

*Actes del 53è Congrés de la Comissió
Internacional per a l'Estudi de la Història
de les Institucions Representatives i Parlamentàries*

J. SOBREQUÉS, J. AGIRREAZKUENAGA, M. MORALES,
M. URQUIJO i M. CISNEROS (coordinadors)

Proceedings of the 53rd Conference of the International
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and Parliamentary Institutions

Volum II / Volume II

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Volum II / *Volume II*

*Studies presented to the International Comission for the History
of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (volume LXXXII)*



Barcelona, 2005

BIBLIOTECA DE CATALUNYA, DADES CIP

International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions. Congress (53è : 2003 : Barcelona)
Actes del 53è Congrés de la Comissió Internacional per a l'Estudi de la Història de les Institucions Representatives i Parlamentàries = Proceedings of the 53rd Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions. - (Studies presented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions ; 82)
Textos en anglès, català, castellà i francès. - Referències bibliogràfiques
ISBN 84-393-6798-8 (o.c.)
I. Sobrequés i Callicó, Jaume, ed. II. Catalunya. Parlament III. Títol IV. Títol: Proceedings of the 53rd Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions V. Col·lecció: Études présentées à la Commission internationale pour l'histoire des assemblées d'États ; 82
1. Corona catalanoaragonesa. Corts - Història - Congressos
2. Parlaments - Història - Congressos 3. Parlaments - Península Ibèrica - Història - Congressos
342.53(091)(061.3)

Primera edició, juny del 2005 (edició núm. 224)

© Publicacions del Parlament de Catalunya, 2005
Parc de la Ciutadella, s/n • 08003 Barcelona
Tel. 933 046 635 • Fax 933 046 636
A/e: edicions@parlament-cat.net

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Tel. 932 254 700 • Fax 932 254 758
A/e: www.mhcat.net

Assessorament lingüístic: Departament de Serveis Lingüístics

Imprès a: Indústries Gràfiques Gabriel Gibert, SA (Tarragona)
Enquadernat a: Enquadernacions Fontanet, SL (Lleida)

Tiratge: 850 exemplars

ISBN: 84-393-6798-8 (obra completa)

Dipòsit legal: B-28535/2005

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Prosopographic analysis of the parliamentary members of Vasconia (1876-1939)

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the research project that will culminate in the elaboration of the *Biographical Dictionary of the Parliamentary Members of Vasconia for the period corresponding to the Restoration and the Second Republic*. The project is receiving financial support from the Basque Parliament and is being jointly managed by the Parliament and the University of the Basque Country.

The project is directed and carried out by a team of lecturers and researchers from the Department of Contemporary History; this team has an accumulated experience of fourteen years in parliamentary history and biographical studies. In 1990, work was initiated on the *Diccionario biográfico de los Parlamentarios de Vasconia (1808-1876)* [Biographical Dictionary of the Parliamentary Members of Vasconia (1808-1879)], which was published in 1993. That project, also financed and published by the Basque Parliament, was the antecedent of the research presented today.

The conclusions and most relevant methodological aspects of the dictionary were presented at the “63rd International Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative & Parliamentary Institutions”, held in Camerino (Italy) in the summer of 1993. They are described in the contribution entitled ‘Spanish parliamentary prosopography during the rise of the liberal revolution (1808-1876)’, which was included in the Conference Proceedings published in 1996.

To that research have since been added the *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales, Burócratas y Patricios de Bizkaia (1800-1876)* [Biographical Dictionary of the General Deputies, Bureaucrats and Patricians of Bizkaia (1800-1876)], published by the *Juntas Generales* of Bizkaia in 1995, as well as its counterpart for the province of Álava, *Diccionario de los Diputados Generales, Consultores y Secretarios de Gobierno de Álava* [Dictionary of the General Deputies, Consultants and Government Secretaries of Álava], publication of which is underway. The aim of both works was to study the life and work of those directing the politico-administrative management

of Álava and Bizkaia in the nineteenth century. At the level of local administration, the research team has published the *Diccionario biográfico de los alcaldes de Bilbao y gestión municipal en tiempos de la revolución liberal e industrial (1836-1901)* [Biographical Dictionary of the Mayors of Bilbao and Municipal Management at the Time of the Liberal and Industrial Revolution (1836-1901)]. The corresponding biographical dictionary for Bilbao for the period of the Restoration and the Second Republic is to be published shortly.

The workings of the political system during the Restoration and the Second Republic have attracted the interest of many historians in recent decades. With the renewed interest in political history, a multitude of works have appeared on political parties, social movements, collective action, elections, and such significant elements of the political machinery as political clientage [*caciquismo*]. For the reigns of Alfonso XII and Alfonso XIII, it is unquestionably this latter aspect and its influence on the electoral processes of the period that has aroused most interest, while for the republican period the central issue for many researchers has been the role of the mass political parties and the different trade unions and their attempts to reform or change the social and political situation of the time. An exhaustive review of the latest works on these issues far exceeds the scope of this communication; mention can, however, be made of the work directed by José Varela Ortega in 2001, bringing together the different examples of political clientage during the *Alfonsina* Restoration, and providing an abundant bibliography. In the case of the Second Republic, studies have continued on the ensemble of parties, political and trade union organisations, which emerged at that time, in addition to regional, county and local studies seeking to provide more detailed analysis. Among the most recent general works serving to complete our knowledge of political parties little studied until recently, are, for example, the work of Nigel Townson on republicanism, Luis Iñigo Fernández on the Liberal Republican Right, and González Cuevas on *Acción Española*. These works complete the more well known, classic studies on socialism, Carlism, etc.

Since the 1990s, another subject to develop and complement the above mentioned approaches was analysis of the role played by parliamentary institutions – in Spain the Congress and also the Senate during the Restoration – within the political system, together with prosopographical study of the human collective involved in these institutions. These approaches run counter to the viewpoint that the Parliament was in crisis or deficient in its workings, a view which was deeply rooted amongst many nineteenth and twentieth-century politicians and has come down to the present. The new studies have tended to evaluate the true measure of the role played by the Congress and the Senate as representative institutions, analysing their specific characteristics and functional problems, how they served as the point of confluence of diverging social and economic interests, and their more or less intense legislative activity seeking solutions to the problems of Spanish society. Within this work, study of the political class and its parliamentary activity, beyond its well known role as electoral ‘bosses’ [*caciques*], emerges as another key to the workings of the Spanish political system.

‘Parliament and Politics in Contemporary Spain’, a monographic issue of the *Revista de Estudios Políticos* (no. 93, July-September 1996) served to highlight the re-

search that had been carried out up until then into the representative institutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in both their institutional and prosopographic facets. This was followed two years later by another edition of a book edited by Mercedes Cabrera (1998), centring exclusively on the monarchy of Alfonso XII between 1913 and 1923, years that saw the break up of the pact and bipartite politics that had characterised the previous period. Together with Fernando del Rey, Mercedes Cabrera has recently published another work questioning the view which sees the Parliament solely as a defender of the interests of large capital and property. Studies of the role played by the Parliament in the Second Republic are less numerous than those for the Restoration period; however, articles such as those by Mercedes Cabrera and Manuel Álvarez Tardío, underline its importance and analyse the internal organisational keys underlying its frequent inefficient decision-making.

This revival of studies on parliamentarianism has proceeded in parallel with another line of research which has produced different biographical dictionaries with studies of the national political elite. In addition to the research group directing the project presented here, whose works on the nineteenth century and other spheres such as the Provincial Deputations and the City Councils have already been cited, the group directed by Pedro Carasa studying the Parliaments of Castilla y León during the Restoration opened up a path that has been extended to include other autonomous regions, such as Galicia and Cantabria, while other projects are underway in Catalonia and Andalucía.

1. The research team and the theoretical background

The Dictionary of the Parliamentary Members of Vasconia project is currently being carried out by the authors of this contribution. Given the wealth of the sources for this period, the team has undertaken to construct the biographical dictionary and at the same time compile microbiographies within the same spatial and temporal context, incorporating the social complexity required by individual biography in a prosopographical analysis. The political and social dimension implicit in electoral competition and their interaction, reflected in election results, constitutes privileged information in the individual biography. For this reason, reference will be made not only to the persons obtaining the parliamentary seats, but also to defeated candidates; by this means, we aim to enrich the merely statistical, numerical dimension to which analyses of representative elites can be reduced. The scale of values and other expressions adjacent to the concept of political society that the parliamentary members might express will also be emphasised in the microbiographies. In short, our prosopography will contain a qualitative contribution and aims to contribute to analysis of political society from the angle of the social and political experience of the parliamentary members, and a reading of political action from this perspective.

The research team are members of the Department of Contemporary History at the University of the Basque Country. They have extensive experience in the social and political history of personalities from the upper and lower classes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

2. Methodology and sources for prosopographical research

2.1. METHODOLOGY

Faced with the diversity often characterising such choices, it was decided to establish the merely geographical as a basic criterion, that is, only those parliamentary members who were elected to represent the districts of Álava, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre, were chosen, independently of their place of birth. Thus, natives of those areas who were elected for other provinces have been excluded. From this basis, an attempt is made to write the biography of the elected parliamentary members of Vasconia, that is, both the members who did not, for whatever reason, finally occupy their seat, and those who were elected for several electoral districts, including a Basque one, but did not finally opt for the latter.

To identify and quantify the parliamentary members under study, the documentation available in two basic sources for the study of parliamentarianism was then consulted: the Archive of the Congress of Deputies and the Archive of the Senate. Furthermore, the information obtained was compared with that offered in the *Diario de Sesiones* of the *Cortes*, and in the *Estadística del personal y vicisitudes de las Cortes y de los Ministerios de España*. This was to rectify certain omissions and errors that were detected in the course of consulting both archive sources.

But before proceeding to the actual biographical research, it must be understood that the biography constitutes the final point of a research process that goes beyond the accumulation of information on the personalities under study. Starting from this premise, a necessary preliminary phase is the creation of what has been termed the Archive of Parliamentary Members of Vasconia [*Archivo de Parlamentarios de Vasconia*], which has a twofold function: firstly, that of serving as a logical basis for the projected biographies; and secondly, to register information that will also contribute to future research in the subject. From this angle, the Archive of Parliamentary Members is envisaged more as a research tool in the history of Basque and Spanish parliamentarianism.

Computerised databases of two types will be included in this Archive:

- Supporting databases, containing information of a more generic nature. For example, administrative councils and boards of directors of major companies, institutions and economic bodies, banks and railway companies, newspapers, magazines and socio-cultural institutions, and results of elections held during the period under study, in order to sketch the profile of those involved and the political context of the period.
- Other more strictly biographical databases, in which individualised, nominal forms will include:
 - Important dates in the life of the subject and his family: dates of birth and death, family links and relations, residence.
 - Education and professional activity: level of education, academic record, career and professional activity.
 - Economic status: inheritance and income, business affairs and activities.

- Politico-administrative management activity: political and administrative posts held.
- Parliamentary activity: electoral process and nomination, parliamentary positions, parliamentary commissions and interventions, motions and proposals.
- Scientific, literary and/or journalistic activity: works, works in collaboration with others, directive functions.
- Socio-cultural activity: participation in recreational and/or cultural associations.

This document archive will be supplemented by an image archive, registering portraits and signatures of the Basque parliamentary members, and thus serving to identify them.

By integrating these databases, detailed information will be obtained for the corresponding biographies. The biographies will follow the structure set out on the biographical filing cards. As mentioned above, it is hoped that this Archive, due both to its conception and design, will prove of use for a variety of different types of research.

2.2. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND ARCHIVE SOURCES

Preparing the biographies of the Parliamentary Members of Vasconia (1876-1939) involves searching, selecting and registering the information contained both in original sources and in the general and specific bibliography that is available.

The general bibliography proceeding from the ABEPI, the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana* and the works of Jaime del Burgo and Antonio Palau y Dulcet, are basically supplemented in the Basque case with that provided by the compilation of Jon Bilbao, the *Enciclopedia General Ilustrada del País Vasco*, and the computerised catalogues of the *Centro de Patrimonio Documental de Euskadi* [Centre of Documentary Patrimony of the Basque Country] (Bergara) and the *Fundación Sancho el Sabio* (Vitoria). To the information coming from this general bibliographical search, will be added data drawn from the long list of specialised works, which cannot be enumerated here due to limitations of time and space.

In a subsequent phase, the documentation available from different archive sources will be studied. The Congress and Senate Archive files are essential for reconstruction of the electoral processes and the parliamentary life of the biography subjects. In the case of the Senate, this information is supplemented by birth and/or death certificates and the economic and politico-administrative certification presented by the Senators in question.

The *Archivo General Militar* of Segovia provides a professional biography of the individual in question, with annexed documentation on his family relations, patrimony and other posts held. In the case of subjects who were members of the Civil Administration of the State, sources are diverse, as the files of the corresponding Ministry and functionaries are available. The latter are available in the *Archivo Histórico Nacional*, the *Archivo General de la Administración* of Alcalá de Henares and the *Archivo de la Dirección General de Tesoro y Política Financiera* [Archive of the General Directorate of the Treasury and Financial Policy].

The university archives also offer data beyond the strict sphere of academic career, enabling us to reconstruct the subject's family milieu. Hence, the Archives of the *Universidad Complutense* of Madrid, and the *Universidades* of Valladolid, Salamanca and Zaragoza are key elements. The same is true for the archives of the scientific academies.

With respect to the public archives of the Basque institutions, although they do not provide personal files enabling us to reconstruct the political career of the subjects, there is abundant documentation in the different funds and sections of the four Deputations; essentially information can be drawn from the minutes of the Deputation and the *Juntas Generales*, polls and censuses, lawsuits and appeals.

The Civil Register, the Register of Urban and Mercantile Property, the municipal archives, archives of businesses, Professional Colleges, and the funds available in cultural and recreational societies... all widen the possibilities for deeper knowledge of the lives of the parliamentary members under study. In some cases, this knowledge will be further enhanced by private family archives.

3. First approaches

The division of the four provinces of Vasconia into electoral districts must be borne in mind, together with changes occurring over the period in question, since these factors determine the number of representatives elected in each electoral contest.

During the Restoration the general trend was to maintain the uninominal electoral districts. The Electoral Law of 1878 upheld the spatial distribution established by the *Sexenio*, specifically the Law of 1 January 1871. This divided the provinces into two or more electoral districts, for which a single representative was elected by simple majority. The Law of 1878 laid down a series of changes, creating new plurinominal districts, including Pamplona, which from then onwards would elect three deputies to the *Cortes*. From 1871, the province of Navarre had been divided into seven electoral districts (Aoiz, Baza, Estella, Olza, Pamplona, Tafalla and Tudela). This division only affected the general election of 1876, and some partial elections that followed it, since from 1878 the new division of the province was established as follows: the districts of Baza, Olza and Pamplona were recast in the new district of Pamplona, while the uninominal districts of Aoiz, Estella, Tafalla and Tudela were maintained with slight modifications. In spite of the changes, seven deputies continued to be elected to the *Cortes* at each electoral summons (Layana, 1998: 67-78).

In the remaining three provinces, all the districts were uninominal during the Restoration period. Between 1876 and 1891, the province of Álava was divided into the districts of Vitoria and Amurrio. The two deputies to the *Cortes* who represented them were joined by a third when the district of Laguardia, which included the whole of the south of the province, was created in 1891. To the three deputies for Álava must be added the five that were elected in Gipuzkoa from 1885. That year saw creation of the district of Zumaya with a part of the territory of the districts of Bergara and Azpeitia, which together with San Sebastian and Tolosa had elected the four representatives of the province until then. In Bizkaia, evolution of the spatial elec-

toral division was more complex. From the start of the reign of Alfonso XII, the province comprised four districts: Bilbao, Balmaseda, Gernika and Durango. In 1884, the district of Markina was created with the aim of counteracting Carlist power in the district of Durango and increasing monarchical power in the province. Later, in 1896, the electoral district of Baracaldo was created, in order to provide the industrialist Adolfo Gabriel Urquijo Ibarra with a district in which to be elected. Hence from that year onwards, six deputies were elected to the *Cortes* by the province of Bizkaia (Real, 1991: 117–123).

The proclamation of the Second Republic represented a caesura in the electoral division of the provinces. During the reigns of Alfonso XII and Alfonso XIII all of the electoral districts, save that of Pamplona, had been uninominal, whereas during the Republic all of the electoral districts were plurinominal and elected more than one representative. By this means republican electoral legislation sought to limit the political clientage that had operated in the uninominal districts during the Restoration, preventing representation for other minority political forces. In the Decree of Modification of the Electoral Law of 1907, enacted on 8 May 1931, it was already clearly affirmed that ‘the Government has been unable to forget the grave consequences for the purity of suffrage offered by the Electoral Law in force, which by establishing the system of majorities for small unipersonal districts, left a broad channel open for compulsion by political bosses (*caciques*), for purchase of votes and all the corrupt practices that are so well known.’ (Rueda, 1998: 179).

The new electoral legislation of the republican regime (Decree of 8 May 1931) established that the basic electoral unit would be provincial circumscriptions, although it made it possible for cities with over 100,000 inhabitants to have their own electoral district separate from the provincial one. Within these units it laid down that there should be one deputy to the *Cortes* for every 50,000 inhabitants, and also left a door open for some representation of minorities by imposing the corrected majority election system. Following this ratio of representatives to inhabitants, a single circumscription was created in the province of Álava, for which two representatives were elected. In Gipuzkoa, representation rose to six deputies and in Navarre, seven. In the case of Bizkaia the province was divided into two clearly differentiated parts. On the one hand, there was the capital, which included a triangle whose vertices were located in Arrigorriaga, Muskiz and Plentzia, and including all of Greater Bilbao. Six deputies were elected here. The remainder of the province became the electoral circumscription of Bizkaia with a further three deputies (Granja, 1986: 185–190).

Having set out the distribution into districts of the Basque provinces and the theoretical number of parliamentary seats to be occupied, we can now offer the first data on the parliamentary members whose biographies are to be written. This group comprised 315 individuals, some of them well-known due to the extent of their political activity, as in the cases of Manuel Azaña, Indalecio Prieto and José Antonio Aguirre; others, however, restricted their activity to the local sphere.

Given the structure of the Parliament, bicameral during the Restoration and unicameral during the Second Republic, the lesser numerical weight of Senators as opposed to the Deputies, which came to double the former, is logical. Amongst other

factors, it is worth pointing to the fact that many Basque Senators were members of the nobility, in line with the general pattern for this Chamber in other periods.

BASQUE PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS DURING THE RESTORATION (1876-1923)¹

Province	Congress	Senate	Congress and Senate	Total
Álava	17	13	10	40
Bizkaia	41	20	13	74
Gipúzkoa	49	31	11	91
Navarre	50	20	12	82
Total	157	84	46	287

The smaller population of Álava and the consequently smaller number of electoral districts entailed a lower level of parliamentary representation than the remaining Basque provinces.

On the other hand, there is also a clear differentiation in the representation of the Deputies to the *Cortes*, some of their names being strictly limited to the period of the Restoration, while 'new faces' took over during the Republic. We can thus talk of a break in the continuity of parliamentary representation.

BASQUE PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS ELECTED
DURING THE REPUBLIC (1931-1939)

Province	
Álava	4
Bizkaia	18
Gipuzkoa	13
Navarre	12
Total	47

1. A strictly territorial criterion has been followed in the preparation of this table, taking into account the Deputies and Senators of each of the provinces and hence counting twice the parliamentary members who were elected in two different provinces. In this latter case, we find Adolfo Urquijo Ibarra, Deputy for Bizkaia for the electoral district of Barakaldo in 1896 and Senator for Gipúzkoa in 1910, as well as Esteban Bilbao Eguía, Deputy for Gipúzkoa in the district of Tolosa in 1916 and 1918, Deputy for Navarre in the district of Estella in 1920 and Senator for Bizkaia in 1919.

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