1977-1993. Distribution (in %) of Seats in the Congress of Deputies.*

	15 June 1977 Constituent Legislature	1 March 1979 Ist. Leg.	28 Oct. 1982 IIInd. Leg.	22 June 1986 IIIrd. Leg.	29 Oct. 1989 IVth. Leg.	6 June 1993 Vth. Leg.
PSOE	33.7	34.6	57.7	52.7	50.3	45.4
PP	4.6	2.6	30.3	30.0	30.3	40.3
UCD	47.4	48.0	3.4	-	-	-
IU (PCE)	5.7	6.6	1.1	2.0	4.9	5.1
CiU	3.1	2.3	3.4	5.1	5.1	4.9
PNV	2.3	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.4	1.4
CDS	-	-	0.6	5.4	4.0	-
Others	3.2	3.9	1.2	3.1	4.0	2.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

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Table 4. *Number of Legislatures of Permanency of Each Member of Parliament by Party Affiliation Over the Total of the Members of the Congress of Deputies in Different Legislatures.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
PSOE	226	110	56	48	23	19	482
%	46.9	22.8	11.6	10.0	4.8	3.9	100
PP	192	65	28	13	0	2	300
%	64.0	21.7	9.3	4.3	0.0	0.7	100
UCD	123	78	21	13	2	1	238
%	51.7	32.8	8.8	5.5	0.8	0.4	100
CDS	13	10	0	0	1	0	24
%	54.2	41.7	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	100
IU/PCE	23	20	6	2	0	0	51
%	45.1	39.2	11.8	3.9	0.0	0.0	100
PNV	15	7	7	0	0	0	29
%	51.8	24.1	24.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
CiU	18	8	13	3	1	1	44
%	40.9	18.2	29.5	6.8	2.3	2.3	100
Others	34	15	3	1	0	0	53
%	64.1	28.3	5.7	1.9	0.0	0.0	100
Total	644	313	134	80	27	23	1221
%	52.1	25.6	11.0	6.6	2.2	1.9	100

Source: Figures brought up to date by September 1994, with data supplied by the Archive of the Congress of Deputies.

If the data referring to the number of legislatures of permanency of the total universe of members of Congress are taken into consideration, the most remarkable fact is the existence of a high rate of renewal (Table 4). Slightly more than half of the total of the 1221 (52.7%) that have been members of Congress throughout the six legislatures remain in the Chamber during just one legislative term. The problems of constructing a stable party system, together with the other complexities of building a democratic political system in Spain, result in the fact that only twenty three members of Congress survive in the Chamber from the

constituent legislature. Nineteen of them belong to the PSOE. Furthermore, the parliamentarians' permanency in four or five legislatures is also very rare.²² (22)

 If we only analyze the parliamentary experience of members of Congress for the last legislature, since the general elections of June 1993 (Table 5), the same pattern of discontinuity is confirmed, or put in other words, the limited "experience" in parliamentary life. More than a third of the representatives have no previous parliamentary experience, a higher amount than would be expected from the electoral results. For instance, the PSOE loses 17 seats compared to the 1989 elections and so, if the renewal tendency was either small or none, it would not have to have "newcomer" members within its ranks, but nearly a fourth of its 159 members (24.2%) obtain for the first time a parliamentary mandate at a national level.²³ (23) The renewal increase in the PP and IU cases is surely a consequence, in part, of the growth of their electoral support and of the greater number of members of Congress they obtain. Finally, we can also conclude that the "historical" nucleus (as it is referred to in parliamentary practice) consists of a small number of socialist and popular members. The IU's obvious break with its old leaders, and the huge renewal taking place inside the coalition, is translated into the fact that none of the fifth legislature's members of Congress had been parliamentarians before 1986.

The differences between parties can be explained not only through their institutionalization problems as organizations, but also by deeper problems of ideological definition and, in consequence, by dramatic changes in their leaderships. And so we need to take into consideration the permanency indicator of the members according to their political affiliation.

Table 5. *Number of Legislatures of the Members of Congress of the Fifth Legislature (1993) by Party Affiliation in the Congress of Deputies (in %)*

Number of Legislatures	PSOE	PP	IU	Others	Total
1	24.2	39.3	44.4	40.3	32.6
2	18.9	31.1	38.9	34.7	25.7
3	19.2	9.4	16.7	19.1	17.6
4	21.7	9.4	0.0	2.7	14.1
5	8.2	3.7	0.0	1.0	5.4
6	7.6	1.6	0.0	2.1	4.6
Total of Deputies	159	141	18	42	350

Source: Gangas (1994)

The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) is, no doubt, the political organization with the highest degree of stability since the beginning of the political transition. Throughout this period, it has gradually turned into an organization fulfilling every requirement for its full institutionalization. Despite the existence of a significant internal debate, especially in reference to the relationship between party and government and the orientation of government policies, it has always relied on a steady nucleus of leaders. On the other hand, breaches within the party have been very rare,²⁴ and the leadership's weight in the selection of candidates for the Congress has been very significant. Every relevant socialist leader at a national level is or has been a member of Congress, enabling us to state that a political career's culmination within the organization is obtained by entrance into this Chamber. Only the

socialist autonomous political elite leaves Congress during the 80's to become part of the autonomous parliaments and governments. Finally, it should be pointed out that the party's leadership has always tended to present as candidates people closely linked with the party's organizational structures. This tendency has been broken for just two reasons: in the last elections, some independents were included in the lists, to try to stop the strong electoral decrease forecast by every poll.²⁵ And secondly, some high ex-officials of the Administration and members of the Government have been rewarded with secure positions in the candidates' lists.

These practices can be translated into an obvious fact: the socialist parliamentarians have the highest rates of permanency inside the Congress, with a continuous decrease in the level of renewal (Table 6). Thus, the socialist group has a very consistent nucleus that is decisive in the Chamber's institutionalization. On the other hand, there are data on the socialist members' experience in representative offices that confirm this tendency (Table 7). It seems that throughout these last years, a clear pattern of political career has been created within the organization, in which having been a representative at a regional level seems to be an important preliminary step to entering the national Parliament.²⁶

Table 6. *Previous Political Experience in Representative Offices (in %). PSOE (1977-1993).*

Offices	1979	1982	1989	1993	Total
Local	2.4	24.5	12.1	14.4	13.8

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Provincial	8.5	9.8	6.0	11.0	8.8
Regional	8.5	65.7	80.5	63.7	73.5
National	1.2	0.0	1.3	10.3	3.8
European	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.2

Source: Gangas (1994)

Table 7. *Permanency in Different Legislatures of the Congress of Deputies. PSOE (1977-1993)*

Legislature	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Constituent	118	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ist.	121	+4	79	56.8	60	43.2	139
IIInd.	202	+87	94	41.6	132	58.4	226
IIIrd.	184	-18	141	68.8	64	31.2	205
IVth.	176	-8	135	75.0	45	25.0	180
Vth.	159	-17	120	72.7	45	27.3	165

A: Number of members of Congress in the parliamentary group.

B: Increase or decrease regarding previous legislatures.

C: Number of members of Congress that maintain their seats with respect to the previous legislature.

D: % of members of Congress that maintain their seat with respect to the total of the parliamentary group during the legislature.

E: Number of new members of Congress with respect to the previous legislature.

F: % of new members of Congress with respect to the total of the group during the legislature.

G: Total of members of Congress throughout the legislature also including those who did not finish the term and those who were included after its beginning. (C+E=F)

Source: Figures brought up to date by September 1994, with data supplied by the Archive of the Congress of Deputies.

The interpretation of the current PP's case is rather more complex, due to its huge consolidation problems as the right wing party. These problems have

resulted, at the ideological level, in an unremitting effort to establish the basis for a center-right ideology and to present an alternative political programme to that of the long lasting socialist government. The PP has also tried to clearly mark their complete break with the Francoist past. This has meant, at the organizational level, the party's reconstruction from the basis established by the Alianza Popular (AP), including within it some of the small organizations that were part of the UCD. Finally, from the leadership's point of view, these problems have resulted in the wide renewal of the party's leadership nucleus that has also been presented as a "generation rupture".

In this situation it is difficult to expect a high stability in the PP members of Congress (Table 8). However, what is perceivable is a certain evolution towards greater permanency, once the aforementioned organizational problems have been solved. The PP is also a highly centralized party, in which all its main national leaders are also members of Congress. On the other hand, the transfer flow of members of Congress towards representative organs or autonomous governments is probably lower due to the fact that the PP has taken part in autonomous governments in very few autonomous communities. Its increased electoral weight in the 1995 autonomous elections has probably modified this fact.

Table 8. *Permanency in Different Legislatures of the Congress of Deputies. PP (1977-1993)*

Legislature	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Constituent	16	-	-	-	16	100	-
Ist.	9*	-	-	-	-	-	-
IIInd.	106	+97	16	14.8	92	85.2	108
IIIrd.	105	-1	54	47.4	60	52.6	114
IVth.	106	+1	55	47.0	62	53.0	117

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Vth.	141	+35	81	56.2	62	43.3	143
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- A: Number of members of Congress in the parliamentary group.
 B: Increase or decrease regarding previous legislatures.
 C: Number of members of Congress that maintain their seats with respect to the previous legislature.
 D: % of members of Congress that maintain their seat with respect to the total of the parliamentary group during the legislature.
 E: Number of new members of Congress with respect to the previous legislature.
 F: % of new members of Congress with respect to the total of the group during the legislature.
 G: Total of members of Congress throughout the legislature also including those who did not finish the term and those who were included after its beginning. (C+E=F)

* Some members' change of parliamentary group makes results unreliable; thus they are not included.

Source: Figures brought up to date by 15/9/94, with data supplied by the Archive of the Congress of Deputies.

The case of the IU's ²⁷ [\(27\)](#FT27) [parliamentarians](#) is rather similar to that of the PP, despite both parties being located on opposite extremes of the parliament's ideological continuum. The high renewal of this coalition's members of Congress (Table 8) reflects the enormous internal difficulties arising from converting the former communist party into a new and reformed left wing party. In this case, the internal breakages inside the party have been very serious, and proof of this is the fact that no communist member of the Congress has remained in the Chamber since the first legislature. Moreover, it is highly significant that the 1982 elections meant the greatest electoral crisis endured by the party, as well as a complete renewal of its members of Congress. Efforts to build up a coalition uniting other left wing groups and political personalities apart from the PSOE, and to create a true leadership within the coalition, seem to have created a certain parliamentary nucleus, especially from the IIIrd. legislature onwards. Like other parties, there is a relation between holding relevant offices within the organization and obtaining a seat in Congress.

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Disagreements between IU parliamentarians seem to be more notable, or at least more noticeable to public opinion, than with other political parties, and so no definitive conclusions can be drawn regarding its parliamentarians' renewal and permanency patterns.²⁸ (28)

 Lastly, I have taken into consideration the cases of the two nationalist parties with a stronger and more stable presence in Congress, as they both support the thesis of a progression in the full institutionalization of the Spanish Parliament, at least regarding their internal composition. The Catalanian nationalist coalition's, *Convergencia i Unió* (CiU), case is especially relevant as it presents the highest permanency rates in its parliamentarians, at least in the two past legislatures (Table 10). CiU seems to have created a group of members "specializing" in parliamentary duties at a national level that has turned out to be of extreme importance during the last legislature, with the continuity of the socialist government depending on its support in the Chamber. In fact, one of its members is part of the small group of "survivors" from the the constituent legislature.²⁹ (29) In the case of the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV) (Table 11), which has always had a smaller number of members of Congress, it can be concluded that their level of permanency in the Chamber is rather lower than the CiU's. For instance, in the Vth. legislature, in spite of obtaining the same number of seats, 60% of members had no previous parliamentary experience. Nonetheless, the number is too small (although very important politically) to make these percentages significant.

These results confirm the provisional conclusions I put forward some years ago: the Spanish Parliament then heading towards its institutionalization seems to have progressed in this direction. Some of the obstacles found throughout the

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process seem to have already been overcome, mainly those owing to the weakness of the party system during the first decade of democratic life. On the other hand, everything seems to indicate that the "parliamentary elite" holds a central position in Spanish political life, as it remains the ultimate arena of the majority of careers born within the political parties. The primacy of party organizations in Spanish political life, as well as their monopolization of parliamentary elections, supports my assessment that the study of the Congress' composition is an indispensable element of understanding the dynamics of the party system's construction, as well as its institutionalization process.

Nevertheless, there still are some dark spots that require further study. I will point out only two of the more significant ones: first, to study the negotiating process between the different party levels from which the electoral lists are created; second, to follow "the track" of those members who do not renew their seat in Congress. This is the only way to obtain a clearer map of the different kinds of political careers generated within each party, and to generate a subsequent analysis of their "organizational cultures".

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Table 9. *Permanency in Different Legislatures of the Congress of Deputies. IU (1977-1993)*

Legislature	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Constituent	20	-	-	-	23	100	-
Ist.	23	+3	20	76.9	6	23.1	26
IIInd.	4	-19	4	100	-	-	4
IIIrd.	7	+3	3	42.9	4	57.1	7
IVth.	17	+10	6	30.0	14	70.0	20
Vth.	18	+1	13	65.0	7	35.0	20

A: Number of members of Congress in the parliamentary group.

B: Increase or decrease regarding previous legislatures.

C: Number of members of Congress that maintain their seats with respect to the previous legislature.

D: % of members of Congress that maintain their seat with respect to the total of the parliamentary group during the legislature.

E: Number of new members of Congress with respect to the previous legislature.

F: % of new members of Congress with respect to the total of the group during the legislature.

G: Total of members of Congress throughout the legislature also including those who did not finish the term and those who were included after its beginning. (C+E=F)

Source: Figures brought up to date by September 1994, with data supplied by the Archive of the Congress of Deputies.

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Table 10. *Permanency in Different Legislatures of the Congress of Deputies. CiU (1977-1993)*

Legislature	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Constituent	11*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ist.	8	-3	4	36.4	7	63.6	11
IIInd.	12	+4	6	46.2	7	53.8	13
IIIrd.	18	+6	9	40.9	13	59.1	22
IVth.	18	0	19	95.0	1	5.0	20
Vth.	17	-1	12	70.6	5	29.4	17

A: Number of members of Congress in the parliamentary group.

B: Increase or decrease regarding previous legislatures.

C: Number of members of Congress that maintain their seats with respect to the previous legislature.

D: % of members of Congress that maintain their seat with respect to the total of the parliamentary group during the legislature.

E: Number of new members of Congress with respect to the previous legislature.

F: % of new members of Congress with respect to the total of the group during the legislature.

G: Total of members of Congress throughout the legislature also including those who did not finish the term and those who were included after its beginning. (C+E=F)

Source: Figures brought up to date by September 1994, with data supplied by the Archive of the Congress of Deputies.

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Table 11. *Permanency in Different Legislatures of the Congress of Deputies. PNV (1977-1993)*

Legislature	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Constituent	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ist.	7	-1	6	66.7	3	33.3	9
IIInd.	8	+1	3	30.0	7	70.0	10
IIIrd.	6	-2	4	50.0	4	50.0	8
IVth.	5	-1	5	55.6	4	44.4	9
Vth.	5	0	2	40.0	3	60.0	5

A: Number of members of Congress in the parliamentary group.

B: Increase or decrease regarding previous legislatures.

C: Number of members of Congress that maintain their seats with respect to the previous legislature.

D: % of members of Congress that maintain their seat with respect to the total of the parliamentary group during the legislature.

E: Number of new members of Congress with respect to the previous legislature.

F: % of new members of Congress with respect to the total of the group during the legislature.

G: Total of members of Congress throughout the legislature also including those who did not finish the term and those who were included after its beginning. (C+E=F)

Source: Figures brought up to date by September 1994, with data supplied by the Archive of the Congress of Deputies.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) Nonetheless there is a tradition to these kinds of studies, begun by J.J.Linz's research of the Francoist political elite. See Linz (1974) and Jerez (1982). On the other hand, this line of work is much more developed in research on the Spanish bureaucratic elite: Beltrán (1977); Baena del Alcázar (1979, 1983 and 1984).Back to text

(2) The majority of works on the Spaniard's political culture have been based on the enlargement of the classical scheme by Almond and Verba. For an attempt to surpass such a perspective, see Morán and Benedicto (1995).Back to text

(3) Von Beyme's work (1995) is especially relevant for his combination of theoretical reflection on the concept of political class and the specific analysis of some of its more relevant characteristics and transformations in contemporary societies. Therefore Von Beyme's is an alternative model that underscores the relevance of the "political class" as a study group.Back to text

(4) This is not the place to explain in detail the debate over the transformations in political life and in democratic systems that have been, during the last decades, the central focus for many social scientists. It will be sufficient to point out that apart from the assessment of the constitution of a party state (Von Beyme 1995), we should also take into consideration the thesis of the crisis of the traditional political parties and the emergence of new political actors that could affect the nature and functions of the traditional institutions of political representation and the "places" for political decision making (Schmitter and Lehmbruch 1979; Offe 1988).Back to text

(5) I am not going to enter debates on the definition of political class and the members of parliament's position within it. Sartori provides a pragmatic definition that allows us to overcome difficulties and apply it in our study: "Classe politica è dunque una sottospecie della classe dirigente: quella parte della classe dirigente che si occupa dell'essercizio del potere" (Sartori 1963: 281).Back to text

(6) Some of the main studies on political transitions are Maravall (1982), Cotarelo et al. (1992), Tezanos et al. (1989) and O'Donnell et al. (1986). Although it is necessary to admit that the role

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of the political elites in the process of political change is especially relevant for the Spanish case, the predominant tendency in most of the studies has usually lessened the complexity of the process to a match (or game of chess) between such elites - a game that resulted in the success of consensus. For an interesting criticism of what the author calls the "pact school" and for an alternative proposal of study, see Edle (1995).[Back to text](#TX6)

[**\(7\)**](#FT7) The literature on the party system in Spain is very large; Montero and Pallarés (1992) present a useful review of it.[Back to text](#TX7)

[**\(8\)**](#FT8) At the beginning of each legislative term, each senator or member of the Congress must fill out a form with some basic biographical data, but it is not compulsory to complete them all, and consequently the information they give out is uneven. Up to now the only general study that has been published on the MPs of the two first legislative terms (based on these data) have been the works by Díaz Nosty (1979 and 1981). The recent passing of a norm by which all members of parliament must make a statement of their properties at the beginning of each legislative term, may mean a positive step towards increasing the information available.[Back to text](#TX8)

[**\(9\)**](#FT9) There are only some isolated cases (five in total), such as that of Dolores Ibarruri (*La Pasionaria*) or José Prat, that run in the constituent election as symbols of a bond with republican Spain. But their presence was merely testimonial and their weight in parliamentary life practically none.[Back to text](#TX9)

[**\(10\)**](#FT10) On this issue, see the excellent work of Aguilar (1995 and 1996); the latter contains a detailed analysis of the influence of historical memory on the mobilizations that took place at the end of the 1970's.[Back to text](#TX10)

[**\(11\)**](#FT11) This breaking with the past is a common element in all Spanish political parties. In the PSOE's case, this was done in the Suresnes Congress in 1974, in which a new generation of leaders took over from the old socialist leaders in exile. This was paralleled in the PCE's case by the abandonment of the "communist orthodoxy", although it seems that the definition problems of "the new party of the left" have not yet been solved. Finally, we must point out that the difficulties of consolidation of a large centre-right party in Spain have been closely linked to this demand for "generation change" in the party elite.[Back to text](#TX11)

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(12) Thus, in Spanish political life there is a genuine "generation" gap that obliterates from it not only those that took direct part in the civil war, but also those that went through it during their childhood. For the most part, the new "political class" is born after the end of the conflict. The most eminent exceptions to this rule are Manuel Fraga and Santiago Carrillo.

Although twenty years have gone by, Carrillo's active role during the transition still generates some significant commentaries: "It's none of my business, but the provocation consisted not only in the legalization of the Communist Party, but in allowing Carrillo to keep leading it. It is not that I have anything against Carrillo, but we all had made a great effort to forget the past, all of us, except communists". (Interview with Miguel Primo de Rivera, *El País*, Memoria de la Transición 6, November 1995.)Back to text

(13) Curiously, whilst these data make it hard to believe in the validity of applying the idea of an "historical memory" that would allow for a rapid reconstruction of the elite's political culture, this very same thesis has been used to explain the generation of the Spaniard's new political culture and to justify, in part, the "gentleness" and success of the political transition (Maravall 1982).Back to text

(14) Being a member of the European Parliament is also incompatible with a seat in the Congress or the Senate.Back to text

(15) Party membership rates in Spain are extremely low when compared to those in most of the European countries, and the same applies to union membership. On this matter, see Montero (1981) and Del Castillo (1990). In recent years there has been a significant change in Spaniards' political participation. This change has not affected the traditional political organizations, but has meant a considerable increase in the affiliation and participation in "non conventional organizations" (NGOs, etc.). See Adell (1993, 1994) and Alonso (1994).Back to text

(16) In the Senate's case this is done differently, as in each electoral constituency Senators are elected by the direct vote to each candidate with an absolute majority system.Back to text

(17) On the consequences of these "organizational cultures" for Spanish political life, see Álvarez Junco (1994)

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and Morán (1996).Back to text

(18) This pattern is totally comparable to the Italian case. Cotta (1979) points out that the members of Congress with parliamentary experience during fascism represented 15% of the Constituent Assembly, a figure decreasing to 3% in the first legislature and non existent in the third. The German case, again, follows the same pattern.Back to text

(19) Most centrist members of Congress that obtained, once again, a seat, did so inside the AP, or in one of the coalitions formed around this party before it became the PP. A small group of social-democrats joined the PSOE during the first legislative term, and only four of them reappear later as members of the CDS, the party headed by the former centrist President of the Government, Adolfo Suárez. In any case, the majority of the parliamentary careers of the centrist ex-MPs were very short.Back to text

(20) There is, nevertheless, a possibility that these differences between members of Congress and those of the Senate may be diminished. The data provided by Von Beyme (1995) on the levelling of significant distinctions regarding the social background, education levels and ways of life of members of parliament, as well as the spreading of a "professional-general" of politics seem to point in this direction, although they refer to the German case.Back to text

(21) This does not mean that there was a total lack of previous "political experience" in the leadership groups and in the new members of parliament. This subject has not been widely studied, but we must point out that for the cases of the two largest leftist parties (PSOE and PCE), there is a considerable number of leaders and members of parliament coming from three different arenas: from the parties of the extreme left (LC, LCR, MC, ORT etc.) after their electoral setback of 1977, from the leadership groups of the most active social movements in the last years of the dictatorship (neighborhood associations, feminist organizations etc.) and, to a lesser degree, from the unions.Back to text

(22) Once again, Von Beyme's recent study (1995) supplies useful information on the German case, and allows for a certain comparison. "The average permanence in Parliament is of a little more than nine years, with a tendency to extend...[The re-election percentage] is of approximately 80% for one re-election. Two thirds of the members of Parliament

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have been re-elected twice, half of them thrice and there is 30% that have been re-elected, at least, four times" (Von Beyme 1995: 130).Back to text

(23) There is the possibility of some of them coming from the Senate or from some of the regional Parliaments, thus questioning the idea of the existence of a continuous but moderate renewal of the parliamentary staff. I do not have the data to allow the verification of this thesis in the autonomous Parliaments' case. On the other hand, until 1989 the number of Senators that "changed" one Chamber for another was very small, and nothing seems to suggest that this tendency has changed (Morán 1989: 84).Back to text

(24) In all these years just one member of Congress for the PSOE has obtained a seat for another party, the IU.Back to text

(25) In the case of the two most significant independent candidates included in the PSOE's lists, the results were disastrous. Both judges (B. Garzón and V. Pérez Mariño) left their seats within a short space of time, creating a considerable scandal by their open criticism of the government's policy towards the corruption issues that have affected it during recent years.Back to text

(26) Data supplied by Gangas (1994) are, nevertheless, difficult to interpret as there is no specification of what kind of offices are being referred to. It also introduces a certain confusion between offices of representation within the party and in other representative institutions in the different levels it takes into consideration.Back to text

(27) I include in this group the former MPs for the Partido Comunista de España (PCE), the main party in the coalition, as well as those belonging to the Partit Socialiste Unificat Catalunya.Back to text

(28) No work has yet been published on the IU that analyzes exhaustively the particular formation of the coalition and the hegemonic weight of the PCE within it. Most works are limited to the study of the PCE during the transition period. See Montero and Pallarés (1992).Back to text

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[**\(29\)**](#) This MP, Miguel Roca, still a member of the Congress when this paper was first written, gave up his seat to become the CiU's candidate for mayor of Barcelona in the local elections of 1995.[Back to text](#)