

10.4 Antonio Herrera and John Markoff – Rural movements and the transition to democracy in Spain Room 203

Chair: Vicente Pinilla

The multiple connections of social movements and the history of democracy are emerging as a lively area for research and theory. Recently, scholars have taken a very long-term look at the way the development of social movements as a form of conflict has been profoundly intertwined with the history of democratisation, at movements as a constituent element of democracy, and at movements as sites of democratic practice and discourse.

The Spanish democratic transition of the 1970s and 1980s is an important and instructive case in point. A very strong consensus emerged that a central feature of the Spanish process was the role played by shrewdly negotiated compromises between reformers inside the late Franco regime and leaders of opposition forces, particularly the Socialist and Communist parties.

We will argue here that the significance of social movements for Spain's democratisation goes well beyond this standard story. We will argue that rural movements did a great deal more than just create a set of destabilizing problems that wise elites successfully managed by devising a democratic national framework.

First we analyse the structures of domination in the Spanish countryside bequeathed by the Franco regime and largely left in place by the negotiations of post-Franco national elites. Second, we focus our attention in four social movement campaigns in the late 1970s and early 1980s that undid rural Francoism, thereby profoundly altering the shape of the democracy negotiated by the national elites.

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