



CAESARIST PRACTICES IN FOREIGN POLICY: THE CASES OF IRAQ AND WESTERN SAHARA

The tension between consensual practices and Caesarist approaches is well-known in the decision-making processes regarding foreign policy, security and defense within current liberal democracies. Two very relevant cases in Spain particularly illustrate this phenomenon: the participation in the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the change of position regarding the Western Sahara conflict in 2022, decisions respectively taken by presidents José María Aznar and Pedro Sánchez, two politicians of a very different personal style and political affiliation. Both decisions, clearly Caesarist, share the characteristic of having ended two fundamental consensus (general agreement) of our foreign policy established during the Spanish transition to democracy. Hence their exemplarity. As is evident after studying both cases, the application of consensual formulas in the development and execution of foreign policy, at least in matters relevant to the political community, aligns with the standards of representative democracy, reinforced by participatory and deliberative behaviour patterns. For their part, Caesarist practices demonstrate by definition a deficit of transparency and democratic quality, as developed in this paper. The methodology employed is interdisciplinary because this study delves into the areas of political science and law, and is founded on an empirical research without succumbing to activist or sectarian temptations.