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The President of the lower chamber, a sovereign institution in times of Monarchical trust? Parliamentary basis in debate in nineteenth-century Spain

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Introduction

The prime minister (president of the government) is currently seen as the main political authority in Spain, as well as in other similar monarchical parliamentary regimes. Although he/she is not the head of state, he/she leads the government, designates its members and is accountable to parliament for the government's actions. On a second level of responsibility, there is the president of parliament (the Congress of Deputies), who is one of the main political authorities in the country. According to the current regulations of parliament, he/she represents the lower chamber, leads discussions and is responsible for compliance with and enforcement of the chamber's regulations.¹ Although this political post is nowadays almost always held by someone from the same political party that forms the cabinet, the incumbent is expected to be impartial, on the understanding that his/her main duty is to ensure that every deputy is able to express their opinion regardless of political tendencies.² However, has this institution always been valued as an independent figure? What has the president of the Spanish parliament's role been in modern Spanish history, and more precisely, during its origins

¹ 'Reglamento del Congreso de los Diputados de 10 de febrero de 1982', *Boletín Oficial del Estado* 55, (5 March 1982).

² The webpage of the Spanish Congress defines the presidency of the chamber 'as an impartial institution beyond partisan confrontation'. See: <http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Transparencia/InfInstit/Prte>, whereas the current president Meritxell Batet was sworn into the post on May 2019 by promising 'impartiality'. See: https://www.eldiario.es/politica/Batet-prometiendo-imparcialidad-exigiendo-llamando_0_901510538.html

in the nineteenth century? What do we know about this institution? Some of these questions will be addressed in this paper.

The prime minister may have been the most important political actor, aside from the monarch, in the nineteenth-century Spanish parliamentary system. He (because he was always a man, as women were not considered political citizens at that time) led the government, but sovereignty was shared with the Crown, as only the monarch had executive power and both parliamentary chambers and the monarch shared legislative power, according to most Spanish constitutions of the century (1837, 1845 and 1876).

The dominance of the shared sovereignty system throughout the nineteenth century may have shaped our image of the president of the lower chamber. Moreover, alternative conceptions and regulations of this post have been dismissed regardless of their impact. Indeed, studies of this political figure have largely ignored its very existence before 1837.

The prominent conception of the president of the lower chamber in nineteenth century Spain is of a figure that was far from impartial and is even assumed to have been a governmental institution, albeit a weak one that was dependent on governments because of the latter's will to control all forms of power.³ In other words, the president of parliament has been viewed as a figure that was subordinated to the government and whose parliamentary functions were linked with the desires of the ruling party. This paper will challenge this perception by analysing the functions assigned to the president of parliament and the qualities ascribed to the post by those in power during the first two thirds of nineteenth century Spain (1810-1867). It begins by looking in detail at the dominant perception to date, according to which the president of the lower chamber was no more than an entity subjected to the government. The paper goes on to challenge this

³ J. I. Marcuello Benedicto, *La práctica parlamentaria en el reinado de Isabel II* (Madrid, 1986), pp. 47-63; D. Sevilla Andrés, 'La presidencia del Congreso de los Diputados (1810-1936)', *Revista del Instituto de Ciencias Sociales* 14, (1969), pp. 21-56.

view by analysing the election procedure and functions as described in the different regulations of the Spanish parliament in the study period (1810, 1813, 1821, 1838, 1847 and 1854).⁴ This analysis concludes by showing how politicians put progressively greater pressure on the president of parliament, but how, at the same time, this institution continued to be appreciated for its impartiality and parliamentary expertise.

The accepted view of the president of parliament as a figure subjected to the government

According to article 47.10 of the 1837 Constitution, article 45.10 of the 1845 Constitution and article 54.9 of the 1876 Constitution, the King ‘freely designates and separates ministers’. Although the legal basis of these constitutions was one of governments that depended on the Crown, it was doctrinally viewed as a regime in which governments also depended on parliament. In other words, in order to stay in cabinet, governments needed to be nominated by the Crown, but also required the parliament’s trust in order to develop their political programmes and have their laws and projects approved. The problem was that the Crown was not, in practice, a neutral subject and it prevailed over parliament whenever conflict arose. According to Juan Ignacio Marcuello,⁵ following Colliard,⁶ this was not a pure negative parliamentarism system, but to a certain extent he does assume it to have been a kind of parliamentarism

⁴ The regulations during the granted charter of the Estatuto Real (1834-36), when the monarch intervened in the election of the president of the chamber, are not considered here. See ‘Reglamento para el regimen y gobierno del Estamento de Procuradores a Cortes’ (Madrid, 1876 [1834]).

⁵ Marcuello, *La práctica parlamentaria*, p. 81.

⁶ J. C. Colliard, *Les régimes parlementaires contemporains* (Paris, 1978).

in negative.⁷ That is, the directorial position of the Crown in the Spanish liberal system conditioned the continuity of governments more than it did the judgement of parliament. Therefore, governments depended more on the Crown than on parliament, as only the monarch designated ministers and they did not have to report to parliament.

Under the 1845 Constitution, executive power was reinforced as an alternative to the model endorsed by the 1812 Constitution, which established a unicameral parliamentary system based on national sovereignty. In other words, the power of parliament was weakened in favour of the Crown and, thus, the idea of the government based on the power of the assembly was absent from Spanish legislation for decades. Parliament was no longer seen, as it was under the 1812 Constitution, as representative of national sovereignty, but instead as an institution whose duty was to act and vote on behalf of society as a whole, in accordance with liberalist view that the wealthy and/or intellectual were the best prepared to express the general interest, and the most distinguished of these were appointed to do so.⁸ Representation was thus widely associated with those ‘natural’ representatives of the nation.⁹

In fact, the idea of parliament during the most part of nineteenth century Spain was far less of a place for deliberation where representatives expressed the desires of the nation than it was a place where the most select and best-prepared individuals were represented and expressed what was best for the nation. Liberal conservative Juan Donoso Cortés, for instance, rejected national sovereignty, as he viewed it as an expression of the general will, and thus not based on reason, as most of the population was not sufficiently qualified to have an opinion. Therefore, he concluded,

⁷ J. I. Marcuello, ‘La Corona y la desnaturalización del parlamentarismo isabelino’, *Ayer* 29, (1998), pp. 15-36.

⁸ A. S. Kahan, *Liberalism in Nineteenth-century Europe: The Political Culture of Limited Suffrage* (Houndmills, 2003).

⁹ G. Capellán de Miguel, ‘Representación’, in J. Fernández Sebastián and J. F. Fuentes (dir), *Diccionario político y social del siglo XIX español* (Madrid, 2002), pp. 612-621.

representation had to be based on law as an expression of reason and justice, which could only be produced by those who had intelligence.¹⁰

Thus, sovereignty was understood to mean the result of laws established by the State,¹¹ and as they were implemented by governments depending on the Crown, the idea of parliament as the place for assemblage, debate and decision of the nation represented by the deputies gave rise to the idea of parliament as a place to confirm the wills of the majority, identified with the government, and even subordinated to the government's desires as long as they were maintained by the Crown.¹²

Parliament was thus a place where this will of the majority was certified and was more about oratory than debate. In fact, debate was usually limited to offering a platform for three opinions in favour of the issue being discussed and three more against it, as long as someone had asked to do so, for if not the deputies would simply go straight to the vote and there would be no debate at all.¹³ This was an extremely different conception from the one formulated by the most advanced liberals during the Liberal Triennium (1820-23), who had proposed at least six opinions in favour and six more against in parliamentary discussions. Debate was at the core of their vision of the representative system to the point that they sought to restrict the president's interventions in order to prevent him from being overly influential.¹⁴ However, their ideas were dismissed.

Therefore, the Spanish parliament in the nineteenth century was a far cry from the more modern association of parliament with deliberation between opposing points of view, representation of the people, the government's responsibility to the parliament,

¹⁰ J. Donoso Cortés, *Lecciones de derecho político: Cuaderno 2º, De la Soberanía del Pueblo* (Madrid, 1837).

¹¹ J. M. Portillo Valdés, 'Cortes', in J. Fernández Sebastián and J. F. Fuentes (dir), *Diccionario político y social del siglo XIX español* (Madrid, 2002), pp. 196-199.

¹² P. Díaz Marín, *Política de Estado: Los discursos de la Corona durante la Década Moderada (1844-1854)* (Alicante, 2018), p. 18.

¹³ See article 110 of the 'Reglamento del Congreso de los Diputados' (4 May 1847).

¹⁴ I. Fernández Sarasola, *Reglamentos parlamentarios (1810-1977)* (Madrid, 2012), pp. 24-25.

and the sovereignty of a parliament within a polity.¹⁵ Liberal Moderates dominated the governments of that time thanks to the Crown's confidence in designating ministers of such a tendency. On the one hand, there were Liberal Moderates who were politically inspired by the French doctrinaires of the July Monarchy (1830-48), with their belief in shared sovereignty between parliament and the Crown and a very limited conception of political and individual rights, as the 1845 Constitution revealed. On the other hand, the Liberal Progressives were mostly in the opposition and were inspired by the British parliamentary system, advocating for a wider sphere of participation in politics, despite refusing universal political rights.

The Liberal Moderates, in fact, associated the regime with the government and the opposition was viewed as an attack on the system,¹⁶ since the will of the majority was perceived as the true desire of the nation, hence minorities were disregarded.¹⁷ The president of parliament was therefore a dependent figure on the government who reinforced the will of the majority. Governments expected to have loyal presidents of the lower chamber who would set the agenda and control the debates in their political interests so that they could implement their political manifestos regardless of parliament's political interests and opinions.

Despite being voted for and designated by parliament, as the president of parliament was usually proposed by the government, he would remain in the post for as long as the government was in charge. Whenever the government was dismissed or the Crown designated a new government, the president of the chamber would change too. So, if parliament ever rejected the government's candidate, the government would be dismissed. Since it depended on the Crown, parliaments rarely had occasion to judge the

¹⁵ P. Ihalainen, C. Ilie and K. Palonen (ed), *Parliament and Parliamentarism: A comparative history of a European concept* (New York, 2016).

¹⁶ Fernández Sarasola, *Los partidos políticos*, p. 82.

¹⁷ See O. Luján, 'El voto en el Congreso de los Diputados durante el reinado de Isabel II', *Historia Contemporánea* 53, (2016), pp. 461-490.

government's actions, and likewise governments rarely had to heed the wishes of parliament. For this reason, the election of the president of the lower chamber was viewed as one of the few occasions when parliament could hold the government accountable by supporting or rejecting its candidate. According to Juan Ignacio Marcuello, the election of the president of parliament was established by Royal Statute (1834-36) as a means for governments to ensure parliamentary confidence at the beginning of a legislature, thus transcending its formal objective.¹⁸

Juan Ignacio Marcuello thus introduces the president of parliament as another element within this system of monarchical trust and parliamentarism in negative, by which governments proposed trusted deputies in order to ensure support for their motions. Governments viewed the election of the president of parliament as a matter of ensuring that they had the latter's trust, as a way of knowing whether their cabinets had the approval of a parliamentary majority or not, a procedure that was also used with the response to the State Opening speech.¹⁹

An example of this procedure was the election of Girona Marquis in 1847. Although the government's candidate, Juan Bravo Murillo, obtained more votes than the others in the first round (92 votes for Juan Bravo Murillo, 70 for Girona Marquis and 40 for Evaristo Fernández de San Miguel), he did not obtain an absolute majority and was therefore not elected.²⁰ In the second round, it is quite likely that the Liberal Progressives, who had chosen San Miguel as their candidate, preferred to support the more progressive Liberal Moderate Girona Marquis -who obtained 111 votes- rather than the conservative Bravo Murillo -who only got one more vote than he had in the first round, 93. That happened on 21 January 1847 and the prime minister, Francisco

¹⁸ J. I. Marcuello, *Los proyectos de reforma política de Bravo Murillo en perspectiva. Conservadurismo autoritario y antiparlamentario en la Monarquía de Isabel II* (Oviedo, 2016), pp. 100-101.

¹⁹ Marcuello, *La práctica parlamentaria*, pp. 47-63.

²⁰ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1846-1847, p. 260.

Javier Istúriz, resigned just seven days later.²¹ Another government was designated in accordance with the parliamentary majority, led by Carlos Martínez de Irujo, Duke of Sotomayor.

Something similar happened in late 1852. After parliament had been closed for a whole year by the conservative Liberal Moderate prime minister Juan Bravo Murillo it opened again on 1 December 1852. Bravo Murillo wanted to introduce a reform to the Constitution, which would strengthen the government's power, leaving it only subjected to the Crown, and thus also weaken parliamentary power. He even rejected the shared sovereignty on which the 1845 Constitution was based and supported unlimited monarchical power. In other words, fundamental laws would not necessarily be discussed in parliament, and could only be approved by the Crown.

Moreover, the president of parliament would be directly designated by the Crown, in a similar manner to the Bayonne Statute of 1808 or the Charter of the Royal Statute of 1834.²² And the Crown would not be subjected to any power, for even the parliamentary response to the State Opening speech could only be written by the president of the lower chamber. This essentially erased another measure of governmental control, as the parliamentary commission who had performed that duty until then would be suppressed.²³

With this plan in mind, Juan Bravo Murillo had even ruled the country for a year with parliament closed, taking advantage of decree-laws approved by the government to sanction measures.²⁴ When he reopened parliament, he expected to obtain its presidency and thereby get it to approve his Constitutional reform. But the parliamentary majority

²¹ *Gaceta de Madrid* (30 January 1847), p. 1.

²² 'Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno del Estamento de Procuradores a Cortes' (Madrid, 1876). See: <http://www.congreso.es/docu/constituciones/1834/reglamento.pdf>

²³ Marcuello, *Los proyectos de reforma*, pp. 64 and 99-100.

²⁴ Marcuello, *Los proyectos de reforma*; J. Pro Ruiz, *Bravo Murillo: Política de orden en la España liberal* (Madrid, 2006), pp. 275-307.

was not in favour. So, the election of the president of parliament was seen as a way to judge the government and its candidate was rejected. After a year with parliament closed, some of the progressive and doctrinaire sympathisers within the Liberal Moderates, together with the Liberal Progressives, gave their support to Francisco de Paula Martínez de la Rosa, who obtained 121 votes, whereas the government's candidate, the conservative Santiago de Tejada, only got 107.²⁵ Bravo Murillo's government understood that the parliamentary majority had rejected his reform proposal, so the following day he closed parliament again and resigned 12 days later.

This has to date been the most widespread view of the president of parliament in nineteenth century Spain, and it owes much to the Liberal Moderate view. However, there were other opinions and legislations that nuance this dominant view, as shown in the following section, which particularly focuses on the period under the Constitution of 1812.

A rotatory chair in the naissance of liberalism (1810-1814)

Far from this image of a subordinated and biased institution, the president of the Spanish parliament was from the beginning of liberal times promoted and regulated as an independent political figure. The 1810 regulation of parliament, in article 1 of its second chapter, established that the president and vice-presidents of parliament were to be elected on the 24th day of every month, and no one could be re-elected to the same post after holding it for six months, even if the deputies supported him unanimously.²⁶ The parliamentary regulations of 1813 and 1821 kept this rotatory system and the prohibition on being re-elected to the same post within the 'three or four months which

²⁵ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1852, p. 4.

²⁶ 'Reglamento para el gobierno interior de las Cortes' (Cadiz, 1810).

the sessions last'.²⁷ That is the reason why between September 1810 and February 1838,²⁸ with the first liberal experiences when the 1812 Constitution was being drafted and after it came into force, only eight out of more than 80 presidents held the post more than once:

- Vicente Cano Manuel -April-May 1811 and February-March 1821.
- Ramon Giraldo -August-September 1811, August-September 1820 and January-February 1822.
- José María Gutiérrez de Terán -April 1812 and April-May 1812.
- Miguel de Zumalacárregui -January-February 1813 and February 1837.
- Antonio Joaquín Pérez Martínez Robles -January-February 1811, February 1814 and May 1814.
- Álvaro Gómez Becerra -June 1822 and October-November 1836.
- Manuel Flores Calderón -February-March 1823 in Madrid and March-April 1823 in Seville-Cadiz.
- Ramón Salvató -October-November 1822 and March 1837.²⁹

This meant that around 80 per cent of the time the president of parliament's chair was occupied by a deputy who had never held the position before. As the post could only be retained for a month, most deputies could be in charge at least once. Indeed, if 41 different people acted as president of parliament between 1810 and 1814 -and only two of them repeated, one of them twice- and at that time there were around

²⁷ 'Reglamento para el gobierno interior de la Cortes' (Cadiz, 1813). See: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B27DzfbcyPNBQW9hd3RhOG02a0E/view>; 'Reglamento del gobierno interior de Cortes y su edificio' (Madrid, 1821). See: <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000045389&page=1>

²⁸ Presidents under the Royal Statute (1834-36) are not considered here.

²⁹ This information has been produced from the Sessions Record of the Congress. See: https://app.congreso.es/est_sesiones/

477 deputies in parliament,³⁰ this implied that nearly 9 per cent of them served as president of parliament. This made the institution one of openness, transversality and parity.

Moreover, the president was conceived as an equal among deputies. That is why, according to article 4 of the 1810 regulation of the parliament, article 30 of the 1813 regulation and article 31 of the 1821 regulation, the president's vote was not decisive but instead counted the same as that of any other deputy.³¹ Martín de los Heros, who was in chair between 1 May 1837 and 31 of May 1837, affirmed when he was elected that 'the authority of the President is really subordinated to the moral conviction of the other deputies, his colleagues'.³² Moreover, the president had to be fair. Vicente Pascual, in chair between 24 February 1812 and 23 March 1812, said that the qualities to be president were 'circumspection, prudence and wisdom'.³³

Together with the promotion of this image of an impartial, fair and autonomous political figure, under the 1812 Constitution the main political dignitary of the State, King Ferdinand VII, was absent from rule until 1814 as he was being retained in Bayonne (France) by Napoleon. Instead, the main political authorities in Spain were represented at that time by the Regency, an institution composed of five members who were responsible for executive and legislative power until the holding of the *Cortes* (parliamentary assembly) in Cadiz. The juntas -popular assemblies- were urged to drive

³⁰ Q. Casals Bergés, *La representación parlamentaria en España durante el Primer Liberalismo (1810-1836)* (Lleida-Cadiz, 2014), p. 118.

³¹ 'Reglamento para el gobierno interior de las Cortes' (Cadiz, 1810); 'Reglamento para el gobierno interior de la Cortes' (Cadiz, 1813). See: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B27DzfbcyPNBQW9hd3RhOG02a0E/view>; 'Reglamento del gobierno interior de Cortes y su edificio' (Madrid, 1821). See: <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000045389&page=1>;

³² Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1836-37, p. 3118.

³³ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1836-37, p. 2815.

this institution so as to deter the ‘external enemies and interior agitators’ who were increasing their movements.³⁴

When national sovereignty was proclaimed in Cadiz, parliament kept its legislative power, while temporarily recognising -as long as the king was absent- the executive power of the Regency. This institution even required parliament’s approval to designate Secretaries of State –modern-day ministries-, who were responsible before the parliament.³⁵ The Regency was therefore responsible before the nation, which was embodied by parliament. In other words, in this parliamentary system, the Regency was accountable for its actions to the parliament, for it was the latter that designated the executive power.³⁶ Therefore, the lower chamber was considered the political basis of the regime.³⁷

Since the competences of the Regency were limited, its power was provisional, and its president lacked the historical tradition of the king, the president of parliament was projected as a significant and preeminent political authority. Estefanía Jerónimo and Miguel Ángel Morales distinguish five main functions of the president under the regulations of the 1812 Constitution: promoting and chairing sessions and parliamentary work, exercising disciplinary authority, ensuring the application of the regulations, protecting the decisions of the assembly as its highest authority and representing parliament before the other state institutions.³⁸

The president of parliament was the main political authority in the chamber and this symbolically reinforced his public image. He sat in the most important seat at the Regency’s jury sessions, and was the only person not required to stand up when the

³⁴ R. Comenge, *Antología de las Cortes de Cádiz*, vol 1 (Madrid, 1909), p. 176.

³⁵ A. de Argüelles, *Discurso preliminar a la Constitución de 1812* (Madrid, 2011), p. 56; Fernández Sarasola, *Reglamentos parlamentarios*, pp. 22-23.

³⁶ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1810-13, p. 3.

³⁷ Fernández Sarasola, *Poder y libertad: Los orígenes de la responsabilidad del Ejecutivo en España (1808-1823)* (Madrid, 2001), pp. 353-363.

³⁸ E. Jerónimo Sánchez-Beato and M. A. Morales Payán, *La presidencia de las Cortes en el constitucionalismo histórico español* (Almería, 2004), pp. 26-37.

members of the Regency entered the room, at least until they reached the altar stairs. The president of parliament sat in the central chair, flanked by the members of the Regency.³⁹ This symbolic arrangement represented the distribution of power: the parliament embodied the nation, the sovereign body whose main authority was represented by the president of parliament. Therefore, executive power was subordinated to recognition of legislative power, thus reflecting the political basis of the 1812 Constitution: the political system was unicameral, as the only legitimate corps voted by citizens. Not even the king had any control over the calling and meeting of parliament.⁴⁰

In a way, this distribution of political power was repeated with the State Opening of Parliament ceremony. Following articles 121 and 123 of the 1812 Constitution, if the king was absent, the president of parliament would open and close the legislature and read his speech. If the king opened the legislature, the president of parliament would only answer his words. The 1813 regulation of parliament stated that the president would address the king with a brief speech.⁴¹ As the King was absent from the ceremonies of 2 October 1813 and 2 March 1814, his role was performed by the Regency, and more precisely by its president, who only spoke to congratulate parliament for opening its session.⁴²

In brief, these initial regulations on the Spanish liberal system positioned the president of parliament as one of the main political authorities -if not the main one-, and acknowledged his impartiality and fairness. However, these circumstances were put to debate from 1820 onwards, when King Ferdinand VII was no longer absent from Spain.

³⁹ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1810-13, p. 4.

⁴⁰ J. I. Marcuello and M. Pérez Ledesma, 'Parlamento y poder ejecutivo en la España contemporánea (1810-1936)', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 93, (1996), pp. 17-38.

⁴¹ 'Reglamento para el gobierno interior de la Cortes' (Cadiz, 1813). See: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B27DzfbcyPNBQW9hd3RhOG02a0E/view>

⁴² Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1814, p. 14.

Moreover, liberal political tendencies, which were being progressively forged, sought to take advantage of the election of the president of parliament for their political benefits, which led to a shift in the president of parliament's position until then. The following section analyses these changes during the Liberal Triennium (1820-23) and the first decades of the definitive establishment of the liberal regime (1836-47), when the image of the president as an independent institution tended to be a matter of discussion between political parties.

Independence in discussion: Between the partisanship of parties and the need for an impartial figure (1820-1847)

Until the Liberal Triennium (1820-1823) the king had been both the head of state and of the presidency of government,⁴³ but in his absence the Regency had temporarily assumed those functions. From this period onwards, although the figure of the prime minister began to be settled, the president of parliament maintained a significant role as a relevant political authority, as he kept his functions at the State Opening of Parliament ceremony. He even appeared to be a symbolic defender of the liberal parliamentarism that King Ferdinand VII opposed. As Ferdinand VII was not in Spain during the Cadiz Cortes (1810-14), he was unable to attend the State Opening of Parliament until 1820. The event symbolised the disputed nature of political power: the traditional divine origin of monarchical power against the emerging new power represented by national sovereignty as embodied in new liberal parliaments. Ferdinand VII did not recognize the authority derived from national sovereignty. When he complained about the enormities committed against him at the 1821 State Opening ceremony and even lied in

⁴³ J. Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *Política y Constitución en España (1808-1978)* (Madrid, 2007), pp. 32-34.

affirming he had sworn an oath to the Constitution and said ‘may everyone observe the constitution as I have done’,⁴⁴ he was conspiring to finish with the liberal regime.⁴⁵ He even acknowledged that he did not recognise parliament’s authority, but only his own divine origin:

Seeing myself surrounded for the second time by the worthy representatives of this heroic Nation that has so often and so relevantly demonstrated its love and adherence to my Royal person, my moved heart cannot but give thanks to the almighty [God], who, having restored me to the Throne of my elders through the courage and perseverance of my faithful subordinates, has deigned to consolidate it by granting him as a basis the Constitution sanctioned by the extraordinary Cortes [Parliament].⁴⁶

Therefore, it was not the nation represented in parliament that, in accordance with its sovereignty, ratified the Constitution and acknowledged the king as sovereign. Conversely, according to Ferdinand VII, it was the divine power embodied by the monarch who had the capacity to establish the constitutional text as a legislative basis. Consequently, parliament was viewed as a mere advisory body.

As his words show, Ferdinand VII took advantage of State Opening ceremonies to assert his position of power, acknowledging that his power was of divine origin, and not dependent on parliamentary recognition. In any case, the will of the king should not be confused with the legal basis of the constitution and the actions of parliament. On 9 July 1820, José de Espiga as the president of parliament, warned the monarch that he needed to accept the constitutional regime:

⁴⁴ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1821, p. 19.

⁴⁵ E. La Parra, *Fernando VII: Un rey deseado y detestado* (Barcelona, 2018), pp. 399-440.

⁴⁶ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1821, pp. 18-19.

Dispel forever the fears, shocks and mistrusts that criminal souls have continuously tried to inspire in the heart of the best of kings, and behold the Throne with its that fraternal alliance that ensures order, produces abundance, maintains justice and keeps the peace. And I, faithful organ of this parliament, and of the great nation that it represents, allow me, Lord, to offer you the due homage of its loyalty and of the noble sentiments that drive it.⁴⁷

And on 1 March 1823, Vicente Cano Manuel was similarly adamant: ‘distinguished companions, let us all take the constitutional path, as we have our king at the forefront as the first one to lead the way’.⁴⁸

In fact, the role of the president of parliament could have been so crucial in the constitutional regime of 1812 that he had an impact on the king’s political decisions. The king even designated prime ministers of opposing political tendencies to those of the presidents of parliament so as to interfere with political action. The presidency of Rafael de Riego was one example of this. He had led the military putsch to restore the Liberal Regime in 1820 and forced the king to concede despite his absolute convictions to the contrary. After the king had pronounced the previously cited words in 1821, Riego demanded a monarch whose aspirations were limited to law enforcement. In response, the king selected a moderate cabinet before being driven to designate another in accordance with the parliamentary majority.⁴⁹ As Ignacio Fernández Sarasola has shown, the regime of the 1812 Constitution, in particular during the Liberal Triennium, introduced the need for ministers who could be trusted both by the Crown and Parliament. When either of these institutions lost that trust, ministers had to resign or be

⁴⁷ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1820, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁸ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1821, p. 20.

⁴⁹ Jerónimo Sánchez-Beato and Morales Payán, *La presidencia de las Cortes*, pp. 35-36.

replaced.⁵⁰ In other words, governments depended on a balance between both institutions.

In addition, so as to reinforce parliamentary power, according to the 1821 regulation of parliament a commission of deputies was constituted to analyse and answer the monarch's speech at the State Opening of Parliament, although in the opinion of deputy Antonio Alcalá Galiano the parliamentary debate was 'brief and of no endeavour'.⁵¹ In fact, opinion among parliamentarians with regard to this commission was disputed, as some felt that the king's speech should be answered by no more than the president of parliament's words, while others defended the need for more in-depth debate.⁵²

In any case, this symbolic and effectively political position of the president of parliament disappeared with the introduction of the 1837 Constitution. The text was promoted by the Liberal Progressives and guaranteed significant attributions to the monarch, including the appointment of ministers. The monarchical component was at the core of the Liberal Progressive doctrine, but they wanted a monarch who accepted his/her constitutional role, was submitted to the parliament and who accepted his/her functions as a mediator between represented and representatives, between government and parliament.⁵³ During the most part of Isabel II's reign (1833-68), the Liberal Progressives were mostly in the opposition as they did not enjoy the queen's trust and only formed governments after military uprisings, such as those of 1854 and 1868. As stated before, they advocated for a wider sphere of political participation, despite being opposed to universal political rights.

⁵⁰ Fernández Sarasola, *Poder y libertad*.

⁵¹ J. Campos (ed), *Memorias de D. Antonio Alcalá Galiano publicadas por su hijo* (Madrid, 1955).

⁵² Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1821, p. 20.

⁵³ M. C. Romeo Mateo, 'La ficción monárquica y la magia de la nación en el progresismo isabelino', in A. Lario (ed), *Monarquía y República en la España contemporánea* (Madrid, 2007), pp. 107-125.

In the 1837 Constitution, national sovereignty was confined to the preamble while the text introduced shared sovereignty by which the Monarch maintained relevant attributes, such as the right to call and dissolve parliament and the capacity to open it, designate the president and vice-president of the Senate and most significantly the right to initiative, sanction and veto with regard to laws.⁵⁴ As national sovereignty was no longer legally effective, the president of parliament was not allowed to answer the king at the State Opening of Parliament ceremony. In fact, from that moment on, it was the prime minister who delivered the opening speech -written by the government, as designed by the monarch- to the queen after kissing her hand.⁵⁵

It was a way to weaken the position of parliament in the constitutional regime as well as reinforce the executive power -which depended on the Crown-, as the power shifted from national sovereignty to shared sovereignty and thus from parliament to the Crown and parliamentary institutions (Parliament and also Senate, the latter more influenced by the queen, as the monarch designated all of its members).

The image of the president of parliament being subjected to partisan pressures also progressively increased. The liberal Antonio Alcalá Galiano described this happening as early as the Liberal Triennium (1820-23) in reference to the aforesaid election of Rafael de Riego as president of parliament in February 1822:

Riego was proposed [as president of parliament], and opinions disagreed somewhat. There was no lack of people who expressed their opposition to such an appointment, considering him a glove thrown at the court and the moderate

⁵⁴ Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *Política y Constitución*, pp. 82-93 and 311-324.

⁵⁵ O. Luján, 'Escenificaciones de poder en el ceremonial de las aperturas de Cortes españolas del siglo XIX', *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia* 79, (2019) pp. 99-126.

party; but there were many more who approved the idea, and from that moment on, the future Parliament was to be divided into two parties.⁵⁶

He acknowledged that moderates and exalted liberals, among the most relevant tendencies, competed for the presidency of the lower chamber, and viewed that as an opportunity to gain access to one of the main political authorities. In June 1822, when Álvaro Gómez Becerra was elected as president of the lower chamber, Alcalá Galiano insisted on the same idea of political confrontation:

Before beginning any debate concerning the state of the nation, the parties measured their strength in the election of the president for the fourth month of the legislature. Many of the exalted liberals were so close to the Ministry and to the moderate inclination that they [moderate liberals] won the election by a landslide.⁵⁷

In fact, Alcalá Galiano even recognised that, for the 1822-23 legislature, the main secret societies, the Masons and Comuneros, agreed to rotate the presidency so that a member of each would be designated president in alternate months.

In other words, the struggle between different political factions was not ascribable to a longer presidency, established for the whole legislature from the 1838 regulation of parliament onwards.⁵⁸ Conversely, its origins can be dated as far back as the Liberal Triennium (1820-23). As Juan Francisco Fuentes has shown, this was a historical period of transition towards the consolidation of liberals in politics, who thus

⁵⁶ Campos, *Memorias de D. Antonio Alcalá Galiano*.

⁵⁷ Campos, *Memorias de D. Antonio Alcalá Galiano*.

⁵⁸ Sevilla Andrés, 'La presidencia del Congreso', p. 22.

progressively fought for the consolidation of the proprietary system.⁵⁹ Therefore, struggles among liberals emerged and the figure of the president of parliament was also in dispute. But this should not be viewed so much as a dispute to control the presidency as it was a struggle to gain access to the main authority of the political regime.

Such political struggles increased in the 1830s, but the dispute took on a different political nature as under the 1837 Constitutional jurisdiction parliament was no longer the basis of the constitutional regime, but one among other institutions, such as the Senate and Crown. Indeed, laws coming from parliament could be blocked from that moment on by the Senate and the calling of parliament depended on the Crown. Parliamentary power was weakened, and hence from the 1837 Constitution and the 1838 regulation of parliament onwards, the political conception of the president of the lower chamber substantially changed. It would never again be a rotating post, but instead a stable one throughout the whole legislature, as it still is today. However, an interim president could be elected as long as the parliament was not constituted with a quorum of half plus one deputy. When this situation occurred, the president of parliament, together with four vice-presidents and four secretaries, were elected for the whole legislature. Moreover, there was no restriction on being re-elected.⁶⁰

The post was therefore viewed as one of less transversality and parity -to which a wide range of deputies could gain access to once-, and instead as a more restricted chair. It was therefore more likely for the president to be in liaison with the political party in cabinet, precisely at a time when there was a progressive shift towards political formations. Therefore, if the government was Liberal Moderate, the president of parliament was expected to be moderate and if the government was Liberal Progressive, the president of parliament would be sympathetic to that cause. This is apparent, for

⁵⁹ J. F. Fuentes Aragonés, 'La formación de la clase política del liberalismo español. Análisis de los cargos públicos del Trienio Liberal', *Historia Constitucional* 3, (2002), pp. 19-37.

⁶⁰ See articles 11 and 12 of the Reglamento del Congreso de los Diputados, (14 February 1838).

instance, with the example of the election of the president for the legislature of 1845-46. The inner factions of the Liberal Moderates were first divided in their support for each candidate, such that the progressives supported Joaquín Francisco Pacheco, with 42 votes, the more conservative among them supported Juan Bravo Murillo with 27 votes and the doctrinaires supported Francisco de Paula Castro Orozco, with 59 votes. In the second round, Castro was finally elected with 74 votes.⁶¹

It can therefore be observed that the competencies of the president of parliament substantially changed from the 1813 regulations to those of 1838. Not only did political parties view the new stable position as an opportunity to control political debate -indeed, the president of parliament was responsible for setting the agenda to be debated and voted on by the parliament-,⁶² but from 1838 there would be no limitations on the president's involvement in commissions.⁶³ In other words, those changes implied a progressive rupture from the 1812-1813 regulations, under which the president and the secretaries were not allowed to either take part in commissions or in discussions.

Moreover, the 1821 regulation of parliament established its article 30 that when 'the president wants to speak about the issue being discussed', he will leave the presidential chair -occupied in the meantime by the vice-president.⁶⁴ Therefore, from 1821, and especially from 1838 onwards, presidents could not claim to be acting impartiality when intervening in governmental affairs. For instance, Pedro Antonio Acuña, president of parliament during the 1841-42 legislature, was on the commission that discussed the answer to the Opening Speech of Parliament, written by the

⁶¹ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1845-46, pp. 7-8.

⁶² See article 21 of the 'Reglamento del Congreso de los Diputados' (14 February 1838).

⁶³ 'Reglamento del Congreso de los Diputados' (14 February 1838).

⁶⁴ 'Reglamento del gobierno interior de Cortes y su edificio' (Madrid, 1821). See: <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000045389&page=1>

government. He intervened to oppose the state of siege that the government was applying in some provinces.⁶⁵

Yet, the supposed image of subordination that has historically been associated to the president of parliament should be nuanced. First, at that time the role of the president of parliament was in dispute, with conflict between the idealistic independent political figure and the struggle between the political parties' interests. In fact, the changes introduced in the late 1830s and 1840s did not prevent the idea of impartiality from continuing to be the main duty of the president of parliament, although this was put into question as he began to be subjected to political confrontations between parties. Alcalá Galiano again felt 'decorum and even impartiality' were essential features of being a good president of the chamber. Indeed, although it can be discerned that he voted in favour of Riego as president of the chamber in February 1822, he criticised him while he was in the chair:

Riego had served the presidency in such a way that he gave little credit to those who had elected him, and not because he was violent, depending on whether he was feared or blamed by his opponents, but because he was puerile and weak. His main endeavour in the month he presided was to honour himself.⁶⁶

Most incoming presidents mentioned the idea of impartiality in their inauguration speeches, regardless of their political tendency. Vicente Sancho, who was in chair between 1 July to 31 July 1837, said on acceptance of the post that 'I shall try to honour [parliament's trust] by leading discussions impartially'.⁶⁷ Similarly, the Liberal

⁶⁵ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1841-42, p. 609.

⁶⁶ Campos, *Memorias de D. Antonio Alcalá Galiano*.

⁶⁷ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1837-1838, p. 4445.

Moderate Pedro José Pidal, who assumed the post on 27 November 1843, stressed: 'I count on the cooperation of all the deputies, because this is a position of impartiality'.⁶⁸

In fact, the president of parliament was clearly perceived as a guarantor of parliamentary debate and impartiality even in times of Monarchical trust. In another example, when Girona Marquis was appointed president of parliament in January 1847 after defeating the government's candidacy led by Juan Bravo Murillo, he took the position insisting that:

Now elected President of Parliament, I have serious duties to fill in this position, which in my eyes is only a position of impartiality and justice. This chair shall neither be a veiled step for command, nor a fatal instrument of division between us; it shall safeguard the interests of the minority, legally defended in this field. ... I address everyone, I speak with everyone, I count on everyone. Let us be faithful to the queen and to the institutions, and let us credit them with our conduct.⁶⁹

A second issue nuancing the subordination of the role is the parliamentary experience assigned to the chair. The average number of repeat presidents increased significantly in the period between 1838 and 1847, when a new regulation of parliament was approved. Nine different men filled the 13 appointments, so four of them (more than 30 per cent) were repeats. Moreover, five of those men had already been presidents of parliament before 1837 (55 per cent). In other words, candidates were not only valued for their political ideology, but also their previous experience in the post.

⁶⁸ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1843-44, p. 278.

⁶⁹ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1846-1847, p. 267.

Manuel Barrio Ayuso was the first president to be elected following approval of the new regulation of parliament in 1838, establishing the election of the president of the chamber for the whole legislature. He was in chair from 16 February to the end of that legislature on 17 July 1838. When he assumed the post, he stressed:

I thank parliament for deeming me worthy of occupying this chair, after having occupied it the previous month. This causes me to boast that maybe this new honour that has just been bestowed upon me is a reward, albeit a superabundant one, for my conduct with regard to justice and impartiality, which I was perhaps able to observe at that time; and I, gentlemen, can say nothing better in this case other than to offer to parliament the same fair and impartial march.⁷⁰

Thirdly, and finally, presidents of parliament were not simple deputies subjected to the government because they ultimately depended on parliamentary recognition. Governments certainly did depend on the Crown, but this was not the case with presidents of parliament. In fact, their mandate could be shortened if parliament withdrew its trust.⁷¹

These three issues -impartiality, experience and independence- were firmly established during the reign of Isabel II (1833-68), delimited here to the period from the parliamentary regulation of 1838 to that of 1867. The following section examines the last years of that period in detail.

The consolidation of the view of the president of parliament as a stable position rather than a subordinated figure (1847-1867)

⁷⁰ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1837-38, p. 920.

⁷¹ Jerónimo Sánchez-Beato and Morales Payán, *La presidencia de las Cortes*, p. 81.

As has already been explained in the previous sections, the dominant view assigned to the president of the Spanish parliament in the nineteenth century owes much to Juan Ignacio Marcuello's studies, which are directly connected to Isabel II's reign and suggest a figure who was subordinated to the interests of the government. This author defines the election of the president of the chamber as a vote of confidence in the government, whereby it was only the monarch who designated ministers, and they did not have to report to parliament, and acted independently from it. Parliaments had very little occasion to judge the action of governments with their vote, and the election of the president of parliament was one of those, as were budgets and the response to the State Opening Speech.⁷²

However, this idea of a regime of negative confidence corresponds mostly to the Liberal Moderate view associated to the 1845 Constitution, by which parliament was expected to approve of the government and rarely express any explicit opposition. But advanced liberal tendencies opposed this system and preferred the government to be subjected to parliament.⁷³ Therefore, the will of the Liberal Moderates and their legal -and dominant- principles should not be confused with all of the Spanish parliamentary regulations of the 19th century.

What these particulars do actually reveal is the pre-eminence of the parliament over the president of parliament and the obstacles that prevented the Crown from exercising dominance. If parliament was able to reject a governmental candidate, even

⁷² Concerning the State Opening Speech see Díaz Marín, *Política de Estado*; O. Luján, 'The descent of the King to the people's assembly: Monarchy and Liberalism in 19th Century State Opening of Parliament's ceremony', in D. San Narciso, M. Barral and C. Armenteros (ed), *Monarchy and liberalism in Spain: The building of the nation-state, 1780-1931* (London, 2020), pp. 184-201 and Luján, 'Escenificaciones de poder'.

⁷³ Fernández Sarasola, *Poder y libertad*, pp. 513-670.

if he had the acquiescence of the Crown, then it is hard to argue that the president of parliament was subordinated either to the government or to the Crown.

In fact, the president of parliament was not always a loyal deputy of the government's political tendency, but was an outstanding political figure regardless of political tendencies. For instance, Luis Mayans was president of parliament four times between December 1848 and December 1851, during both the governments of the Liberal Moderate Francisco Narváez -of the doctrinaire faction-, and Juan Bravo Murillo -of the conservative faction. In other words, the change of government in January 1851 did not imply that Luis Mayans would not be re-elected in June 1851, when Bravo Murillo introduced his conservative project.

Another example was Francisco Martínez de la Rosa, who was president of parliament seven times between December 1852 and February 1862, as well as other interim periods and his previous presidency in October-November 1821. He was elected in December 1852 in opposition to the conservative candidate Tejada, but he was again elected in March 1853 and November 1853 under the Moderate reactionary governments of Federico Roncali and Luis José Sartorius, then again in May 1857 under the Liberal Moderate doctrinaire government of Narváez and in December 1858 under Leopoldo O'Donnell's Liberal Union -a political party that united progressive Liberal Moderates and moderate Liberal Progressives.

The same happened with Antonio de los Ríos Rosas, member of the Union Liberal, who was president of parliament in times of O'Donnell's second government (1865-66), but had previously been in the same post in November 1863 with the moderate Manuel Pando Fernández de Pinedo as prime minister.

In fact, this tendency of presidents holding the post more than once was even more frequent between 1847 and 1867 than it had been in the previous two decades. In

the later period, there were 23 appointments and nearly half of them (11) were presidents returning to the post. In fact, just two presidents concentrated 50 per cent of appointments (Luis Mayans, four times between December 1848 and December 1851, and Francisco de Paula Martínez de la Rosa, seven times between January 1852 and February 1862).

Therefore, it must be assumed that the president of parliament was not merely a government-derived post. The government certainly had some influence, but the president was not always subordinated to it, but instead was progressively valued as a prominent political figure who had previous experience either of parliamentary affairs or in high political posts. Of the 12 men who held the post during the 20 years from 1847 to 1867, only one had previous experience as president of parliament (Francisco Martínez de la Rosa in October-November 1821), but nine of them (75 per cent) had been ministers before becoming president for the first time. Such was the case of Antonio de los Ríos Rosas, Alejandro Mon, Luis Mayans, Facundo Infante, Alejandro de Castro and Fernando Álvarez. Some of those 12 presidents had even been prime minister: Martínez de la Rosa, Juan Bravo Murillo and Baldomero Espartero. Only Pascual Madoz, Diego López Ballesteros and Martín Belda had not been ministers before, but did after being presidents of parliament. The latter, however, had occupied significant administrative posts before, such as General Director of Public Works and he had been vice-president of parliament before becoming its president.

With this idea of political and parliamentary expertise, Francisco Martínez de la Rosa accepted the chair for the third time in 1853, when representative institutions were under discussion:

A little more than three months ago I found myself placed in this same position by the will of another parliament, and at the moment of receiving such an unexpected honour I understood that it was not a gift made to me, but was public testimony of appreciation that I possessed the faith and constancy with which I have dedicated my life to sustaining along with defence of the institutions that are, at the same time, the strongest support for the Throne and the best guarantee of the rights of the Nation. ... I shall observe the strictest impartiality, which in this position is equivalent to justice; I shall try to keep order as the best guarantee of freedom.⁷⁴

Experience was thus considered an attribute of the president in the nineteenth century Spanish parliamentary system, but so was impartiality. This was a shared perception among deputies regardless of their political tendency. Just two examples. First, the progressive Facundo Infante, who expressed this idea of impartiality assigned to the president of parliament when he accepted the chair in January 1855: 'I have no more to say, gentlemen, other than I shall use the most complete impartiality in this chair. For me, from this place, there are no more than Deputies of the nation and I shall be the president of parliament, not the president of one faction or another'.⁷⁵ Second, Juan Bravo Murillo who claimed the same when accepting the post in January 1858:

This honourable distinction imposes serious and difficult duties upon me. These duties are to lead discussions in the spirit of the strictest impartiality, to lead discussions in such a way that, by conciliating the freedom that the representatives of the nation must have to issue their broad and all-embracing

⁷⁴ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1853, pp. 277-278.

⁷⁵ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1854-56, p. 1612.

opinions, the respect and decorum that this same body deserves is achieved ... The stability of institutions, the splendour of the throne and the prestige of national representation, which are the ends to which we all undoubtedly aspire ... shall be achieved without there being any divergence of opinions.⁷⁶

However, as already stated earlier, one thing was the discourse, which was repeated as routine, and another was the facts. Indeed, as seen before, the president of parliament could intervene in discussions from the 1821 regulation of parliament onwards and these circumstances were maintained in the regulations of 1838, 1847 and 1867. And, of course, presidents could not claim to be impartial when speaking in favour of the response to the State Opening speech, pronounced by the queen and written by the government. Even Juan Bravo Murillo, in 1858, sustained the discourse of the Liberal Moderate Government from the tribune of parliament and refused to answer those deputies who asked him to say whether he and Istúriz's new government were keen to recover the political projects of Bravo Murillo's government of 1852.⁷⁷

This was a consequence of the struggle between party interests and the president's independence, a struggle that I would say was not resolved, as both realities co-existed and shaped the institution.

Conclusions

This paper has analysed the political figure of the president of the Spanish parliament during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century (1810-1867). Traditionally viewed as a figure subjected to governments, it has to some extent challenged this general

⁷⁶ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1858, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes del Congreso de los Diputados: Legislatura de 1858, pp. 128-138.

perception by considering the views and functions assigned to the post and concluding that although the institution was subjected to the struggles of political parties, independence, impartiality and political and parliamentary experience stood out as the main values ascribed to this political responsibility.

Two main systems governing the presidency of parliament have been described. The first is derived from the 1812 constitutional rule and is associated to the regulations of parliament of 1810, 1813 and, to a lesser extent, 1821, whereby the president of parliament was a rotatory chair that was renewed monthly and thus seen as a transversal and independent post. However, this system was challenged when King Ferdinand VII returned to Spain and the struggles between political tendencies intensified during the Liberal Triennium (1820-23). It was definitively cast aside by the 1837 Constitution and the 1838 regulation of parliament, after which the conception of the president of parliament changed. It was no longer a rotating post, but a stable one, with no limitations on re-election and with the president no longer prevented from becoming involved in commissions and discussions. The post thus became less about transversality and parity, and was instead more subjected to the political parties' struggles. But the idea of impartiality being the main duty of the president of parliament persisted. Moreover, parliamentary experience was valued as a key factor for being elected to the post, for between 1838 and 1867 more than half of the deputies had already been presidents before.

In conclusion, the Spanish parliamentary system of the 19th century cannot be discarded so easily as a place for deliberation and representation. Presidents of parliament came across as mediators of different political points of view. Political parties' struggles and governments certainly did seek to control presidents for their political benefit, but 19th century Spanish presidents of parliament should not simply be

viewed in terms of this subordination, but rather as being shaped as a result of this partial political struggle and the projected desire for impartiality.