

11. SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY: NAVIGATING GLOBAL SHIFTS AND DOMESTIC CRISES

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1 INTRODUCTION

There is a general consensus in the literature on contemporary Spain that three processes have changed the whole country as well as its foreign policy: democratization, Europeanization and the modernization of its society (see, among others, Mesa, 1988; Gillespie, Rodrigo & Story, 1995; Barbé, 1999; Kennedy, 2000; Torreblanca, 2001; Powell, 2001; Closa, 2001; Piedrafita et al, 2007, Morata and Mateo, 2007, Pereira, 2010; García Cantalapiedra and Pacheco Pardo, 2014). This chapter acknowledges the importance of these three drivers and contributes to the existing literature by broadening the catalogue of drivers of change. It assesses the effects of three major international factors (the end of the Cold War, September 11 and the global financial crisis) as well

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as more recent domestic transformations. In the last decade, Spain has undergone a multifaceted crisis: economic (global uncertainties were amplified by the debt crisis and the bursting of the housing bubble), political (rejection of corruption and privileges of mainstream parties, the eruption of the *indignados* movement in 2011 and the subsequent erosion of Spain's imperfect bipartisan system) and territorial (facing the challenge of a persistent pro-independence movement in Catalonia since 2012). In 2020, the health crisis was added to the list. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has so far amplified the three pre-existing crises.

This chapter assesses the intensity and direction of change in general foreign policy orientation, defense and security policy, aid policy, bilateral relations with a selected group of countries – in this case France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Morocco and Venezuela – and Spain's commitment to multilateral frameworks. The chapter sheds light on processes and dynamics that are shared by other countries studied in this book, but it will also highlight some peculiarities of the Spanish case. Although the book focuses on change, it also points out the areas where continuity prevails, either due to the strength of political consensus or to bureaucratic and diplomatic inertias.

2 GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION: AMBITION, PRIORITIES AND LEADERSHIP

With the return of democracy in the late seventies, the main goal of Spanish foreign policy was the normalization or rehabilitation of the country in the international community (Barbé, 1990). After a constituent period that laid the basis for a renewed and modernized international identity, scholars have pointed at the consolidation of a basic consensus around European integration as a priority and multilateralism as a principle for Spain's foreign policy (del Arenal, 2008). To a large extent, this consensus was aimed at turning the page of Francoist foreign policy, which was held responsible for Spain's isolation and economic and political backwardness (Morán, 1980). One aspect where we can observe a significant continuity among Spanish governments, and a broad consensus among political parties, experts and pundits, is that Spain is considered to be a "middle power". Politicians and academics have used this concept to describe Spain's current *and* potential international role. For instance, Celestino del Arenal (2011: 231) described Spain under the Felipe González government as "a middle power, with a strong normative character, with a significant role in international affairs and the willingness to project itself globally and particularly in Latin America and the Mediterranean".

Europe, Latin America and the Mediterranean constitute the regional priorities of Spanish foreign policy. This is conceptualized as Spain's triangle of priorities, in which Europe occupies the top of

the triangle dominating and determining the relationship with the other two regional priorities (Barbé, 2011). In the relationship with Latin America and the Mediterranean, there was an effort to update the conceptual toolbox in order to illustrate change vis-à-vis Francoist foreign policy. When referring to the links with Latin America, the traditional concept of *Hispanidad* (Spanishness) was replaced by the idea of building an ibero-american community that also embraced Portugal and Brazil. The concept of *Africanismo*, associated with Spain late colonial ambitions, was also removed from the official narrative. The so-called “traditional friendship with the Arab peoples” (Algora Weber, 2010) was replaced by the idea of promoting cooperation in the Mediterranean (Barbé, Mestres & Soler i Lecha, 2007; Hernando de Larramendi, 2009; Vaquer i Fanés, 2014; Soler i Lecha and Morillas, 2020).

The conceptualization of Spain as a middle power and the triangle of priorities have been uncontested. Nevertheless, the way in which Spanish foreign policy was framed underwent some changes. For instance, under Aznar’s conservative governments, the goal was to be recognized as a global actor, for which Spain needed to increase its presence in areas that had been neglected before, such as the Asia-Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa (Piqué, 2001). In that period, Aznar aspired to join the G-8 and aimed to be recognized as the best European ally of the US. Aznar and his inner circle considered Atlanticism as the best way to upgrade Spain’s international status. The terrorist attacks of September 11 presented a unique opportunity to reach out to the US and demonstrate Spain’s alignment with Washington’s priorities and policies. Aznar also followed a more aggressive strategy in European politics, particularly in the negotiation of voting rights in the Nice Treaty, in which Spain joined forces with Poland. These two choices moved Spain away from the EU’s core and resulted in a deterioration of its relations with France and Germany.

After winning the 2004 elections, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero invoked the idea of a “return to Europe” (Presidencia del Gobierno, 2004). Neither Rodríguez Zapatero or his ministers renounced the idea of acting and being recognized as a middle power. Interestingly, the first words of the prime minister in his 2006 state of the nation speech were: “we are a middle power within the European Union and the eighth industrial power in the world” (Rodríguez Zapatero, 2006). The rest of the speech stressed Spain’s capacity to integrate new citizens, progress in gender policies or Spain’s contribution to peace through multilateralism and combatting inequality through cooperation. This was a clear attempt to demarcate differences with the domestic and international policies of his predecessor, or, to put it differently, an attempt to “de-Aznarise” Spanish foreign policy (González del Miño, 2007).

In the early 2010s, Spain's international ambitions suffered a serious blow due to the convergence of political, economic and territorial crises. Austerity cuts, corruption scandals, the rise of anti-establishment political forces, the fragmentation of the Spanish parliament and the secessionist movement in Catalonia forced successive Spanish governments to downgrade their recent international aspirations and redirect their energies to domestic politics. The appointment of the conservative leader, Mariano Rajoy, in December 2011 intensified this trend as the new prime minister showed little appetite for foreign policy issues. In what has become a catchphrase in Spanish foreign policy, he decided to follow the advice once given to Aznar by a member of his party: "*menos Siria y más Soria*" [Less Syria and more Soria]². That is: cut down on international projection to devote more efforts to domestic affairs.

The downscaling of Spain's international ambitions did not go unnoticed and many analysts wondered whether Spain was punching below its weight. Charles Powell, director of the Madrid-based think tank Real Instituto Elcano, admitted that "the economic and financial crisis has encouraged political elites to reconsider Spain's external commitments and allegiances", which "has undermined Spain's overall prestige and credibility" (Powell, 2012: 23). Ignacio Molina, working for the same organization, reflected a similar concern regarding Spain's influence in the EU. He stated that "If Spain ever punched above its weight in Brussels, it now does the very opposite" and considered that "after years of slow de-Europeanisation (...) Spain must not only put the integration process back at the heart of its national project, but it must also dare to co-lead it" (Molina, 2013: 9).

In 2018, Pedro Sánchez, the leader of the Socialist Party, became prime minister after a motion of no confidence against Rajoy. In January 2020, after several months of political instability and two elections, Sánchez announced the creation of the first coalition government since Spain's transition back to democracy. Unlike most of its predecessors, Sánchez speaks foreign languages and has shown an interest in foreign policy matters from the very beginning of his term as prime minister. In principle, this creates favorable conditions for a "presidentialised" foreign policy, yet domestic tensions could impede Sánchez to invest time and energy in the external front. In terms of priorities, one of the novelties is the increased interest in Africa, which was reflected in the coalition agreement (PSOE and Unidas Podemos Coalición Progresista, 2019). Yet, there is also a lot of continuity, as reflected in the speech before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of

²Soria is the least populated province of Spain and is commonly used as a metaphor for rural Spain. The idea of "*menos Siria and más Soria*" is attributed to Jesús Posada, former president of the region of Castilla and Leon and then Spanish parliamentarian, himself born in Soria.

Foreign Affairs minister Arancha González Laya. She described Spain as a “nodal country” which is “firmly anchored in the EU and a proud member of the community of countries of Ibero-America and the Caribbean, with a clear Atlantic vocation and capacity of influence in the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean” (González Laya, 2020).

3 DEFENSE AND SECURITY POLICY: TERRORISM, ALLIANCES AND MILITARY INDUSTRY

In contrast to most EU countries, terrorism has had a long-lasting impact on Spanish domestic and foreign policies. For several decades, Spain suffered from terrorist attacks by ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*), a Basque secessionist organization created in 1959 and dissolved in May 2018, responsible for the death of more than 800 people, among which 343 civilians. More recently, the country was the target of two major jihadist attacks: the 2004 Madrid train bombings (193 killed) and the 2017 Barcelona attacks (16 killed). The terrorist threat has had important consequences for Spain’s foreign policy: it conditioned the relationship with other countries dependent on whether they were perceived as indispensable allies in the fight against those threats. The best-known case is that of cooperation France in the fight against ETA, which suffered some ups and downs (Morán, 1997). This bilateral cooperation with Spain’s northern neighbor was reinforced by the shared fight against the jihadi threat, which also became a key aspect of Spain-Morocco relations. Yet, terrorism has also worsened relations with more reluctant partners. This is the case for Belgium, whose courts refused the extradition of ETA members on several occasions, and Venezuela, which once was a popular safe haven for members of this organization.

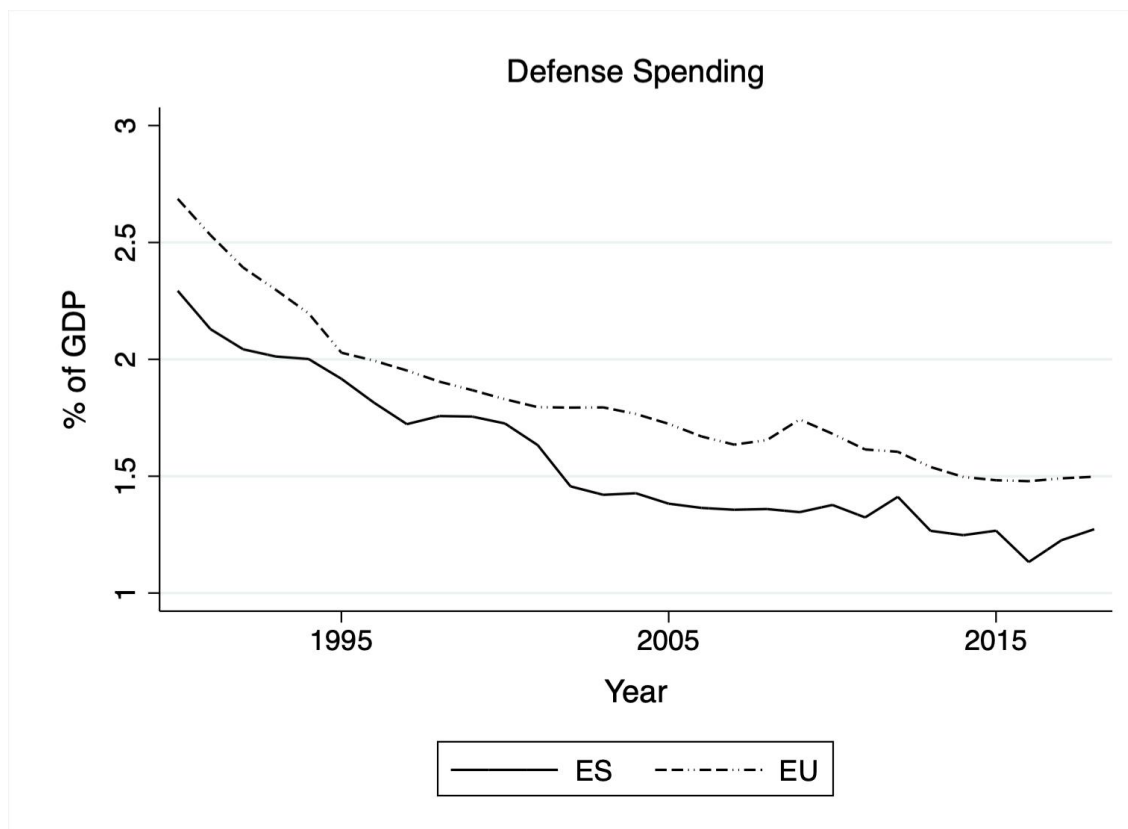
The September 11 attacks were a game changer. Spain, who perceived that it had been talking to deaf ears when urging for a more robust European and international cooperation in this field, understood that it was the right moment to vindicate its position. At the EU level, Spain took advantage of the fact that it held the EU presidency to upload its priorities into the common agenda. This strategy was very visible in the preparations of the European Council of Seville, which included an annexed declaration on the fight against terrorism as part of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). At the global level, the government led by José María Aznar understood that the fight against terrorism could be a launching pad for closer relations with Washington. Aznar became an enthusiastic supporter of the global war against terrorism and this paved the way for one of the most divisive foreign policy decisions in Spain’s contemporary history: support of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

A second driver for change was Spain's participation in security organizations. While there was always broad social and political consensus on Spain's participation in the European Union, NATO has been far more contentious. It was one of the few issues where political parties could not reach a consensus during Spain's transition to democracy. During the seventies and eighties large segments of Spain's left were opposed to NATO membership. However, since the beginning of the 1990s, the issue was no longer an object of major public debates, partly due to the end of the Cold War. Even *Podemos* is no longer advocating for Spain's exit from the alliance, while arguing that there should be a gradual strengthening of the EU's defense capabilities.

The participation in peacekeeping operations, particularly in the framework of the UN, has been backed across the political spectrum and is considered as a channel to modernize and even democratize the Spanish armed forces (Labatut: 1993; Soler i Lecha et al., 2006; Serra, 2010; Navajas Zubeldia, 2014). Spain's first contributed to a UN operation in 1989, when it participated with a contingent in the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM). The participation of Spanish forces in Iraq in 2003 was far more controversial. The country witnessed massive anti-war protest movements and the opposition was very vocal in criticizing Aznar's decision to support the US-led invasion of Iraq without a UN mandate. 2004 was one of those rare occasions in which foreign policy became a major issue in a general election (Barreñada, Martín and Sanahuja, 2004; Aixalà, 2005; Sahagún, 2005). Together with the impact of the Madrid train bombings, Aznar's alignment with Washington against the will of the majority of the Spanish population, was a key driver of the victory of the then relatively unknown Rodríguez Zapatero. One of the first decisions of Zapatero's government was the withdrawal of the Spanish troops from Iraq. This unilateral and rapid movement was consistent with the will of the population but intensified the breach of foreign policy consensus among mainstream parties and temporally damaged relations with the US.

Aznar's support to the Iraq war, in combination with the financial and human cost of the military operation (Spain was not militarily involved in the first phase of the war but deployed troops as part of a "peace-keeping" international division) resulted in an increased social oversight on the deployment of military missions abroad. Spanish governments have been required to better justify the need of such deployments, providing a greater say to Parliament (Arteaga, 2011: 937). In 2020, Spain was participating in 17 operations in four different continents under different formats: mostly UN, NATO and EU missions but also in the ad hoc international coalition in Iraq against the self-proclaimed Islamic State as well as bilateral missions with France in the Sahel. Yet, the largest contingent was deployed in UNIFIL's mission in Lebanon (610 men and women in 2020).

The third main driver of change are defense expenditures, and related to it, the role of Spain's military industry. On this front there are some elements of continuity. First and foremost, Spain's defense budget is consistently lower than that of other members of the EU and NATO, despite the US' insistence that all NATO members should reach the 2% budgetary threshold and several unmet promises by Spanish ministers to do so. The impact of austerity cuts has been lower in this area when compared to other budget lines, such as development aid. On this, there are no noticeable differences between socialist and conservative governments and this is mainly due to the nature of some defense contracts, as well as the fact that a significant part of the budget corresponds to fixed costs (salaries, maintenance, etc.). Another continuity is the prominent role of the Spanish defense industry. Once more, both socialist and conservative governments seem to agree on the priority given to the internationalization of this sector as part of the effort to promote Spain's industry and create jobs.



One area of significant change is the increased social debate and popular scrutiny on the morality of some arms exports. The most relevant example concerns military contracts with Saudi Arabia, mainly as a result of the humanitarian disaster caused by the Saudi involvement in the war

in Yemen. This has led some local and international NGOs to put pressure on the Spanish government to halt Spain's exports to Saudi Arabia, particularly after the intensifications of bombings and casualties in the summer of 2018. The announcement in September 2018 by the Spanish Ministry of Defense to cancel the sale of 400 laser-guided bombs to Saudi Arabia by the government represented a major turning point. Yet, the ministry was forced to backtrack due to strong pressure by the Saudi government, who threatened to cancel other contracts, by the military industry and by local and regional politicians afraid that this could imply job-destruction in their constituencies. The level of controversy and public debate around that decision was unprecedented. In Spain, several academics and activists had been denouncing Spain's arms exports to countries at war or repressing fundamental freedoms for years (Fisas, 1995; Ortega and Calvo, 2015), but have had little impact on the foreign policy making. In contrast, the 2018 controversy on Saudi Arabia, even if arms sale critics were ultimately unsuccessful, showed that the scope of actors able to shape foreign policy decisions has widened and that social movements and advocacy groups have become more influential.

4 OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE: INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, IDEOLOGICAL BIASES, BUDGET CUTS, AND MIGRATIONS DIPLOMACY

Compared to other countries in Western Europe, Spain is a newcomer when it comes to official development aid (ODA). Although Spain created the Fund for Aid and Development (FAD) in 1976, until 1981 Spain was still a recipient of international aid. In 1987 the government established the guiding principles for Spanish development cooperation. One year later, it created the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) (Sotillo, 2014; Olivé and Pérez, 2019b). The role of Spanish civil society was key in creating domestic pressure for more generous international cooperation programs from the very beginning.

Another peculiarity of Spanish development assistance is the major role played by local and regional governments. As explained by Aitor Pérez (2014), in relative terms Spain is the most decentralized actor when it comes to ODA, with one third of bilateral cooperation being spent by sub-state governments. This has allowed some regions or cities to identify their own thematic or geographical priorities. Two examples are Andalusia's focus on Morocco (Desrues and Moreno Nieto, 2007) or, at the local level, the support provided by Barcelona's municipality to Proactiva Open Arms, a rescue and first aid NGO operating in the Mediterranean.

Spain's cooperation policy also has some differences with other major donors when it comes to its regional priorities. The central position of Latin America in the list of priorities and the cooperation

record of NGOs and local and regional governments is one of the elements explaining why those funds devoted to medium-income countries are particularly high despite encouragement of the UN to focus on low income ones (Intermon Oxfam, 2019: 71). Yet, more recently, sub-Saharan Africa has become more prominent. Moreover, based on recent budgetary evolutions, Iliana Olivé and Aitor Martínez (2019a) have concluded that Spain's aid and development policy is less Latin American, more African and far more Europeanized than typically described. There is a scholarly debate on Spanish development policy between scholars who that aid is guided by the preservation of linkages with former colonies and economic interests might guide Spanish aid (Tezanos, 2008) and scholars who suggest that "inertia, herd behaviour, and a lack of specialisation are the determining factors" (Olivé and Pérez, 2019b: 133).

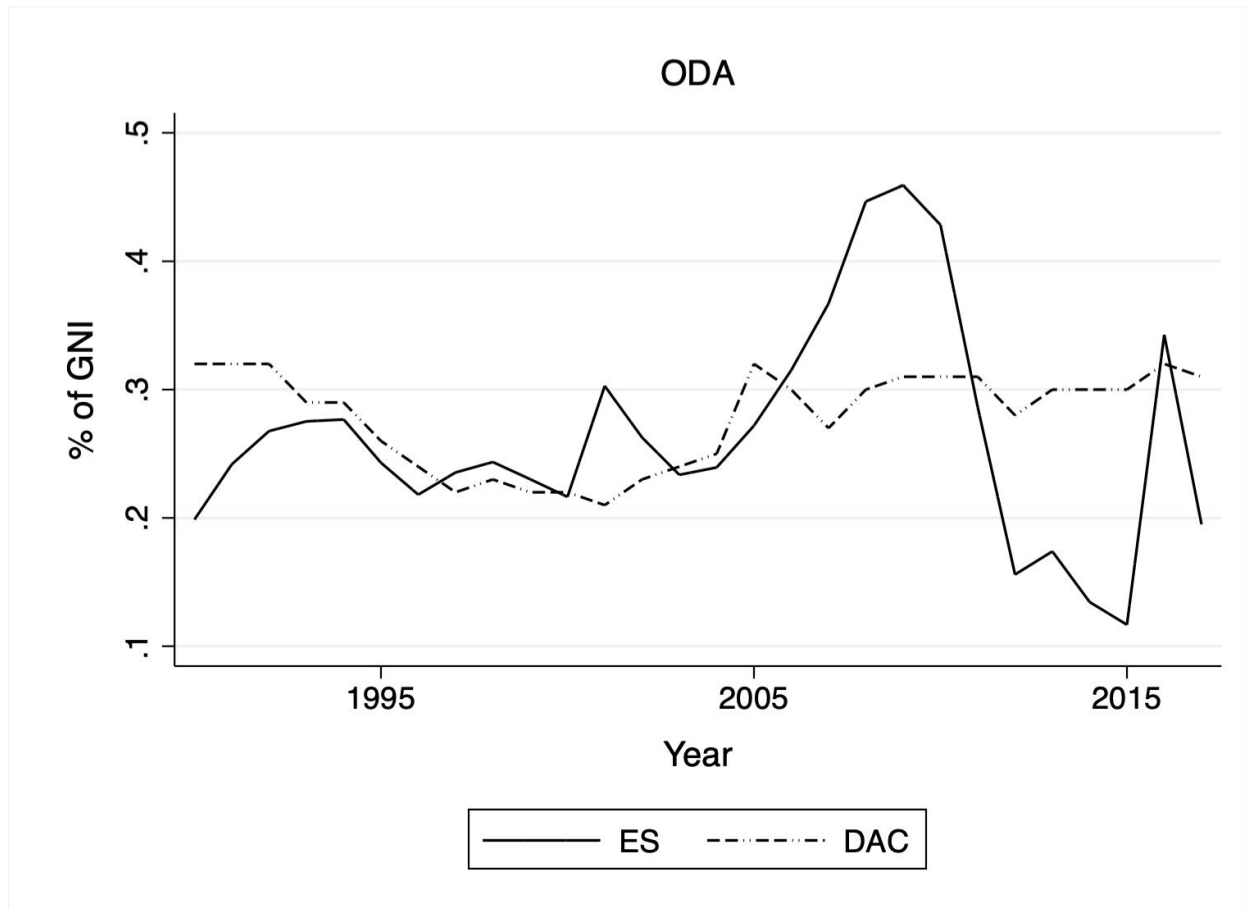
Together with those peculiarities, it is also important to identify the similarities with the other EU members. Development aid is not an exception to the broader process of Europeanisation of Spanish external action (Sanahuja, 2012). Much like other international actors, Spain considers its aid policy as one of the components of the country's international projection and as part of its external action, particularly after the victory of the Socialist government in the 2004 elections. Since then, the official denomination of the Foreign Affairs Ministry incorporated the cooperation component. In addition, there have been several institutional and policy developments trying to develop an integrated approach and the so-called "all of the government" or "all of the country" approach. This is the case of the National Pact against Poverty, which was endorsed in 2007 by the government, the opposition and NGOs (Sotillo, 2014), or the 2012 launch of the Masar programme that followed after Arab Spring (Michou, Soler i Lecha and Torreblanca, 2014). The 2015 External Action Strategy of the Foreign Affairs Ministry also detailed that ODA aimed at contributing to attain Spain's foreign policy goals such as projecting Spain as an advanced democracy or strengthening Spain's international influence, especially in Europe, Latin America, the Mediterranean Basin and before world powers (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, 2015: 76).

The economic and financial crisis and the austerity policies that followed had a major impact on Spanish international aid. Spain was not an exception, as other EU countries, particularly in Southern Europe, followed a similar trend. However, in the case of Spain the impact was particularly strong. This was partly due to the severity of the economic crisis in Spain, but also due to specific domestic political dynamics. With the victory of the socialist party in the 2004 elections, the government led by Zapatero had decided to significantly augment the resources devoted to development aid. This was consistent with its general efforts to differentiate its foreign policy with that of Aznar and to better connect with the demands of Spain's civil society, which had been putting pressure on national,

regional and local governments since the 1990s to make further progress towards the goal of reaching the 0.7 ODA/GNI ratio. In consequence, Spain moved from 0.24% to 0.46% between 2004 and 2009. However, Spain's ODA rapidly decreased after the global financial crisis. By 2012, after the budget cuts implemented from 2010, Spain's development aid represented only 0.16%. This downward trend continued during the governments led by the Popular Party. By 2015, when Spain was already announcing that the crisis was over and that it was growing quicker than most economies in the euro-zone, ODA reached its lowest point, with only 0.12%. During this period, top governmental figures, like Foreign Affairs Minister José Manuel García-Margallo, presented those cuts as a painful sacrifice, arguing that the alternative was even worse, suggesting that the government had to choose between cutting ODA or cutting health and retirement benefits (Agencias, 2012).

The change of government, after the motion of no confidence against Rajoy, did not result in an increase in ODA. This was partly due to the impossibility of approving a national budget (in fact, the rejected budget proposal of 2019 foresaw a 19% increase) and two successive elections that put governmental initiatives on hold (Gutiérrez, 2019). In consequence, Spain's development policy was characterized as a comatose policy (Fanjul, 2019). The agreement to form a leftist coalition government in Spain, which took office in January 2020, may finally revert this trend. The Socialist Party and *Unidas Podemos* set the ambitious goal of reaching a 0,5 ODA/GNI ratio by the end the 2019-2023 term (PSOE and Unidas Podemos Coalición Progresista, 2019).

Whereas the dire economic impact of COVID-19 could compromise this goal, Spain has been one of the EU member states that has most vocally asked for a generous support to its southern neighbors in the fight against the pandemic. For instance, Sánchez co-signed the letter with other international leaders asking for a debt relief and stimulus packages for Africa (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). Madrid also led other governments, regional organizations and financial institutions to plead for a joint response to counter the COVID-19 crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean (Abellán, 2020).



Next to the economic crisis and governmental changes, Spanish development policy has also been impacted by a new focus on migration (Tezanos and Gutierrez, 2016). This development can be traced back to the period 2006-2008, when there was a surge of irregular arrivals by boat to the Canary Islands (almost 60.000 people in three years). This situation not only prompted Spain to ask for greater involvement of the EU, and specifically FRONTEX, in the Atlantic Ocean and boosted police and maritime cooperation with Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal. It also translated into an increase in Spain's development assistance to the countries of origin or transit of irregular migrants. For instance, in its first-ever Africa Plan (2006-2008), the Spanish government announced the opening of new Technical Cooperation Offices in Cape Verde and Mali and expressed the willingness to launch co-development projects in Gambia, Nigeria and, again, Mali. In this process, Spain developed what has been referred as a new form of 'migration diplomacy' (Pinyol, 2009; Senge, 2018) and which has been presented by governmental officials

but also by some experts as a best practice to be emulated by other EU member states (Fine & Torreblanca, 2019).

5 BILATERAL RELATIONS: EUROPEAN ALLIANCES, NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS AND DOMESTIC POLITICISATION

The three traditional priorities of Spain's foreign policy, Europe, the Mediterranean and Latin America, have been translated into a dual strategy. On the one hand, Spain has actively favored multilateral cooperation frameworks at a regional or interregional level (see next section). On the other hand, it has entertained privileged bilateral relations with key countries in each of those regions. While multilateral commitments tend to generate wide political consensus in Spanish foreign policy, bilateral relations are a fertile ground for political confrontation, especially relations with non-EU countries.

In the EU, Spain has consistently pursued a strategy of developing preferential relations with the big member states, particularly with France and Germany. Bilateral government summits became the main platform in which ministers discuss and promote new initiatives for bilateral cooperation in areas that may include education, transport, anti-terrorism or energy. Equally important, European and international affairs are also discussed in these meetings. Through these summits, Spain has not only sought to upgrade bilateral relations but to project itself as a major EU actor (Mestres, 2014). Even before these summits, Spain had cultivated preferential relations with France and Germany. In the late 1980s, the excellent personal connection between Helmut Kohl and Felipe González was seen as one of the elements that allowed Spain to upload its own priorities to the European agenda and reinforce Madrid's image as a committed and constructive partner in the post-Cold War period.

As with many other foreign policy issues, bilateral relations were also affected by Aznar's disruptive choices. The privileged relations with the US and its allies in Europe (mainly the UK) moved Spain away from Paris and Berlin. It is worth noting that in an interview in the *Washington Post*, Aznar argued that since the 1800s, "Spain's decision-making in foreign policy has been subordinate to France, which is no longer the case. Some are happy, others are not. I'm happy for Spain to be making its own decisions. All of a sudden we find ourselves at the forefront" (Boustany, 2004). In sharp contrast with Aznar's policies, one of the main mottoes of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's foreign policy was to "bring Spain back to the EU's core". This implied mending ties with Berlin and, above all, Paris. This strategy bore some fruit and French support was key to including Spain as one of the permanent guest invitees to the G-20. From 2011 onwards, Spain's relations with Paris and

Berlin, but also with the rest of the EU member states, was overtaken by the need to gather their support in the face of the economic crisis and the secessionist challenge in Catalonia.

In contrast, the relationship with the United Kingdom has been less institutionalized, despite the density of bilateral relations at all levels between both countries: tourism, financial sector or foreign residents. The relationship has been often captured by the unresolved territorial conflict over Gibraltar. On this front, Brexit is a game changer. Since the United Kingdom took the decision to leave the EU, Spain understood that the situation had changed and that it would now benefit from a more privileged position. Thus, it occasionally threatened to veto the UK-EU agreements if Spain's positions on Gibraltar were not taken into consideration and obtained some victories such as when in February 2019 a negotiation document of the EU referred to Gibraltar as a "colony of the British crown"³.

Gibraltar is not Spain's only territorial dispute. Differences with Morocco regarding the sovereignty of Ceuta and Melilla – two cities on the North African coast – as well as regarding some islets and rocks have been a major concern for Spain. In order to diffuse the risk of a major crisis erupting with its southern neighbor, Spain combined two different and complementary strategies. On the one hand, Madrid has tried to Europeanize these disputes so that if Rabat were to adopt a confrontational or threatening attitude, the target would not be Spain but the whole of the European Union (Gillespie, 2000; Vaquer i Fanés, 2003). On the other hand, Spain tried to increase bilateral trade and investment and also upgraded institutionalized political dialogue through regular summits. As Miguel Hernando de Larramendi (2009:40) argues, by buffering their joint interests and establishing an institutionalized political dialogue, Spain aimed at limiting "the scope of bilateral tensions and encapsulate the crisis that periodically stirred these relations". This policy might not have been able to prevent bilateral tensions, but has contributed to the prevention of the escalation of tensions. For instance, tensions reached a peak in 2002, when Morocco and Spain were about to enter a military conflict over the sovereignty of an inhabited islet (Perejil/Leila) but the two countries were able to redress the situation and even intensified their cooperation on areas such as migration and terrorism soon after.

It is around migration that we can observe one of the peculiarities of Spain's policies towards Morocco: domestic politicization. This has been one of the areas where the two main political parties have openly criticized each other's foreign policy strategies (Fernández Molina, 2009). The

³ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 Council of the European Union Interinstitutional File: 2018/0390(COD). Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/38044/st05960-en19.pdf>

fragmentation of Spain's political system caused by its political, economic and territorial crises has added two additional elements of complexity to Spain's relationship with Morocco. The first one is the sudden emergence of VOX, a radical right-wing populist party that has borrowed Trump's rhetoric on walls, invasions and nationalism. The second novelty is *Podemos*. This party, in government since January 2020, has been attached to the Saharawi cause and political discourses or gestures by its members can easily provoke fuming reactions of Rabat.

Finally, in Latin America it is less easy to identify which bilateral relation matters the most. Spain has tried to cultivate good relations with all the countries in the region and above all, it has sought to promote all sorts of regional and interregional platforms (see next section). One of the distinct characteristics of Spanish policies towards Latin American is the key role played in bilateral relations by major Spanish companies. The resulting economic interests, together with what Madrid perceives to be an insufficient interest of (or even inadequate policies by) the EU, is one of the reasons why there has been a relative return to bilateralism in EU-Latin American relations (Sanahuja, 2013: 51-52).

Latin America has become one of the main areas for the internationalization of Spanish companies, including many examples from the financial sector, energy, insurance or civil construction. In some cases, these companies benefited from the use of tied aid to developing countries. Hereby, the presence of those companies has helped to increase the role and influence of Spain in Latin America, sometimes in competition with other EU member states. On some occasions this has created tensions with Latin American governments, specifically when Spanish companies have been targeted by national policies or legislation. An example of this is the expropriation of Repsol oil subsidiary YPF in Argentina by Fernández de Kirchner's government. Spanish companies such as Telefónica, the telecoms group, and BBVA, Spain's second-largest bank, are also present in Venezuela. Relations with this country have also become part of domestic politics in Spain, with an unprecedented intensity.

Relations with Venezuela were already strained in the Aznar period, when the Venezuelan authorities accused the Spanish government of having supported the 2002 coup attempt against Hugo Chávez. By 2004, when the Socialist Party won the elections, foreign affairs minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos also accused the previous government of backing the putschists. This stirred a harsh debate in the Spanish parliament (Egurbide, 2012). A similar dynamic has been reproduced since 2019, but with even more intensity. Although the Sánchez government was one of the first to recognize Guaidó as a legitimate President, the attempts to reach out to Maduro's government and some gestures such as the President's reference to Guaidó as the leader of the opposition, infuriated

the right-wing parties in Spain. Right-wing parties blamed the Socialist government for being too soft towards the Maduro government and local and regional leaders became vocal in supporting the opposition in Venezuela to an extent that some of their actions were seen as contradicting Spain's foreign policy line. The tone has been even harsher against the junior partner of the coalition, *Unidas Podemos*, who is accused by its political rivals of being complicit with the Venezuelan regime and its repressive tactics.

6 MILITANT MULTILATERALISM: NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

Spain's indisputable commitment to multilateral initiatives is the result of two elements. The first is Spain's self-perception as a middle power with global interests. Spain assumes does not have the capacities to defend its national interests on its own. Therefore, it feels better protected through international norms and institutions and perceives the European Union as the optimal pathway to promote its interests and values. A second, equally, important factor is the impact of Spain's traumatic history of the 19th and 20th century; epitomized in the loss in 1898 of its last colonial possessions in America and the Pacific, which prompted an intense intellectual discussion about the reasons for Spain's decline and how to revert it.

Spain has been a pro-active member in the UN institutions, being elected a non-permanent member in the UNSC on five occasions and a member of the Council of Human Rights twice. Spain is also the 10th largest contributor to the UN budget and 11th largest contributor to the Peace Operations budget. The effects of the economic crisis, particularly after Spain's abrupt U-turn in 2011 to introduce draconian austerity measures, has also impacted some voluntary contributions to UN initiatives. However, the impact of the economic crisis was relatively small, especially compared to its cuts in ODA.

Keeping the middle power narrative, Spain has become more active and has developed several niche diplomacy initiatives (Cooper, 1997). In the last fifteen years, Spain has developed a profile as a liberal solidarist actor in the UN, which is well appreciated by NGOs in the field of Human Rights. In this area, Spanish diplomacy is clearly marked by domestic assertive transformations regarding women's rights during Rodríguez Zapatero's term and LGBT rights. Spain has been assertive in regard to gender equality on issues such as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Human Rights Council, even as more and more voices reject this liberal solidarist orientation. Pedro Sánchez addressed the UN General Assembly in September 2019 defining the Spanish foreign policy as multilateralist and feminist, stressing Spanish efforts to implement Agenda 2030 and its readiness to join the group of countries leading the fight against climate change (Presidencia

del Gobierno, 2019). An example of this commitment was Madrid's willingness to replace Santiago de Chile as the host for the COP25 climate negotiations in November 2019.

The two issues that have been the most relevant for Spain both reflect its domestic context: gender equality and the fight against terrorism. The fight for gender equality is mainly but not exclusively supported by progressive voices. For instance, under a Popular Party government, as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, Spain was one of the driving forces for the adoption of Resolution 2242 on Women, Peace and Security (Barbé, 2016).

As explained in the previous sections, the fight against terrorism has been a main concern in Spain for decades. One of Spain's contributions to the multilateral debate has been its insistence to take the role of victims of terrorism into consideration, thus mirroring the major social and political role that victims of ETA and jihadi terrorism have had in domestic debates. One of the priorities during its 2015-2016 mandate as a non-permanent member of the UNSC was to give a voice to the victims in the fight against terrorism. Together with Afghanistan, in 2019, Spain launched the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism in the UN.

While the issue of victims seems to generate broad consensus, there are other dimensions of the international fight against terrorism that have been far more divisive. As said before, Aznar supported the Bush administration in its war on terror and the war in Iraq. Spain's stance was relevant as it occupied one of the non-permanent seats in the UNSC and, through that position, worked with the US and the UK to convince some reluctant countries, particularly focusing on Latin American. Unsurprisingly, Rodriguez Zapatero also reached out to the multilateral framework to mark a contrast with the policies of his predecessor. For instance, he joined forces with Erdogan's Turkey to propose the launch of the Alliance of Civilizations. Two years later, this initiative was integrated into the UN system, has been joined by 146 states and organizations and supported by leading personalities, such as Desmond Tutu or Mohamed Khatami.

Spain's militant multilateralism is not only projected through Spain's active involvement in the UN but also in the development of the EU's foreign and security policy. One of the first international decisions of the first democratic government was the application for membership to the EEC (July 1977) and the accession into the Council of Europe (November 1977) and Spanish governments perceived the country as a "medium size power anchored in Europe" (Barbé, 2011: 134) and one that has successfully Europeanized its foreign policy priorities (Torreblanca, 2001; Barbé, 2011). The end of the Cold War dynamics, coupled with globalization, gave Spain additional arguments to persuade its European partners that the time had come to pay more attention to Europe's Southern

flank and to Latin America, as an emerging global partner and in both domains Spain became a driving force of interregional cooperation.

7 CONCLUSIONS: FOUR LAYERS OF CHANGE

There are several elements of continuity in Spanish foreign policy, such as the priority given to European integration, Latin America and the Mediterranean, the active involvement in multilateral frameworks and the concern for unresolved bilateral disputes with Morocco and the United Kingdom. Next to them, there are four drivers of change of Spanish foreign policy in the last three decades. The first are long-term transformations that started in the seventies and that significantly changed the country as a whole as well as its foreign policy priorities and decision-making process. The most relevant transformation is the democratization of the country in the seventies, along with the accession of the country to the European Union in the eighties and the modernization of Spanish society.

The second driver of change concerns domestic political change. Elections have sometimes had a major impact on Spanish foreign policy. As a result of government changes, there are significant differences in the way Spain has been facing some foreign policy issues. The effects are stronger in highly polarizing or sensitive topics such as bilateral relations with the US, sovereignty disputes with Morocco and the United Kingdom (Gibraltar) or relations with Latin American countries like Venezuela. Despite repeated calls to recuperate a foreign policy consensus, this is an area where politicization is apparent and, what is more, where some decisions are meant to mark a rupture with the policies of preceding governments and undo the way taken by political rivals. The decision of the Aznar government in 2003 to support the US invasion of Iraq is the one that had the most profound impact and, therefore, the one that generated the strongest reactions.

The third driver of change relates to major changes at the global level that have altered the political or economic global system. In the case of Spain, the end of the Cold War implied a relaxation of the domestic political debate on NATO and opened opportunities for Spain to convince the EU institutions and member states to devote more attention to other priorities such as the Mediterranean and Latin America. September 11 had a profound impact. It empowered Aznar's government to deploy a more assertive policy and Spain was able to transfer its priorities and concerns at the EU and multilateral level. The effects of the global economic crisis were immediately felt through drastic budget cuts that undermined previous progress in aid and, to a lesser extent, in defense matters too.

Yet, contrary to other countries studied in this volume, Spain did not only face an economic crisis but rather a multifaceted crisis. This is the fourth driver of change. Spain's economic travails coexisted with a profound political crisis and also a territorial one with its epicenter in Catalonia. The accumulation of mutually reinforcing crises drastically changed Spain's political party system, forced succeeding governments to devote most of their attention to domestic politics and further polarized the Spanish political arena, foreign policy not being an exception. Thus, the capacity of Spain to overcome those crises and heal the wounds of acute political confrontation is a key factor to take into account when foreseeing which kind of international player Spain aims to become and which its priorities will be.

	Instance Change	Drivers and Inhibitors
Adjustment Change	Bilateral relations with France and Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership change: Aznar (1996-2004) • Behavior change in allies • International event: economic crisis • Inhibitor: EU integration dynamics
	Bilateral relations with the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership change: Aznar (1996-2004) • International event: Brexit
	Bilateral relations with Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership change: Aznar (1996-2004) • A more assertive Moroccan policy • Domestic constraints: fragmentation of the political system • External events: massive arrivals of irregular migrants
Program Change	Bilateral relations with Venezuela and Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership changes (right vs left) • Domestic constraints: politicization
	Refinement of the anti-terrorist policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International event: September 11 • Domestic events: terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and Barcelona (2017); dissolution of ETA (2018) • Societal pressures: the role of victims
	Participation in international peace operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic change: end of the Cold War

	Instance Change	Drivers and Inhibitors
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International events: September 11 and conflict outbreaks in the Balkans, MENA and Sahel • Participation in international organizations • Domestic change: modernization and democratization of the Spanish armed forces
	Transparency or arms exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal demand (peace activists) • Inhibitor: societal demand (workers from the defense industry) • Inhibitor: institutional veto players (mainstream parties)
	ODA becomes a foreign policy tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International organizations: UN, EU, DAC (OCDE) • International norms: 0,7 goal • External change: migration flows and COVID-19 • Societal demand: NGOs • Leadership change (left-wing governments) • Inhibitor: economic crisis
Goal Change	Atlanticist turn (1996-2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International event: September 11 • Leadership change: Aznar (1996-2004) • Inhibitor: bureaucratic constraints and political and societal opposition
	Defense of territorial integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of behavior of partners (Morocco) • Societal demand: Spanish nationalism and Catalan secessionism
International Orientation Change	NA	NA

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