



## Parliament and citizenship in Spain: Twenty-five years of a mismatch?

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# Parliament and Citizenship in Spain: Twenty-Five Years of a Mismatch?

PABLO OÑATE

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRATIC LIFE IN SPAIN: AN HISTORIC RECORD

On 15 June 2002, Spain celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first free elections representing the longest democratic period of Spanish political history. These elections provided Spanish citizens with the opportunity to choose their political candidates, thus putting an end to the former authoritarian regime. The democratic political system is today fully consolidated and has managed adequately to channel social interests and conflicts, catering for varied political opinions and diverse regional differences, which is attested by the fact that three major political options have succeeded each other in government and parliament.

It is possible to state that the political system is now fully institutionalised and has more than amply complied with its role of solving and managing conflicts, contributing to the peaceful co-existence of Spanish citizens.<sup>1</sup> The institutional instruments afforded by the Spanish Constitution of 1978 have created an efficient framework that even includes mechanisms for its own reform, if it becomes necessary. Therefore, this is a good time to analyse and take stock of the role played in this process by the Spanish Parliament – Las Cortes Generales (divided into the Congreso de los Diputados, the Lower House and the Senado, the Upper House), as the key institution of the political system and the mainstay of the transition to democracy, consolidation and institutionalisation processes. This analysis is thus carried out considering the feelings, attitudes and opinions generated by its role while acknowledging the criticism directed at this institution in recent decades.

Leaving aside the theories of the crisis or the decline of parliaments and the *restrictive paradigm*<sup>2</sup> when studying this institution, it should be considered a multi-functional and versatile institution that has faced deep changes with great stability and has managed to adapt itself to these in a very flexible manner.<sup>3</sup> It does not come as a surprise that the adaptability

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shown by parliaments has been described as an '*all-purpose flexibility*'<sup>4</sup> and that in spite of certain changes in their functions and the loss of their traditional monopoly over some of them, it still remains the sole institution vested with formal and popular legitimacy to carry out the functions assigned to it, wherefore it becomes an essential institution for modern political systems.<sup>5</sup> This is precisely the stance adopted in order to carry out our analysis.

Considering the importance of subjective factors attached to the generation of support for this institution, in other words, how citizens perceive the institution, its members and their activity,<sup>6</sup> we shall focus on an analysis of the characteristics that best describe MPs (a profile of parliamentarians), and on the attitudes and opinions of the citizens with regard to the institution and its members (the parliamentarians). Considering that under the Spanish constitutional system the role of the Congreso de los Diputados outweighs that played by the Senado, most of our discussion will refer solely to the former, and it is not necessary to examine its organisation or operation here, as these matters have already been dealt with in the contribution of Jordi Capo. In any event, most of what will be said here about the Congreso de los Diputados is applicable equally to the Senado.

The 25 years in which a democratic parliament has been in force in Spain may be broken down for analytical purposes into three periods clearly delimited by the results of the polls and the distribution of the seats in parliament.<sup>7</sup> The first period commenced in the wake of the first democratic polls held in 1977, which opened the Constituent legislature, up to the exceptional elections of 1982. In 1977 a moderate right-wing party (Unión de Centro Democrático, UCD) held the barest majority thus requiring the support of other small parties to approve acts and pass bills through parliament. The Spanish Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) led the opposition, holding almost the same number of seats as the UCD, so that the political arena was in the hands of small parties which acted as arbitrators. The 1979 elections, which opened the First legislature, generated very similar results, although they were not so highly competitive. The Spanish Parliament played a leading role in transforming an autocratic regime into a democratic system. It was here that the institutional design of the new democratic system was conceived and propped up, while the representative institution provided a legitimate framework for the rest of the political system. This brought parliament into the limelight and its leading role is comparable to that observed in other parliaments involved in a similar process of transition to democracy.<sup>8</sup> The main parliamentary activity at that time – albeit not the only one – was the draft of the constitutional text on a consensual basis, with the participation of almost all political groups in a joint effort to create a document where nobody would feel excluded and valid for every form of government.<sup>9</sup> In view of the special

circumstances of the transitional period, the Spanish Parliament and in particular, the Congreso de los Diputados became the main and in fact almost the only forum for political debate, agreement and decision, as it was the only 'place' in which the leading politicians of the party were present and met, as no other bodies or institutions had been created at that time. Due to all the above, the Spanish Parliament acquired a leading role, acting as a provider of support, vitality, presence and legitimacy which was irradiated to the rest of the new political system<sup>10</sup> which it would hardly enjoy again, due to the institutional design adopted.<sup>11</sup>

The second period is framed between the elections of 1982, which opened the Second legislature, and 1993. Parliamentary action at that time is characterised as being in a dormant or lethargic state arising from the absolute majority of seats obtained by the Socialist Party (PSOE) at the elections held in 1982, 1986 (Third legislature) and 1989 (Fourth legislature), as its parliamentary group imposed such a majority in all voting sessions of the House, whereby it became subject to the decisions adopted by the government. The opposition was in the midst of an internal leadership crisis that prevented it from exercising effective control in order to provide a clear alternative government. The House became a body charged primarily with the ratification and *ex post* legitimacy of what had already been decided by the executive, and at the same time new instances and representative forums appeared for the representation of social interests that did not exist during the transition to democracy. As a consequence of all this, the Spanish Parliament stepped down from its leading role during the transition period and entered into a quiescent parliamentary activity. Institutional normality brought about a paralysis of the dynamism that it had experienced some time before.

The third period is inaugurated by the general elections of 1993 (which opened the Fifth legislature) leading to a series of parliamentary agreements between the party in power and regional forces which provided the necessary support for the passage of bills. At the same time, the main opposition party, which had changed its name to Partido Popular (PP) – Alianza Popular before 1989 – had closed the door on its internal conflicts and had become a clear alternative to the existing government, with a more ambitious agenda and developing an intense effort of opposition and control of the government in parliament. The parliamentary arena was waking from its slumber of the 1980s, and was experiencing a new dynamism which was not interrupted in spite of the PP winning the 1996 election, opening the Sixth legislature (it also required the support of small regional parties to secure approval of its projects) and in spite of the ample majority of parliamentary seats obtained in the election of 2000 (which opened the Seventh legislature); the PP preferred to continue availing itself of the support of small regional parties during the voting sessions although in terms of numbers it was not strictly necessary.

This situation has turned the parliament into a sounding board that presents certain images to society, whereby this institution has regained some of its former activity and presence which became very diffused during the previous decade.<sup>12</sup>

In the following we shall attempt to take into account this division into three periods (intense activity and presence at the beginning, inactivity, and then an awakening of parliamentary action, respectively), although our analysis suffers from the lack of available data during the first period: the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Spanish Institute of Sociological Research, CIS) produced its first surveys only from 1982 onwards. Some data exist for the earlier period, but there are no series that would allow for comparison back to that moment. Firstly, we offer a social and political profile of MPs of the Congreso de los Diputados in order to show evidence of the changes and continuity detected in these 25 years of parliamentary activity, referring to the personal circumstances of those involved (the MPs), and consequently of the House. In the second section we shall discuss the opinions and attitudes of the MPs towards the institution, their activity, their ties with their political party and with other members of the House and with citizens. This will provide us with the necessary information to know how MPs feel about the work they carry out and their place of work. Finally, the last section deals with opinions and attitudes of the electorate towards the parliamentary institution, the work carried out there, its activities and players, and the importance they attach to this assembly for the functioning of the democratic system, including their feelings about how parliamentarians represent the interests of the citizens, and so on. All the above allows us to provide an X-ray of the attitudes generated by the institution, in order to attempt a diagnosis which is provided in our conclusions of what the key players feel and experience with respect to the relations set up in these last 25 years of parliamentary activity.

#### **THE PROFILE OF SPANISH MPs**

In these 25 years of parliamentary activity the Congreso de los Diputados has experienced a much higher rate of renewal of MPs than is commonly found in other political systems; almost half the members elected in each legislature are new to the House. This renewal ratio varies from one parliamentary group to another depending on their success at the polls and the internal struggles suffered by each party.<sup>13</sup> This high renewal ratio also affects – and to a greater extent, as it applies to 68 per cent of its members – the composition of the different *Comisiones Permanentes* (Standing Committees) of the House which, at least in theory, are specialised bodies charged with discussing technical issues.<sup>14</sup> In order to explain this high renewal ratio and why such appointment is not cherished, several factors have been identified, among

which we would point out the stringent limitations to holding another office, poor remuneration, the reduced presence of ordinary MPs considering the hierarchical structure of the House and the difficulty of advancing in a political career from that of a backbench MP.<sup>15</sup>

This lack of continuity among Spanish MPs hinders their professionalisation and has reinforced the sway of strong parliamentary groups (which are a reflection of the distribution of political parties in the House). Since the first elections of 1977, the legal regulations and the Rules of the House have chosen to boost the presence of those parliamentary groups in lieu of fostering the capacity of independent action of the MPs. The objective sought in order to facilitate transition to democracy was a strengthening of political parties in all institutional areas considering the initial starting point of the party organisations, reducing partisanship and weak loyalties, diminished presence and social integration. Parliamentary groups became effectively the players of parliamentary life, and the field of action of individual MPs was virtually non-existent if he or she did not receive support from his/her political party. The high renewal rate of the House reinforced this trend.

This dependency, which is also commonly found in other parliaments akin to the Spanish political environment, is not seen as something negative by most citizens or by the MPs themselves. According to surveys carried out by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas only 48 per cent of citizens consider that MPs should follow their own judgement rather than the guidelines of the party if these proved to be different. In the case of MPs, only four per cent of them consider that their judgement should always prevail, whereas 67 per cent replied that it depends on the nature of the issue, and only 30 per cent stated that the guidelines set by the party should always be final.<sup>16</sup>

The presence of women occupying seats in the Congreso de los Diputados has increased at the same rate as in most other European parliaments. During the First legislature the presence of women MPs in parliament was negligible, both in terms of numbers (they represented little more than five per cent of 350 seats) and also in parliamentary proceedings. Their presence started to increase, albeit slowly, after the Third legislature, although a leap forward would only take place during the Fourth legislature (commencing in 1989) during which 15 per cent of MPs at the Congreso de los Diputados were women. It was at that time that the inclusion of women in the electoral lists of political parties (occupying senior positions in general) had become an issue<sup>17</sup> which was taken into account by all political parties to avoid a negative reception from citizens. In the 1990s, such growth consolidated and women's presence grew at a similar rate to that registered on average in other parliaments in other European countries, above that achieved by France, the United Kingdom or Belgium but still considerably below the ratios for Scandinavian countries.<sup>18</sup> Following the March 2000 elections, 29.7 per cent

of seats are now occupied by women. And, for the first time in Spanish history, the speakers of both Houses (Congreso de los Diputados and Senado) are women, who also preside over six of the 19 committees of the Lower House.<sup>19</sup>

The percentage of women varies from one parliamentary group to another: initially the highest percentage of women MPs was found in Isquierda Unida (Spanish left-wing party – during the Sixth legislature, which commenced in 1996, they achieved a 33.3 per cent ratio). Of the two leading parties, the Socialist Party has had the highest ratios of women MPs in the last legislatures (27.7 per cent during the Sixth legislature, and 38.4 per cent in the Seventh one, which commenced in 2000), ahead of the Popular Party, which only in this current legislature has registered a ratio of women MPs in excess of 25 per cent among its ranks (26.8 per cent). This trend clearly indicates that the presence of women in the House and in other political institutions is growing, and also in terms of occupying increasingly high-profile positions.

The average age of MPs has remained quite stable, close to 45 years. By age groups, it may be seen that younger MPs (under 40) have gradually lost ground since the founding elections held in 1977; at that time almost 40 per cent of MPs were under 40 whereas at present they hardly account for 20 per cent of its members. The number of MPs with an age range of 40 to 59 has grown over this period from 50 per cent to 73 per cent of total MPs. Among senior age groups, upward and downward trends may be seen when examining the 60 to 69 group, and in the age group of 70 and over, the trend is clearly a downward one, as shown in Table 1.

Considering the various parliamentary groups, differences may be detected in the age of their respective MPs arising chiefly from the electoral results of their party, whether it has obtained the majority of votes (in which case some MPs are appointed to hold office in the government) and also if the party has experienced any internal struggles.

TABLE 1  
AGE OF SPANISH MPs BY LEGISLATURE (%)

Constituent 1977	First 1979	Second 1982	Third 1986	Fourth 1989	Fifth 1993	Sixth 1996	Seventh 2000
<30	6.2	4.3	2.4	3.0	0.6	0.3	1.4
30/39	33.5	40.4	34.9	29.0	26.3	17.6	19.0
40/49	31.5	34.4	32.1	42.9	47.7	48.9	45.1
50/59	18.6	13.2	22.6	21.0	22.3	27.8	27.0
60/69	8.5	5.4	6.7	3.0	2.3	5.1	7.5
>70	1.7	2.3	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.3	0.0

Source: For 1977–96, P. Gangas, ‘Los diputados españoles: 1977–1996’, p.275. For 2000, Congreso de los Diputados, [www.congreso.es](http://www.congreso.es). The figures represent a percentage considering a total of 350 MPs that make up the *Congreso de los Diputados*.

Spanish MPs are highly qualified: in all legislatures approximately 75 per cent of them have had a higher education degree, a large number of them are law graduates, followed at a considerable distance by holders of degrees in economy, arts and medicine. But if we consider their professions prior to becoming MPs we find that certain variations have ensued during the eight legislatures analysed here. The number of civil servants has progressively increased and at present accounts for half the MPs of the House. Without any doubt, the fact that they may return to their previous office and their experience in the administration are the two factors that explain why so many civil servants become MPs. On the other hand, the number of technicians, attorneys, manual workers, farmers and businessmen in the House has gradually diminished. It seems logical that having to forsake their line of business for a four-year period is not exactly an incentive to become an MP.<sup>20</sup>

Some Spanish MPs had previous political representative experience in regional parliaments or local councils, although considerably less than their European colleagues. In the present legislature, 29 per cent of MPs had previously held office in local councils, whereas only 22 per cent had gained the same experience in regional parliaments.<sup>21</sup> The number of those who move from local councils or regional parliaments to state parliament has increased in the last 25 years: during the First legislature very few of them had previously been involved in local or regional politics.<sup>22</sup> These figures are greatly reduced if we compare them to those who held prior office on a sub-state representative level in parliaments of other countries, although the fact that this figure is steadily increasing could be a sign that this trend will continue in the future as parliamentary life spreads over a larger number of legislatures.

In summary, the Congreso de los Diputados has experienced a considerable renewal rate from one legislature to another, considering the House as a whole but also with regard to the members or chairs of the different committees. This high renewal rate has been consistent throughout the Spanish democratic period. The average age of Spanish MPs has not varied considerably over these 25 years (46 years), even if there are fewer young representatives. There has been, however, an increase in women holding seats in the House (especially since 1989), as well as of MPs with prior experience in the local or regional representative bodies. It could be said that the Spanish representative profile is getting closer to that of other European long-institutionalised parliaments.

#### THE OPINIONS OF MPs

According to article 66 of the Spanish Constitution, the parliament is vested with the functions of representing the Spanish people, drafting and passing laws, controlling executive action and approving the national budget. Only

42 per cent of MPs consider that they represent all the Spanish population, while 28 per cent of them stated that they represented the voters of their constituency, 17 per cent the voters of their party and nine per cent the political party to which they belong. However, in view of the data recorded in Table 2, when they have to take a decision it seems that they not only take into account the opinion of the citizens they claim to represent.<sup>23</sup>

The opinion of party leaders is taken into account almost to the same degree as that of the voters of their constituency, and to a greater extent than public opinion in general, voters of the party or its affiliates. This is in line with their opinion that they chiefly represent the majority of citizens (either of the country or of their constituency), while observing at the same time party discipline when voting (most MPs consider that such discipline could be relaxed on certain occasions depending on the nature of the issue). However, as we shall see, although MPs are convinced that they represent the interests of citizens, their opinion about dealing with this topic is not so emphatic.

Spanish MPs say they are acquainted with the issues that relate to the citizens of their constituency and have frequent contact with them; 86 per cent of them stated that citizens, their party affiliates and leaders contact them very often or quite often, as well as other MPs (in all cases more than 80 per cent) and citizens' associations (60 per cent). On the other hand, they have little or no contact with religious groups (83 per cent), professional associations, Secretaries of State or business associations (in all cases above 60 per cent have no contact). According to their statements, they have a plural knowledge of general problems and keep abreast of issues that affect their constituency.

TABLE 2  
GROUPS WHOSE OPINION WEIGHS ON THE DECISIONS OF MPs (%)

	A lot or considerably	Little or nothing	No reply
Voters of their constituency	90.5	2.2	7.4
Party leaders	82.4	7.2	10.5
Public opinion in general	75.2	15.6	9.2
Party affiliates	63.7	22.6	13.6
Media	36.6	50.9	12.8
Other MPs of the party	42.4	41.3	16.4
Lobbies	23.0	62.9	14.0
Voters of their party	79.2	10.6	10.2
Government	39.7	46.4	13.8

Source: Study 2,250, conducted in 1997, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

As we shall see in the next section, the opinions of citizens in this respect hardly match those provided by their representatives. To put this matter into focus, we simply note that only five per cent of citizens polled stated that they had contacted an MP of their constituency when facing a problem that affected them personally, or their town or city. Additionally, 86 per cent of those who have never contacted an MP declared that they would not even think of doing so. It seems that Spanish citizens do not feel very close to their parliamentary representatives.

Going back to the importance attached by MPs to the different activities carried out in the course of their parliamentary work, we find that the representative function (defending the interests of their constituency) comes first, followed closely by the task of drafting laws (Table 3). It should be emphasised that they consider the defence of party interests slightly more important than preparing the National Budget, the measure that records the state's income and expenditure and the allocation of resources.

As is to be expected, there are differences between MPs belonging to the leading parliamentary group (Grupo Popular, which supports the government) and MPs from the main parliamentary group of the opposition (Grupo Socialista); however, most of them consider – to much the same extent – that their main task is to defend the interests of their constituency, and MPs from the party in power believe that they represent the country to a much greater extent than those in the opposition (with percentages of 72.9 and 56.5 respectively). Still more striking is the high percentage registered for activities involving the passage of bills among MPs of the opposition (they attach only 4.5 per cent less importance than the majority group) considering that the Spanish parliamentary system of adversary politics implies that their legislative initiatives (whether as motions or amendments) are hardly ever seconded. Obviously, one of the main roles of the opposition is to study the bills and motions

TABLE 3  
WEIGHT ATTACHED TO THE DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES  
OF PARLIAMENTARY WORK (%)

	A lot or considerably	Little or nothing	No reply
Represent the country	60.7	29.2	10.1
Draft laws	87.1	10.1	2.7
Solve the country's problems	89.0	7.4	3.6
Control Executive action	72.1	24.4	3.5
Defend the interests of my party	66.8	28.1	5.1
Draft the Budget	66.0	28.3	5.6
Represent the interests of my constituency	90.1	6.2	3.8

Source: Study 2,250, conducted in 1997, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

proposed by the leading parliamentary group in order to present amendments and prepare the debates. It is very much the same in the case of the budget (which is considered a more important activity by opposition MPs than by those of the leading party). In this sense, the parliament is increasingly being used as a sounding board to reach the general public and ensure visibility. As is to be expected, controlling executive action is perceived as far more relevant among opposition MPs (twice as much) than among MPs belonging to the leading group.

This information on the importance attached to certain activities by MPs may be matched against the degree of satisfaction they derive from these. Table 4 provides an overview of the different activities or issues involving parliamentary duties of MPs,<sup>24</sup> and the data obtained are certainly striking if compared to what has been recorded above: the activity which is perceived as most appealing to MPs is that related to the drafting and passage of bills which occupied the third position in the ranking of the importance given to activities. To uphold interests and solve particular problems within their constituency occupies tenth place as to degree of satisfaction and appeal, although it was considered the most important of their duties. Controlling executive action occupied fourth position in importance, whereas in the list of the most satisfactory activities it merits a second-to-last entry. On the other hand, for most Spanish MPs the least appealing activity by far is meetings of committees or of the plenary, notwithstanding the fact that they devote almost 40 per cent of their time to this.

In spite of these contradictions between the degree of importance attached to each activity and the level of satisfaction obtained, most Spanish MPs admitted that they were very satisfied with their work; three-quarters of them stated that they were very satisfied (11.6 per cent), or satisfied

TABLE 4  
THE MOST APPEALING AND SATISFACTORY ACTIVITY FOR MPs IN THE COURSE  
OF THEIR PARLIAMENTARY DUTIES (%)

Legislative function, drafting laws	23.6
Contact with social sectors	17.8
Solving problems in general	14.3
Parliamentary debates	11.0
Defend interests and solve problems of their region	6.5
Committee work	4.2
Political debates, in general	3.4
Controlling executive action	2.6
Social influence and closeness to decision power	2.4
Others	4.9
No reply	9.3

Source: Study 2,250, conducted in 1997, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

(65.6 per cent) in their role as MPs, whereas only 21.7 per cent of them declared that they were unsatisfied with their work and there were no ‘very unsatisfactory’ replies. However, oddly enough, the MPs from the leading parliamentary group are least satisfied with their work (providing the lowest number of ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ replies – eight percentage points below that scored by the opposition) and their replies were more likely than those of other MPs to register ‘very unsatisfied’ or ‘unsatisfied’ (approximately 15 percentage points more). On the other hand, those whose day-to-day activity is not backed by the majority of the House feel more satisfied with their work.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, this general degree of satisfaction goes hand in hand with a very stringent system of disqualifying circumstances to holding office that makes the post of MP a full-time job. MPs may not pursue extra-parliamentary activities and most of them consider that they do not have a higher income as MPs than they did before coming to office. Furthermore, when a proposal for the elimination of this system of disqualifying circumstances is put to them, 54.2 per cent of MPs were against such a proposal and only 41.3 per cent stated that a more flexible system would be preferable. On the other hand, the main complaint of Spanish MPs regarding their work is the lack of human resources, which ranks far above other concerns such as lack of economic or material resources, lack of information or advisory services, bureaucracy, administrative proceedings or the operation of the internal services in the House. In light of all the above there is no doubt that MPs are satisfied with their work, which makes the high renewal ratio from one legislature to another all the more surprising.

#### PUBLIC OPINION AND THE CONGRESO DE LOS DIPUTADOS

From the very beginning of the current democratic period, most Spanish citizens (85 per cent on an on-going basis) have considered that a democratic system is preferable to any other system of government. These democratic convictions lead us to believe that this parliamentary institution – where political representatives chosen by citizens take their seats and which, in the case of the Spanish parliamentary system, appoints the members of the main constitutional bodies – should receive considerable attention and sympathy from those very citizens. However, judging from the results of surveys,<sup>26</sup> Spanish citizens to a considerable extent are not familiar with the parliamentary institution, its functions, its players – the MPs – and the work carried out by them. The data supporting this statement have remained stable since 1982.

The Congreso de los Diputados is the institution that selects the majority of officers for the main constitutional bodies. Therefore it is not surprising that a great majority (more than 78 per cent) of citizens consider that parliament is

very or quite important for the functioning of democracy,<sup>27</sup> whereas only ten per cent consider that it is hardly or not at all important; likewise, 75 per cent of those polled consider that parliament is a necessary institution and only seven per cent stated that it was unnecessary.<sup>28</sup> In a similar vein, there are many more (twice as many) citizens who consider that the decisions adopted by the Congreso de los Diputados have a great or considerable impact on them (62 per cent) than those who seem to think it hardly affects them or not at all (32 per cent).<sup>29</sup> All the data summarised here show that this institution receives a considerable degree of *diffuse support* from Spanish citizens,<sup>30</sup> support which has hardly undergone any significant variation over time in spite of the different political parties in power or changes in parliamentary majority. As has been mentioned elsewhere, we therefore have a diffuse support of a structural nature.<sup>31</sup>

But the position changes if we consider the opinions relating to the degree of *specific support* which citizens attach to the parliamentary institution.<sup>32</sup> The first remarkable issue is that there is widespread ignorance as to the functions vested in this institution, or of the name of the Speaker of the House (in spite of being the third most important political officer of the country). Less than 40 per cent of people surveyed, regardless of the party they voted for, were able to provide the name of the speaker of the Congreso de los Diputados (who is also the speaker of parliament). This percentage plummets if we take into account the number of citizens who are able to remember the name of the candidate that headed the list of the political party they voted for, regardless of whether he/she was finally elected or not (let alone the results when the question referred to other electoral candidates occupying lower positions in the blocked and closed list when running for elections).

A similar attitude may be inferred from the degree of interest shown by Spanish citizens with regard to parliamentary activity: 60 per cent stated that they were not at all or hardly interested in parliamentary debates and only 30 to 45 per cent declared that they were greatly or somewhat interested. A significant increase is noticeable over recent years (since 1996) in the proportion who claim to be interested (a ten per cent increase approximately) which coincides with Partido Popular winning the elections and the parliamentary agreements with three other parties during the period of revitalisation of the House which was mentioned at the beginning of this article. However, there are still more citizens who have little or no interest in the work carried out by their MPs than those who wish to be informed of their activities. Furthermore, this high ratio of disinterest remains constant (hardly varying more than four per cent) regardless of whether the person polled had voted for the majority party of the House or the first opposition party. In any case, parliamentary activity consistently merits less attention than that carried out by the local council, the national or the regional government. In spite of the

fact that most senior officers of the country are appointed by the House, that the National Budget is approved by the House and it exercises a direct or indirect control over all political institutions (in political and economic terms), most Spanish citizens consider that as an institution it has a diminished power, rated below that held by the national government, banks, major companies, multinationals, political parties and the judiciary.

This lack of interest and under-rating of parliamentary debate is in line with the opinion held by most citizens as to the importance of the issues discussed in the House: less than half of those surveyed (between 31 to 50 per cent, depending on the political situation at the time) consider that the main issues of the country are discussed in parliament, while 32 to 49 per cent of those polled consider that the House pays too much attention to unimportant matters. The changes in these figures do not seem to correlate with any specific trends, significant circumstances or to a division in political periods. Only 51 per cent of citizens consider that the debates held in the House have a major or considerable impact on them, whereas 41 per cent of them consider that the debates in which their MPs are involved have little or no effect on them. There are as many citizens who consider that such discussions do not affect them at all as those who consider that they have a considerable impact on them (14 and 13 per cent respectively).

Citizens do not feel that their interests are either particularly represented or defended by MPs: 60 per cent of citizens consider that MPs do not defend their interests at all or hardly (15 per cent think that their interests are not represented at all). Only 27 per cent think that MPs defend them to a considerable or sufficient extent and a mere 2.6 per cent feel that their interests are effectively represented. These global figures, which remain stable over time, are, however, subject to variation when considering if the person questioned voted for the party which held the majority of seats in the House at that time, with differences between replies of approximately 20 percentage points. Those who consider that their interests are highly or sufficiently represented by their MPs have never exceeded 50 per cent, not even among those that voted for the leading party from time to time (and within the group of those who voted for the majority party, only 40 per cent claimed that their MPs represented to a great extent, or sufficiently, the interests of their electorate).

On examination of the data obtained when the citizens are polled about what they consider to be the main concern of their elected representatives, the results are even more eloquent. As shown in Table 5, citizens consider that MPs are more concerned (twice as concerned) about their own interests or those of their party than those of the electorate or of Spain. There seems to be a wide consensus among citizens that MPs are not primarily concerned with the general good or the interests of those that voted for them, which

TABLE 5  
AREAS OF CONCERN OF SPANISH MPs ACCORDING  
TO CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS (%)

	A lot	Considerably	Hardly	None
Their own interests	37.2	42.6	9.0	1.3
The interests of their party	31.7	52.3	6.9	0.8
The interests of their voters	5.0	30.6	44.9	10.5
The interests of Spain	4.7	36.3	38.0	10.7

*Source:* Study 2,309 conducted in December 1998, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (N/sample size = 4,970).

contrasts with the results obtained in the former section when we analysed the main concerns stated by MPs in the course of their parliamentary work.

In view of these figures, it may be relevant to examine how Spanish citizens grade the extent to which MPs take into account the opinions of different groups when they have to adopt a political decision in the course of their parliamentary work. Considering the data collected in Table 6, it follows that citizens do not consider that there is much responsiveness from their parliamentary representatives. Citizens feel that neither their interests nor their opinion is taken very much into account by MPs, who are much more concerned with their own interests and opinions.

In light of the above data, it may be advanced that Spanish citizens are not very satisfied with the political institution that allegedly represents their interests and national sovereignty: they are hardly aware of its functions, players, show little interest as to its activity (much less than in the case of other institutions), in their opinion it does not hold much power, and the debates conducted in the House are hardly relevant and have little impact

TABLE 6  
OPINIONS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY MPs WHEN ADOPTING THEIR DECISIONS,  
ACCORDING TO CITIZENS' OPINION (%)

	A lot	Considerably	Hardly	None
The electorate of their constituency	3.5	21.6	42.2	13.9
Public opinion in general	4.2	26.7	40.8	12.6
Voters of their party	6.5	36.3	30.8	9.1
Lobbies	8.5	34.5	25.2	7.8
Party affiliates	7.4	39.8	29.3	5.9
Media	10.2	38.9	25.3	7.2
Party leaders	23.8	46.0	12.0	2.7

*Source:* Study 2,240 conducted in April 1997, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. The question is only posed to those persons who stated that they followed parliamentarian activity with great or considerable interest (N = 654).

TABLE 7  
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS (%)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Very satisfied	2	2	1	2	2	1	4
Satisfied	34	41	30	47	42	28	54
Very satisfied + Satisfied	36	43	31	49	44	29	58
Dissatisfied	33	33	47	29	37	44	24
Very dissatisfied	8	9	10	5	5	9	3
Dissatisfied + Very dissatisfied	41	42	57	34	42	53	27

*Source:* Data from Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Studies Nos 2,042, 2,076, 2,124, 2,201, 2,229, 2,240 and 2,286. The figure (N) refers generally to 2,500 cases except 1998 which was 5,000. The 1997 data refers only to the *Congreso de los Diputados*.

on them. They also consider that their interests are not the main concern of their MPs and that their opinion as citizens and voters is hardly taken into account in the parliamentary decision-making process.

The result of the evaluation of Spanish citizens as to the work carried out by the parliamentary institution is far from positive. In fact it ranks behind the work of their local council or the regional government, that of the national government and their respective regional parliament. Only 27 per cent of the citizens consider that the work carried out at the national parliament is positive, while 42 per cent of them rated it as average and 14 per cent considered it negative.<sup>33</sup> The degree of satisfaction over the functioning of parliament is low, as may be gathered from Table 7. Only in 1998 did half the citizens polled declare themselves satisfied with its functioning. But the previous surveys show a higher proportion of Spanish citizens dissatisfied with how parliament works. The only exceptions to this are the 1995 and 1998 data, but there are no specific circumstances which may explain these exceptions.

#### CONCLUSIONS – PARLIAMENT AND CITIZENSHIP: 25 YEARS OF MISMATCH?

All the foregoing data lead to the conclusion that there is a mismatch between the Spanish Congreso de los Diputados and Spanish citizens. Spaniards have a very different perception from MPs about parliament and its actors' work. Spanish citizens do not show any real interest in what their representatives do or in who they are; they do not feel very satisfied with the effective running of their parliament, or with the way in which MPs perform their duties, or with how the general interest (their interests as citizens) is represented in this institution, or the extent to which their opinions are taken into account when making decisions. The figures verify that many of these

opinions persist over time and are widespread: they remain basically unchanged regardless of changes in the current political situation, of the party voted for by the citizens or the majority party. There are hardly any significant changes to these negative perceptions of the institution that to a great extent connects them with the state. The differences over time in the parliament's composition, its functioning, dynamics and internal activities have therefore had no effect on citizens' perceptions, which remained stable during the 1980s and 1990s.

On the other hand, it can be observed that the opinions of citizens hardly match those put forward by MPs on the same issues. Their way of perceiving the development of parliamentary work and their representative function is altogether different, depending on whether the persons surveyed are citizens or MPs. The responsiveness level of the former runs counter to the perception of the latter.

Notwithstanding these views on the running of parliament, the activity of MPs does not seem to be a major worry for Spanish citizens, judging from the data examined this does not affect the level of diffuse support for the institution and the political system as a whole. A token of this high level of diffuse support is the stability of electoral turnout in the different elections held since 1977. This high and stable turnout 'is generally considered to be an eloquent indicator of a healthy democracy which reflects the trust placed on the political system'.<sup>34</sup> Besides this, the percentage of citizens who think parliament is really important for democracy is quite high and stable.

It is now some years since Norton stressed the importance of analysing parliamentary institutions within the context and political culture that surrounds the institution.<sup>35</sup> Those who have studied the political culture of Spanish citizens generally agree that it runs on the lines of apathy, lack of interest, a feeling of subjective inefficacy, democratic cynicism, and is unattached to the political system, its institutions and authorities. Citizens are not committed politically speaking (at least in the institutional arena) but they do not reject the system: they still consider that a democratic system is the only valid manner of organising political co-existence, the electoral turnout is still quite large, and they still consider that parliament is a key institution acting as the cornerstone for the democratic system. The Spanish democratic system, its stability and legitimacy do not seem to be endangered.

These attitudes are not only found among Spanish citizens. They have been detected in a considerable number of Western political systems in which the principles and institutions of the democratic system enjoy a solid support from citizens who are becoming increasingly more sophisticated and are highly critical of its running and day-to-day results.<sup>36</sup> In these systems 'a clear evidence of a widespread eroded support to politicians and the functioning of democratic institutions ... is detected. The lack of

confidence in the responsiveness of authorities has been relayed to them and has spread to the institutions themselves'.<sup>37</sup> A general decline in the trust placed on political institutions of representative democracy is noticeable, and this obviously also affects the parliament, but the Spanish Congreso de los Diputados is the one parliament that has registered the lowest decline in confidence placed in it (merely a percentage point in five years) of the different parliaments considered (the decline on average for the period considered has been 12 percentage points).<sup>38</sup>

When talking about the mismatch between the Spanish Parliament and its MPs on one side, and its citizens on the other, we are, to a large extent, identifying 'unsatisfied democrats' unhappy with the operation, efficacy or performance of parliament, but who support democracy and the democratic political system as the only system of government: more sophisticated, participative and critical citizens who at the same time – and perhaps due to these traits – are unsatisfied with the operation of the main institutions of representative democracy. This does not necessarily mean that they should be considered as a threat to the system, but on the contrary they may bring about change and reform within these systems.<sup>39</sup>

Talking about the Spanish case, Linz pointed out,<sup>40</sup> several years ago, that a high degree of legitimacy is compatible with low levels of efficacy (or, as Easton put it,<sup>41</sup> a high level of diffuse support and a low level of specific support), without posing a threat to or compromising the stability of the system – at least in the short term. Perhaps all these attitudes should be examined as a consequence of the 'cyclical fluctuations' noted by Cotta<sup>42</sup> with respect to 'representation' and 'decisionism', which implies that in certain situations citizens tend to participate intensely and become involved in political issues, whereas at other times they turn their back on general issues, thus exhibiting a highly 'social and political privatism or individualism',<sup>43</sup> taking refuge in an extreme interpretation of 'the democracy of the Moderns'.<sup>44</sup> In any event, it is not irrelevant for the health of democratic systems that the parliamentary institution is seen as a 'house without windows',<sup>45</sup> which is operative from a political standpoint but which does not mean anything to most citizens. We trust that precisely those citizens who are 'unsatisfied democrats' act as a spur so that democratic systems and their representative institutions become more receptive and tuned to citizenship, achieving an effective integration of this institution into their daily lives.

#### NOTES

1. Obviously this is not the place to discuss the largely unresolved conflict of the Basque Country. It is the only issue that the constitutional political system has not been able to solve or channel adequately.

2. P. Norton, 'Parliaments: A Framework for Analysis', *Western European Politics*, 13/3 (1990), pp.1–9. See, also S.C. Patterson and G.W. Copeland, 'Parliaments in the Twenty-first Century', in G.W. Copeland and S.C. Patterson (eds.), *Parliaments in the Modern World. Changing Institutions* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), p.154.
3. When making this assertion, we take into account the growth of the state apparatus, new contexts, new commitments under the responsibility of the state, new agents which perform certain tasks formerly ascribed to parliament, evolution of political parties (mass, catch-all, cartel parties), cultural change and a more sophisticated, unsatisfied and demanding citizenship, the dismantling in part of the welfare state, integration on supranational political instances, territorial decentralisation processes, and the like.
4. N.J. Polsby, 'Legislatures', in F.I. Greenstein and N.J. Polsby (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*, vol.5 (Addison-Wesley, 1975), p.297.
5. G. Loewenberg, 'The Role of Parliament in Modern Political Systems', in G. Loewenberg (ed.), *Modern Parliaments. Change or Decline?* (Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton, 1971), pp.14 ff.; Polsby, 'Legislatures', pp.262 and 302; U. Liebert, 'Parlamento y consolidación democrática en el Sur de Europa', *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 42 (1988), pp.103 and 131; P. Norton, 'Parliament in the United Kingdom: Balancing Effectiveness and Consent?', *West European Politics*, 13/3 (1990), p.29; P. Norton, 'Introduction', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 50/3 (Special Issue on Western Legislatures), (1997), p.468; G.W. Copeland and S.C. Patterson, 'Changing an Institutionalized System', in Copeland and Patterson, *Parliaments in the Modern World. Changing Institutions*, p.160; J.R. Montero, 'Parlamento y opinión pública: las percepciones y los niveles de apoyo a las Cortes Generales', in A. Garrorena (ed.), *El Parlamento y sus transformaciones actuales* (Madrid: Técnicos, 1990), p.102; J. Santamaría, 'El papel del parlamento durante la consolidación de la democracia y después', *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 84 (1994), pp.18 ff.; P. Oñate, 'Parlamento y crisis de la representación en España', paper submitted to the IV Congreso de la Asociación Española de Ciencia Política, Granada, 1999, p.22.
6. Liebert, 'Parlamento y consolidación democrática en la Europa del Sur', p.121; P. Norton, 'Legislatures in Perspective', *West European Politics*, 13/3 (1990), pp.146 and 147.
7. A. Martínez, I. Delgado and P. Oñate, *Parlamento y opinión pública en España* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1998), pp.11 ff.
8. Liebert, 'Parlamento y consolidación democrática en la Europa del Sur', p.94.
9. Discussed in P. Oñate, *Ideología y consenso en la transición política española* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1998), where readers interested in this matter may find more information.
10. J. Capo et al., 'By Consociationalism to a Majoritarian Parliamentary System: The Rise and Decline of the Spanish Cortes', in U. Liebert and M. Cotta (eds.), *Parliament and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990), p.102. Regarding the exceptional role and functions played by the Spanish Parliament under these political circumstances please refer to Santamaría, 'El papel del Parlamento durante la consolidación de la democracia y después', pp.12 ff.
11. This institutional design implied that parliamentary sovereignty was enthroned as a myth almost from the very beginning of its democratic existence, in favour of a very strong executive, with the corresponding impact on the opinion of citizens as to the representative nature of parliament and parliamentary representatives (U. Liebert, 'Parliament as a Central Site in Democratic Consolidation: A Preliminary Exploration', in Liebert and Cotta (eds.), *Parliament in Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey*, p.10). These underpinnings consisted of an electoral system clearly based on majority, a constructive no-confidence vote similar to that established in the Basic Law of Bonn, the requirement of simple majority to win a no-confidence motion, the appointment of ministers by the president of the government, limitations to the creation and operation of parliamentary groups, a reinforced position of the speaker in directing parliamentary work, the possibility of passing legislation by the executive using the system of decree-laws, and so on.
12. Such was the case of Scandinavian parliaments at the end of the 1980s: the reactivation and revitalisation of parliamentary activity in these countries on all fronts during the decade of the

- 1980s is closely related to the minority condition which the governments of those three countries experienced in that decade and especially in the 1990s, and with the guidelines of co-operation and competition which were established between the different political parties as a consequence of this situation. In this sense, please refer to E. Damgaard, 'The Strong Parliaments of Scandinavia: Continuity and Change of Scandinavian Parliaments', in Copeland and Patterson (eds.), *Parliaments in the Modern World. Changing Institutions?* pp.90 and 100.
13. More details in P. Oñate, 'Congreso de los Diputados, grupos parlamentarios y partidos', in A. Martínez (ed.), *El Congreso de los Diputados en España: funciones y rendimiento* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2000), pp.129 ff. The renewal ratio in the elections of March 2000 was 43.4 per cent (which was very similar in both major parliamentary groups, according to the data provided by I. Delgado and M. Jerez, 'Las elecciones de 2000: un intento de análisis de los parlamentarios españoles en perspectiva comparada', paper submitted to the V Congreso de la Asociación Española de Ciencia Política, Sept. 2001. The number of MPs that have held office during three consecutive legislatures is not even one-third of the total members of the House.
  14. The renewal ratio of members belonging to standing committees between the Fifth and the Sixth legislature was 68 per cent. On-going chairmanship of these committees reveals an astonishingly low ratio: only 20 per cent of the persons who held this office in each legislature had also done so in the preceding one. But only seven per cent of the chairs of standing committees had held an appointment in the Board of Governance (one chair, two deputy-chairs and two secretaries) of that standing committee. And not even 50 per cent of the chairs of a standing committee had been members of the same in the previous legislature. More details in P. Oñate, 'La organización del Congreso de los Diputados', in Martínez (ed.), *El Congreso de los Diputados en España: funciones y rendimiento*, pp.89 ff.
  15. There are comparatively few ministers who had previously been MPs, whereby it becomes less attractive to remain in office as an MP. See J. Botella, 'Parlamento y carreras políticas', in M. Ramírez (ed.), *El Parlamento a debate* (Madrid: Trotta, 1997), p.152; and M. Jerez, 'La élite parlamentaria', in Ramírez (ed.), *El parlamento a debate*, p.133.
  16. Study nos.2,240 and 2,250 conducted in 1997 by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
  17. The Socialist Party as its German counterpart had adopted a 25 per cent quota for women in its electoral lists. Compliance with the quota became mandatory as from 1994. However, most of them occupied positions that provided them with few opportunities of becoming elected. In its turn, the Partido Popular, following its reorganisation in 1989 wanted to convey an image of a centre party and therefore it was essential to place women in senior positions. Since then the number of women included in its lists and considered for senior appointments, whether in the House or in other institutions, has grown constantly.
  18. The percentage of seats occupied by women has been as follows: 14 per cent in 1989, 15.6 per cent in 1993, and 21.6 per cent in 1996. Data gathered from P. Gangas, 'Los diputados españoles, 1977–1996', in Martínez (ed.), *El Congreso de los Diputados en España: funciones y rendimiento*, p.275.
  19. Only three out of 14 legislative standing committees (Constitutional, Foreign Affairs, Environment) are chaired by a woman. The three other chairwomen of standing committees are of non-legislative committees (considering that two of them chair the House Rules and Appointments Consultative Committee which are always chaired by the person acting as the Speaker of the House from time to time). Information taken from the web page of the Congreso de los Diputados ([www.congreso.es](http://www.congreso.es)).
  20. For an assessment of the studies and previous occupation of Spanish MPs – a setback is the high no-reply level by MPs – please refer to Gangas, 'Los diputados españoles: 1977–1996', p.278; and Delgado and Jerez, 'Las elecciones de 2000: un intento de análisis de los parlamentarios españoles en perspectiva comparada', p.28.
  21. Data provided by Delgado and Jerez, 'Las elecciones de 2000: un intento de análisis de los parlamentarios españoles en perspectiva comparada', p.33.
  22. See Botella, 'Parlamento y carreras políticas', pp.148 and 152.
  23. El Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas carried out a study in December 1997 (no. 2,250) on the attitudes and opinions of Spanish parliamentarians about the institution, the work and

activities carried out there. The study was based on a survey conducted on all MPs which has not been repeated and therefore it is not possible to analyse the evolution experienced by such opinions and attitudes over time, either previously or at later moments. In spite of its static viewpoint, it provides interesting information on how the main players of this institution perceive different aspects of their day-to-day work and life. It would be desirable that a study of this nature were conducted in each legislature, so that regular series could be obtained on the same questions and indicators. This study was the subject of an in-depth analysis at a research project titled ‘Representación política, decisiones colectivas y acción partidista en los procesos de reforma institucional. Un análisis comparado de España y México’, which has yielded its first fruits in the book edited by Martínez, *El Congreso de los Diputados en España: funciones y rendimiento*.

24. The questionnaire does not contemplate exactly the same categories so it does not warrant a comparison in strict terms. However, the data gathered make it possible to perceive the relationship between the importance attached to each activity and the degree of satisfaction obtained.
25. An attempt has been made to explain this paradox considering the dependency to which the majority is subject regarding small regional political forces due to the correlation of political forces existing in the Congreso de los Diputados at the time when this survey was conducted. Probably this factor has something to do with this circumstance, as the MPs who were most satisfied with their work were those belonging to the group that seconded Grupo Popular in the voting sessions, which claimed certain benefits in exchange. See I. Delgado, ‘Elites políticas y vida parlamentaria: actividades y motivaciones de los diputados españoles’, in Martínez (ed.), *El Congreso de los Diputados en España: funciones y rendimiento*, p.335.
26. We will use the information available from the surveys conducted by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas between 1982 and 2000. Most of these surveys provide similar data which implies that there are no substantial variations over time, or due to the political situation or the political party in power. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, we will provide data referred to the average of the period considered. Unfortunately there are no data for these issues for periods before 1982. The opinions of Spanish citizens on parliament have been analysed in depth in I. Delgado, A. Martínez and P. Oñate, *Parlamento y opinión pública en España. On representation and its crisis in Spain*, see Oñate, ‘Parlamento y crisis de representación en España’.
27. As was to be expected, these figures are somewhat higher (seven percentage points) among those who voted for the leading party. As we have already stated, this opinion hardly changed over time and the importance attached to the House did not diminish even during the years in which Spanish political life was plagued by scandals of political corruption (1993 to 1996).
28. Even among those who at times stated that an authoritarian regime would be preferable (thus showing their lack of democratic spirit), the ratio of citizens who consider that parliament is a necessary institution is three to one.
29. However, Spanish citizens consider that decisions of parliament have less effect on them than those stemming from regional parliament, the national government, the regional government and their local council (in this order). The decisions passed in the Spanish Parliament only have – in their opinion – a higher degree of importance than those of the European Parliament or the European Commission.
30. The expression ‘diffuse support’ in the sense used by Easton is understood to be a ‘reserve of favourable attitudes of citizens towards the political system [or some of its institutions], which makes them accept or tolerate certain political outputs which do not deserve their favour or which may entail detrimental consequences for them’. D. Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), p.273. This issue was discussed recently by P. Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens. Global Support for Democratic Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), considering (based on Easton’s category) that the concept of political support is multi-dimensional and its five aspects must be differentiated for an adequate measurement of the same.
31. Oñate, ‘Parlamento y crisis de la representación en España’.

32. Specific support, which may equally refer to the political system, its institutions or its authorities, arises from the satisfaction experienced by its members both in terms of results or outputs of the system and from a general and abstract evaluation of its performance in political terms. D. Easton, 'A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support', *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975), pp.437 ff.
33. Study No. 2,286 of the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, May 1998 (N = 9,980).
34. P. Norris, 'Representation and the Democratic Deficit', *European Journal of Political Research*, 32/2 (1997), p.281. As Topf put it, 'West European national elections are in little danger of losing the capacity to bind citizens to the political system', R. Topf, 'Electoral Participation', in H.D. Klingemann and D. Fuchs (eds.), *Citizens and the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.50.
35. Norton, 'Legislatures in Perspective', p.147.
36. For a general overview please refer to the works compiled by Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens. Global Support for Democratic Governance*. The conclusion of P. Norton in the monographic issue on Western Parliaments may be consulted: 'Conclusion: Stronger Links, Weaker Support', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 50/3 (1997), pp.468–75.
37. R.J. Dalton, 'Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies', in Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens. Global Support for Democratic Governance*, pp.63 and 67.
38. Please refer to the data provided by H.D. Klingemann in this area, 'Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis', in Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens. Global Support for Democratic Governance*, p.51.
39. Klingemann, 'Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis', pp.32, 43 and 56. Other contributions in Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens. Global Support for Democratic Governance*.
40. J.J. Linz, 'Problemas de la democracia hoy', in J. Montabes (ed.), *El sistema electoral a debate: veinte años de rendimientos del sistema electoral español (1977–1997)* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1998), pp.26 and 27.
41. Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*.
42. M. Cotta, 'The Rise and Fall of the Centrality of the Italian Parliament: Transformations of the Executive-Legislative Subsystem after the Second World War', in Copeland and Patterson (eds.), *Parliaments in the Modern World. Changing Institutions*, pp.66 and 67.
43. J. Habermas, *Problemas de legitimación del capitalismo tardío* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 1986), pp.54, 78 and 96; as well as C. Offe, *Partidos políticos y nuevos movimientos sociales* (Madrid: Sistema, 1988), pp.171 ff.
44. B. Constant, 'The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns', *Political Writings* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
45. C. Melnik and N. Leites, *House Without Windows* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1958).