

To be published in Antonio M. Bañón y Bernard McGuirk (Eds.), *Refugees in Conflict and Post-Conflict. Media, Artistic and Political Representations*. Studies in Post-Conflict. Volume 12 London: Critical, Cultural and Communication Press, 2021.

The Spanish translation of this paper is to be published in Antonio Bañón & Josep Solves (Eds.). *Discurso lingüístico y migraciones*. Madrid Arco/Libros, 2021.

Spanish Discourse on Refugees

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Abstract

In the summer and autumn of 2015 hundreds of thousands of refugees, mostly from Syria, arrived in Western Europe. With the slogan “Refugees Welcome”, they were welcomed and assisted by many volunteers at borders and train stations. After a review of the studies of this solidarity movement in Austria, Germany, the Scandinavian countries and the UK, and within a general project on social movement discourse, this paper examines parliamentary, municipal and movement discourses in Spain. The multidisciplinary theoretical framework of this analysis combines the study of discourse, social movements, politics, citizens, solidarity and empathy.

Keywords: Refugees. Europe. Refugees Welcome. Social Movements. Discourse Studies. Solidarity. Empathy.

Introduction

In the summer and autumn of 2015 hundreds of thousands of refugees, especially from Syria, arrived in Western Europe. After a harrowing flight, often on foot, through Turkey, Greece and the Balkan, they applied for asylum in Austria, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. Despite rather dissuasive official immigration policies, these refugees were received and assisted by large numbers of volunteers, who offered food, drinks, shelter, translation and other services at borders or train stations. This spontaneous movement was soon identified with its slogan “Refugees Welcome”.

In Germany, this solidarity movement was described even in more general terms of a widespread “Welcome Culture”. In the late summer of 2015, Chancellor Angela

Merkel, confronted with the arrival of some 800,000 asylum seekers, famously commented in an interview “We’ll manage!” (*Wir schaffen das*). Even right-wing tabloids such as *Bild Zeitung*, commented positively about the popular reception of refugees – at least in the beginning of the sudden arrivals (*Heinkelmann-Wild, Beck, & Spencer, 2019).

Although few of these refugees continued their voyage to Spain, also in this country there was a growing popular movement of civil society of welcoming refugees, also defying official refugee policies of the conservative PP government.

Complementing earlier sociological and media studies, this chapter focuses on some of the discourses of this movement in Spain as well as of related organizations, agencies, initiatives and NGO’s. Such discourses not only are a prominent antiracist practice in their own right, but at the same time offer insight in the crucial social cognitions, such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, underlying these practices – notions less explicitly studied in most social movement research.

The Spanish Sociopolitical Context

In the afternoon of September 29, 2015, Spanish parliament debated about a bill proposed by the socialist group about the “humanitarian crisis of the refugees”. Although of course there were different opinions and amendments, the bill was approved unanimously – thus expressing a consensus that also Spain had to contribute to alleviating the emergency of the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees in Europe. Esperança Esteve Ortega, in her presentation of the bill, emphasised the importance to

- (1) (...) dar un ejemplo a la ciudadanía de que este Parlamento es capaz no solo de actuar con rigor y racionalidad sino también con comprensión, con empatía y haciéndose cargo del dolor de los seres humanos

(...) give an example to the public that this Parliament is capable not only of acting with rigor and rationality but also with understanding, with empathy and taking charge of the pain of human beings

Keywords in this fragment are the notions of *comprehension*, *empathy* and *pain*, taking precedence over the (alleged) normal criteria of rigour and rationality, exceptionally so, reminded another MP. These and related concepts define the key notions of public

discourse on the refugee crisis all over Europe in that “long summer of 2015”. Other speakers emphasized that Spain, its previous socialist and current conservative governments, as well as its current parliament had been marginal and slow with granting asylum to refugees, but that today Spanish citizens and NGOs had given the good example for the current parliamentary initiative. Also Ms. Esteve Ortega stressed in her speech that the citizens in this case had given the good example for the bill.

Catalan MP for the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) party, Joan Tardà i Coma in the same debate summarizes the abominable reputation of Spain about refugees:

- (2) La memoria es corta y España no ha sido ejemplo de nada en todo lo relativo a refugiados. En treinta años España ha acogido tantos refugiados como en un solo año Alemania. Le recuerdo que cuando hicimos la Ley del año 2009 —con la que fuimos muy críticos porque se convirtió en una de las leyes más restrictivas de Europa—, aun cuando gobernaba la socialdemocracia en el Estado español, se acogía el 10 % de lo que acogía la República italiana de Berlusconi, con lo cual está todo dicho. Datos Eurostat de 2014: Unión Europea 185.000 solicitudes; España, 1.583 concesiones. Luego el Estado español se ha convertido en un fortín.

Memory is short and Spain has not been an example of anything in everything related to refugees. In thirty years Spain has welcomed as many refugees as in a single year Germany. I remind you that when we made the Law of 2009 - with which we were very critical because it became one of the most restrictive laws in Europe -, even when the Social Democracy governed the Spanish State, 10% of what it received was accepted the Italian Republic of Berlusconi, with which all is said. Eurostat data for 2014: European Union 185,000 applications; Spain, 1,583 concessions. Then the Spanish state has become a fort.

The usual numbers in debates on migrants and refugees in this case were not the “numbers game” that defines the rhetoric of exaggeration in migration news in the press, but real numbers, as confirmed by official European statistics (see below). Although conservative governments in Spain have no doubt deserved the criticism of being more radically anti-immigration and its members often racist or xenophobe, Taradà’s speech correctly reminded the MPs that the socialists were hardly much more liberal with granting asylum.

The main points of the bill adopted unanimously urges the Government the following: (1) to alleviate the situation of the refugees (b) to state that militarization of the borders (by Frontex) is not the solution (c) to create a European Rescue Agency, (d) that Spain comply with the quotas set by the EU, (e) to list the issues where the government is lacking initiative (f) to modify the Dublin III regulation (g) inform people in the countries of origin how to enter the EU – and Spain – legally and to combat human trafficking (h) to grant humanitarian visas. Further points deal with scholarships for refugees, the regulation of the status of minors, flexible family

reunification, and to supply specialized personnel. These and the other points of the bill, as well as the debate in parliament presuppose how the Spanish state hardly played a primary role in the reception of refugees and granting asylum. Indeed, another MP stressed the situation in the Spanish enclaves of Ceúta and Melilla, where thousands of refugees are waiting for decisions in a refugee camp.

As is also obvious from the debate in parliament, the MPs are aware that civil society and especially the organizations and other NGOs for refugees had already reminded the government as well as public opinion about the urgent need to take action. A week before the parliamentary session, on September 18, refugee organization ACCEM, after earlier public messages, addressed an open letter to the Minister of the Interior – to be examined in more detail below – stressing that asylum seekers in Spain are treated as second class people.

Compared to other countries in Western Europe, Spain in 2015 received few of the refugees from Syria, who generally aimed to go to Germany and Sweden. The 2015 report of CEAR on refugees in Europe and Spain informs that in that year 1585 refugees, mostly from Syria, were given “international protection”, and 260 were settled. It also reminds that the governing conservative Partido Popular in March of the same year had successfully presented a bill that allowed the illegal expulsion of migrants in Ceuta and Melilla to neighbouring Morocco. More generally, it says, that Spain denies 90% of asylum applications at the borders and the Madrid airport – in 2014 0,95% of all refugees (625.000) arriving in Europe. In 2015, 14780 persons applied for asylum, mostly from Syria and Ukraine, most of them in Melilla. On May 30, 2016, Spain had received only 105 of the 9232 refugees it had promised to accept in a European agreement. Specifically by people from Syria, in 2015 there were 5724 asylum applications (Informe 2016).

Other organizations and agencies report the same minimal solidarity of the Spanish state. The Ombudsman report for Spain in 2015, mentions that of 3.240 people only 31% obtained refugee or protection status – compared to 52% in Europe.

The Ministry in its 2015 report concludes first the vast increase of asylum seekers in 2015 (14.887) compared to 2014 (5.952), of which most (5.723) from Syria, of which only 17 were granted asylum, and 639 the right of protection (in 2015). In Barcelona most asylum seekers were from Ukraine (489), and from Syria only 41 – which

provides some background to the fact that the pro-refugee attitudes in the city could hardly contribute to the reception of Syrian refugees defining the EU “refugee crisis”.

The national and international press commented on the hardly generous asylum policies and practices in Spain. *El País* on April 20, 2016, reported that Spain only provided international protection to 1030 asylum seekers, 0,3% of those 333.350 in the EU, according to Eurostat figures, and a third of all applicants (3240), of which 655 from Syria.

Amnesty International next month (May 19, 2016) concluded from its Refugee Welcome Index that the Spanish “government refugee policies are out of touch with public opinion”. More than in other countries, in Spain 78% of citizens strongly agree with the statement that “people should be able to take refuge in other countries to escape from war or persecution”. These figures are consistent with what has been observed above about the many pro-refugee activities by civil society.

Finally, in June 2016, the Defensor del Pueblo (the National Ombudsman) –still designated both in Spanish and English with its traditional masculine form, although it is a woman (Soledad Becerril) – also formulates her opinion and formulates recommendations about Spanish refugee policies and practices. In its detailed 105-page report, she criticizes that asylum procedures have not yet been integrated in the Spanish legal system, that the 2009 Law hinders current international obligations as well as access to the procedure of potential applicants, delays and deficiencies of the procedure, as well as lack of coordination (p. 101). Based on these critical conclusions, the report formulates recommendations for the ministry, the Office of the Secretary General for Immigration and Emigration, as well as the autonomous communities. Hence, not only MPs, and as we’ll see below NGOs and social movements, but also an official independent office formulates serious criticism about the refugee policies and decisions of the Spanish State. As may be expected, and as we’ll see below, those of civil society are often quite more critical, and sometimes more radical.

Studies of Refugees Reception in Europe and Spain

There is a vast number of books and papers, as well as specialized journals, on refugees. In November 2020, the Library of Congress lists more than 5000 books and the Web of Science more than 10,000 indexed articles with the word “Refugees” in their titles.

Though more limited in time and topic, Google Scholar lists more than 20,000 articles on “Refugee Crisis” between 2015 and 2020 alone, of which more than 16,000 on Europe. More specifically on “Refugees Welcome” there are more than 2700 articles in Google Scholar, of which some 1200 with the word “discourse” and 200 with the word “discourse analysis”. Though much less in the Web of Science, also here we find more than 300 indexed Articles on the “Refugee Crisis” during the last 5 years– though much less (60) combined with “Discourse”.

In sum, there is a vast literature on refugees in general, and many articles (but so far few monographs) on the so-called “Refugee Crisis” in Europe in 2015-6, in particular, but relatively few of these on discourse and discourse analysis. So, after a few references to other studies in Europe, we limit our literature review to studies on the reception of refugees in Spain.

Studies of the Refugees Welcome in different countries

Many studies in Europe on the arrival and reception of refugees were written in Austria, Germany, the UK and the Scandinavian countries. *Rosenberger, Stern & Merhaut (2018) is one of the few book-length studies of solidarity and reception and of protests against deportation in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, with extensive description of official policies as well as local grassroots movements. In their discourse-historical study, *Rheindorf & Wodak (2018) critically examine the (meta-) discursive struggle in Austria in the media and political debate about the “border fence” and how many refugees should be admitted, especially in a political context of the pressures of the extreme right.

After their first reception in Austria, most refugees continued their journey to Germany, which soon became the hotspot of the Refugees Welcome movement, and the creation of the Welcome Culture (for a general study, also in international perspective, see the monograph of *Pries, 2018). It is not surprising, therefore, that most studies on these topics were published in Germany, only some of which can briefly be mentioned here. The collection of articles of *Rosenberger, Stern & Merhaut (2018) was already mentioned above for Austria,. Many studies on the reception of refugees in Germany are carried out by Karakayali and his collaborators. Based on survey data and

interviews, Among his other studies, *Karakayali (2019) discusses the solidarity with refugees as a special kind of social movement, different from traditional movements

Although most refugees remained in Germany, many thousands continued their journey to the Scandinavian countries. In Denmark they were received at borders and train stations by members of a movement of “venligboerne” (kind citizens/neighbours) - - see *García Agustín & Jørgensen (2019), one of the few books on the solidarity movement in Europa and Denmark. In Denmark especially the sociological survey studies of Jonas Toubøl on solidarity activism have contributed to our insight in the group style, values and ethics of the grassroots movement, and their lack of trust in parliament and the police (*Toubøl, 2017, 2019).

Most refugees didn't stay in Denmark but continued their travel to Sweden, with Germany undoubtedly the most refugee-friendly country in Europe, although the arrival of thousands of refugees soon led to new legislation to limit immigration. Also here we find several studies on solidarity with refugees. *Krzyżanowski (2018), in a study of Twitter messages of the Social Democratic Party discourse, shows how politicians legitimize immigration policies, often in populist terms. Within the framework of Critical Discourse Studies, *Johansson (2017) examines the discourses of prominent politicians on welfare for refugees. Although in their speeches the politicians may appear less chauvinistic, their actual policies and legislation are hardly positive for refugees. Other studies are on the Swedish media (see below) and on local activities of organizations and volunteers assisting refugees. *Mäkelä (2016, 2020) offers an thematic analysis of interviews in Malmö with members of the Refugee Welcome movement in Sweden, within a social movement perspective focusing on motivations. Interestingly, she finds that as soon as the local authorities take over the responsibility of refugees, civil society becomes less engaged. In a more theoretical framework and a extensive literature review, *Povrzanovic Frykman & Mäkelä (2020) examine current Refugee Welcome activities in light of cosmopolitan values and aspirations for social justice. Influenced by the work of Chouliaraki (2006), *Dahlgren (2016) discusses the civic response to the arrival of refugees and the fluctuating discourses about the current events in a more theoretical analysis of “moral spectatorship” (on the media portrayal of human suffering see also the earlier Swedish study of *Höijer, 2004).

Once on their way, some refugees also arrived in **Norway**, where similar scenes of humanitarian assistance occurred, for instance at the railway station in Oslo. As is the

case in Sweden, also here students and other scholars in several disciplines studied the events and the relevant political and civic discourses of volunteers (see, e.g. the book by *Enjolras & Eimhjellen, 2018, with studies of social engagement, the organizations involved and the role of the social media).

Already before the “refugee crisis” of 2015, many refugees tried to reach the United Kingdom, giving rise to the events – and their study – of the camps across the Channel in Sangatte and Calais (see, e.g., *Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Millner, 2013; *Rygiel, 2011). Although – or because -- the conservative government admitted much less refugees than in Germany or Sweden, also in the UK there was an active pro-refugee movement – as well as many relevant studies. Since his PhD thesis on the experiences of refugees in Scotland, Steve *Kirkwood (2012), in collaboration with Simon Goodman and other discursive social psychologists, engaged in detailed discourse analytical studies, e.g. of parliamentary debates (*Kirkwood, 2017) as well as the detailed monograph on the language of asylum by *Kirkwood, Goodman, McVittie & McKinlay (2019). One of the very few books on the discourses on refugees, this study examines the discourses on asylum policies, “places of death” and safety, who counts as refugee or asylum seeker, their work experiences, and their relations with local citizens (among several other relevant publications before and after 2015, see, e.g. Goodman & Burker, 2010, 2019).

Sam Parker, wrote a series of discourse analytical studies about refugees – and their experiences of integration and racism -- in Wales (*Parker, 2018, 2020). *Parker, Naper & Goodman (2018) show the influence in the press of the UK, Norway and Australia of the publication of the famous photograph of the body of Alan Kurdi, a three year old Kurdish-Syrian boy, drowned with his mother on their way from Turkey to a Greek island – an event discussed in most studies of the plight of refugees arriving in Europe in 2015 (for a study of the role of this photograph, see also *Olesen, 2018).

In the framework of a large international project, based on 147 in-depth interviews, and hence probably the most extensive empirical study of the topic, *Monforte et al. (2019) compare volunteers’ engagement in the UK and France, focusing on “collective action based on values of compassion, hospitality, solidarity and humanitarianism in contemporary societies.”

In a much broader perspective, and continuing her earlier research on the mediation of distant human suffering as spectacle (among many other publications, see

Chouliaraki, 2006, 2013), Lilie Chouliaraki also (co-) authored several papers on the “refugee crisis”. Based on a semiotic analysis of images in five countries (Greece, Italy, Hungary, UK, and Ireland), *Chouliaraki & Stolic (2017) examines the role and responsibility of the media in the ongoing ‘crisis’, focusing of different categories of ‘visualization’ of refugees, including biological life, threat and security, hospitality and political activism, post-humanitarian engagement, critically concluding that their portrayal hardly humanises the refugees. Based on a content analysis of 1200 news articles in eight European countries *Chouliaraki & Zaborowski (2017) critically conclude that refugees are always “mute”, that is, they barely have ‘voice’ in the hierarchy of the media, for which “our” politicians dominate the news on the ‘crisis’. They thus also are not political, social and historical actors. A special issue of the *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* is dedicated to this powerful role of the media in the politicization of the refugee crisis (*Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, & Wodak, 2018; *Triandafyllidou, 2018).

Studies on Refugees in Spain

Directly relevant for this paper, we finally summarize some of the (few) studies carried out on refugees in Spain. *Pries (2018) in his book on refugees and civil society, also on Spain, wonders why so few new refugees arrived in Spain, although it was easier to reach than Greece or Italy – whereas many thousands from North Africa arrived in Spain across the Strait of Gibraltar and via the Canary Islands in the early 2000s. After, that Spain used a carrot and stick strategy, including negotiations (to limit migrants from coming) with Morocco, which aptly uses its position in a power play to get advantages,

*Montagut & Moragas-Fernández (2020) showed how the Spanish press (*El Pais*, *La Vanguardia* and *El Mundo*) between 2015 and 2017 engaged in both humanization and dehumanization frames with the typical use of FLOOD or (positive or negative) TRAVELLER metaphors conceptualising refugees, but also in terms of volumes and loads. Governments or countries on the other hand were conceptualised as living things, e.g as “remaining firm” or “moving forward”.

As part of the MAREM project of the Ruhr University (Bochum) , studying refugee protection in Greece, Italy and Spain *Witkowski, Pries & Mratschkowski

(2019), first observe that compared to other countries in Southern Europe, Spain has relatively few refugees. They usefully provide a general survey of the (rather heterogeneous) networks of organizations in Spain involved in the reception of refugees and their (critical) relations with state actors, such as the police.

The ethnographic MA thesis of *Netherland (2017) studied how, within the general “Culture of Welcome” perspective, grassroots organizations operate in Catalonia and how they approach the integration of refugees, whose conceptualization appears to reflect academic ideas of integration. He concludes that “the effects of interculturalism can be seen in the organizational nature of each group and their focus on defending the intercultural reputation of Catalonia”, and that the “grassroots mentality towards refugees has been seen to allow for contextual fluidity, focus on choice and displacement and emphasize moral responsibility toward immigrants of any profile seeking to improve their lives.”

In the framework of a collection of studies on the “refugee crisis” (*Della Porta, 2018), Spanish authors *Alcalde & Portos (2018) contribute one of the most substantial studies of refugee solidarity in Spain, focusing – as does the whole book – on such social movement notions as “political opportunity structures”, or, in other words, the political context of the movement. Besides political analysis, the authors conducted 24 interviews with local activists and pro-refugee organizations. Theoretically interesting is that they formulate their approach in a sociocognitive perspective by referring to the “*perceptions of the local opportunity structure*” (p. 159), and not on the actual political context, because what influences social activists is how they perceive or interpret such context. They study various regions and cities in Spain, such as Barcelona, Andalusia, Galicia and the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Barcelona is a special case because of the activist background of Mayor Ada Colau and her explicit policies and discourses in favour of Refugees Welcome – a slogan displayed at Barcelona’s Town Hall. The organizers confirm earlier studies about the political context of social movement activities, in the sense that a positive political context, as is the case in Barcelona, social movements such as Stop Mare Mortum, can only “fill the gaps” of what the local government doesn’t do, but generally within a context of cooperation. At the same time, though, Barcelona is also typical because of (massive) protest demonstrations, despite political solidarity of its government and institutions, probably not only to mark the independence of the local movements (as the authors surmise), but also to protest

against national and European policies and practices. This is generally the case in those Spanish cities where political allies are in power, as is the case in Cadiz and A Coruña governed by Podemos. Especially interesting for this paper is the finding that the experience of pro-refugee organizations in such cities is that there are many “nice and radical words” (p. 167) but few concrete policies. This is also observed in cities governed by the social democrats (PSOE). This obviously is also because the (conservative) central government, responsible for national asylum policies hardly allows local policies that are inconsistent with national policies (and politics) – despite the widespread movement of “Cities of Refuge”. As we have seen, even national parliament there was a consensus in the late summer of 2015 to improve the reception of refugees. A very different picture emerges in Ceuta and Melilla, at the “Southern Frontier” of “Fortress Europe”, with many families of police and military and governed by the right, where “closed borders” also mean “close opportunities” and citizens hardly solidarity with refugees (p. 171ff).

More specifically focusing on solidarity and the Refugees Welcome movement *Garcia Agustin & Jørgensen in their book dedicate a well-informed special chapter to Barcelona – after discussing the *venligboerne* movement in Denmark. Within a broader sociopolitical perspective, such as a study of the tension between “sanctuary cities” and the Spanish government, they focus specifically on the Barcelona Refuge City Pan (BRCP), launched in September 2015, and the activities of famous Mayor Ada Colau, both locally, nationally and internationally. As we’ll see in our discourse analysis below, this tension between city and state also emerges in Ada Colau’s open letter to prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. In Barcelona, with the BRCP and strengthening its “Care Service for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER) and its Nausica accommodation program “solidarity becomes institutional” (p. 101ff). In interviews their leaders observe that broad solidarity with refugees is also due to massive media coverage of the “refugee crisis” – a fact that is relevant for our theoretical framework of the discourse-based (re)production of mobilization and social movements. The authors also pay attention to the huge manifestation of February 2017 urging more positive national policies for refugees. We’ll examine the relevant discourses of this Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra initiative below. As was observed by Alcalde & Portos (2018) also in this study the authors find that pro-refugee organizations criticize the authorities for

their lack of political action (p. 107). Later this was especially the case for Barcelona's (police) treatment of the *manteros*, the West-African street vendors.

Theoretical Framework

A Multidisciplinary approach

The theoretical framework needed to be able to describe and explain the discourses about the Refugees Welcome movement is complex and multidisciplinary. Obviously, we first need a *theory of public discourse* to account for its structures and functions in society – a theory generally missing in the social sciences. Secondly, assuming that the popular activities consisting in assisting refugees constitute a specific kind of social movement, requires a *theory of social movements*, which itself is multidisciplinary. Different from other types of social movement whose members engage in contentious actions for their own benefit, activists of Refugees Welcome do so for the benefit of refugees. Thirdly, their actions are a form of *solidarity*, a concept that itself requires philosophical, social, political and psychological analysis. Fourthly, the actors engaging in solidarity with refugees do so in their identity of 'ordinary' citizens, which requires a theory of *civic society*. Fifthly, these actions take place at and across national *borders*, and for the benefit of refugees crossing such borders, a crucial dimension that requires a special sociopolitical analysis of such concept. Finally, even when such solidarity actions are not primarily engaged in with political goals, for instance to acquire or defend power, they take place in a *political context*, such as the role of the state, its agencies or political parties and their policies relating to refugees in particular and immigrants in general.

Discourse Studies

Although activities in solidarity with refugees largely consist in assistance such as providing shelter, food, drink, translation and support in their interaction with the authorities, members of the movement also engage in many forms of text and talk (*Johnston, 2013; *Woodly, 2015). In order to be able to assist refugees, they must know such refugees are arriving and in need of help in the first place. Such knowledge

is acquired through traditional media such as television, radio and newspaper, and today especially also through social media such as Facebook or Twitter, or through interpersonal conversations with other people who have such knowledge (of the vast literature on political knowledge acquisition through the media, see, e.g. *De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; *Eveland, 2002). Such mediation or discourse-based knowledge acquisition also *presupposes* vast amounts of social and political knowledge (*Van Dijk, 2014), in this case about refugees in general, the specific refugees who now need help, as well as general knowledge about political and geographical contexts, such as the ongoing civil war in Syria, as one of the causes of the ongoing ‘refugee crisis’ (*Consterdine, 2018; *Leeper, 2020). Such understanding, as well as the social attitudes and ideologies of the citizens, are themselves the necessary conditions of empathy, solidarity and decisions to participate in solidarity activities. This part of the theoretical framework must also explain why some groups or categories of citizens, even with the same knowledge, decide to act in favour of refugees, while others may remain indifferent, or engage in actions against the reception of refugees. Once individual citizens have acquired the relevant information about (these) refugees, they most likely engage in conversational or social media interaction with family members, friends or colleagues to communicate their intention to participate, or ask their interlocutors to join the movement, a familiar topic of mobilization and recruitment (see, e.g. *Bennett, Breunig & Givens, 2008), but not studies in discourse analytical terms. Next, when arriving at borders, ports, railway stations or government agencies with the intention to participate in solidary action, they need to coordinate their actions through many forms of conversational interaction, on the one hand, and to talk to refugees, in a mutually comprehensible language (although there is much literature on volunteer interaction with refugees, as we have seen above, there is as yet no literature on conversations with refugees). Then, the activists need to talk to representative of local groups, organizations, agencies, house owners, and many others who need to cooperate in offering permanent or temporary assistance in acquiring shelter and the organization of everyday life. Finally, each day the activists not only talk with others about their experiences, but also to friends and family to tell about their experiences, whether in face to face conversations, or online through e-mail, phone or social media (*Davis, 2002). This is merely a brief summary of much more complex ongoing text and talk involved in the acquisition of knowledge, getting involved, planning actions and

communication about such actions with others. All these discourses are crucial micro-components of the social movement, few of which analyzed in depth in traditional social movement studies – also because few of these discourses are usually recorded for later analysis.

Social Movements

At more comprehensive meso- and macrolevels of analysis, the more or less coordinated activities of refugee assistance of groups of citizens, especially when the state does not do so, or does so insufficiently, constitute what the very participants define as a movement, e.g., by attributing a name to it, such as “Refugees Welcome”. Classical social movements, such as those of workers or peasants, are typically constituted in the material interest of its participants (*Della Porta & Diani, 2015). New Social Movements, such as feminist, peace or environmental movements rather focus on the identity or civil rights of specific groups or the wellbeing of society in general (Laraña, Johnston & Gusfield, 1994). Movements such as Refugees Welcome are a special kind of (new) social movement, focussing on the rights, interests or well-being of others (*Della Porta, 2018), as was also the case for parts of the Abolition, Civil Rights or antiracist movements, or the solidarity movements, committees or organizations in favour of oppressed minorities in other countries, as was and is the case in Europe or the USA of groups solidary with repressed groups (citizens, writers or politicians) in Latin America (see e.g., *Power, 2009).

The Refugees Welcome movement, thus, is rather different from many other social movements. Not only it acts in solidarity with other people and focuses on a specific kind of “forced” migrant, namely those fleeing oppression or civil war in their own country, and especially those who were not welcome in other countries. Secondly, spontaneous individuals and groups providing assistance to refugees may form a temporary movement in times generally defined as a crisis, when others (countries, the state, NGOs, organizations or private companies) do not offer such help. This means that when (much of) the crisis is over, the movement may become less active or stop to exist. Thirdly, the movement generally has no recognized overall leaders, organization, headquarters, elections, publications and other forms of organization. Fourthly, during the 2015 Refugee Crisis, local or national movements of Refugees Welcome in various

countries were formed. Although most of the solidarity actions were planned and executed nationally or locally, members usually knew that similar groups existed in other countries, and sometimes cooperated with them, personally or formally, so that the movement had become an international movement (*Della Porta & Tarrow, 2004).

As a special social movement, thus, Refugees Welcome may be studied with the usual concepts and theories developed for similar social movements, such as in forms of its recruitment, organization, members, types of action, goals, networks with other groups or NGO's, relations with the state or political parties, and other types of political context ("opportunity structures"). The analysis of the knowledge, attitudes and ideologies as well as the discourses of this movement must be part of such a theory of social movements.

Citizenship Studies

Part of the study grassroots assistance of refugees has been carried out in the framework of Citizenship Studies, itself a multidisciplinary field, as are discourse and social movement studies, straddling with sociology and especially political science, law and international relations, with its own journal and hundreds of publications – also on refugees (*Isin & Nyers, 2014). This is not just relevant for the identity and the activities of activists as citizens, but also for the complex political identities of the refugees themselves, often in a limbo between identities as immigrants or asylum seekers (*Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy, 2005). One of the dimensions of such Critical Citizen Studies is the definition of Civil Society, and the type of relations with the State, such as active or passive participation, cooperation, dissent, resistance or confrontation.

Applied to the study of refugees and the assistance of refugees, citizenship studies may focus on the political or social rights of refugees, their democratic inclusion, special legislation, nationalization, migration policies, securitization, state sovereignty, border regimes, belonging, community and so on (*Johnson, 2014). Relevant for this study, however, are less the studies on the identities of refugees as citizens, but rather those of solidary autochthonous citizens and organizations assisting refugees (see the literature on Europa cited above for different countries, and *Agarin & Nancheva, 2018;

*Bock & MacDonald, 2019; *Rosenberger, Stern & Merhaut, 2018; see also *Stock, 2019).

Solidarity, Altruism and Empathy

Refugees Welcome is generally defined as a movement of solidarity (see, e.g., *García Agustin & Jørgensen, 2016; 2019; *Ataç, Rygiel & Stierl, 2018; *Brandle, Eisele & Trezn, 2019; *Kirchhoff, 2020; *Siapera, 2019). Within our multidisciplinary perspective, we thus need examine the very concept of solidarity and how it is relevant for the study of solidarity movements. Philosophical and political analysis of solidarity examines the relations between a solidarity group, on the one hand, and a group who benefits with such solidarity (*Kolers, 2016; *Pensky, 2008; *Scholz, 2008). One of the criteria of this relationship is that any kind of solidarity action must benefit the target group and does so according to the criteria of that group. This means that it may be debatable whether actions that also, at the same time, benefit the solidarity group, that is, various kinds of self-serving assistance, should not be called solidarity in the first place.

As is the case for most societal phenomena studied here, also solidarity has at least two fundamental dimensions, namely a sociopolitical one of solidarity practices at the microlevel and groups and organizations, at the macrolevel, on the one hand, and various forms of personal and social cognition on the other hand (*Passy & Monsch, 2020). Indeed, for solidary citizens to engage in action, they need to construe mental models of a social situation in which they can play a role, plan and execute actions, and about which they can tell stories later. At the same time, they share knowledge about refugees and their predicament and needs, current refugee policies and border practices, etc, as well as socially shared attitudes on migration and ideologies of democracy, antiracism, etc. that sustain all solidary activity. Discourse is the crucial interface between these, because on the one hand it is a prominent solidary social practice in the first place, and on the other hand it is the main source of information about refugees, their current situation, state agents, etc.

One of the dimensions of solidarity is *altruism*, a perspective, state of mind and moral practice often studied as a property of members of solidarity movements, based on concern for the wellbeing of other people (of the vast literature, see, e. g. *Eisenberg,

1986; *Giugni & Passy, 2001; *Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). One of the crucial questions dealt with in such studies is whether people engage in prosocial behaviour, such as assisting refugees, without any reward or other direct or indirect interest.

One of the personal motivating forces of solidarity is *empathy*, another complex notion, which besides the usual analysis in terms of types of emotion also has been analyzed in neuropsychological terms, e.g. as a property of mirror neurons that enable people not only to know the knowledge of other people, but also to feel the other's feelings (besides the neurological studies of empathy, see especially the studies of social empathy: *Segal, 2018).

If empathy is a form of emotion and defined in terms of embodiment, it should only be defined in terms of the individual properties or persons. That is, strictly speaking, empathy cannot be shared by a social group, community or movement, because these have no 'collective' body. This does not mean that in specific contexts groups may not have similar emotions, and thus empathy, at the same time, e.g. when collectively confronted with the visible plight of refugees. Such 'collective' empathy may very well be related to knowledge and evaluative beliefs that can be socially shared, precisely about the situation of refugees. Thus, embodied empathy and related emotions, such as compassion or pity, may be the part of the personal mental models that define plans for future or ongoing actions of solidarity.

Political Analysis

Finally, especially at the macrolevel, the solidary activities of the Refugee Welcome movement and its members also require political analysis. Most activists, defined as citizens and hence as members of civil society know about current migration and refugee policies of the state and the political parties, government agencies, international treaties and border activities. Hence, their solidary activities may be engaged in in defiance of laws or regulation, and as contentious actions and protests against official policies and practices, such as the deportation of refugees (*Rosenberger, Stern & Merhaut, 2018). At the same time, they know which political parties support liberal or restrictive state policies, and hence with which parties they can contribute, or against which parties they must act (*Hadj Abdou & Rosenberger, 2019). In other words, Refugees Welcome as a movement has been founded and engaged in *solidarity* with

refugees but at the same time often in *resistance* against governments, political parties or organizations, locally, nationally and even internationally – as is the case for most contentious social movements. It is this form of political context analysis that is traditionally called a study of present or absent “political opportunities”.

Analysis of Pro-Refugee Discourse in Spain

The role of discourse in the analysis of social movements deserves more theoretical and analytical attention than usually recognized in most sociological approaches. Discourse, first of all is among the main repertoires of protest and solidarity, besides such well studied activities as manifestations, marches, occupations or strikes. Many types of discourse, e.g. of traditional and social media, are also the principal means of mobilization and recruitment, and how civil society learns about new social movements and their goals and activities. Their discourses at the same time reveal the knowledge, attitudes and ideologies of social movements. It is within this more general framework we examine some properties of pro-refugee discourse in Spain, especially of NGOs, cities and parliament, as well as the goals, motivations, norms, values and ideologies.

Parliament

We have seen above that pro-refugee discourse in Spain – as well as elsewhere in Europe during the “long summer” of 2015 – was not limited to NGOs or social movements, but also occurred in parliament, for instance in the PSOE-led initiative of a special bill and its debate on September 29, 2015. Esperança Esteve Ortega, socialist MP from Barcelona, presented and defended the bill in the following words:

- (3) Creo que no solo nos hemos sensibilizado, sino que hemos tomado conciencia de que los grupos políticos, los que tenemos responsabilidades públicas no podíamos quedarnos ajenos al problema, al drama humano, a las muertes y que algo teníamos que hacer, no solo lo que nos viene dado por las obligaciones que tienen el Estado y este Parlamento, sino algo más, algo de lo que hoy podemos sentirnos satisfechos y es que presentamos una proposición no de ley cuyos datos muy pronto quedaron obsoletos.

I think that not only have we become sensitized, but we have become aware that political groups, those of us with public responsibilities, could not remain oblivious to the problem, the human drama, the deaths and that we had to do something, not just what is given us by the obligations of the State and this Parliament, but something else, something that today we can feel satisfied about and that is that we present a proposal not of law whose data very soon became obsolete

As is the case for most pro-refugee discourse, solidarity is first of all conceptualized in terms of “sensitivity”, that is, in terms of emotions and affect conditioned by discourses about “human drama” and “deaths”, and hence as direct causes of “something we have to do”, that is, the very motivation of political action. In the fragment of her speech cited above, she explicitly refers to the crucial notion of *empathy* caused by the “pain” of “human beings”. Other speakers topicalize the very notion of ‘emotions’ in their speeches, as does left-wing Basque scholar and MP Carlos Martínez Gorriarán, who also speaks of compassion, solidarity and “universal ethics”, as comprehensible human reactions, but as an introduction to statement that, politically, such emotions are not enough:

- (4) Intervengo brevemente para anunciar que mi grupo por supuesto va a apoyar esta iniciativa parlamentaria y que nos alegramos mucho de que sea en un tema de tanta importancia, porque en realidad se trata de un problema de la democracia y no solamente, como quizá se repite con demasiada facilidad, de un problema humanitario o sentimental, aunque también lo sea. Es evidente que en la crisis de los refugiados hay un enorme componente emocional y que muchas veces lo que ha conseguido que cambien de opinión prácticamente todos los Gobiernos de Europa, incluido el español, han sido las reacciones emocionales de la opinión pública, lo cual habla bien por una vez del género humano y de su predisposición a la compasión y a la solidaridad.

I intervene briefly to announce that my group will of course support this parliamentary initiative and that we are very happy that it is on such an important issue, because in reality it is a problem of democracy and not only, as perhaps it is repeated with too easily, of a humanitarian or sentimental problem, even if it is too. It is evident that there is an enormous emotional component in the refugee crisis and that many times what has managed to change their opinion practically all the governments of Europe, including Spain, have been the emotional reactions of public opinion, which speaks good for once of the human race and its predisposition to compassion and solidarity.

Also Esperança Esteve Ortega in her presentation of the bill stresses that beyond personal emotions and shared beliefs, the institutional context of this discourse requires an account of political “obligations” in the form of a bill, as part of the “rational” tasks of government. This deontic aspect of political or moral *obligation* is another main dimension of pro-refugee cognition and discourse about refugees. Moreover, such political obligation is not reserved to the left, but shared in a moral and political consensus of all parties -- at least until the representation of far-right party Vox in parliament after the general elections of 2019 – a “responsibility” and “global compromise” she says to be shared by all organizations both in Spain and in Europe. In such terms, the government is urged to act as formulated in main points of the bill summarized above, especially because the topic of refugees, compared to that of migration, hardly was dealt with before in parliament. We see that “news facts” are

perceived as causes of the necessity of taking action, as is the case for social movements, and in the very terms of social movements about a “better world is possible”

- (5) No construimos para que todo se quede igual, construimos para adaptarnos a un mundo que cambia cada día en nuestros barrios y en nuestras ciudades, cada uno con su historia. El momento actual nos exige a los políticos —y acabo— flexibilidad, dirección, comprensión, mirada larga pero también concreción, pensando en nuevos paradigmas de convivencia que hemos de ir tejiendo a diario no para buscar el mundo ideal, que seguro que no existe, sino para contribuir al mejor mundo posible.

We do not build so that everything stays the same, we build to adapt to a world that changes every day in our neighbourhoods and in our cities, each with its own history. The current moment demands of us politicians (...) flexibility, direction, understanding, a long look but also concreteness, thinking about new paradigms of coexistence that we have to weave daily not to look for the ideal world, which surely does not exist, but to contribute to the best possible world.

We have also seen above, in the speech of Tardà I Coma in this debate, that the current parliamentary solidarity with refugees is not exactly typical of Spain’s current and past attitudes about migrants and refugees, at least not as compared to Germany. Bask MP Emilio Olabarria Muñoz is also (self) critical about parliament:

- (6) ¿Por qué una política de cuotas? ¿Desde cuándo la condición de refugiado y la adquisición del derecho de asilo tienen que estar parcelados en forma de cuotas? La cuota que asume el Estado español no llega ni al 0,036 % de la población del Estado español. ¿Es generosa esta posición? ¿Vamos a realizar una reflexión apologética de la generosidad del Estado español en materia de aceptación de refugiados (...) ¿Por qué todas las instituciones públicas han sido adelantadas por la sociedad civil? ¿Por qué se nos han adelantado Amnistía Internacional, Acnur o la Iglesia católica? Todas las instituciones, personas particulares, familias y clubes de fútbol han actuado de forma más rápida y seguramente más solidaria que la propia institución que representa la soberanía del Estado español. Tenemos que hacer una reflexión autocrítica sobre esta cuestión que su retórica ha edulcorado por mor del consenso.

Why a quota policy? Since when do refugee status and the acquisition of the right to asylum have to be divided into quotas? The quota assumed by the Spanish State does not even reach 0.036% of the population of the Spanish State. Is this position generous? Are we going to make an apologetic reflection on the generosity of the Spanish State in terms of accepting refugees (...) Why have all public institutions been advanced by civil society? Why did Amnesty International, UNHCR or the Catholic Church get ahead of us? All the institutions, individuals, families and football clubs have acted in a faster and surely more supportive way than the institution that represents the sovereignty of the Spanish State. We have to make a self-critical reflection on this question that his rhetoric has sweetened for the sake of consensus.

Another property of antiracist discourse in general, and of pro-refugee discourse in particular, is the rhetorical and argumentative strategy of the numbers game, in this case to emphasize the shame about Spain’s refugee policies. Especially the well-known comparison move, in which the speaker opposes parliament with the organizations of

civil society or even the catholic church, is another well-known strategy of pro-refugee discourse.

Amnesty International

If we turn to official NGOs, an influential critical intervention is published by Amnesty International, which had developed an Refugees Welcome Index, comparing countries on the basis of percentages of people who accept refugees in the country, city or even at home, with China, Germany and the UK on top. As we have seen above, its 2016 report finds for Spain that the government is “out of touch with public opinion”, a conclusion shared in parliament as well as among NGOs and other pro-refugee solidarity groups. Amnesty and its discourses are important because they primarily address governments, in this case also with concrete numbers:

- (7) To respond to the global refugee crisis, Amnesty International is calling on governments to resettle 1.2 million refugees by the end of 2017. That is far more than the 100,000 per year governments are currently taking annually, but less than a tenth of the 19.5 million refugees in the world today. (...) Politicians should stop pandering to intolerance and division, and listen to their people who want to help their fellow human beings. They must address the shameful imbalance that sees 86% of the world’s refugees welcomed by the world’s poorer countries while the wealthy ones renege on their responsibilities.”

The speech act of the public appeal to governments is followed by the presupposed (“should stop”) criticism of “intolerance and division”, and two comparisons, first with their own solidary citizens, and then with the poor countries of the world receiving many more refugees. The notion of “shame” is also part of the political rhetoric of pro-refugee discourse, and characteristic of a deontic pragmatic speech act, as in the everyday accusation “You should be ashamed”. In its report Amnesty registers that 82% of people in Spain expect their government to do more. Implicitly it not only accuses governments but also the press:

- (8) Governments cannot allow their response to the refugee crisis to be held hostage by headlines. Too often they use xenophobic anti-refugee rhetoric to chase approval ratings. This survey suggests they are not listening to the silent majority of welcoming citizens who take the refugee crisis personally.”

Interesting here is that the usual reference to the “silent majority” is associated with widespread prejudice and anti-immigrant attitudes, and governments not typically urged to follow public opinion. This also shows how both socially and politically the refugee

situation in Spain and Western Europe is special and exceptional with respect to general tendencies of xenophobia or islamophobia.

Discourses of Pro-Refugees Organizations

ACCEM

The pro-refugee NGOs may be expected to engage in particularly critical discourse with respect to official policies and practices. On September 18, 2015, ACCEM addresses an open letter to the Minister of the Interior of the conservative PP government of Mariano Rajoy, with the following passages:

- (9) Estamos desolados porque hace semanas que venimos advirtiendo que el tratamiento diferenciado que se está haciendo provocaría que hubiera refugiados de primera y de segunda. Y es lo que ha pasado.
Las personas refugiadas que están aquí en nuestro país esperando a solicitar asilo son tratadas como de segunda. No hay foto ni video de su tragedia que despierte la atención mediática y social y fuercen a atenderlos. Pero merecen y tienen derecho al mismo tratamiento que los que son objeto de dicha atención.
(...) La necesidad de ampliar y agilizar el sistema de asilo para las personas que ya están en España es inaplazable. Y que todas las personas tengan las mismas oportunidades para acceder a él también.

*We are devastated because for weeks we have been warning that the differentiated treatment that is being done would cause first and second class refugees. And that's what happened. Refugees who are here in our country waiting to apply for asylum are treated as second rate. There is no photo or video of their tragedy that arouses media and social attention and forces them to attend to them. But they deserve and are entitled to the same treatment as those who are the subject of such care.
(...) The need to expand and streamline the asylum system for people already in Spain cannot be postponed. And that all people have the same opportunities to access it too.*

The general presupposition of this letter is the comparison between the vast media attention for the current refugee crisis and especially the refugees from Syria, on the one hand, and the thousands of other asylum seekers in the country who receive little media coverage, and hence less official attention. No doubt, as is shown by its other discourses and other practices, ACCEM is also committed to the reception of Syrian refugees, but as a committed NGO its main involvement of the many thousands of refugees already in Spain – many more than the “new refugees” from Syria. The letter thus is a function of the ongoing social commitment of the NGO – and hence a manifestation of its “politics as usual”. It does so, first in the emotional terms of being “devastated” (*desolados*), and

using the classical critical metaphor of differential treatment of “first and second class” citizens.

A week earlier, on September 11, 2015, ACCEM publishes a statement on the current European “emergency”:

(10) Hasta el momento actual, tanto la Unión Europea como los Estados miembros de la Unión han ofrecido una tardía y lenta respuesta a la situación de emergencia humanitaria que estamos viviendo. Ahora que comienzan a tomarse decisiones es necesario que se haga con agilidad, eficacia y rapidez pues la lentitud y la torpeza tienen serios costes en vidas humanas y sufrimiento añadido. Todas las decisiones y medidas tomadas deben acompañarse de una suficiente dotación económica. (...) Queremos recordar que dar una atención y una acogida dignas a estas personas es una responsabilidad para España en virtud de los distintos compromisos internacionales adoptados. Accem, junto al resto de organizaciones especializadas en asilo, llevamos décadas trabajando con las personas refugiadas, hemos gestionado antes otras situaciones de emergencia. (...) (...) Queremos felicitar al conjunto de la ciudadanía de la que formamos parte por la respuesta social que se está dando ante esta situación de crisis, una respuesta ejemplar de solidaridad con las personas que llegan hasta territorio europeo huyendo de la guerra y la violencia.

Until now, both the European Union and the Member States of the Union have offered a belated and slow response to the humanitarian emergency situation that we are experiencing. Now that decisions are beginning to be made, it is necessary to do so with agility, efficiency and speed, since slowness and clumsiness have serious costs in human lives and added suffering. All decisions and measures taken must be accompanied by a sufficient financial endowment. (...) We want to remind you that giving these people a dignified care and welcome is a responsibility for Spain under the various international commitments adopted. Accem, along with the other organizations specialized in asylum, have been working with refugees for decades, we have managed other emergency situations before. (...)

(...) We want to congratulate all the citizens of which we are a part for the social response that is being given to this crisis situation, an exemplary response of solidarity with the people who come to European territory fleeing war and violence

One of the strategies, already observed above, is critical polarization, on the EU level, between GOOD civil society and BAD (“late”, “slow” and “clumsy”) governments, where the NGO obviously sides with the positive ingroup. Secondly, NGO discourse like this not only makes critical assessments, but also formulates the deontic aspects of “what must be done”, and the criteria of (agility, efficacy and speed) *how* it must be done within the current emergency situation defined in the humanitarian terms of “human lives” and “suffering”. Relevant for a Spanish NGO, the discourse must not only be about Europe but focus on Spain, again in terms of its “responsibility” and “international commitments” – further deontic notions, and in terms of a crucial criteria: reception must be dignified (*digna*). In such NGO discourse, positive self-presentation about the decades of experience of the NGO with similar emergencies is crucial. After listing the obligations of countries and governments, part of this positive self-presentation is the reference to congratulations of the main ally of the NGO, namely

solidary civic society. The declaration finally elaborates on international refugee politics of the EU, the international community and the sources of flight in the countries where refugees come from, and proposes recommendations about rescue at sea, humanitarian corridors, resources, etc.

CEAR

The 251-page 2015 report of the *Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado* (CEAR) deals extensively with “the reality of refugees in the world, in the European Union and, mainly, in Spain”, and specifically with the present refugee situation in Europe and Spain. As may be expected, the very first lines engage in harsh criticism of the EU:

(11) En su vana obsesión por cerrar las fronteras a las personas refugiadas, la Unión Europea ha condenado a los parias de la Tierra a emprender travesías cada vez más arriesgadas en su huida de las guerras, las crisis humanitarias, las violaciones de los derechos humanos, los conflictos tan complejos que están convirtiendo el siglo XXI en el siglo de las personas refugiadas.

In its vain obsession to close borders to refugees, the European Union has condemned the outcasts of the Earth to undertake increasingly risky journeys in their flight from wars, humanitarian crises, violations of rights, the complex conflicts that are turning the 21st century into the century of refugees.

There are many ways to refer to refugees, and such is part of the denomination strategies of pro-refugee NGOs. Besides references to refugees, asylum seekers or forced migrants (*personas vivían lejos de sus hogares de manera forzosa*), this text more dramatically emphasizes the plight of refugees by calling them “outcasts of the World”. This is hardly an hyperbole, but a correct description of their situation, added to an enumeration of the main causes of their flight (wars, etc.) as is the temporal generalization to the 21th century as the relevant time frame of the emergency. Such an initial passage is followed by the usual statistics about the thousands of refugees drowned in Mediterranean, while stressing the need of a new refugee policy and criticizing “cold (immediate) return” policies of Spain, as well as up to 90% of rejection of asylum claims.

The 2016 CEAR report, informing in more detail about 2015, observes the vast increase of asylum seekers, especially from Syria, but at the same time criticizes the very slow decision making about asylum requests. In his Prologue, CEAR Director Carlos Bersosa states: “European leaders continue to bet for closing doors for refugees

and migrants through waterproofing of Europe's southern and eastern border". He uses the usual CLOSED DOOR metaphor, and the less common WATERPROOF metaphor, which however is consistent with the standard metaphor to describe the arrival of migrants or refugees in terms of WAVES or TSUNAMIS.

As we have found for antiracist discourse in general (*Van Dijk, 2021), also pro-refugee-discourse may extensively describe the wretchedness of situation of refugees, as does the 2015 CEAR report in its introduction:

(12) Un año más, también alertamos en nuestro Informe anual sobre las especialmente duras consecuencias de la crisis económica en las personas solicitantes de asilo y refugiadas y también en las que finalmente han quedado sin protección internacional. Su situación de particular vulnerabilidad, derivada de la experiencia traumática que motivó su exilio, de la dureza de una travesía que en no pocos casos dura varios años, el desconocimiento del idioma, las dificultades para acceder a un puesto de trabajo en un mercado laboral precarizado o para el reconocimiento de sus competencias profesionales y sus títulos académicos, tienen que motivar un esfuerzo mucho mayor de las administraciones públicas, con las partidas presupuestarias necesarias, para cumplir con los compromisos internacionales adquiridos por España.

For yet another year, we also warn in our Annual Report about the particularly harsh consequences of the economic crisis on asylum seekers and refugees and also on those who have finally been left without international protection. Their situation of particular vulnerability, derived from the traumatic experience that led to their exile, the harshness of a journey that in many cases lasts several years, the lack of knowledge of the language, the difficulties in accessing a job in a precarious labour market or for the recognition of their professional competences and their academic qualifications, they have to motivate a much greater effort of the public administrations, with the necessary budget items, to comply with the international commitments acquired by Spain.

Solidarity implies empathy with the negative situation of the Others, and this fragment makes a summary of that situation. Again, as in most NGO discourses, the principal addressee appears to be the (Spanish or local) governments (the “public administrations”), which are urged to do more. This effort is typically also formulated in financial terms (which implicitly may mean financial support of the NGOs), and the main reason are “international commitments”, which imply legal and/or moral obligation. We see again that emotional appeals are combined with rational/legal ones in a discourse with frequent deontic modalities.

The 2016 CEAR report elaborates on its criticism of the government, including concluding for the first time a lack of data from the ministry:

(13) La opacidad en el acceso a los datos, los criterios restrictivos e injustos en el estudio de solicitudes de la protección internacional y la retórica del compromiso del Gobierno con las personas refugiadas contrastan con la movilización de decenas de miles de ciudadanos y ciudadanas y de organizaciones sociales y con la disposición sincera de decenas de ayuntamientos, que en 2015 constituyeron la Red de Ciudades Refugio, y de varios gobiernos autonómicos a apoyar en la acogida a los desheredados y desheredadas del planeta.

The opacity of access to data, the restrictive and unfair criteria in the study of applications for international protection and the rhetoric of the Government's commitment to refugees contrast with the mobilization of tens of thousands of citizens and of social organizations and with the sincere disposition of dozens of municipalities, which in 2015 constituted the Network of Cities of Refuge, and of several autonomous governments to support the reception of the disinherited men and women of the planet.

Especially relevant in this fragment is the contrast, observed by MPs, NGOs and activists, between the (current, conservative) government and civic society, including local governments. Another aspect of the criticism, elsewhere formulated in terms of “nice words but little action”, is briefly summarized in terms of “rhetoric”. The example finally shows another of the classical denominations of migrants or refugees in terms of a variant of Frantz Fanon’s “wretched of the earth”: the “disinherited men and women” of the planet. Just above this passage the Director briefly mentions that La Fundación del Español Urgente had declared the work “refugiado” the word of the year 2015. He closes his 2016 Prologue with the following words:

(14) Estamos ante una encrucijada decisiva. Una amplia mayoría ciudadana exige en España y en la Unión Europea que nuestro continente sea tierra de asilo. No podemos permitir que más personas sigan muriendo, ahogadas, en el Mediterráneo. Y que nuestros valores naufraguen definitivamente con ellas. Se lo debemos a Aylan y a quienes como él perecieron porque nuestros gobernantes les cerraron las puertas.

We are at a decisive crossroads. A vast majority of citizens in Spain and the European Union demand that our continent be a land of asylum. We cannot allow more people to continue to die, drowning, in the Mediterranean. And that our values are definitely shipwrecked with them. We owe it to Aylan and to those like him who perished because our rulers closed their doors.

Again the important role of civic society during the refugee emergency is emphasized, for Spain and Europe, and those who “govern” criticized. The CLOSED DOORS metaphor is repeated, in this case preceded by the CROSSROADS metaphor conceptualizing a moment of crucial decision making -- hence implying urgency. More original is the final metaphor of DROWNING (of our values), projecting the real downing of refugees in the Mediterranean to the domain of ideology.

The hundreds of pages of the annual CEAR reports offer many examples of organizational text about refugees, which would require more specific analysis, such as lists of relevant laws, organizations, statistics about refugees in the world, in Europe and Spain. Numbers in this case are not a rhetorical move of enhancement but real numbers – numbers that speak for themselves. Indeed, these fragments of the report don’t need the metaphorical devices of its evaluative Prologue. The same is true for the description

of the many ways human rights are violated (arrest, torture, executions, etc) in the countries of origin of the refugees, with special focus on women and children – as well as the ways more than 1,3 million refugees arrive and are treated in Europe in 2015, of whom barely 1% applied for asylum in Spain. Yet, among the long chapters of numbers, one also finds more evaluative, critical passages such as:

(15) Pero, en lugar de actuar inspirada por los valores de solidaridad y respeto a los derechos humanos que fundaron el proyecto europeo, Bruselas ha optado por intensificar la construcción de la “Europa fortaleza” reforzando sus políticas de externalización de fronteras y ha acordado medidas que vulneran los derechos humanos y están poniendo en grave riesgo la vida de muchas personas migrantes y refugiadas (CEAR, Report 2016, p. 45).

But, instead of acting inspired by the values of solidarity and respect for human rights that founded the European project, Brussels has chosen to intensify the construction of “Fortress Europe” by reinforcing its policies of externalization of borders and has agreed measures that violate human rights and are putting the lives of many migrants and refugees at serious risk.

If any metaphor has become a standard description of Europe facing refugees, it has been the one of Fortress Europe, here still used between quotes, and accompanied with the CONSTRUCTION metaphor. The same is true for the reference to the main values applied in the reception of refugees, namely that of *solidarity* (used 42 times in the 2016 report)-- defining the very movement of Refugees Welcome, civic society, as well as the NGOs themselves. As may be expected there is also technical jargon in such reports, for instance when it speaks about “policies of externalization of borders”. One of the major benchmarks of pro-refugee discourse, and in this example, is also the violation of human rights (mentioned 92 times in the report) and the reference to human lives.

Finally, in a less bureaucratic style, the report pays attention to the role of civic society, the NGOs and the (initially positive) coverage of the media – especially with pictures of the drowned Turkish boy – and its change at the end of 2015 after the terrorist attacks in Paris. Here CEAR aims to contribute to balanced reporting by providing reliable information.

The City of Barcelona

We have seen above that Barcelona, led by its activist Mayor Ada Colau, played an important local, national and international role during the EU crisis caused by the sudden arrival of more than a million refugees. Ada Colau was elected Mayor on June 13, 2015, just before the “long summer of refugees”. She stimulated the national

movement of “Cities of Refuge”, put a huge “Refugees Welcome” banner on the Town Hall, and met colleagues of other cities abroad to talk about the reception of refugees. Although the city already had received many migrants and refugees before and had a special program servicing migrants and refugees (SAIER, active since 1989) in place, also in Barcelona 2015 and the following years there was special attention for refugees. A huge demonstration organized by Casa Nostra Casa Vostra (Our Home, Your Home), with more than 170,000 participants marched through the city urging the (conservative) government in Madrid to admit more refugees – rightly so, because as we have seen above official recognition of refugees in Spain was hardly generous.

After the earlier studies on Barcelona and refugees reviewed above (*Alcalde & Portos, 2018; *García Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019), which focused more on the political and social movement aspects of Barcelona as a refuge city we’ll briefly examine the relevant discourses involved, e.g. as posted on the city websites.

Thus, the city website as “refuge city” (<https://ciutatrefugi.barcelona/es>) begins by explaining the three phases of the reception of refugees because even when their situation has officially been recognized, refugees need to be attended to by NGOs, cities, other organizations and volunteers. It is here where Barcelona come in as a city:

(16) Barcelona participa en el proceso de acogida de las personas refugiadas y solicitantes de asilo desde el primer día: las integra en los barrios y en su vida cotidiana social y cultural, y atiende a los menores en centros educativos de la ciudad o, a todas las personas que lo necesitan, en la sanidad pública y los servicios sociales. (...) Barcelona tiene una larga experiencia de acogida e integración de personas recién llegadas y facilita el acceso a los servicios y a los programas municipales a todas las personas que llegan a la ciudad, con independencia de su situación legal.

Barcelona participates in the reception process for refugees and asylum seekers from day one: integrates them in the neighbourhoods and in their daily social and cultural life, and cares for minors in educational centers in the city or to all the people who need it, in public health and social services. Barcelona has a long experience of welcoming and integrating newcomers and facilitates access to municipal services and programs for all people who come to the city, regardless of their legal situation.

Thus, without much rhetoric or more positive self-presentation than referring to its “long experience” the website presents the city as a city of refuge. It explains the function of the SAIER service and a special program Nausica, aptly called after a posthumous play of Joan Maragall written between 1908-1911, about Greek princess Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinoos, meeting Ulysses on the beach after his shipwreck (a story not told on the website).

The city made an agreement, presided by Vice-Mayor for Social Rights, Laia Ortiz, with a large number of local organizations (including Associació Catalana de Solidaritat i Ajut als Refugiats (ACSAR), for an “Inclusive Barcelona”, as explained in its 2015 report “Un espai compartit entre el govern de la Ciutat i la societat civil per a la inclusió social” (A shared space between the government of the City and the civil society for social inclusion). The report summarizes the activities for refugees as follows:

(17) L’ESPai SOCIAL DE CIUTAT REFUGI: OBJECTIUS I ACCIONS

Aquest sorgeix de la necessitat de donar resposta a la massiva mobilització ciutadana que ha generat la crisi humanitària dels refugiats, que s’ha abocat a oferir ajuda, tant al consistori com a les entitats. Concretament, l’Espai Social pretén canalitzar i coordinar els oferiments de solidaritat (serveis, recursos, materials i activitats) de la societat civil i de la ciutadania; i així com sensibilitzar i implicar a la ciutadania i els voluntaris en la lluita contra el racisme, les discriminacions i les desigualtats a través de l’acció social i comunitària i el compromís amb la ciutat. Dins d’aquest espai s’ha constituït un grup motor format per entitats i ONG representatives dels diversos sectors implicats (veïnals, voluntariat, atenció a les persones refugiades i immigrades, col·legis professionals, lleure juvenil i infantil i universitats), algunes de les quals ja tenen una àmplia experiència en aquest àmbit. (p. 88).

THE SOCIAL SPACE OF THE CITY OF REFUGEE: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

This arises from the need to respond to the massive mobilization of citizens that has generated the humanitarian crisis of refugees, which has led to offering help, both to the council and to the entities. Specifically, the Social Space aims to channel and coordinate the offers of solidarity (services, resources, materials and activities) of civil society and citizens; and to raise awareness and involve citizens and volunteers in the fight against racism, discrimination and inequality through social and community action and commitment to the city. Within this space, a driving group has been set up made up of entities and NGOs representing the various sectors involved (residents, volunteers, care for refugees and immigrants, cooperation, professional associations, youth and children's leisure and universities), some of whom already have extensive experience in this field.

Though clearly an institutional text, with its proper style describing structures and activities, the social and political backgrounds and implications are clear: organizing assistance for refugees where the State doesn’t do so. It explicitly presupposes “massive mobilization” of civil society and, as in many texts on refugees, includes de deontic modality of “need” in a context of a “humanitarian crisis”, and summarizing its services in terms of the keyword of “solidarity”, defining the Refugees Welcome movement. Crucial is the emphasis on the broad participation of various “sectors”, including volunteers, in this agreement and organization, thus going beyond a mere institutional arrangement. Very relevant in this passage is that the assistance offered not only aims at refugees, but at the same time formulated a broader antiracist goal, making this text at the same time an example of contemporary antiracist discourse (*Van Dijk, 2021). On the next page, the report states:

(18) POSICIONAMENT DEL CONSELL DE GOVERN DE L'ACORD ENTORN LA CRISI DE REFUGIATS.

El Consell de Govern de l'Acord Ciutadà davant el gravíssim problema humanitari de les persones refugiades i front el tractament instrumental i poc solidari dels Estats de la Unió Europea (UE), va aprovar en mes de novembre una declaració per posar de manifest un seguit de consideracions, propostes i compromisos d'acció per millorar la manera com es fa front a aquest important desafiament de la cohesió social. En aquest document el Consell de Govern sol·licita, entre d'altres, un canvi substancial en les polítiques macroeconòmiques de la Comissió Europea així com enfortir les polítiques de cooperació internacional, més solidaritat i sentit de la justícia per tal d'ampliar les quotes d'acolliment i que sigui escoltada la veu de la majoria de la ciutadania, que reclama més justícia i inversions

POSITION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE AGREEMENT SURROUNDING THE REFUGEE CRISIS.

The Governing Council of the Citizen Agreement in the face of the very serious problem humanitarian treatment of refugees and in the face of instrumental treatment and unsympathetic to the states of the European Union (EU), approved in month of November a statement to highlight a series of considerations, proposals and commitments for action to improve the way how to deal with this important challenge of social cohesion. In this document, the Governing Council requests, among other things, a substantial change in the Commission's macroeconomic policies European as well as strengthening international cooperation policies, more solidarity and a sense of justice in order to increase reception quotas and that the voice of the majority of the citizenry be heard, who demands more justice and social investment..

This text makes explicit the political position of the City and the agreement also with respect to Europe and its refugee policies, hyperbolically emphasized as a “various serious humanitarian problem”. If its own activities as city and movement are framed with the norm and value of solidarity, the criticism of the EU in that case is formulated by the anti-norm of “little solidarity”. Whereas in the previous fragment, the report deals with racism and discrimination, in this example there are other fundamental notions of the city and refuge city: social cohesion and justice, e.g. by increasing refugee quotas. Again, also in this fragment, as in the ones cited above, an emphasis is put on the role of civil society in this humanitarian crisis: “the majority of the citizens”. The 2016 report of the Agreement (of 622 entities!) explicitly focuses on refugees, repeats the same criticism of the (“little solidary”) EU, list all the European and national statistics, and concludes that the cities are the main “channel” of reception. After such statements they also list the usual demands: more social investment, solidarity, global justice, human rights, international cooperation and listening to the voice of the majority of the citizens. The Assembly of the Agreement on May 3, 2016, in which 190 persons participate, discusses its activities.

We see that the different texts of NGOs, cities and organizations formulate the situation in the same or similar terms and make the same criticism and demands. In

other words, despite its local variations and diversity, “pro-refugee discourse”, also in Spain, is coherent and consistent.

Social Movement Discourse

Casa Nostra Casa Vostra

On February 18, 2017, the NGO Casa Nostra Casa Vostra organized in Barcelona the “largest manifestation in the world” *Volem Acollir* (We Want to Welcome) for the rights of refugees with the slogan “Prou excuses, acollim ara!” (Enough Excuses, Welcome Now) with half a million participants, and covered in the international press. The organization published a 650-word manifest, which it called the citizens to sign, and which we cite at length given its relevance for the study of pro-refugee discourse:

(19) Catalunya ha estat sempre terra d'inclusió, però no podem oblidar que en molts moments també hem estat rebuts en altres terres. A Catalunya convivim amb persones de la resta de l'estat, persones de totes les cultures, de tots els països i de totes les creences.

Més de 290 milions de persones han hagut de desplaçar-se forçosament de casa seva per conflictes armats, vulneracions dels drets humans, canvi climàtic i pobresa. Des de l'any 2000, i per culpa les polítiques europees de blindatge de les seves fronteres, més de 35.000 persones han perdut la vida intentant creuar el Mar Mediterrani, que s'ha convertit en un immens cementiri. L'any 2016 ha estat un dels més mortífers.

Els estats membres de la Unió Europea, lluny d'oferir una solució a la situació, han restringit encara més el pas de les persones fins a tancar les fronteres i Europa s'ha consolidat com una gran fortalesa. N'entren amb comptagotes i qui ho aconsegueix ho fa jugant-s'hi la vida i buidant-se les butxaques en favor de les xarxes de tràfic de persones. Un cop arriben als nostres pobles i ciutats, corren el perill dels CIE, l'exclusió i el racisme. Aquestes polítiques de la UE incentiven la mortalitat i esborren del mapa les vies segures i legals. Per molt que s'apliquin mesures per frenar la immigració, les persones continuaran intentant arribar perquè els motius que les empenyen a fugir són molt més forts que els murs que es puguin trobar pel camí.

El setembre de 2015, L'Estat espanyol es va comprometre a rebre prop de 18.400 persones refugiades en un termini de dos anys. Malgrat les pèssimes condicions en què es troben aquestes persones, aquest compromís s'està incomplint a hores d'ara. D'aquesta manera, el govern espanyol, conjuntament amb altres estats europeus, vulneren sistemàticament el Dret internacional així com els compromisos adquirits amb la signatura de la Declaració Universal dels Drets Humans o la carta de Drets Fonamentals de la Unió Europea (UE), entre d'altres. L'acord entre UE i Turquia n'és un exemple flagrant.

Les competències en polítiques d'asil són estatals, però creiem que Catalunya i les seves institucions han de donar una resposta més clara i contundent davant el desplaçament forçat de persones més gran des de la II Guerra Mundial. Catalunya té competències en polítiques d'acollida i podria aplicar mesures per millorar-les i enfortir-les des d'ara mateix.

Per tot això, davant la inacció de l'Estat espanyol, fem una CRIDA A LES INSTITUCIONS CATALANES A:

1. Actuar definitivament davant d'aquesta situació tal i com ho reclama la ciutadania perquè Catalunya sigui terra d'acollida.
2. Garantir la inclusió i el desenvolupament social digne de les persones migrades a Catalunya i comprometre's a aplicar mesures contra el racisme, la xenofòbia i la LGTBI-fòbia.

3. Defensar el dret a la lliure circulació de les persones, tal i com queda recollit a l'article 13 de la Declaració Universal dels Drets Humans.

4. Treballar per erradicar les causes d'injustícia, violència estructural, guerra i vulneració dels drets humans en origen que són l'arrel dels moviments forçats o no desitjats de població. I en aquest sentit, fomentar la cultura de pau. Demanem que s'agafin compromisos immediats.

I ANIMEM LA CIUTADANIA a organitzar-se, mobilitzar-se i fer sentir la seva veu per tal d'aconseguir una conscienciació col·lectiva que afavoreixi el canvi d'actitud de les institucions en relació amb l'anomenada "crisi migratòria" que actualment viu la Mediterrània.

Catalonia has always been a land of inclusion, but we must not forget that at many times we have also been welcomed in other lands. In Catalonia we live with people from the rest of the state, people from all cultures, all countries and all beliefs.

More than 290 million people have been forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, human rights violations, climate change and poverty. Since 2000, and because of European policies to shield its borders, more than 35,000 people have lost their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea, which has become a huge cemetery. The year 2016 has been one of the deadliest.

The member states of the European Union, far from offering a solution to the situation, have further restricted the passage of people to close borders and Europe has established itself as a great strength. They enter with a dropper and whoever gets it does so by risking their lives and emptying their pockets in favor of human trafficking networks. Once they reach our towns and cities, they are in danger of CIEs, exclusion and racism. These EU policies encourage mortality and erase safe and legal avenues from the map. No matter how much measures are put in place to curb immigration, people will continue to try to get there because the reasons that push them to flee are much stronger than the walls that can be found along the way.

In September 2015, Spain pledged to receive nearly 18,400 refugees within two years. Despite the dire conditions in which these people find themselves, this commitment is being breached at this time. In this way, the Spanish government, together with other European states, they systematically violate international law as well as the commitments acquired with the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU), among others. The EU-Turkey agreement is a clear example.

Competences in asylum policies are state-owned, but we believe that Catalonia and its institutions must give a clearer and more forceful response to the forced displacement of older people since World War II. Catalonia has competences in reception policies and could apply measures to improve and strengthen them from now on.

Therefore, given the inaction of the Spanish state, we call on Catalan institutions:

- 1. To act definitively in the face of this situation as demanded by the citizens so that Catalonia is a host country.*
- 2. Guarantee the inclusion and dignified social development of migrants in Catalonia and commit to implementing measures against racism, xenophobia and LGTBiphobia.*
- 3. Defend the right to free movement of persons, as enshrined in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*
- 4. Work to eradicate the causes of injustice, structural violence, war and violation of human rights at the root that are the root of forced or unwanted population movements. And in this sense, foster a culture of peace. We call for immediate commitments.*

AND WE ENCOURAGE CITIZENS to organize, mobilize and make their voices heard in order to achieve a collective awareness that favors the change of attitude of the institutions in relation to the so-called "migration crisis" that currently live the Mediterranean.

Instead of a full discourse analysis of this fundamental social movement text, let us highlight some of its characteristic properties:

- A historical local background and the diversity of Catalonia
- A reciprocity motivation to help (We were also welcomed abroad)
- The numbers game about the refugees and the causes and reasons of flight
- Criticizing the restrictions of the EU and the treatment of arriving refugees

- The lacking commitment of Spain and the violation of international human rights
- The conclusion: Catalonia must help
- A call to Catalan institutions to act, fight racism, defend the right of free movement, eradicate the causes of injustice, etc. and to encourage citizens to raise their voice.

Reformulated and summarized in this way, we see the complex argumentative structure of this manifest: Given X, Y and Z, the practical conclusion is that We All must help. As is also the case for antiracist movements and their discourses (Van Dijk, 2021), identity is formulated in terms of history, positive characteristics of US (diversity), negative characteristics of THEM (the lack of action of the EU and the Spanish state), the description of the current situation (the emergency: 35,000 deaths), the nature and goals of current action (fight racism, etc), and a call to civil society.

Stop Mare Mortum

Another major pro-refugee movement in Catalonia is Stop Mare Mortum (SMM), initially, as its name suggests, focused on raising consciousness about the massive deadly consequences of refugees intending to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. They also published several manifests, including until 2020 on the occasion of the fire in the refugee camp in Moria, Greece. Its 800-word “foundational manifest” in 2015, following the death at sea of hundreds of refugees, was signed by 180 organizations and 1100 individuals, and features the following fragments, after mentioning the hundreds of drowned people, the resulting “indignation” of larger parts of civil society and the aims of the SMM movement:

- (20) (...) a resultat d’unes polítiques migratòries i de control de fronteres que podem catalogar de genocides, ja sigui per acció (..) o per omissió de les responsabilitats de salvament. Davant d’aquesta crisi humanitària —la més important a Europa des del final de la II Guerra Mundial—, les institucions europees i els estats membres no tan sols no han sabut respondre amb celeritat, sinó que ho han fet en una línia oposada a allò que exigim des de la gran majoria d’entitats socials, organitzacions no governamentals i moviments socials.

Des de Stop Mare Mortum lluitem pels drets d’aquelles persones que han de deixar els seus països d’origen, sense fer distinció entre persona migrant i persona refugiada: totes elles es veuen obligades a abandonar el seu país, sigui per salvar la vida que una guerra o una persecució ha posat en perill, sigui per fugir d’una situació econòmica insostenible que també posa en perill la seva subsistència.

Alhora, la Plataforma Stop Mare Mortum rebutja frontalment les actuals polítiques europees i estatals d'externalització i control de fronteres, de retenció i expulsió de persones, d'intervenció militar exterior, així com tantes altres que responen més a discursos de l'extrema dreta i a interessos electoralistes que no pas als valors universals de solidaritat, igualtat de tracte i respecte pels drets humans, que la UE suposadament defensa. És per aquest motiu, i perquè ens oposem que se segueixi legitimant aquest genocidi migratori, que la Plataforma Stop Mare Mortum exigeix a la UE i als estats membres que (,,)

**Per una Europa d'acollida i respectuosa amb els drets humans.
NO MÉS MORTS al mar Mediterrani.**

(...) as a result of migration and border control policies that can be classified as genocides, either by action (.) or by omission of rescue responsibilities. Faced with this humanitarian crisis —la most important in Europe since the end of World War II, the European institutions and the Member States not only have failed to respond quickly, but they have followed a policy opposed to what which we demand from the vast majority of social entities, non-governmental organizations and social movements.

From Stop Mare Mortum we fight for the rights of those people who have to leave their countries of origin, without distinguishing between migrants and refugees: all of them are forced to leave their country, either to save their lives, endangered by war or persecution, or to escape an untenable economic situation also threatens their survival.

At the same time, the Stop Mare Mortum Platform frontally rejects current European and state policies of outsourcing and border control, detention and expulsion of people, foreign military intervention, as well as many others that respond more to discourses of the far right and electoral interests rather than the universal values of solidarity, equal treatment and respect for human rights, which the EU supposedly defends. It is for this reason, and because we oppose that this migratory genocide continues to be legitimized, that the Stop Mare Mortum Platform demands from the EU and the member states that (,,)

***For a Europe that is welcoming and respectful of human rights.
NO MORE DEAD in the Mediterranean Sea.***

The SMM movement doesn't mince words when it denounces the EU and its states, and qualifies the deaths of many thousands at sea as a "genocide", thus defining the manifest first of all as a speech act of accusation. Secondly, as do all pro-refugee organizations, the current situation is defined as a "humanitarian crisis" – rather than as a "refugee crisis". Thirdly, historical, political and ideological emphasis is added when describing the current situation as the worst since World War II. Fourthly, as observed before, we observe the ideological polarization between US (pro-refugee organizations) and THEM (the EU and the European states). Fifth, as do all social movements in their manifests and after formulating an urgent current problem or crisis, they formulate their aims, namely to fight for the rights of "people who had to leave their countries" – adding the crucial elaboration that they do not distinguish, as does the EU, between "real" refugees and "fake" refugees, that is "economic" migrants, since whatever their reasons to flee, they were *forced* to do so. Before ending the Manifest with its main slogans, the accusation of the EU and its members is further specified by a more detailed condemnation of its policies and practices, especially outsourcing border control. Relevant is another accusation, also formulated in much other pro-refugee

discourse, namely that governments are influenced by (racist) anti-refugee discourses of the far right – which indeed had multiplied, also in the media, after the initial support of Refugees Welcome in the summer of 2015. Finally, as we also have often seen above, the evaluation and accusation is based on the fundamental norms and values of all pro-refugee movements: solidarity, equal treatment and human rights.

We see, again, that foundational statements, programs and other public discourses of NGOs, cities and social movements have very similar components, often formulated in the same style and similar discursive strategies of storytelling (about deaths), argumentation, accusations, formulating goals and making explicit the norms and values of its engagement.

Refugees Welcome España

Following the example in Germany, also in Spain a specific “Refugees Welcome España” movement was formed, later developing into an organization assisting refugees to find a home. On September 3, 2015, first Facebook messages of this “citizen platform” briefly presented itself to society, also featuring its motivation (the drama of thousands of people), its goals (palliate the drama, find homes):

(21) **Es casi oficial: estamos en marcha.**

Somos una plataforma ciudadana convencida de que la cultura del acogimiento permitirá paliar en parte el drama de miles de personas que buscan asilo en Europa.

En estos momentos trabajamos en el diseño y puesta en marcha de una plataforma digital que permita el registro de personas interesadas en acoger a refugiados en sus casas y/o ayudar a financiar su manutención. Nuestro modelo es el de #refugeeswelcome en Alemania.

It's almost official: we're on the move.

We are a citizen platform convinced that the culture of foster care will partly alleviate the drama of thousands of people seeking asylum in Europe.

At the moment we are working on the design and implementation of a digital platform that allows the registration of people interested in welcoming refugees into their homes and / or helping to finance their maintenance. Our model is #refugeeswelcome in Germany.

The next day, the platform formulates more political analysis of the situation and of the motivation of its activity:

- (22) Es hora de hablar en contra de las fronteras mortales que han sido promulgadas en nuestro nombre. Gente de toda Europa están organizando la resistencia y la solidaridad en sus pueblos y ciudades. El 12 de septiembre queremos mostrar con miles de personas de toda Europa nuestra solidaridad con aquellos que huyen de la guerra, la violencia y la miseria . Queremos que todos los refugiados sepan que: ¡Son bienvenidos!
Únete a la iniciativa mediante la organización de un evento en tu propio pueblo o ciudad!

It is time to speak out against the deadly borders that have been enacted in our name. People from all over Europe are organizing resistance and solidarity in their towns and cities. On September 12 we want to show with thousands of people from all over Europe our solidarity with those who are fleeing war, violence and misery.

We want all refugees to know that: They are welcome!

Join the initiative by organizing an event in your own town or city!

Though specifically focused on the current emergency, also this fragment features several of the discourse properties of social movements of solidarity:

- The universal metaphor of discursive protest: raise one's voice
- The urgency of the cause: the metaphor of deadly borders
- The massive nature of resistance and solidarity
- The definition of those we are fight for (those fleeing war etc)
- A call for action (join the activity and do something)

The following days, the Facebook messages detail how the movement wants to help (sharing homes), reference to other cities, such as Valencia and Madrid taking initiatives, numbers of how many people join the action, announcing a manifestation in Madrid, and organizing a “caravana” to borders in Austria, Hungary and Croatia, etc.

The fragments of Spanish discourse about refugees briefly examined above, provide a first impression of the ideas, the attitudes, ideologies, norms and values of the major actors in the ongoing humanitarian emergency. Similar analyses may be given for other official or grassroots organizations, such as UNHCR (in Spanish: ACNUR), Refugiados Bienvenidos, SOS Racisme, Oxfam, Red Cross, Caritas, and many more involved in the reception of refugees.

Conclusions

The humanitarian crisis caused in Europe by the arrival of many hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Middle East also reached Spain, although confronted only by not more than 1% of asylum seekers, of which even much less were granted “international protection”. Parliament, “Cities of Refuge”, stimulated by Barcelona and its activist Mayor Ada Calou, NGOs and social movements, responded more positively to the crisis, especially by developing plans and programs, organizing manifestations and especially publishing a flood of public discourse – some of which briefly studied in this article.

The analysis is part of a vast number of studies, articles, theses, and some monographs in several European countries, especially Greece, Austria, Germany, the UK and the Scandinavian countries, on the events of the Long Summer of 2015 and the massive solidarity “Refugees Welcome” movement in which organizations and volunteers offered their spontaneous assistance to the thousands of newly arrived citizens. Though few compared to other countries, some of these studies have also examined this movement in Spain.

Within the sociopolitical context of Spain and its conservative government in 2015 and the enthusiastic “welcome” movements in civil society, the present article is formulated within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework featuring discourse studies, refugee studies as well as other social sciences. At various levels of organization and with different names, the “Refugees Welcome” movement, first of all had to be studied as a special social movement in terms of social cognitions, discourses and other practices solidarity, as well as its opponents and allies in the social and political context.

Though formulated in different communicative and sociopolitical contexts the discourses of the various institutions, organizations, cities and movements appear to have very similar discursive structures and strategies, some of which may be formulated here, also by way of conclusions:

- The ideological polarization between US (pro-refugee) and THEM (the EU and the State) at all levels of discourse: lexicon, metaphors, norms, values and arguments.
- The stress of the role of emotion-related norms of engagement, such as empathy and solidarity – opposed to the rationality of “politics as usual”.
- Various references to the past, as a property of the movement or as a motivation to help.
- Emphasis on the lack of generosity of the (Spanish) state and the EU – described a Fortress Europe.
- Criticism of the slow, deficient asylum procedure.
- Shameful comparisons with other countries, which received and accepted many more refugees.
- More generally a detailed numbers game, but not as rhetorical strategy of exaggeration (as traditionally in the press covering migration) but as precise statistics of the real situation.

- The standard description of the situation in terms of evaluative descriptions such as “humanitarian crisis”.
- The deontic modality of much discourse, e.g. in terms of what “must be done”, needs, obligations and necessities.
- The stress on new policies, views, actions, programs, etc
- Calls for action, collaboration and solidarity among civil society.
- The reference to prevailing racism and anti-refugee attitudes, especially at the far-right and its influence on the government.
- Descriptions of the situation in the countries where refugees come from, also as an assessment of the motivations of flight.
- Describing the many risks during flight.
- The many difficulties refugees face in the new country.
- Positive self-presentation of the organizations, e.g. in terms of their expertise and experience.
- The organization of networks, alliances etc.
- Formulate proposals for improvement of refugee reception.

This chapter and our analysis merely provides a first discourse analytical approach to the study of pro-refugee discourse in Spain, within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework and against the background of hundreds of earlier studies in Western European countries on the “refugee crisis of 2015. The limitations of this study need to be emphasized. First of all, a much larger corpus of pro-refugee discourse in Spain need to be assembled and studies. Secondly, all these discourses require much more detailed local discourse analysis of their style, rhetoric or other persuasive strategies. Thirdly, when taken as a complex social movement, also the activities and discourses of various official grassroot actors need to be examined in terms of a multidisciplinary theory of social movements. Related to such an analysis, fourthly, is a more sociopolitical analysis is necessary to study of the discourses of these actors in a broader political context, both of Spain as well as of the European Union. Despite its limitation, though, the article makes a case for the necessity of a discourse analytical approach within the broader theoretical framework of the study of refugees in general, and of the “refugee crisis of 2015, in particular.

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