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The perspectives of the development of paradiplomacy in the context of feminist foreign policy – the example of Spain

Perspektywy rozwoju paradyplomacji w kontekście feministycznej polityki zagranicznej na przykładzie Hiszpanii

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The article aims to identify the perspectives of the development of paradiplomacy in the context of feminist foreign policy using the example of Spain. The author shows the relationship between the foreign policy of central government and the foreign activity of the regions and the place of sub-state actors in the central strategies of feminist foreign policy. The example of Spain and its recently published strategy was chosen due to the interchangeable application of the concept of foreign policy and external action and the clear distinction of the actors involved in the implementation of the paradigm. The comparative case study aims to show how the regions apply the practice of feminist foreign policy in their paradiplomacy strategies. On this basis, areas have been identified which, in this perspective, are fields for the development of the “feminist paradiplomacy” of the autonomous communities of Spain.

Perspektywy rozwoju paradyplomacji w kontekście feministycznej polityki zagranicznej na przykładzie Hiszpanii

W artykule podjęto próbę zidentyfikowania perspektyw rozwoju paradyplomacji w kontekście feministycznej polityki zagranicznej na przykładzie Hiszpanii. Autorka wykazała relacje pomiędzy polityką zagraniczną władz centralnych a aktywnością zagraniczną regionów oraz określiła miejsce podmiotów subpaństwowych w centralnych strategiach feministycznej polityki zagranicznej. Przykład Hiszpanii i jej niedawno ogłoszonej strategii został wybrany z racji wymiennego stosowania pojęcia polityki zagranicznej i działań zewnętrznych oraz wyraźnego wyróżnienia aktorów, biorących udział we wdrażaniu paradygmatu. Porównawcze studium przypadku miało na celu ukazanie, w jaki sposób regiony zastosowały w swoich strategiach dotyczących paradyplomacji praktyki feministycznej polityki zagranicznej. Na ich podstawie zidentyfikowano obszary, które w perspektywie staną się polem do rozwoju „paradyplomacji feministycznej” Wspólnot Autonomicznych Hiszpanii.

Introduction

In 2021, of the more than 4,000 ambassadors in the world, only 842 women are the heads of embassies of their state, which means that the share of female ambassadors is 20.7%. These figures show that women are still underrepresented in the world of diplomacy. However, there are states that strive for equal representation, for example, Sweden, which, according to the data from the report, is represented by 50 female ambassadors out of a total of 104.¹

This is related to the introduction of *feminist foreign policy* (FFP) in 2014 by former Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, who was a member of the coalition government of Stefan Löfven, who prioritised gender equality and thus it was also considered in external activities and has been expressed in the FFP.² The concept was presented in the *Handbook: Sweden's feminist foreign policy*, the aim of which was to discuss the assumptions of the introduced policy and to share good practices with other states. Later, for example, Canada (2017) and Mexico (2020) decided to introduce a policy like the Swedish FFP. Spain joined this group in March 2021.^{3,4}

- 1 AGDA *Women in Diplomacy Index 2021*, Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy [online], [access: 10 XII 2021]: https://www.agda.ac.ae/docs/default-source/Publications/agda-women-in-diplomacy-mar-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=4&TSPD_101_Ro=08fa865404ab20005fbaa52d9bef5876a1b8e6ac5118cf2f16343fd75d68c691bb8cabe1027187760891f77eb71430007dea11c250dc2fd1foe3588e67cbc475a12cfef0fb-d5e60d9be22cbf55a378d75c9bf5d28843f66e9e8507654e499b2e.
- 2 K. Durma, *Feministyczna polityka zagraniczna jako narzędzie promocji udziału kobiet w procesach związanych z bezpieczeństwem międzynarodowym i pokojem (kazuś Szwecji)*, [in:] *Kobiety w systemie bezpieczeństwa państwa*, red. A. Gasztold, K. Oblińska, Warszawa 2021, pp. 209–210.
- 3 *Handbook. Sweden's feminist foreign policy*, Government Offices of Sweden, Stockholm 2019, [online, access: 10 XII 2021]: <https://www.government.se/4ae557/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook---swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf>.
- 4 D. Szacawa, *Szwecja: równouprawnienie płci i feministyczna polityka zagraniczna*, „Komentarz IES 356 (53.2021)” [access: 11 XII 2021]: <<https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/szwecja-rownouprawnienie-plci-i-feministyczna-polityka-zagraniczna/>>; Pedro Sánchez *points to feminist diplomacy as key tool to tackle global challenges*, „Gobierno de España” [online], 10 III 2021 [access: 11 XII 2021]: <<https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/presidente/news/Paginas/2021/20210310feminist-guide.asp>>.

FFP researchers focus more on how it works at the central level. There is a small number of studies that take into account the subjective evolution of diplomacy in the context of the FFP. As Małgorzata Kopka-Piątek and Iwona Reichardt rightly point out in the publication *Will women save the world? Feminist foreign policy*, the conditions of women's activities in the foreign policy at the level of regional governments are insufficiently presented. The authors refer to Polish circumstances, although this is not an isolated case where the participation of women in the foreign activity of sub-state entities is not sufficiently recognised.⁵

This article aims to contribute to filling the existing research gap and to identify the perspectives on the development of the paradiplomacy of sub-state actors in the context of the FFP introduced at a central level using the example of Spain. An attempt will be made to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the foreign policy of the state and the paradiplomacy of administrative-territorial units?
2. How is paradiplomacy included in the paradigm of FFP at the central level?
3. What are the conditions, circumstances, and objectives of Spain's adoption of the paradigm of FFP?
4. How has FFP introduced at the central level been implemented by the Spanish regions in their foreign activities?
5. What are the perspectives of the development of paradiplomacy in the context of FFP in Spain?

The following hypotheses have been formulated for verification:

H1: The paradiplomacy of administrative-territorial units is parallel to and consistent with the foreign policy of the state.

H2: Sub-state actors have little presence in the strategies of central FFP.

H3: Spain's adoption of the paradigm of FFP is conditioned by the change of government from right-wing to centre-left and results from the government's introduction of gender perspective into all areas of policymaking.

5 M. Kopka-Piątek, I. Reichardt, *Czy kobiety uratują świat? Feministyczna polityka zagraniczna*, Warszawa 2020, s. 33, [access: 10 XII 2021]: <<https://pl.boell.org/pl/2021/02/23/czy-kobiety-uratuja-swiat-feministyczna-polityka-zagraniczna>>.

H4: FFP was present at the regional level before becoming the subject of a strategy at the central level, which makes it all the more surprising that strategy documents at the regional level do not refer to a central strategy *expressis verbis*.

H5: The perspective is to expand the catalogue of FFP practices in regional strategies within their competencies and to address the most problematic aspect of FFP in the regions – representation. Considering the diversity in the level of implementation of the different FFP tools in the regions and to avoid further asymmetry, this should be regulated at the central level.

To verify the author's hypotheses, the institutional and legal method and systems analysis (multi-level governance) will be used. Furthermore, the author will apply comparative case study analysis using content analysis and desk research.

State foreign policy and the paradiplomacy of sub-state entities

In scientific publications, many definitions of foreign policy can be found. For instance, Peter Calvert understands it as “decisions and actions that largely concern the relationship between one state and others”,⁶ while James N. Rosenau defines the term as “systematic decision-making by constitutionally authorized officials of individual States”.⁷ Regardless of the concept, as a rule, the common denominator in the context of foreign policy is to put the central authorities in the main role. Undoubtedly, competencies in the field of foreign policy are still mainly the domain of the state. In both unitary and federal states, the central government is considered responsible for matters related to so-called *high politics*, that is., related to diplomacy, defence, or national security.⁸

However, the processes of globalisation determine the changes taking place in contemporary international relations, including the increase

6 P. Calvert, *The foreign policy of new states*, St. Martin's Press, New York 1986, p. 1.

7 *Political science and public policy*, ed. J. N. Rosenau, Chicago 1968, p. 222.

8 H. Michelmann, *Introduction*, [in:] *Foreign relations in federal countries*, ed. H. Michelmann, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, London-Ithaca 2009, p. 3.

in the number of participants and their interactions with other actors in the international environment. This group also consists of sub-state entities whose foreign activity is the result of external and internal factors. Such a division was proposed by Panayotis Soldatos, where, among external causes, he distinguished the ever-deepening interdependencies and internationalisation of all areas of life, which led to a situation where areas identified with so-called *low politics*, often within the competence of administrative and territorial units, also became the subjects of interest in international relations. As part of the internal reasons, the researcher draws attention to the domestication of foreign policy, that is, to some extent limiting the role of central authorities in favour of other domestic actors. This process somehow blurs the line between the traditional division of issues strictly belonging to foreign policy and those classified as areas of internal policy.⁹

The phenomenon briefly presented above, as well as many other reasons, which are not addressed in this article due to its limits, have created a space for sub-state entities to undertake actions outside their country and/or to actively participate in the foreign policy conducted by the central authorities, and this activity has gained the name of paradiplomacy. The pioneers and propagators of the term, that is, Ivo Duchacek and P. Soldatos, point out that paradiplomacy is a neologism derived from the English *parallel diplomacy*.¹⁰

Paradiplomacy, according to Noe Cornago, is “the involvement of the authorities of sub-state actors in international relations by building contacts of a formal and informal nature, both permanent and ad hoc, with foreign public or private entities in order to pursue socio-economic, cultural and political interests, as well as any other international dimension of their constitutional competencies”,¹¹ while Alexander S. Kuznetsov

9 P. Soldatos, *An explanatory framework for the study of federated states as foreign-policy actors*, [in:] eds H. J. Michelmann, P. Soldatos, *Federalism and international relations. The role of subnational units*, Oxford 1990, pp. 44–46; A. S. Kuznetsov, *Theory and practice of paradiplomacy. Subnational governments in international affairs*, Routledge, New York 2015, p. 104.

10 M. Raś, *Aktywność międzynarodowa regionów Federacji Rosyjskiej*, Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, Warszawa 2018, s. 29.

11 N. Cornago, *On the normalization of sub-state diplomacy*, “The Hague Journal of Diplomacy” 2010, no. 5, p. 13.

sees the concept of paradiplomacy differently, as he presents it as a form of political communication, from which the main purpose is to obtain benefits, for example, economic, political or cultural, through the autonomous actions of regional authorities with foreign entities.¹² Despite different concepts, generally, as Stefan Wolff rightly points out, paradiplomacy refers to international activity and the possibility of sub-state actors conducting foreign policy.¹³

Generally, paradiplomacy should not constitute any competition for the foreign policy pursued by the state. However, if regions want to carry out more intensive activities, there may be tensions or conflicts with central government.

Soldatos distinguishes four types of relations between central government and sub-state entities in relation to paradiplomacy:

1. Cooperative-coordinated model – all foreign activities, including paradiplomacy, are coordinated by the central government;
2. Cooperative-joint model – the central government involves the regions in its foreign policy;
3. Parallel-harmony model – the regions can operate independently of the central government within their competencies, but this must be in line with the priorities and assumptions of the foreign policy pursued by the central government;
4. Parallel-disharmony model – the paradiplomacy of the regions is contrary to the assumptions of the state's foreign policy.¹⁴

As Brian Hocking points out, the relationship between central authorities and sub-state actors acting on the international stage should not be understood in the context of a zero-sum game. The paradiplomacy of sub-state actors, due to their state-like nature, can play an important role in shaping foreign policy not only by conducting their activities, but also by participating in activities initiated by the central authorities¹⁵.

12 A. S. Kuznetsov, *Theory and practice...*, p. 31.

13 S. Wolff, *Paradiplomacy: Scope, opportunities, and challenges*, "The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs" 2007, vol. 10, p. 141.

14 P. Soldatos, *An explanatory framework...*, p. 38.

15 B. Hocking, *Patrolling the "Frontier": Globalization, localization and the 'actorness' of non-central governments*, "Regional & Federal Studies" 1999, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 19; M. Raś, *Aktywność międzynarodowa...*, p. 49.

In most cases, paradiplomacy can be defined as parallel to the foreign policy of the state according to the origin of the term itself, as suggested by Soldatos and Duchacek. This means that the activity of the regions, as a rule, harmonises with the priorities of the central government, while complementing the foreign policy of the entire state. It is also necessary to emphasise the secondary nature of paradiplomatic actions and their subordination to the original form.¹⁶ In addition, considering how the regions conduct their foreign activities and the instruments they use, it can be observed that traditional diplomacy is a model for them. Nevertheless, it happens that sub-state actors attempt to conduct more advanced paradiplomatic actions which are not necessarily in accordance with the priorities of the state's foreign policy.

Sub-state actors in FFP – the Spanish exception

The concept of FFP first appeared in the context of the new approach to shaping and conducting foreign policy in Sweden in 2014. The announcement of the first idea of this type in the world in Sweden is not accidental, as this country has been striving for gender equality (*gender mainstreaming*) for many years and is the leader in the *Gender Equality Index 2021*, obtaining a score of 83.9 out of 100 points.¹⁷ The FFP is the next step, involving the introduction of a feminist perspective to the assumptions of foreign policy.

The paradigm of FFP, understood as a set of rules, norms and patterns used to solve a given problem, assumes a shift in foreign policy from elite-oriented to more inclusive, guided by ethical principles, readiness to deal with rooted patriarchal power relations and practices abroad, as well as the will of challenging the invisibility of gender in foreign policy.¹⁸

16 I. D. Duchacek, *The international dimensions of subnational self-government*, "Publius. The Journal of Federalism" 1984, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 30–31.

17 *Sweden: Gender equality Index*, "The European Institute for Gender Equality" [online], 2021 [access: 11 2022]: <<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/SE>>.

18 K. Aggestam, A. Bergman-Rosamond, A. Kronsell, *Theorising feminist foreign policy*, "International Relations" 2019, vol. 33, p. 28.

Sweden contributed to the outline of the principles and norms by providing its *know-how* in the form of *Handbook: Sweden's feminist foreign policy*, which explains what FFP is, presenting, for instance, ways to introduce changes or methods and their implication for different areas of the country's foreign policy. According to the concept proposed by Sweden, the basis for FFP is the so-called three "Rs":

1. Rights – promoting the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, for example, by eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination that lead to restricting this freedom;
2. Representation – promoting women's participation and influence in decision-making processes at all levels and in all fields and seeking dialogue with women's representatives at all levels, including civil society;
3. Resources – allocating resources for the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities in the enjoyment of human rights for all women and girls.¹⁹

In addition to presenting the goals for 2019–2022, working methods in the Swedish foreign service or ways of communicating the new concept, the handbook also discusses the areas of foreign policy where the implication of the FFP assumptions is relevant:

1. Peace and security
2. Human rights, democracy, and the rule of law
3. Disarmament and non-proliferation
4. International development cooperation
5. International trade.²⁰

Three years later, Canada identified similar areas when it introduced *the Feminist International Assistance Policy*. According to the Canadian strategy, FFP is a tool that will allow for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and thus for further building of a more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous world.

As Jennifer Thomson notes, despite the similarities, for example, in terms of area, between Swedish and Canadian FFP, there are also many differences. First of all, in Sweden it is clearly emphasised that the main problem that FFP is supposed to help solve is gender inequality. Canada, on the other hand,

19 *Handbook. Sweden's feminist...*, p. 13.

20 *Ibidem*, pp. 63–85.

puts poverty first and treats gender equality as a tool to reduce it. In addition, the two documents differ in terms of the degree of detail when it comes to achieving the objectives set out in the strategies. In the case of Sweden, the basis for the implementation of FFP is the three "Rs", already described above, and in the Canadian version many generalities can be found that do not propose specific actions. This does not mean that all areas of activity are sufficiently developed in the Swedish document.²¹

What the Swedish and Canadian documents do have in common is there is no mention about the regions in the sense of sub-state actors. This may not be surprising in the case of Sweden, but it is for Canada due to its federal system. Instead, Sweden focuses on emphasising the role of the foreign service and cooperation with the European Union (EU) or other international organisations and players, whereas in the Canadian version the significance of private sector is also highlighted.²² If the term region or its derivatives occur, it is within the supranational concept of the region.²³

The inclusion of sub-state actors is something that distinguishes Spanish FFP. The strategic document includes the various actors who are supposed to be involved in its implementation. The collaboration of other ministries and public administrations (the General State Administration, regional administrations of the autonomous communities, and local administrations) is assumed, as they are subjects of Spain's external actions in accordance with article 5.1 of the Law 2/2014, of March 25, *The Action and the Foreign Service of the State*.²⁴ The inclusion of the autonomous communities is particularly significant for this article, as these are sub-state actors which are able to conduct their own paradiplomacy.

Furthermore, in the whole document the term *external actions* is used in parallel with foreign *policy* which suggests the participation of other actors. The act mentioned above distinguishes these two terms. External actions (foreign/exterior action) are understood as the "orderly set of actions that the constitutional bodies, public administrations and

21 J. Thomson, *What's feminist about feminist foreign policy? Sweden's and Canada's foreign policy agendas*, "International Studies Perspectives" 2020, no. 21, pp. 429–430, 432.

22 Ibidem, pp. 431–432.

23 M. Raś, *Aktywność międzynarodowa regionów...*, p. 193.

24 Ley 2/2014, de 25 de marzo, de la Acción y del Servicio Exterior del Estado, «BOE» núm. 74, de 26/03/2014.

agencies, entities, and institutions which are dependent on them carry out abroad, in the exercise of their respective powers”, while foreign policy is reserved only to the central government. It is also clearly emphasised in the Spanish Constitution, as international relations are said to be the exclusive competence of the state.²⁵ This express division was made to limit the potential competencies’ conflicts between the autonomous communities (especially those with separatist tendencies: Catalonia, Basque Country and, to lesser extent, Galicia) and the state. Moreover, the external action act also obliged the actors to develop external actions in accordance with the principles, guidelines and objectives set by the government.²⁶ The central government can then use these tools in the case of disobedience and attempts by communities to exceed their competencies and enable the authorities to challenge this before the Constitutional Court.

Spain’s adoption of the paradigm of FFP

The latest edition of FFP is the Spanish concept, entitled *Spain’s feminist foreign policy. Promoting Gender Equality in Spain’s External Action*, introduced in March 2021. It is intended to complement other existing Spanish legislation as well as strategic documents promoting gender equality, such as the Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March, on effective equality between women and men, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Towards a Spanish sustainable development strategy or the strategy for External Action, but also to be in line with conventions, declarations or action plans adopted at international or EU level.²⁷ In addition, the adoption of the paradigm of FFP represents another step to achieving equality between women and men, begun during the term of office of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. During the first term of the Zapatero’s centre-left government, two important legal acts were approved: in 2004, gender violence law, and in 2007, gender equality law. The second term, mainly due to the economic crisis

25 Constitución Española, de 29 diciembre 1978, «BOE» núm. 311, de 29/12/1978.

26 Ley 2/2014, de 25 de marzo...

27 *Spain’s feminist foreign policy*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Madrid 2021, p. 4 [online, access: 11 I 2022]: <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documents/2021_02_POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA_ENG.pdf>.

and the policy of austerity, did not bring key changes, but actions taken, such as the decriminalisation of abortion or increasing the participation of women in the decision-making process, showed a willingness to continue the chosen direction.²⁸

After the centre-right People's Party took power in 2011, the mechanisms of equality policy suffered greatly. During Mariano Rajoy's conservative government, there was, for instance, a change in the ministerial structure in which the Secretary of State for Equality became the Secretary of State with competencies for the prevention and elimination of discrimination ranging from social exclusion to family, childhood, dependency, disability, and equality.²⁹ Moreover, the government oversaw a huge decline in the number of female ambassadors (from 27 to 9) and challenged the law regarding quotas before the Constitutional Court.³⁰ That is to say, despite the relative continuity in developing strategies aimed at achieving gender equality, the years 2009–2017 show a general decline in Spanish gender equality and social policy law and an end to integrating gender mainstreaming into policymaking, as it was not perceived as a priority for the ruling party.³¹

However, the central policy was not only complemented in the above-mentioned period by the tools introduced at regional level. Due to the specificity of the territorial system of Spain, called *The State of Autonomies* and the competencies of autonomous communities, the regions had a chance to develop equality policies when the government abandoned action in this

- 28 C. Valiente, *Gender equality policymaking in Spain (2008–11): Losing momentum*, [in:] eds B. N. Field, A. Botti, *Politics and society in contemporary Spain. Europe in transition*, The NYU European Studies Series. Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2013, pp. 179–180.
- 29 E. Lombardo, M. León, *Políticas de igualdad de género y sociales en España: origen, desarrollo y desmantelamiento en un contexto de crisis económica*, "Investigaciones Feministas" 2014, vol. 5, p. 27.
- 30 E. Anderson, *Globe-trotting gender gap: Spain drops female diplomats*, "The Local España" [online], 10 II 2016 [access: 24 X 2022]: <<https://www.thelocal.es/20160210/number-of-female-ambassadors-plummeted-under-rajoy-report/>>.
- 31 E. Lombardo, *Gender equality policies in Spain – update*, "European Parliament" [online], 2016, [access: 11 I 2022]: <[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/583112/IPOL_STU\(2016\)583112_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/583112/IPOL_STU(2016)583112_EN.pdf)>[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/583112/IPOL_STU\(2016\)583112_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/583112/IPOL_STU(2016)583112_EN.pdf)>, p. 10.

direction. In order to fill the gap, most of the autonomous communities have decided to adopt their legal acts regulating gender equality.³²

In 2018, after a vote of no confidence in Mariano Rajoy, Pedro Sánchez formed his minority cabinet, which was called a feminist government primarily because of the number of female ministers (11 out of 17 ministers). This was the highest share of women in government in the whole history of Spain. In addition, Sánchez stressed that his government is not only to be feminine, but also feminist, and all this in response to the “message from the public” given during the numerous protests caused by the verdict in La Manada rape case. According to the prime minister’s statement, the government’s goal was to mainstream a gender perspective throughout the justice system.³³

The second government of Sánchez, formed by the PSOE-Unidas Podemos coalition, was formed after early parliamentary elections in 2020. At that time, Arancha González Laya was the foreign minister of Spain and at the beginning of her term of office, she said “Spain is back.” What she meant was that it was high time Spain returned to shaping the responses to international affairs. She also highlighted that when some actions are taken internally, it should also be coherent with foreign policy. Therefore, the introduction of Spanish FFP reflects other areas of policy where the feminist perspective had been included earlier.³⁴

The Spanish document assumes the systematic mainstreaming of the gender perspective into all activities of the foreign service by introducing structural changes in its working methods and institutional culture. In addition, the foreign service is obliged to make gender equality a priority and to take it into account in the management of human, material and

32 D. Morondo Taramundi, *Country report: Gender equality. How are EU rules transposed into national law? – Spain*, “European Commission” 2021 [online] data #####, [access: 11 I 2022], <<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d4c2abe5-f4ce-11eb-aeb9-01aa75ed71a1/language-enhttps://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d4c2abe5-f4ce-11eb-aeb9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>>, p. 5.

33 M. Vidal, *Sánchez: “Éste es un Gobierno feminista y no tiene complejo alguno”*, “Cronica Global” [online], 17 VIII 2018 [access: 13 I 2022]: <https://cronicaglobal.elespanol.com/politica/sanchez-gobierno-feminista_155867_102.html>.

34 “Spain is back”: *An interview with Arancha González Laya*, “Foro Permanente de Política Exterior” [online], 10 III 2021 [access: 13 I 2022]: <<https://foropoliticaexterior.cl/spain-is-back-an-interview-with-arancha-gonzalez-laya/>>.

financial resources. Spain also aims to work together with various actors to improve the situation of women by supporting the principle of equality in the implementation of public policies. According to the strategy, the integration of a gender perspective into foreign policy requires intersectionality, that is, taking into account all forms of discrimination, not only on the basis of gender, but also ethnic or racial origin, sexual orientation and gender identity, economic status, religious beliefs or disability.³⁵

Like the examples of FFP discussed above, Spain has identified its main areas, calling them lines of action:

1. Women, peace and security – implementing the assumptions of the second National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security 2017–2023, based on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agendas formally initiated by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which was adopted on 31 October 2000³⁶;
2. Violence against women and girls – contributing to the multilateral and bilateral projects aimed at promoting the Spanish method of combating gender-based violence;
3. Human rights of women and girls – taking initiatives to strengthen the rights of women and girls with a focus on sexual and reproductive rights;
4. Participation of women in the decision-making process – including the participation of women and girls in all spheres of power and influence;
5. Economic justice and *empowerment* of women – promoting equal access to resources and women's economic empowerment.³⁷

Case study: Catalonia and Galicia

As it is only in the Spanish document that the role of sub-state actors in achieving the FFP objectives is taken into account, the analytical units of the following case studies will concern two autonomous communities – Catalonia and Galicia. These two cases have been selected as they are the only autonomous communities which approved their own legal acts

35 *Spain's feminist foreign...*, p. 8.

36 The WPS agenda rests on four pillars: prevention, participation, protection and relief and recovery.

37 *Spain's feminist foreign...*, pp. 21–27.

directly appealing to and regulating external actions. That is to say, both communities regulated the aspects of paradiplomacy to the greatest extent, therefore they can be analysed in terms of the aspects of FFP. The cases will be investigated in terms of direct or indirect implementation of Spanish FFP with a particular focus on the legal acts and strategies of these autonomous communities. Furthermore, the share of women in the paradiplomacy of Catalonia and Galicia will be specified by checking the number of females in the positions of regional president, head of the subnational unit responsible for external actions, head of political representations abroad and representative on the Committee of Regions.

In 2014, Catalonia approved a separate legal act concerning its external activity. *Law 16/2014, of 4 December, on external action and relations with the European Union* was the first document among the autonomous communities which regulated paradiplomacy at regional level. It lists the basic objectives of the paradiplomatic activities carried out by the community, such as the promotion of Catalonia and its interests abroad and the strengthening of the region's position as an international player, being active in the areas for which it is responsible and those for which its interests are covered. In addition, the act sets out the principles of Catalan paradiplomacy, which fits into the paradigm of FFP, as they assume conducting external actions based on non-discrimination on the grounds of gender, origin, nationality, race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, or political convictions. Furthermore, in accordance with this act, the gender perspective should be incorporated in policy development and in the development of projects and programmes.³⁸

According to article 15.1, "every four years, the Government of Catalonia shall approve the Strategic Plan of External Action and Relations with the European Union, which must establish sectorally, geographically and institutionally the medium-term priorities and objectives of external action of Catalonia".³⁹ The latest plan available is for 2015–2018, as the 2019–2022 plan, despite being approved, is currently suspended by the Constitutional Court due to a conflict of competencies with the state government. The document envisages the division of areas of external action into four main

38 Ley 16/2014, de 4 de diciembre, de acción exterior y de relaciones con la Unión Europea, «BOE» núm. 309, de 23/12/2014 [access: 11 I 2022].

39 Ibidem.

strategic goals. One is “the contribution to global objectives: peace, security, human rights, sustainable development, social justice and cohesion and active multilateralism”, in which the aim of achieving gender equality is also included. Catalonia has planned to become involved in influencing the international agenda for development and establishing a platform for dialogue on the agendas of development, gender, and human rights.⁴⁰

This document also recalls another strategy developed by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation – the Master Plan for Development Cooperation 2015–2018, whose subtitle is “for a country committed to gender equality and human rights”. Its aim is to include the gender perspective in every action taken by the Catalan government in the area of sustainable human development. Applying a gender-based approach to planning, monitoring, or evaluating policy and actions means implementing elements and strategies such as gender mainstreaming, the empowerment of women, gender condition and position or power relationships between women and men.⁴¹

Furthermore, the strategy highlights specific objectives where actions follow the elements mentioned above:

1. in relation to civil and political rights
2. in relation to economic, social and cultural rights
3. in relation to the right to peace and the right to a life free of violence
4. in relation to environmental sustainability
5. in relation to global challenges in sustainable development.⁴²

Surprisingly, this sphere also consists of issues concerning security, which belong to aspects of high politics and, in principle, are not included in the regions’ competencies.

40 *Strategic Plan for External Action and European Union Relations 2015–2018*, “Generalitat de Catalunya”, Barcelona 2015, [access: 15 I 2022]: <https://exteriors.gencat.cat/web/.content/saeue/00_pla_accio_exterior/pla_accio_exterior_2015_2018/paec/paec15-18_en.pdf>, pp. 47–49.

41 *2015–2018 Development Cooperation Master Plan*, “Generalitat de Catalunya”, Barcelona 2015, p. 19 [online], [access: 15 I 2022]: <http://cooperaciocatalana.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/02dgcd/PlaDirector/AnysAnteriors/PlaDirector_2015-2018.pdf>.

42 *Ibidem*, pp. 32–35.

The newest strategy, for 2019–2022, also promises to prioritise a focus on gender issues and the defence of human rights and treat it as a characteristic trait of Catalan cooperation, while contributing to the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.⁴³

Regarding representation, if considering the elected president, the minister of foreign action, the foreign representations and representatives in the Committee of the Regions, the share of women in the Catalan paradiplomacy is 22.2%. Since 2021, Victoria Alsina-Burgues is the Minister of Foreign Action and Open Government of Catalonia (her predecessor was male), and she also represents Catalonia in the Committee of the Regions. There are two more women in the paradiplomatic structure of Catalonia – the head of the Delegation of the Government of Catalonia to Central Europe is Krystyna Schreiber and the head of the Delegation of the Government of Catalonia to Germany is Marie Kapretz,⁴⁴ while the heads of the other 12 representations are male.

In 2021, Galicia, a second autonomous community, passed a law regulating external actions and development cooperation. In *Law 10/2021, of 9 March, regulating external action and cooperation for the development of Galicia*, there are also aspects which attempt to incorporate the gender perspective into conducting paradiplomacy. For instance, it is a requirement to report to the superior body of the General Administration of the Autonomous Community of Galicia, competent in matters of equality, when the agreement has repercussions for gender issues both when Galicia is a participant and when the agreement is an autonomous initiative. Furthermore, one of the principles of development cooperation is to contribute to the full enjoyment of rights by women, to achieve gender equality and to ensure women's empowerment at all levels and in the different phases of planning, implementation, and evaluation.⁴⁵

43 *2019–2022 Development Cooperation Master Plan*, “Generalitat de Catalunya”, Barcelona 2019, [online], [access: 15 I 2022]: <<http://cooperaciocatalana.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/02dgc/PlaDirector/catalan-master-plan-development-cooperation-19-22.pdf>>.

44 *Delegaciones del Gobierno en el exterior*, “Generalitat de Catalunya”, [online], data### [access: 15 I 2022]: https://exteriors.gencat.cat/es/ambits-dactuacio/afers_exteriors/delegacions_govern/.

45 *Ley 10/2021, de 9 de marzo, reguladora de la acción exterior y de la cooperación para el desarrollo de Galicia*, «BOE» núm. 79, de 2/04/2021.

The law also regulates the programming of Galician external actions in a strategic document called the Galician Strategy for External Action (Egaex), which prioritises long-term objectives. It assumes that external activities conducted by the region, for example, within the Galician communities abroad, should take gender equality into consideration. However, gender-related issues are stressed mostly within development cooperation. The strategy's objective regarding development cooperation is to defend women's rights by promoting formal and real gender equality, supporting public policies of social cohesion, fighting against gender violence, and ensuring the empowerment of women through strengthening their organisations, both in cooperation activities and development education. This strategy requires the integration of gender equity in a transversal way in all interventions and areas, making this priority an essential requirement for the financing of projects.⁴⁶

Moreover, the strategy also highlights the need to include equality issues in terms of actions within "the European Project" (European integration) and promoting "galleguidad" (being Galician). It assumes eliminating the barriers to achieving full equality between men and women. Furthermore, it obliges the Galician communities abroad to promote the full integration of women in their associative life, without discriminating or separating women from the decision-making and representation processes.⁴⁷

Among the representatives of Galicia participating in its paradiplomacy, there are no women in executive positions. Galicia possesses three delegations abroad of which the heads are all male. The same situation exists with both with the elected position of the president of autonomous community and the appointed one – the Director-General for External Relations and Relations with the European Union.⁴⁸

In both cases there is no direct reference to FFP, which was approved at the central level. However, it can be seen that some relevant aspects

46 *Estrategia Gallega de Acción Exterior (Egaex)*, "Xunta de Galicia" [online], [access: 17 I 2022]: <<https://cpxt.xunta.gal/exteriores-ue/estrategia-galega-de-accion-exterior>>.

47 *Ibidem*.

48 *Acción Exterior y Cooperación Transfronteriza*, "Xunta de Galicia" [online], [access: 17 I 2022]: <<https://cpxt.xunta.gal/exteriores-ue/accion-exterior-cooperacion-transfronteriza>>.

of the central strategy had been implemented by the regions before the central government did so. These elements of FFP are seen in both of the autonomous laws regulating paradiplomacy, which consider gender equality as an objective of conducting their external actions. Furthermore, the strategy of Catalonia highlighting the aims of its paradiplomacy ensured the application of a gender-based approach, while Galicia focused more on the general provisions. That is to say, in comparison to Galicia, Catalonia developed its FFP to a greater extent. Despite this difference, Galicia also paid attention to integrating the gender perspective into all actions, particularly regarding development cooperation.

The common problem for both regions is representation. In the paradiplomatic positions created following the example of traditional diplomacy, such as heads of departments responsible for external actions, delegates or members of the Committee of Regions, women are underrepresented. Moreover, there are no women in the appointed posts that is, presidents of the autonomous communities, which also participate in conducting paradiplomacy, for instance through foreign visits.

Perspectives of the development of feminist paradiplomacy

As the case study shows, the autonomous communities had included some practices of FFP in regional strategies before the central strategy was published, thus the regional documents do not refer to the central one *expressis verbis*. The regions mostly concentrated on development cooperation in terms of implementing the practices of FFP. However, in other aspects, the different level of detail is established, which may lead to further asymmetries among the regions. For instance, Catalonia pointed out the need for a gender-based approach in the fields of peace, security, combating violence against women, equal enjoyment of law, the empowerment of women, climate change or participation in decision-making, which makes the regional strategy more similar to the pioneering strategy of FFP. Galicia does not distinguish these areas of actions, which means it can be considered less advanced.

As the regions are included as actors in Spanish FFP, from the perspective of the development of paradiplomacy of the autonomous communities in the context of FFP, there is an expansion of practices in accordance with the centrally introduced strategy and based on the areas of action contained in it. Nevertheless, the scope adopted by the region in accordance

with Spanish law and the theory of paradiplomacy should be within their competence, which is why the inclusion of issues related to high politics in regional strategies, such as security, can be considered as competition to politics at the central level and may lead to conflicts and tensions between the central government and the regional government. To avoid already present asymmetries among regions, there is a need for new central regulations like *Law 2/2014, of March 25, on the Action and the Foreign Service of the State* or the use of current law in terms of Spanish FFP.

Moreover, in this perspective, the problem of underrepresentation, which is a vital aspect of the paradigm of FFP, should be addressed. Holistically, the share of women in paradiplomacy of the Spanish autonomous communities is 37.6%. The lowest representation of women in terms of paradiplomacy is regarding elected posts, that is, presidents (23.5%) and the highest among members of the Committee of Regions (47%).⁴⁹ However, despite the generally low percentage of women in paradiplomacy, it is visible that actions are being taken to change this situation. For example, in 2021 in Catalonia there was a change in the post of minister for foreign action from man to woman, therefore, in this perspective, there are improvements in terms of equal representation in the regions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the external actions which are carried out by sub-state actors are, as a rule, parallel to and consistent with the foreign policy of the state. Therefore, their paradiplomacy should be conducted in accordance with central strategies. Nonetheless, it happens that sub-state actors (in the case presented above, Catalonia) do not follow the central objectives and attempt to exceed their scope of competencies, which is met with a response from the central authorities who challenge them before the Constitutional Court. Regarding the second hypothesis, the administrative-territorial units are barely present in the strategies of central FFP. It is an exception that the regions are included as actors of FFP in Spain, which after the change of government from right-wing to centre-left returned to developing policies with a gender-based approach. The ending of steps

49 The data was collected on the official websites of autonomous governments of 17 Autonomous Communities.

towards gender equality at the central level did not mean that the regions did not integrate the gender perspective into their policies. That is to say, FFP was present at regional level before becoming the subject of a strategy at central level. However, there is no reference to a central strategy *expressis verbis*.

In the perspective of developing feminist paradiplomacy, there is an expansion of the catalogue of FFP practices in regional strategies within their competencies and in accordance with the central strategy. Furthermore, in the future, the most problematic aspect of FFP in the regions – representation – will be addressed. To ensure similar results among the regions, the implementation of FFP will be regulated centrally by approving a new law or using one already in existence.

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