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When is an oligarchy formed? The origins
and evolution of an elite. Barcelona 1850-
1920

Jose Miguel Sanjuan Marroquin



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

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Abstract: This paper tracks the origins and inner changes of Barcelona's economic elite in the long term. The objective is to achieve a deeper understanding of the mechanism that families and individuals developed to gain access to the elites and retain their economic position. For doing so, the paper analyzes industrial and real estate tax payers in three moments (1853-1883-1919). Through this approach we can observe that in aggregate, elites (identified as the 5% of the higher taxpayers) move from a stationary state to a progressive increase of wealth concentration. For a deeper understanding of the mechanism and inner changes of this elite, we focus in 81 families and exhaustively we have tracked down their origin and evolution. The conclusion is that their initial wealth accumulation is linked with a few specific situations. Their economic promotion seems to be related to specific windows of opportunity that open at certain moments and/or places. Once these windows of opportunity close the elites seem to progressively lock on themselves. This tendency created social circles that favored endogamy.

JEL Codes: N13, N33, N83.

Keywords: elites, 19th century, social mobility, prosopography.

Jose Miguel Sanjuan Marroquin
Universitat de Barcelona

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1. Introduction

The Industrial Revolution in Europe created an economic growth without precedent accompanied by a rise in the internal inequality.¹ In this context some families managed to accumulate fortunes disproportionately big that gave them an enormous political and economic power becoming the new economic elite, whose influence has extended in some cases to the present.² The role of the elites in the long term evolution of this inequality has been studied through different approaches. The institutionalists have remarked that the persistence of endowments linked to institutions explain why the inequalities persist, Business History has focused in the particular role of family firms and the Top Incomes approach has studied the share of the rents that the elites manage to retain.³ However relatively few studies focus in the internal evolution of elites, its evolution in the long term and its permeability.⁴ In this sense this paper aims to contribute to this debate analyzing for the case of Barcelona, when 19th's Century economic elites were created, replaced and its grade of mobility. The hypothesis that we defend is that the creation of elites is restrained to certain specific moments.

For doing so, we use the taxes on Real State and over Commercial and Industrial activities to map the economic activities of Barcelona in three specific moments: 1853, 1883 and 1919. This mapping of the economic activities of the city and the proprieties allow us to identify the wealthiest 5% objectively. From this pool of individuals we have chosen the twenty five first tax payers for each year and by studying their biographies we have determined for each individual when the individuals gain access to the elites and which activity fostered the change.⁵ The methodology proposed in this paper has the advantage of identifying objectively who the elites were in three specific moments, instead of relying in dictionaries of business men or industrialist who can have a bias in their election.⁶

2. Concepts and Sources.

In first place we have to take into consideration the **concepts** used in this paper. When we refer to elites we are talking basically about those individuals situated in the upper 5% of the tax

¹ Allen, RC (2009)

² Some examples would be Carnegie, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt for the EEUU, Rostchild for the UK, Schlumberger for Germany, Agnelli for Italy, Juncadella for Spain.

³ Atkinson, AB, Picketty, T (2007) for Top Incomes, for business history see Landes, D (2006), for institutionalists see Acemoglu, D et al (2008) For a general reflection on the role of billionaires see Delong, B (1998)

⁴ One of the few debates can be found in England around the “rags to riches” phenomena. See Foreman-Peck, J; Smith, J.A (2004); Nicholas, T (1999); Crouzet F(1985).

⁵ For studies of Barcelona's elites see Vicens Vives, J (1954), Sola, A (1977, 1995, 2004) and McDonough, G (1986). For global vision of Spain economic elites: Cabrera, M; Del Rey (2002) and Zurita, R; Camurri, R eds (2008).

⁶ For England: Foreman-Peck, J; Smith, J.A (2004); Nicholas, T (1999); Crouzet F (1985). They all use as source dictionaries of industrialists and businessmen. For Spain see Diaz Morala, p (2013)

distribution.⁷ This is of course a simplification as in the 19th century society we found very well defined hierarchies depending on richness, kind of capital, how and when was acquired, social prominence, geographical origin with several sides depending on politics and business.⁸ With that in mind, in this paper we are referring to the economic elites as a single group as the objective is to understand its evolution.

In this paper we use direct taxes over proprieties (*Contribución Territorial* henceforth CT) and industrial and commercial activities (*Contribución Industrial* henceforth CI) as **source** for mapping the economic activity between 1853 and 1919, pointing objectively the elite's members and tracking its evolution. In this section we analyze the tax system in order to understand the information provided in the sources, its limitations, and how we should use it in our investigation.

In Spain during the period of our study, direct taxes were allocated in an up-down model where the Central Government fixed the quantity that has to be collected. This amount was divided between regions, cities and villages following political criterion.⁹ In big cities such as Barcelona, Seville, Valencia and Madrid, the major taxpayers headed commissions that assessed real estate and fixed the CT. This assessment of real estate was made taking into consideration the rents that generated and if this information was not available used the value of the property. For the Commercial activities the Guilds and Associations also represented by the major tax payers made an estimation of the activity of each economic sector and divided the taxes accordingly. Taxes over the manufacturing activities were directly fixed by the Central Administration using a flat rate for each type of machine. Notice that not all the activities were levied being the main excluded ones: bonds, stock shares, and salaries. Finally it is wieldy know that this tax system was subjected to a high degree of tax avoidance and of corruption.¹⁰ In summary during the period studied CI was paid by about 10% of the active population and CT was paid only by 12% of the families. Hence the studied 5% of the upper tax payers represented around 0.6% of population who paid 30-40% of the direct taxes.

There were internal incentives to counterbalance this potential unfairness of this tax system and ensure a certain balance in the allocation of the duties. In the first place, taxes were low and represented a small effort at least for the upper classes. Paying taxes also had individual and collective direct benefices. Only payers were able to acquire the right to vote and to become candidates in municipal and national elections. Also, at least during the first two decades of our study (1850-1860) the quantities that were paid by each of the Guilds and Associations were

⁷ For a review of different approaches to the elite concept in economy see Brezis E; Temin, P (2007).

⁸ Badia, M et al (2010) for an example of networks in Barcelona.

⁹ Vallejo et al (1996); Curto-Grau, M; Herranz-Locan; Solé-Olle (2012).

¹⁰ Is wieldy know that the tax revenue system in Spain was a corrupted one. In 1870 the rural tax avoidance for 1858-1865 was estimated in around 40%. Pons Altes, JM (2008), 9.

used to configure the municipal government and the top tax payers were included in the Municipal Government. Taxes were also a way of mapping the wealth as the quantity that each individual or company paid was published. Hence was a way of tracking the relative importance of each other business and therefore a way to credit access. This public exposure also assured a certain level of vigilance between the tax payers.¹¹ In addition a certain amount of fairness in distribution was also guaranteed by the necessity of political equilibrium. Direct taxes (as the *Contribuciones*) fall on the activities of the wealthiest, the indirect taxes (*Consumos*) fall on the poorer. So, the political in charge when allocated the taxes had to consider a balance: If he charged too much in the direct taxes he could lose his positions as he was damaging his electors. If he charged too much in the indirect taxes he could face an uprising like the one in the neighbour city of Lleida in 1865.¹²

We conclude that the tax system give us inexact information, but definitely was the mechanism that the major tax payers used to evaluate the incomes of the tax payers and had incentives to be fair. We know the tax system was not proportional to the level of wealth or income, but is possible to use it to identify the elites in an objective way and they give us a general vision (with nuances) of the economic structure of the city.

Commercial and industrial taxes, CI, were divided in four great *Tarifas* that sub-divide in hundreds of different sections and many of them changed during the period we studied.¹³ Real estate tax payers were listed in the CT by surname detailing the proprieties that each individual had.¹⁴ For taxes paid in 1853, 1868 and 1883 we found 44,500 records of individuals and companies from where we extracted the upper 5% (3,087)¹⁵ and we constructed a data base. We have to note that since the beginning of the 20th century we are not able to use the *Contribuciones* as the way of recording taxes changed. Commercial and industrial activities began to pay a lump sum and real estate was recorded by building and no longer by individual. Hence for 1919 we used the list of highest tax payers that had representation in the City Hall for identifying the elites and the information from the Official Chamber of Urban Property for the aggregate values.¹⁶

We have, however to remark one last limitations imposed by our methodology. We excluded the Public Limited Companies because we cannot know how the stock shares changed. But the

¹¹ We have found some correspondence, denouncing individuals that change from one college to another for avoiding paying its share of taxes. *Correspondencia Junta de Comercio a las cortes 21-03-1864. CXXXIV 2, 221 Legajo CXXXIV.*

¹² Pons Altes, JM (2008), 27

¹³ In 1853 we find more than 300 categories and in 1883 this number has increased to more than 350 as the most relevant activities were subdivided and new ones were included. In 1853 were recorded 8,543 tax payers and in 1883 11,738. We have picked up 5% of the upper tax payers of each *Tarifa* in order to have a homogenous sample.

¹⁴ In 1853 we found 5,501 proprietaries and in 1883 7,497.

¹⁵ This number does not correspond with a 5% as we have picked up 5% of each of the *Tarifas* in order to capture the widest number of individuals.

¹⁶ Massana, C (1985). 191-207.

diversification of investment of economic elites that is reflected in their inheritances allows us to overcome this limitation. For instance, Manel Girona was one of the greatest shareholders of the “*Banc de Barcelona*” a limited company that does not appear, but we can easily find him among the top tax payers for the companies he co-owned or for his real estate proprieties. .

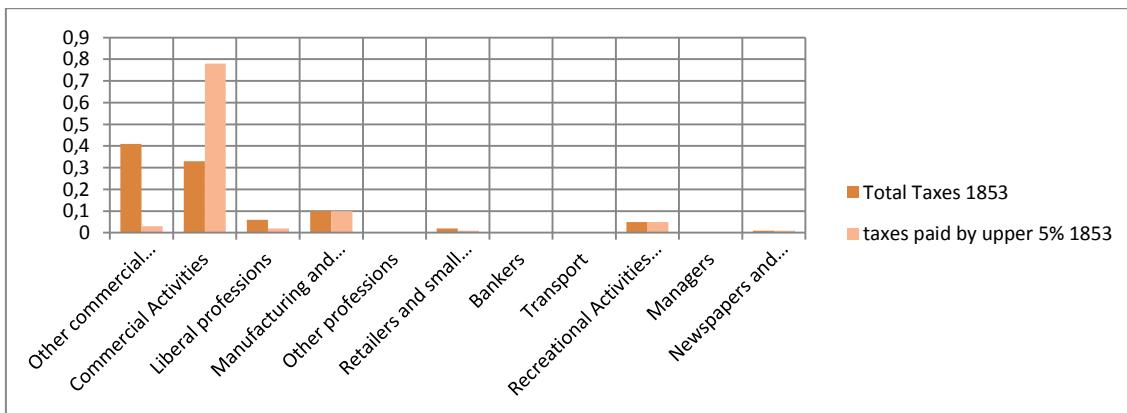
All in all taxes has allowed to construct a date base that can be used to objectively choose who the higher tax payers are in three specific moments, follow the movements of these high taxpayers within the elites and compare the evolution of the different groups that compose the elites.

3. The elites among the economic structure of Barcelona

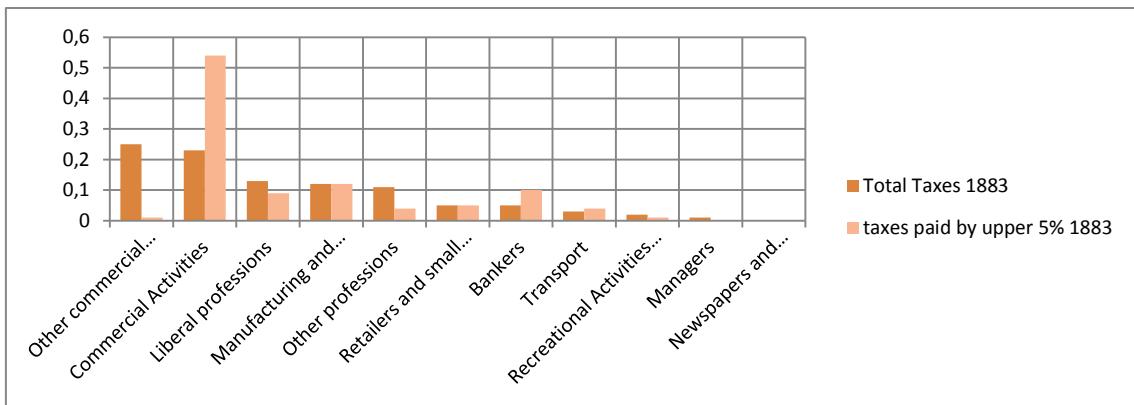
In this section we use our data base to present a first aggregate analysis of the economic structure of the city of Barcelona from 1853 to 1919. We use the CI to point in which activities we can locate the major tax payers and use the CT to analyze the economic structure of real estate and extend the analysis to 1919.

Industrial and Commercial activities.

As we have said for industry and Commerce we have available data for 1853 and 1883. During these three decades the growth of Barcelona’s population was relatively stable and industrial firms still had not moved to the periphery as will do later.¹⁷ Annex 1 shows the total numbers of tax paying for 1853 and 1883 and the weight of each activity in number of individuals and in taxes. Graphs 1 and 2 present the same data in percentages. For instance in 1853 the individuals paying taxes in the Commercial activities section represented 33% of the total taxes while accounted 80% of the top tax payers. In 1883 represented 23% and accounted little more than 50% of the upper tax payers. Observing these figures we can extract several conclusions.



¹⁷ Tatjer Mir, M (2010).



Graph 1 and 2. Comparison of the economic structure of Barcelona in 1853 and 1883 using CI. own elaboration.

The first and more relevant is stability: the upper 5% pays almost the same percentage in 1853 and in 1883 (35% and 37% respectively) and the most relevant activities are for all the period those related with industry, commerce transport and finance. In this activity we identify a core of families enriched during the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th that in 1853 appeared paying mainly under the category of merchants and in 1883 were subdivided in merchants, ship-owners and bankers and that with the industrialists comprehend most of the elite's members. The decrease of the taxes paid by this group in 1883 is artificial as is consequence of the tax effort reaching other economic flourishing groups such as the liberal professionals (lawyers, notaries, doctors...). Another fact that reassures this stability is that these elites linked to commerce, decreased their ranks during three decades in little more than forty individuals while the base increased in 37%. This stability and concentration of the business was consequence of the necessity of adopting economies of scale that needed increasing amounts of capital, and as consequence of the absence of boundaries that limited its size.

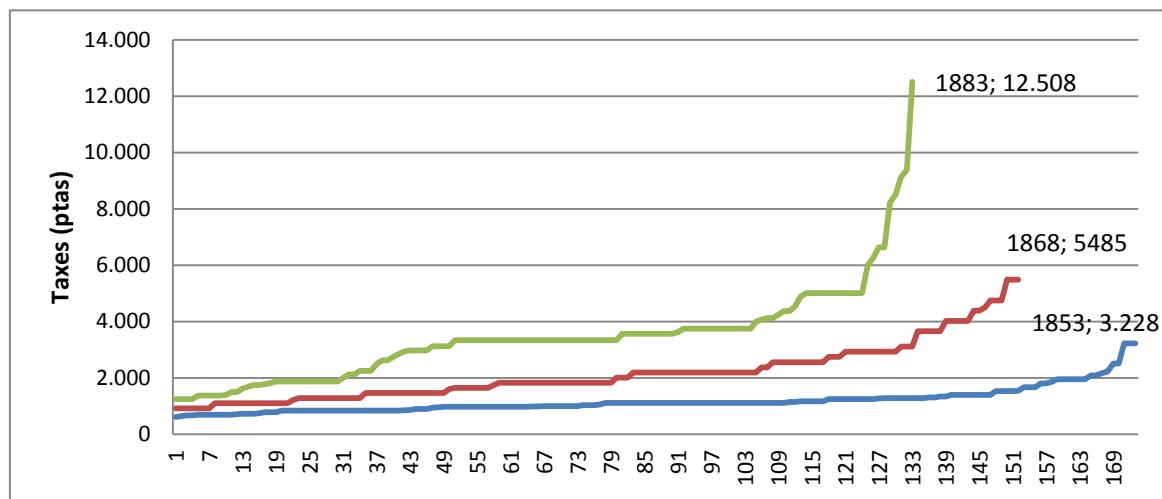
Secondly, as the top of the pyramid remained stable we observe that the authorities in charge of the revenues, the top tax payers, did an effort for increasing the base of tax payers as year after year we found an increase in the number of divisions and in the diversification of the taxed activities. Of course this also reflects the growth and internationalization of the city and the necessity of the Central Government of gathering taxes.

Thirdly we observe an increase in the differences within the highest tax payers. By way of example observe in graph 3. In it we can see the evolution of the number of merchants and bankers over time and the taxes paid by each individual. The diminution in the number of merchants is parallel to a severe increase in the payments of the top. For instance, in 1853 the top 10% paid 3.4 more times that the bottom 10% and there was a difference of 5.2 times between the highest and the lowest tax payer in this category. In 1883 the top 10% paid 8.3

times more than the lowest and the difference between the higher and the lower tax payer has increased to 7.3 times.

This increase in the concentration is also observed among industrial tax payers, as only one tenth of the industry is big enough to be present among the upper 5%. This reflects the evolution of industry in the city since the beginning of the century: very few big factories and many little workshops, which will remain as one of the characteristics of Barcelona's industry during the 20th century. The increase in this sector is related with a diversification in the activities of the factories. In 1853 we found only different textile activities, but in 1883 we begin to find other activities as manufactories of machinery, nails, cards, beers, etc. Of course we do not have to forget that taxes on industry were fixed by Central Administration as part of the protectionist policy. In consequence we may be facing an underrepresentation of the global weight of these activities. We have to remember that Barcelona was since 1820's both a very important factory core after the industry moved from the interior of Catalonia due to the increase in cost of coal, as well as turning into a "logistic hub" as the city exported a big part of his production to the rest of Spain and the Settlements and imported the raw materials (coal and cotton) need for their industry.¹⁸

The distribution of the activities also fits with the information we have from the representation in the City Hall. For instance in 1854-56 manufacturers had 9.5% of the aldermen and paid 10% of the taxes and merchants had 38% of the representation and paid half of the taxes.



Graph 3. Taxes paid by Merchants and Bankers in 1853, 1868 and 1883. Own elaboration

Real Estate owners

¹⁸ Nadal, J (1975)

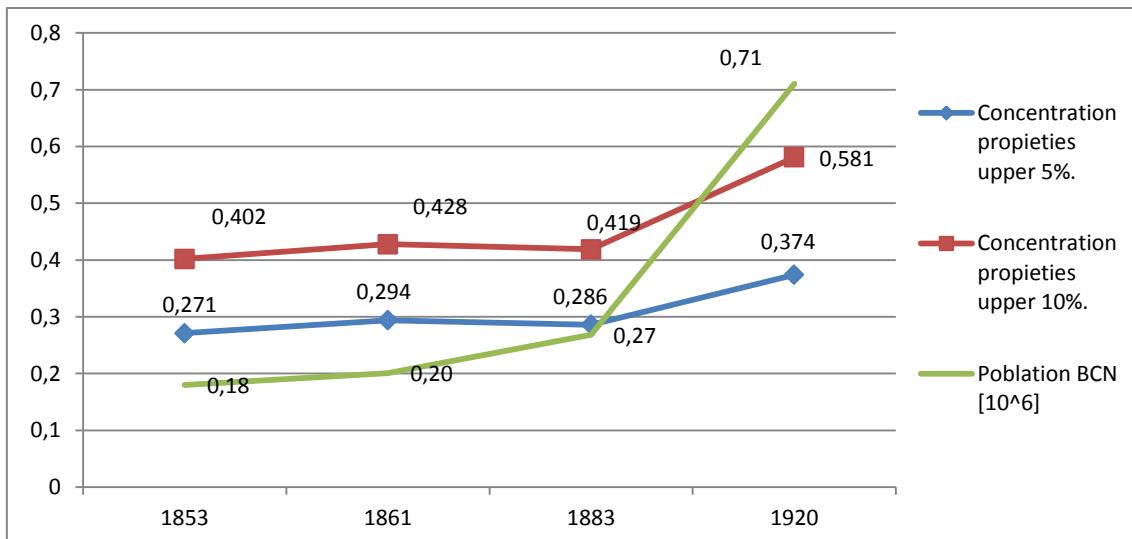
The study of taxes over real estate allows us to complement and extend the information provided by the Industrial and Commercial taxes, allowing us to study concentration in long term. When approaching real estate series we have to take into consideration that we are studding the time when Barcelona, as many other European cities, demolish their walls and began the construction of the *Eixample*. A new bourgeoisie space for the upper and middle class that wanted to escape from the crowded old town. This process was neither fast nor regular in time. On the contrary to other cities the big promoters quickly become bankrupt and the expansion of Barcelona rely on in individuals that invested in a small number of proprieties. This circumstance gives the study more reliability as the propriety is more dispersed.¹⁹

As we have previously mentioned in the case of real estate we are able to expand our series to 1919 and Graph 4 summarized the evolution of real estate proprieties. As in CI the CT remains stable from 1853 to 1883 as percentages of concentration remain almost the same. But with the turn of the century we observe a sharp increase in both population and concentration. This phenomenon was boosted by the fact that the WWI supposed huge benefices for Barcelona's elites. Graph 4 also points that during the second half of the 19th century the number of tax payers increases in parallel to the number of elites and slightly less than the population,²⁰ but during the first twenty years of the 20th century as the city receives immigrants and expands a severe increase in both population and concentration is observed. During the period 1853-1919 while the population of Barcelona multiplies by nearly 4, the owners of buildings multiply by 6, but the upper 5% only increase in 1,3 times. In another words by 1919 1,200 families had about 37% of the proprieties, while 157,000 families had no proprieties.

This severe increase in the concentration and in consequence in inequality has to be situated in the middle of city shaken by a mutual violence between the upper classes and the work class. It helps to understand the climate aggression that transformed Barcelona in a violent city by the end of the century.

¹⁹ Tafunell, X (1994), Villar, P (2008).

²⁰ CON/FAM compares families with contributors.



Graph 4. Evolution of concentration on Real Estate vs increase of population. Own elaboration

	1853	1868	1883	1920
5 % upper [%]	0,271	0,294	0,286	0,374
10 % upper [%]	0,402	0,428	0,419	0,581
5% upper [n]	220	275	375	1302
10% upper [n]	440	550	749	2604
Total tax payers	4.395	5.497	7.492	26.044
Barcelona population [n]	179.755	200.837	268.471	710.335
Barcelona families [n]	35.951	40.167	53.694	157.852

Table 1.Evolution of concentration on Real Estate. Own elaboration.

4. A prosopographical approach to the elites

The information presented in the previous section maps the distribution of taxes among the different activities and presents an aggregate picture of the evolution of income concentration in Barcelona. In this section we use the same data base to identify the major tax payers tracking their evolution in time.

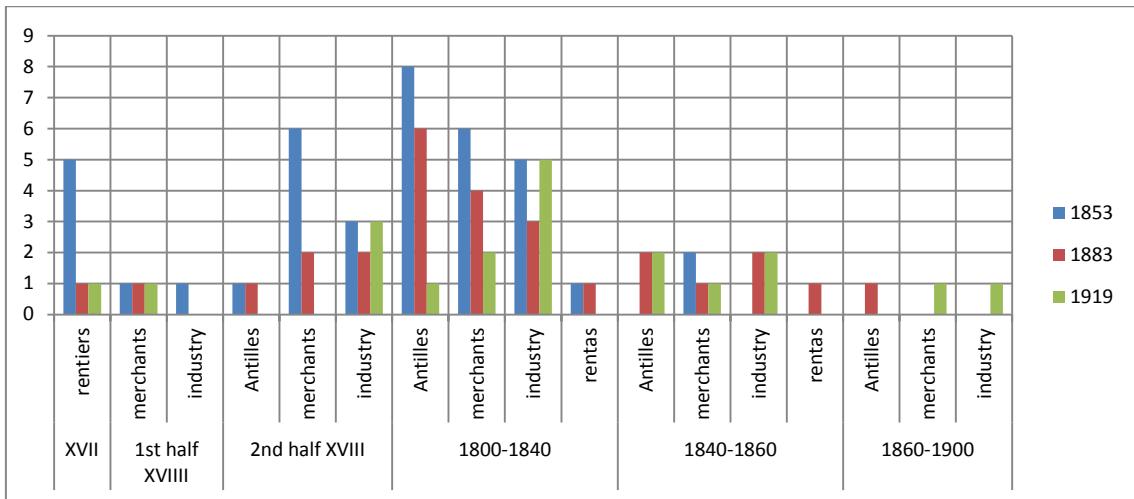
We have picked up from the 5% 125 top tax payers distributed as follows: the 25 top tax payers for 1853 and 1883 for from CT and CI and the 25 first real estate owners for 1919. These 125 individuals have been grouped into 81 families that are defined as our **case studies**. This grouping has been done through the observation of direct linkages between individuals (i.e. father-son, uncle-nephew or when we detect a direct transmission of the inheritance). As we move forwards and backwards in time this simple methodology becomes increasingly complicated as the number of antecessors and descendants increase. When having to choose between family branches we have selected the line where the main part of the capital was transmitted or originated. The methodology also has the limitation that we did only record the origin of the fortune and not the successive dedications that its members have or the ways in

which they invest their capital over time. For instance the members of the family Bacardi appear recurrently in our date base. They gathered their initial fortune after the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) through an *asiento* of bread (kind of public tender). Her son and grandson invested in real estate and his grand grandson invested in different public limited societies and was the representative of the Central Bank of Spain in Barcelona appearing as a one of the first tax payers in 1853 and his son in 1883 and 1919. But following our methodology its case of study appears as a fortune created in early XVIII century through commerce.

Having in mind this limitations we have made an in-deep analysis of their biographies and background extracting the following systematic information: age, place of birth, *when* they become part of the elites, *how* they became part of the elites detailing the economic activity which gave origin of the fortune and their involvement in politics. From our list we have deleted public limited companies and for the limited partnership companies we have used the most important shareholder. We have analyzed jointly those paying taxes for real estate and for commerce as we have observed from the available last wills that the observed individuals formed a single group with similar backgrounds.

In first place we focus in the origins of the 81 cases. Graph 5 and table 2 shows the origins for each member that appears in each year. As we are looking to the top tax payers of each year some individuals or their descendants may repeat. This approach is useful to observe that during the second half of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th is a concentration of cases independent of the year. In other words: individuals appearing in 1853, 1883 and 1919 accumulated capital broadly in the same period. This assumption is based in a second observation, that when top tax payers disappear from our lists of 25 major tax payers they do not drop off from elites. In fact we are observing an internal replacement with very little mobility from outsiders between 1853 and 1919. This internal mobility can be observed in table 2 in the progressive replacement of the merchants and rentiers by industrials. After WWI families linked with Antilles, Commerce and the old aristocracy fade in front of the owners of factories. This increase is caused by the decision of the members belonging to the second or third generation of manufacturers from the hinterland and the surrounding bell of the city to install in downtown and of course due to the increasing importance of the industrial sector during the end of the 19th century. The old families coming from the 18th century gradually drop off either as they become related with larger families in Spain or due to a progressive loss of importance. The opportunities to enrich in Cuba and Puerto Rico progressively close as increases emigration and insecurity in the colonies. Those families with fortunes originated in Antilles and through commerce fade away remaining only the really big ones, like Claudio

Lopez Bru whose father created the largest shipping company in Spain.²¹ Manufacturers replace the old bankers and merchants as first tax payers.



Graph 5. Origin and activity for each of the samples.

origin	1853		1883		1919	
	9	0,23	10	0,36	3	0,15
Antilles	9	0,23	7	0,25	11	0,55
industry	9	0,23	8	0,29	5	0,25
merchants	15	0,38	3	0,11	1	0,05
rentiers	6	0,15	28		20	
total	39					

Table 2. Activity of top tax payers by year of observation

In order to have a more precise vision of where the windows of opportunity were situated in table 3 and graph 6 we have grouped the individuals in cases of study, independently of the year and the number of times that appear. This way of organizing the data allows us to reconstruct in the long term the evolution of elites.

The six of them that have their origins in the 17th century or before are families from the Catalonian or Castellan aristocracy. Two of them are absentees whose main proprieties are in other parts of Spain. The other four are families of the old aristocracy that had a prominent role in the institutions of Barcelona before to the War of Succession. During the war they fought in different sides, gathering honors and proprieties. And by the middle of the 18th century their patrimonial situation had increased through marriages, allowing them to remain part of the elites during the 19th and in some cases 20th centuries.²²

During the first half of the 18th century after the defeat of the Habsburg forces and the imposition in Catalonia of a new political and economic regime, the old political elite

²¹ Rodrigo Alharilla, M (2000)

²² Fontana, J (2014), Garcia Espuche (2014).

disappeared. And although there are no specific studies that cover the evolution of the economic elite during the 18th century from the available biographies we can conclude that the 17th century economic elite, mainly formed by merchants, continued during the 18th century.²³

The first years after the war was a period of reconstruction of the economic activity heavily conditioned by the war consequences and we only record two cases of economic promotion. The Canals family, linked with the first factory of calicos and the Bacardi family, merchants that obtained several public procurements (*asientos*) and that were able to successfully invest in real estate. In both cases branches of those families still were relevant in the 20th Century. The fact that we are only able to observe two cases reinforces our hypothesis that there was no replacement in the economic elites after the war.

The 18th century merchants, survivors of the 17th century, followed a model of commercial business strongly linked with the Ancient Regime logic, were the ultimate objective was to gather enough capital and influence to win access to the aristocracy. But, in the periphery of their supply chains and in the new manufacturing activities we detect the creation of new fortunes with a different mentality.

During the second half of the century due to the reforms carried out by the House of Bourbon (that basically allowed Catalonia and other regions to trade with the colonies without the restrictive laws of the *flotas* and some incentives to the manufactures and to commerce in general), a loss of influence from the guilds, a very favorable international scenario and a *hinterland* that produced wine products that could be exchanged, the opportunities boosted, especially for those situated in the right networks.²⁴ Among them we find the first *indianos* still linked with the continental colonies of South America, manufacturers of calicos and merchants from the hinterland that were either settling in Barcelona or establishing their first connections with Cuba. A colony that still had not achieved the importance that will have decades later.

Most of these individuals had a (relatively) wealthy background or a solid technical background as part of the guilds that enabled them to take advantage of the opportunities. Although, almost none of them were able to demonstrate that had the rents to become part of the *Junta de Comercio* that grouped the main merchants of the city. But when the Napoleonic wars and the Independence of the Colonies hit the city and turned up-down the equilibrium of forces in the commercial sector and industry took a new and leading role being able to take advantage of the situation. If we just compare the surnames of the members of the *Junta* before and after the war we find that they have changed almost completely.

²³ Garcia Espuche, A (2014).

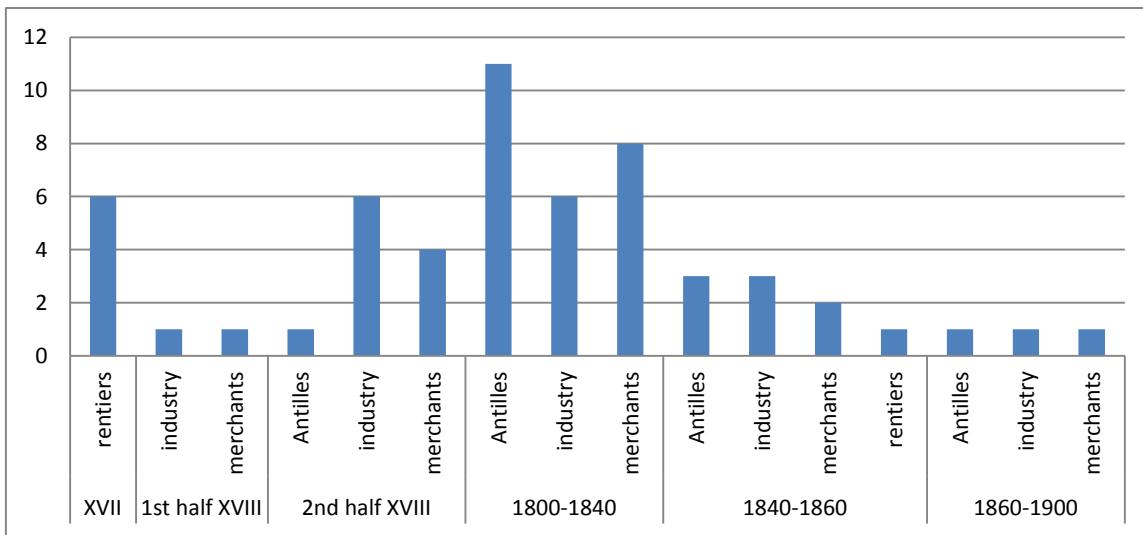
²⁴ Torras i Elias (1994), Vilar P (1964).

Why? The explanation is linked to the relationship between industry and commerce. Before the war manufacturers depended of merchants. The *Junta* members controlled the access to the markets and in some ways the access to informal credit. But by the 20's the manufacturers had the most prominent role as they had been able to change their industry and began to manufacture cotton changing the supply lines, the product that was offered and the financial services that the merchants had to offer.²⁵ This change was already pointed out by Jaume Vicencs Vives and Angels Solà, when they describe how after the Napoleonic Wars a generation of new men took the economic reins of the city. In this paper we have confirmed this affirmation as we can see that a great window of opportunity opened just after 1808 and began to close between 1840 and 1860. These 60 years concentrate 62% of the creation of great fortunes. Opportunities appeared in the Antilles, either through commerce or by the direct exploitation of business in the settlements. And in some specific manufacturing or commercial ventures, most of them linked with individuals or companies already economically prosperous who successfully adapt.

period	origin	cases	percentage
XVII	rentiers	6	0,11
1st half XVIII	industry	1	0,04
	merchants	1	
2nd half XVIII	Antilles	1	0,20
	industry	6	
	merchants	4	
1800-1840	Antilles	11	0,45
	industry	6	
	merchants	8	
1840-1860	Antilles	3	0,16
	industry	3	
	merchants	2	
	rentiers	1	
1860-1900	Antilles	1	0,05
	industry	1	
	merchants	1	

Table 3.origin and period of formation of the elites.

²⁵ Fradera, J (1987)



Graph 6. Origin and period of formation of the elites.

Those from the Antilles and specifically Cuba were the most numerous group in 1800-1860 counting 14 individuals. We have to take into consideration that the Antilles was a very particular place during the first decades of the 19th century. It was one of the places in America with highest GDP and per capita income due to the sugar commerce, whose importance was boosted due to withdraw of Haiti from commerce.²⁶ Catalonian merchants (and people from all over Spain) participated in different aspects from the triangular commerce that exported wine and manufactures from Catalonia in exchange of sugar from Cuba and cotton form New Orleans. Strongly linked to the slavery in a time when the United Kingdom banned its commerce.²⁷

The process was gradual and most of them began as part of small business that progressively grew along with the economy of the island. The initial networks were quite small and in fact the most important ones were the ones that linked Barcelona with South America. But after the loss of the colonies and the importance that Cuba acquired both as hub for the cotton and as origin for the sugar this networks increase in importance. The individuals that compose these networks stay in charge for decades sending the benefits to Spain and returning to their hometowns after a time. This immigration remained linked to Catalonia and offered the possibility to young men to jump to the Antilles with a certain security. Newcomers from Catalonia or from other parts of Spain where able to integrate in these established circles and some of them thrive. In return, a apart from the capital, the *indianos* also returned with an increased human capital.

Indianos had a diverse behavior after their return and their assets, as can see from the last wills that are available tend to diverse in their investments. But in our case studies almost two-thirds appear as important proprietary and the rest where merchants or in two cases factory owners.

²⁶ Coatsworth, J (1999). Bahamonde, A; Cayuela, J (1992).

²⁷ Moreno Freginals, M (2001); Rodrigo Alharilla, M (1998, 2007, 2014); Yañez, C (2008)

We have to consider that observing the taxes paid in the city of Barcelona only show part of the picture.²⁸

Those linked with commerce and manufacturing had a pattern very similar to that found in the second half of the XVIII Century: members of guilds whose activities had a high market value, merchants and manufacturers from the hinterland that moved to the city either as agents of their families or to begin a new business. Examples illustrate these backgrounds. For instance we find the members of the Girona family whose founder Ignasi Girona departed from a wealthy position at the end of the 18th century and was able to create a Merchant House that his sons would expand becoming of the axis of Barcelona during the 19th century. Manel Girona and his brothers created the most important bank of the city and a holding of several dozens of companies in different sectors.²⁹ Francisco Fontanellas a merchant from a wealthy family that through the *asientos* was able to get access to enough credit to become involved in the financial business. Antonio Xuringuer a merchant related with the trade of products. And two Italians merchants linked with networks from their hometowns that although had arrived to the city during the 18th century did not have the chance to accumulate capital until the first decades of the 19th century. Antonio Durio invested in the business of restoration and Ignazio Villavechia being involved in the commerce of grain. Both maintained a prominent position during the 19th century and both maintained strong links with their hometowns generation after generation. Almost all of them by the mid of the XIX century were investing heavily in real estate, and almost all of their descendants appear in 1883 or 1919 as big real estate owners.

But commerce as way of boosting solid and long term fortunes very soon reached a dead-end. Between 1840 and 1900 we only found three cases of economic progress. The family Vidal-Ribas linked with the powerful commercial house of the Nadal whose origins seem to be related with slave trade. And Salvador Andreu, a pharmacist who managed to create a new model of retail business and that managed to direct a huge investment in urbanizing the mountain of Tibidabo and lastly the local agent of the Galician bank house Simeon Garcia. Of course this does not mean that no commercial or financial initiatives were launched. What does it mean is that opportunities either was taken by members of the consolidated elites or that did not generate capital able to survive in the long term.

In reference to industrials, we find families that have their origins in the manufacturing companies created during the 18th century coming from either technicians related with the calico industry that in most cases finally owned their business, merchants who invested in this sector or foreign technicians. For instance we find a French technician named Jean Achon that through technical improvement was able to establish a calico printing factory whose sons continued.

²⁸ Rodrigo Alharilla, M (2007)

²⁹ Blasco, Y; Sudria, C (2009), Pla Tolrà, L (2014)

Francisco Juan Siataré a ship builder from a guild origin that invested the benefits in real estate. The Batlló a family of manufacturers that just in one generation passed from owning several workshops to one of the largest factories in Barcelona. And the Pons family silk merchants' that invested in a network of factories that lasted for more than one century. During the last decades of the century we observe that the second generation of industrialist that had constructed their factories outside Barcelona moved to downtown either because they favored living in the city or because they invested in the town. And that the new entries are related to factories no longer linked with textile, like Jose Mansana one of the few self-made man that we find which was related with the gas industry, Josep Pujol a bourgeois that in partnership with French industrialists constructed an important brick factory.

In consequence after 1860 the upper part of the elites closed upon themselves, which coincides with the literature of the time. *Before* the windows of opportunity were linked to specific external shocks. In the review we have identified the War of Succession, the Napoleonic Wars, the loss of the continental settlements and the Industrial Revolution. These shocks impacted in the elites and fostered deep changes. But *after* 1860 the economic crisis of 1864-68, the end of the *febre d'or* in 1882 and the loss of the settlements in 1898 did not produce a substitution in the elites. My hypothesis is that there is no change since 1860 as the nature of the crisis changed and the opportunities associated with the technological changes of the industrial revolution were mainly seized by the elites, with very little opportunities for outsiders.

Regarding the change in the nature of the crisis, the War of Succession and the Napoleonic Wars impacted heavily in the city. The first killed thousands of inhabitants forced to exile dozens of thousands and destroyed a fifth part of the city and banned the institution of Catalonia. The second was accompanied by years of French occupation and by the exile of most of the elites from the city. These violent impacts along with a technical change and a deep change in the markets produced the replacement of elites. But during the second half of the 19th century, although several uprisings, and three civil wars there was little intense violence *within* the city. And the elite members had the capital and knowledge to invest and to take advantage of the technical changes.

This progressive closure among the ranks of the elite is also reflected in the increasing age of the elite members and in the progressive drop-off from the direct implication in policy. While in 1808 the average age was around 40 years for the *Junta* members, in 1853 the top tax payers had increased the average age to 53 years and in 1919 it has raised to 61 years. This tendency was also pointed by Piketty et al (2006) for the same period in Paris. Part of this increase of course is associated with a general extension of the life expectancy but also to a general aging in elites due to the absence of new members.

Regarding their direct involvement in politics we have to remember that almost all the members were *de facto* actively involved due to their obligations as top tax payers or as active memberships of the different patronal lobbies. And most of them had a place in the Municipal Board and in different committees. But there is a progressive difference in the involvement and in the positions defended. While in the beginning of the 19th century we find some of the elite's members with a clear liberal allegiance, taking part in the civil wars and going to exile. In the middle of the century they become active parliamentarians and senators defending their economic positioning in person either in Madrid's Parliament or in Barcelona as Majors. But while in 1853 and in 1883 the ones who become deputies were individuals who need to have direct linkages with the central government in order to protect or promote their business (i.e. defend protectionism of the textile industry). These linkages for the generation of 1919 were no longer necessary as this influence was set up through other ways. They had the possibility of sending representatives to Madrid, to finance the generals that lead the *pronunciamientos* or directly to influence the monarchy following an aggressive policy of ennoblement that was set up by the monarchy for having a direct linkage with them.³⁰ Among the 1919 200 first tax payers we find 25 nobles, most of them of very recent creation. An example of this change can be found in the Guell family. Joan Guell i Ferrer was *Indianó*, manufacturer and one of the most influent figures in Barcelona, was deputy in Madrid defending the Catalonian industry. His grandson was a personal friend of the Monarch Alfonso XIII and did not needed to be deputy. This evolution on the influence marked a rupture in elites since the beginning of the XX century among those who remained closely linked to the city and those who jump to a national and even in some cases international level.

	1853	1883	1919
deputy	7	3	2
senator	3	3	
major	1	3	

Table 4. Members of the elites involved in politics.

5. Conclusions.

The two approaches presented in this paper give a complementary vision of the evolution of Barcelona's elites in the long term covering the 18th, 19th and 20th century. The aggregate data of taxes over commerce and industry are used to map those activities where elites are present. As we have seen the analysis demonstrates that commerce, banking and shipping were key activities and that most of Barcelona elites were linked to these activities in one way or another. This group presented stability over time and implement severe restrictions to access to its ranks,

³⁰ De Riquer, B (2013)

reinforced by a progressive concentration of capital. Industry on the other hand, although clearly underrepresented in the tax system had a pyramidal structure with very big factories with high permanence over time and little workshops. The importance of industry as a road to elites seems to become increasingly important during the second half of the century. Other groups appeared as consequence of economic growth and its importance is acknowledged by their incorporation into the tax system but do not generate big accumulations of capital. In this context real estate was for elites another way of investing in both economic and social capital and a way of transferring the capital. The analysis of the long term series of proprieties helps us to understand the inequality associated with the evolution of elites.

We complete this analysis through a prosopographical approach of the principal lineages. Through a systematic review we find that continuity is also evident, being the movements among the upper 5% common but cases of “rags to riches” very infrequent. The fact that we have been able to track that certain lineages have maintained their presence among the economic elites since the 18th until today, highlights the importance of studding the initial accumulation of capital.

Biographies also help to obtain information that is clearly unavailable through an aggregate analysis. In the first place we are able to situate the origin of the fortunes and the windows of opportunity. In this we have concluded that the Antilles during the first half of the 19th century was an exceptional place for promotion either through the effort of generations or by some other ways, whose impact still is matter of controversy. Also, commerce and industry was a way for families very close in an economic sense to elites, to enrich and establish trade houses and factories that would become key actors in the life of the city. But after the decade of 1860's the entries of new members diminish and opportunities seem to be captured by elite's members. After the impacts of the Napoleonic Wars and the Industrial Revolution it becomes extremely difficult to reach the top, and for those that had already reach it took (generally) decades to step down. The descent from this category could take generations and was generally associated to a dispersion of fortunes among heirs accounting very little cases of bankruptcy. This lack of renewal is reflected in the increasing age of the members of the elite and how they become less interested in a direct involvement in politics.

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Annex 1

	1853				1883			
	tax payers [individuals]	upper 5% [individuals]	Total Taxes	taxes paid by upper 5%	tax payers [individuals]	upper 5% [individuals]	Total Taxes	taxes paid by upper 5%
Other commercial services	6312	12	494.546	10.760	4293	8	813.808	8.488
Commercial Activities	605	417	400.087	335.363	370	284	747.644	671.809
Bankers	5	0	3.432	0	130	56	171.304	120.300
Transport	0	0	0	0	148	25	96.609	54.193
Liberal professions	333	14	72.687	9.010	1283	125	426.171	110.226
Manufacturing and Industry	967	48	123.219	44.549	1387	77	396.701	150.438
Other professions	0	0	0	0	3173	103	364.750	45.306
Retailers and small commerce	81	9	29.672	5.932	503	61	178.147	60.499
Recreational Activities (Cafes, Restaurants, Theatres)	192	20	64.437	19.402	117	9	56.936	13.162
Managers	0	0	0	0	256	2	26.891	2.814
Newspapers and printers.	46	4	13.219	3.531	78	0	7.356	0
Total	8543	524	1.210.341	428.547	11738	750	3.286.317	1.237.235
Other commercial services	0,74	0,02	0,41	0,03	0,37	0,01	0,25	0,01
Commercial Activities	0,07	0,80	0,33	0,78	0,03	0,38	0,23	0,54
Liberal professions	0,04	0,03	0,06	0,02	0,11	0,17	0,13	0,09
Manufacturing and Industry	0,11	0,09	0,10	0,10	0,12	0,10	0,12	0,12
Other professions	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,27	0,14	0,11	0,04
Retailers and small commerce	0,01	0,02	0,02	0,01	0,04	0,08	0,05	0,05
Bankers	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,01	0,07	0,05	0,10
Transport	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,01	0,03	0,03	0,04
Recreational Activities (Cafes, Restaurants, Theatres)	0,02	0,04	0,05	0,05	0,01	0,01	0,02	0,01
Managers	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,02	0,00	0,01	0,00
Newspapers and printers.	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,00	0,00	0,00
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1