



Spain: Conditional Democracy by Christopher Abel; Nissa Torrents; Democratic Politics in Spain: Spanish Politics after Franco by David S. Bell

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The American Political Science Review, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Mar., 1985), pp. 232-233

Published by: [American Political Science Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1956171>

Accessed: 29/12/2012 18:23

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Much of the existing research on political business cycles focuses on fiscal policy. Not at all a bad choice, considering that it is the structure of budget outlays and receipts that is controlled most directly by the president or Congress. However, one need not be a monetarist to recognize that monetary policy has an important impact upon inflation and the rate of growth of the economy. Yet because of the Federal Reserve Board's statutory independence, too little attention has been paid to monetary aspects of political business cycles.

Into this relative vacuum steps *Monetary Politics*. Woolley examines the Federal Reserve Board as a policymaking institution rather than searching the data for relationships between electoral timing and monetary policy innovations (although he does a bit of this too). This permits Woolley to trace the steps of policy development. The heart of this book examines the relationship between the Federal Reserve and each of the actors or interest groups that might circumscribe the FRB's independence. The pressures upon the Federal Reserve Board to respond to political considerations are intense. Articulate and powerful lobbies argue strenuously on both sides of the unemployment versus inflation issue. Monetary politics describes the Fed's careful balancing act between economic growth and inflation. Does the Fed make its decisions solely on the basis of technical considerations, or does it bow to political persuasion?

In successive chapters Woolley analyzes the relationship between the Fed and the banking community, economists, the president, and Congress. Woolley analyzes both the incentives and the capacity of each major actor to influence the Fed. Is there sufficient unanimity of opinion in the Congress to permit it to direct the Federal Reserve? Do economists have control over the opinions of Board members? How influential is the president in setting FRB policy? Woolley shows that none of these groups are able to control the

actions of the Federal Reserve Board. In a tightly argued chapter, Woolley shows that Congress neither has the inclination nor the purpose to direct monetary policy. The independence of the Board is a functional arrangement that allows individual congressmen to stay afloat in the murky waters of monetary economics while appearing to satisfy constituent demands. The chapter on presidential-Fed relations shows that despite intermittent attempts at jawboning, the president also fails to control monetary policy. Woolley believes the historical similarity between presidential positions and Reserve Board policies reflect a shared consensus on the correct course of action. When no such consensus exists, Woolley views the positions taken by the Federal Reserve Board as institution preserving; the Board assumes policy positions in an attempt to reduce political threats from the outside.

Monetary Politics is a valuable addition to the literature because of its attention to the monetary side of the political business cycle and for its institutional analysis. When balanced against its strengths, the weaknesses of this book are small. I think fault can be found with the type of "class analysis" that views Board members graduating from the same elite schools as holding a set of common interests. Further, what little statistical analysis presented is not always convincing. Evidence of a monetary cycle should probably focus on presidential election years versus nonelection years rather than the odd/even pattern that Woolley uses (p. 128). In addition, as Woolley recognizes, pair-wise analysis of interest groups may not capture actors acting in concert. Finally, I wish the research in this volume had included the Reagan-Volker period. I think the current set of monetary policy issues would have made valuable grist for the Woolley mill.

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Comparative and Other Area Studies

Spain: Conditional Democracy. Edited by Christopher Abel and Nissa Torrents. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984. Pp. ii + 198. \$24.50.)

Democratic Politics in Spain: Spanish Politics after Franco. Edited by David S. Bell. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. Pp. xiii + 203. \$25.00.)

There has been far too little analysis of Spain's unique transition from authoritarianism to

democracy after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, and an even more unfortunate paucity of qualitative research on the remarkably stable democracy that has since emerged. Taken together, these two edited volumes are an invaluable addition to English-language scholarship in the latter area. Both books have assembled a collection of articles that will be invaluable for specialists and accessible for all students of comparative politics.

The contributions to the Bell volume emphasize Spain's similarities with West European democracies. Spanish politics are, as Bell argues in his preface, surprisingly un-Latin. The disintegration of the party of the transition, the Union of the Democratic Center, convincingly explained by José Amodia, did not lead to a polarization of Spanish politics as many had feared. Elizabeth Nash's chapter examines the rapid moderation of the Spanish Socialist Workers party, an important factor obstructing such a polarization. Bell's contribution attributes the self-destruction of the Spanish Communist party, another ingredient of the centripetal nature of the party system, to the unresolved contradictions of Eurocommunism and the intransigent authoritarianism of the party leadership. Bruce Young contributes an informative account of the historic elections of October, 1982 that produced Spain's first ever single-party majority government and the young democracy's first alternation of power. What is lacking from the discussion of the major political parties is a chapter on the conservative Popular Alliance, now Spain's second largest party. The Popular Alliance is clearly one of the keys to the future of Spanish democracy, and a party whose democratic credentials have at times been called in question.

The Bell volume also contains two chapters treating areas in which Spain's politics continue to diverge from its West European counterparts. Mike Newton's chapter on the peoples and regions of Spain provides a cogent overview to an extremely complex aspect of the Spanish polity. Pedro Vilanova is, not surprisingly, the most pessimistic of the contributors in his consideration of the Spanish armed forces, which continue to pose the most formidable threat to parliamentary democracy. The three remaining contributions fit into the collection more awkwardly. Peter Holmes provides a straightforward description of relations between Spain and the EEC. Most readers will find the chapter on Spanish social structure, written by José Cazorla Perez and J. Mentabes Pereira, too descriptive and somewhat less useful. The book's major weakness is the inclusion of Pierre Subra de Biesses's piece on constitutional norms and central administration. It is dry, overly technical (much in the legalistic tradition of Spanish political science), and out of place in the volume.

The overall tone of the Abel and Torrents book is less favorable toward Spanish democracy. A number of the contributors question the profundity of the democratization process and point to the regime's inability to control the military, redistribute income, secularize politics, and narrow the gap between political participation of the sexes. The contributions of *Spain: Conditional*

Democracy overlap with those of *Democratic Politics in Spain* in three areas. There is a superb chapter on ethnic nationalism by Salvador Giner and a valuable essay on the Spanish Army by Paul Preston. In addition, Angel Viñas has provided an important analysis of the international dimension of Spanish politics, specifically, relations with the United States and NATO. *Spain: Conditional Democracy* places much less emphasis on party politics and focuses more on social and cultural aspects of Spain's new democracy. Audrey Brassloff provides a competent treatment of the role of the Catholic Church in post-Franco Spain. Nissa Torrents explores the renaissance in cinema and the media since the death of the dictator, and Juan Masoliver documents how the political change has influenced Spanish literature.

A particularly provocative contribution is Monica Threlfall's examination of women and political participation in the new democracy. Her chapter reveals a disturbing absence of women in positions of influence in the governing Socialist party and a less surprising lower voter turnout. There are two general treatments of the transition. Shlomo Ben-Ami's chapter on the legacy of franquism provides some interesting insights into Spain's transition from above, but Juan Antonio Ortega Díaz-Ambrona's highly descriptive synopsis of the Spanish transition does not add as much to the volume. Like its counterpart in the Bell collection, the contribution on the economy and popular movements, written by a team of scholars from the Universidad Central de Barcelona, seems too cursory to be of much use. To its credit, and in contrast to the Bell book, the Abel and Torrents volume includes a bibliography and index.

On the whole, both works are needed additions to a much understudied area of comparative politics. *Democratic Politics in Spain* would be better for classroom use, and is, on the whole, more informative and rigorous. *Spain: Conditional Democracy* treats an interesting series of topics not previously written about and is an excellent complement to the Bell volume. Despite their different emphases, both works underscore the considerable achievements of Spanish democracy, as well as the persistence of obstacles and limits. So far, Spain has managed to avoid the political instability of neighboring Portugal or the paralysis of Italian democracy. All the contributors would likely agree with Vilanova's assertion that Spain is a "weak, not particularly effective democracy, but a democracy nevertheless" (p. 147).

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