Voting under Franco’s and Salazar’s regimes after 1945

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Are elections enough to consider a regime to be democratic? Since 1945 the number of states which hold elections increased precipitously. Yet, not all elections reflect the competitive and plural nature of elections in Western democracies. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, political science has recognized the regimes in Eastern Europe and Asia after the “Third wave” of democratization as ideal cases to test theories of democratic elections, but neglected Western Europe. Is Western Europe an exception? Do Western European countries display similar electoral trends?

After the allied victory in 1945, a significant number of European states remained or became dictatorships. Nevertheless, during these years they held regular elections. While these European non-democracies shared a common electoral model, a comprehensive analysis which takes into account their intricacies using primary sources would be a career project. For this reason, I focus on the Iberian dictatorships. In my research I evaluate the historical significance of elections held in Franco’s Spain and Salazar and Caetano’s Portugal. I also identify their purpose and assess their consequences.

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