10 Being a ‘refuge-city’

Welcoming rhetorics in Paris and Barcelona

Louise Hombert

Introduction

In September 2015, the European media and politicians were focused on one issue: the migration ‘crisis’ and its ‘waves of migrants and refugees’ flooding into Europe. The arrival of these asylum seekers in Europe was labelled a ‘crisis’: a violent phenomenon, presented as emerging from nowhere, which disrupted the balance of a well-organized system of actors. However, the politicization of this problem remained relatively superficial at the national levels. In response to the ‘crisis,’ some cities started to get involved. As the first to be concerned by refugees and migrants’ arrivals (e.g. inadequate accommodation infrastructure, saturated administrative, legal and health services, etc.), they did not want to be responsible for a social failure. They chose to receive refugees and to take charge of the problem, while denouncing the state and European wait-and-see attitudes. They then called themselves not only ‘refuge cities,’ but also ‘solidarity cities,’ or ‘welcoming cities.’ At the same time, Europe was facing a rise in political extremism in many countries, particularly in response to the arrival of migrants: the breakthrough of Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany, Jobbik and Fidesz in Hungary, the Northern League in Italy, and the National Rally¹ in France. These extreme right-wing movements have many faces and promote different values, such as nationalism, xenophobia, and Euroscepticism. In this context, it is interesting to question the openly inclusive stance of the refuge cities, which claim to be ‘humanists.’

But what is humanism and what are the values associated with it? Although there are some debates about the very origin of the term (Vesperini 2015), this chapter will focus on the contemporary ethics the term implies. Its most common contemporary meaning can be defined as follows: humanism is ‘a doctrine that is both theoretical and practical, laying down in principle the inalienable dignity of every human person and aiming to provide everyone with the conditions for their full development and to defend them against all political, legal, moral, economic and other attacks’ (Morfaux 1980: 150). The analysis will be built on this definition. What would then be humanist values? Obviously, there is no fixed or exhaustive list. At a

minimum, a fundamental tenant of humanist behavior includes respect of individual's dignity. Then follows the question of protecting others against all forms of oppression and injustice. Implicitly, humanism is therefore supported by a form of compassion or intrinsic empathy for others, through this shared human condition, common to all.

To analyze these welcoming cities' positions, I will compare Paris and Barcelona. I will examine the different rhetorics these cities have mobilized to talk about the context of European migration and the reception of migrants in their respective territories. These two metropolises, represented by their city councils and mayors, refer to many humanist values, such as humanity, dignity of all, or respect for human rights, and both call themselves 'refuge cities,' yet their migration situations are very different, as are their political contexts. The challenge is then to understand whether or not being a 'refuge city' has the same meaning and stakes for both Paris and Barcelona.

To address these questions, I have analyzed local executives' speeches, a collection of the public communications of the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, and the Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, as well as speeches of some of their deputies. The main materials are media interviews, excerpts from city council debates, and posts on Facebook, published between 2015 and 2018. The lexicometric analyses have been supplemented by an ethnographic inquiry carried out in 2017 and 2018 in Paris and Barcelona, including interviews with local elected officials, members of associations, and citizens' groups. It was important to also listen to the speeches of the other actors organizing the reception. Associations and groups of citizens, by working on the ground, can have a different conception of the refugee-city concept and the welcoming process. It was therefore interesting to meet with these organizations to question the reception of political speeches and their construction of the refugee-city, with all the values it implies. All of the statements made by respondents and the extracts from the corpus reported here are personal translations from French, Castilian, or Catalan into English. Theoretically, this analysis is rooted in three fields of research: the local governance analysis; the sociology of political discourse, focusing on the strategic approach; and, finally, the research on moral economies.

After having observed the words of welcome in the two cities, by taking a close look at the keywords and the main lexical fields mobilized, the differences and similarities between Barcelona and Paris will be analyzed in the second part of this chapter. Although both do not use the same rhetoric, but they have similar objectives.

Speaking of welcoming

What does it mean to be a 'refuge-city?' And to be 'welcoming?' This first part focuses on the speeches made by the municipal teams of Paris and Barcelona. The set of texts (from 2015 to 2018) is made up of: 52 city

council's debates, both in Paris and Barcelona (with Ada Colau, Anne Hidalgo, and their deputies speaking); 59 Facebook posts (only Ada Colau and Anne Hidalgo's official pages, no deputy mayors'); and mayors' press interviews. In order to better understand, the uses of the employed words, each sub-section will begin with a description of the local context, in which these speeches have taken place.

The keywords

Keywords are the cornerstones of political speeches. The following part concentrates on the terms – essentially nouns and adjectives – that are most commonly used in the speeches of the two mayors and their deputies. To analyze the keywords, a statistical analysis has been carried out to find out the frequency of each word used.

Hospitality, dignity, humanity: the Parisian tryptic

The issue of migrants' reception has been debated in France for several years now. A quick recall of the contemporary economic and political context is necessary here. Since the economic crisis of 2008, France has been slowly recovering: the unemployment rate was still 8.9 percent at the beginning of 2018, which is close to what the country had experienced in the early 2000s (Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques 2018). At the same time, as elsewhere in Europe, nationalist-populist discourses have gained prominence in the public sphere. Although the National Rally vote in Paris has remained much lower than in the rest of France, it has nevertheless increased in recent years (Auffret 2015). In this context, the voice of the Parisian municipality has been divergent, promoting a welcoming policy, thus involving new expenditure for recently arrived migrants. Let us take a closer look at the public speeches made by the Parisian executives. After reading the City Council's debates, press interviews, and the Facebook publications of the Mayor of Paris and her deputy Dominique Versini, certain keywords stand out in their speeches, including 'humanity,' the duty of 'hospitality,' or 'dignity/indignity.' The following excerpts attest to this:

Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris:

Together, we will fight without respite, so that Paris may prove worthy of all Parisians, so that it may remain a refuge-city, fair, humane, and solidary.

(Hidalgo 2015)

We can all be proud of this dignified and humane system, which prevents street camps and is faithful to our tradition of welcoming people.

(Hidalgo 2017)

The tradition of hospitality in our city has been respected, and we have put an end to the undignified mass camps in the streets of Paris.

(Hidalgo 2018)

Dominique Versini, Deputy Mayor of Paris:

We must keep in mind humanism [...] I plead for the government to have a humanist policy, and I think we now need to put a little more humanity here.

(France Info 2018)

The issue of dignity and indignity is central to the Mayor of Paris' speeches, particularly in her Facebook posts. Indeed, 'dignified' and 'undignified' are among the four adjectives most used on this social network by Anne Hidalgo, just after 'humanitarian' and 'Parisian,' while at the City Council, the main adjectives are those of 'minor' and 'young.' This difference can be quite simply explained by the fact that the debates of the City Council, although public, are not speeches intended for the whole of society: they are mainly debates between elected officials and administrative representatives intending to vote on the city's political programs. The statements therefore focus primarily on questions of legal competence and whether the reception of unaccompanied young people and minors, among others, is the responsibility of the city. Facebook appears here as a space dedicated to freer and more personalized political communications (Enli & Skogerbø 2013), where humanist values are more present, especially the question of dignity and indignity that is specific to the Paris case. Indeed, these words are almost always used to qualify the makeshift camps that appeared in 2015 in the Parisian streets as a result of overcrowding of the reception and asylum systems. Between 2015 and 2019, tens of thousands of people passed through these camps, including asylum seekers, refugees, rejected asylum seekers, individuals subject to the Dublin Regulation, and people in transit seeking to reach other countries. Most of them came from Afghanistan, Eritrea, or Sudan. In April 2019, there were 1,300 people living in two major makeshift camps in Porte de la Chapelle and Porte d'Aubervilliers in the North-East of Paris.

Human rights and European solidarity: Barcelona's priorities

Although Paris and Barcelona share the same title of 'refuge city,' there are important differences in the way that they deal with the issue of welcoming migrants. This matter has not been as much debated in the capital of Catalonia as it has been in Paris. Local public opinion has seemed to be relatively favorable to reception, as evidenced by the '*Volem Acollir*' ('we want to welcome' in Catalan) demonstration on February 18 2017, which brought together more than 160,000 people. It was the largest demonstration in favor of migrant and refugees' reception in Europe. Ada Colau's welcoming speech seemed then less disruptive in this

local framework than Anne Hidalgo's one in Paris, also because of Catalonia's recent history and political and economic context. Indeed, since the late 1990s, Catalonia has experienced a new wave of migration, now composed of foreign-born people: there were only Spaniards in the previous migratory periods, in the 1920s and 1960s. According to Núria Franco i Guillén, 'Catalonia is the Autonomous Community of Spain that welcomed the largest number of immigrants' from 1998 to 2009 (Franco i Guillén 2011: 84). Moreover, unlike France, Spain was until very recently one of the European exceptions, with no openly far-right political movements or major xenophobic and nationalist movements (González-Enríquez 2017). The words chosen by the Mayor of Barcelona and her deputies in charge of migration issues are then somewhat different from those of the Mayor of Paris, as shown in the following quotes:

Ada Colau Ballano, Mayor of Barcelona:

Although this falls within the competence of the States and Europe, we will do everything in our power to participate in a network of refuge cities. We want cities committed to human rights and life, cities we can be proud of.

(Colau Ballano 2015a)

Europe is at a crossroads and must choose between welcoming people seeking refuge or welcoming new forms of fascism and xenophobia.

(Colau Ballano 2016a)

Today, on the occasion of Europe Day celebration, I would like to share this message of gratitude, because if there is a Europe for which it is worth fighting, it is in Lampedusa, Lesbos, Athens, in all those places that defend life and give the rest of Europe a lesson in humanity.

(Colau Ballano 2016b)

we are deeply ashamed to see how homeless people die trying to save their lives at the doors of our home. Barcelona has been prepared for months to welcome people who do not come because of dehumanized policies [...] I am proud of a city that rebels against injustice and is organized to show the world its commitment to life and human rights.

(Colau Ballano 2016c)

Echoing the words of Paris' mayor quoted above, these extracts from Ada Colau's speeches testify to the same claim of humanism, through references to 'human rights,' 'the protection of 'life,' the struggle against 'dehumanized policies,' and 'injustice.' However, the keywords in Ada Colau's language are not the same as in Anne Hidalgo's. Indeed, a statistical analysis of the word occurrences shows a clear presence of the terms 'European,' 'municipal,' and 'international' among the ten most used adjectives, alongside the terms 'humanitarian,' 'solidarity,' and 'humane.' This reflects a broader geopolitical contextualization of this

issue of migrants' reception in Barcelona: this is a European – if not a global – challenge in which cities have a role to play. No reference to the question of dignity is made here, unlike in Paris, which seems to underline how much this term is linked to the issue of camps in the French capital, a problem that Barcelona does not have. In contrast to other major European cities such as Rome or Berlin, Barcelona has not experienced a similar influx of asylum seekers and refugees coming from Africa or Middle East. A real increase began a bit later, in 2017, and accelerated when Spain became the first country of entry for migrants to Europe in 2018 and when the political situation in Venezuela deteriorated. According to the Service of Attention to Immigrants and Refugees of Barcelona (SAIER), asylum applications in Barcelona have increased fivefold in three years, from 1,374 in 2015 to 7,433 in 2018 (Congostrina 2019). In 2018, most of the applicants came from Venezuela, Colombia, and Honduras.

Analysis of lexical fields: the importance of values

The analysis continues by no longer focusing on the welcoming keywords only but also on the lexical fields used to describe this willingness to welcome. The aim here is to know more about the place values occupy in these speeches. To achieve this, a lexicometric test was realized via the Reinert method in IRaMuTeQ software. The objective here is to propose a classification of the texts according to the proximity of the lexicon that composes them. The resulting terminal classes therefore represent sets of sentences that tend to contain the same words. This analysis makes it possible to identify the main themes addressed in our previously mentioned text compilations.

Paris: staying pragmatic

In the Parisian case, the Reinert method revealed four classes of discourse, or four themes regarding reception of migrants and refugees.⁷ They are represented in the form of the dendrogram below. It presents the most specific terms of each theme obtained (according to the Chi2 statistics): the larger the font size and the higher the words in a column, the more representative they are of this theme.

Our four classes are divided into two branches, corresponding to two main categories: political actions to the left, and context description to the right. The analysis starts from the left of the dendrogram to the right.

Classes one and two represent the actions and concrete measures carried out in the city. More precisely, class one concerns the 'sheltering' [*mise à l'abri*] operations coordinated by the Police Prefecture to send migrants gathered in makeshift camps erected in public places to accommodation centers. From 2015 to 2018, nearly 35 sheltering operations were carried out, but the reappearance of new camps was not resolved in a sustainable manner. In addition, the term 'sheltering' is particularly relevant to institutional discourse. Many refugee activists and citizens' groups prefer to speak

Figure 10.1 Main semantic fields in Parisian speeches about migrants' reception

of ‘evacuation’ or even ‘roundups,’ in view of the number of people who did not receive accommodation after these operations, or who were taken to an administrative detention center (*Centre de Rétention Administrative*). Using the term ‘roundup’ [*rafle*] is very meaningful: in French history, it has been used to refer to the sudden and massive deportations of Jews to concentration camps during the Second World War.

Class two concerns the *Centre de Premier Accueil* (CPA), also known as the Humanitarian Center, which was established in November 2016 near Porte de la Chapelle and closed in the spring of 2018. This center, initially co-managed by the City of Paris and two associations, Emmaüs and Utopia 56, was the embodiment of the City of Paris’ desire to welcome people, since it set up this project without the support of the State, at least initially. The aim of this center was to welcome migrants (mainly single men²) for a few days, before referring them to the appropriate social measures, depending on their administrative situation. This was the first center of its kind to be opened in France. Nearly 25,000 men passed through it during the time it was open.

Then, classes three and four represent the contextualization values. Class three offers a description of the humanitarian context: ‘misery,’ ‘unworthy,’ ‘unacceptable,’ ‘war,’ ‘camp.’ Class four corresponds to an imperative for action with plural justifications: ‘law,’ ‘responsibility,’ ‘defender,’ ‘history,’ ‘refuge,’ ‘challenge,’ and ‘humanity.’ These two classes constitute 45.5 percent of the public speeches analyzed here, which allows us to observe how important the values mobilized to describe the situation are in close relation to concrete action mechanisms: almost as much speaking time is devoted to one as the other.

However, it would be overly simple to separate here our two main categories with ‘action’ – via devices – on the one hand, and ‘speech’ – via simple context descriptions – on the other. On the contrary, it is worth emphasizing the performative dimension of language, in particular of the institutional language studied by Bourdieu. In his work *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), Bourdieu underlines the fact that, when an institution speaks through its officials, the simple process of appointing an object leads to a construction of reality. Producing a speech structures the worldview of the agents who listen to it, and in return, structures the world itself when these agents consider it legitimate and therefore adhere to it. Yet the effectiveness of this institutional language cannot be understood without the very authority of the institution from which it emanates. It is thus thanks to the symbolic power vested in the spokesperson, as the representative of the institution, that the latter can produce a performative speech. This analysis of institutional language allows for a better understanding of the important place of descriptive values in the Mayor’s communications: to build a ‘welcoming city,’ Anne Hidalgo or her deputies must mobilize humanist values to describe the context in which the actions of the city are embedded – here ‘unworthy,’ ‘humanity,’ ‘respect,’ and ‘refuge.’ The next part will question how important this institutional language is in Ada Colau’s speeches.

Figure 10.2 Main semantic fields in Barcelona's speeches about migrants' reception

Barcelona: for a freer voice

The same lexicometric analysis was applied to the quotes compiled for Barcelona's case, and the results are as follows:

The dendrogram above shows five thematic classes. Class five is separate, concerning migrants rescued in the Mediterranean and more specifically the NGO Proactiva Open Arms. Class four represents the overall humanitarian situation – 'flee,' 'conflict,' 'drama,' 'humanitarian,' 'emergency,' while classes one, two, and three concern the political sphere. More precisely, class three corresponds to political denunciation – 'crisis,' 'situation,' 'necessary,' 'EU.' Then, classes one and two are the political responses: class one concerns the global political system – 'political,' 'subject,' 'asylum,' 'European,' 'State,' – and class two concerns the justifications for political action – 'refuge,' 'welcoming,' 'solidarity,' 'obligation,' 'democracy,' 'racism,' and 'human right.'

This lexicometric analysis confirms the first leads identified by the occurrence analysis. Here the classes of this dendrogram represent much more general themes than in the Parisian case. Apart from class five and the terms 'Barcelona' or 'Generalitat,'³ nothing links the corpus to a specifically Barcelonaease or even Spanish situation, while half of the thematic classes in Paris concerned the local context. The values mobilized by the Mayor of Barcelona contain a more global, universal dimension, and they are also more diffused in each class. Class three remain the most substantial. Through the significant mobilization of references to 'Europe,' Ada Colau and her team's speeches place the question of welcoming people within a broader issue: Europe's values. They strongly underline the opposition between, on the one hand, respect for human rights and solidarity, and on the other hand, the EU's inaction accompanied by the rise of xenophobia and nationalism. This argumentative rhetoric is very rarely present in Paris' municipal team's statements. However, these two metropolises are largely united in the mobilization of the humanist register, making extensive use of the terms 'humanity,' 'humane,' 'solidarity,' and insisting on the duty to 'welcome' and to be a 'refuge.'

Being welcoming, but what for? Understanding the different refugee-cities rhetorics

The common points and specificities of each public speeches' compilation have been precisely detailed in the first part of this chapter. Although our two refugee cities promote the same humanist values, their rhetoric is not quite the same. The second step is to understand these differences and observe the objectives sought by these processes.

Two cities that do not speak the same language: contextualizing values

The analysis of the speeches allowed us to highlight nuances and gaps between the statements made by local executive authorities in Barcelona and Paris. Indeed, the former mobilizes more universal moral principles by placing them in a broader geopolitical context, while the latter links its values more closely to concrete local issues. Let us look for a moment at the factors explaining these differences.

First of all, a key factor is the migratory and humanitarian situation of each city. As it has already been emphasized, Paris has been facing a problematic humanitarian situation since 2015, with the emergence of squalid makeshift camps on its streets. At the beginning of January 2019, over 2,000 exiles were reportedly spread over three main camps in the northeast of the capital. There is therefore a real local issue regarding housing and access to vital resources (water, food, care) for migrants, which explains the references to the principle of 'dignity' (or 'indignity') in the executive's remarks. However, these problems are not encountered in Barcelona. For instance, in the autumn of 2015, when the Parisian reception facilities were overcrowded, Barcelona's executives demanded asylum seekers and refugees be sent there in Catalonia. No makeshift camps similar to the Parisian ones were set up there, and, until the summer of 2018, the reception facilities did not yet have any real problems of being too small. These differences therefore highlight the gap between a more generalist discourse in Barcelona, which places its action in a global European situation, and a more specific discourse in Paris, where local issues are at stake.

A second explanatory factor is the local public opinion. The inhabitants of Barcelona seem to be rather in favor of welcoming refugees, as indicated by the important demonstration of February 2017, *Volem Acollir*, mentioned earlier. In this context, Ada Colau could allow herself to promote hospitality. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from one of her Facebook publications:

The day before yesterday, 50 people died of asphyxiation in a ship's hold. Yesterday, more than 70 people died in a truck. Today, we woke up with two shipwrecks: perhaps more than a hundred dead. We have a sea full of dead people. Borders full of barbed wire, spikes, blades ... and dead people. Men, women, boys, and girls, dead.

And part of Europe cries, screams, wants them to be saved, not to die, but ... but not to come, to leave, to disappear, not to exist and not to have to see them on television, and even less on our streets, with their blankets, in the underground or on the stairs of our houses.

Some people irresponsibly promote fear 'of others,' 'of illegal immigrants,' 'of those who come to sell without a permit,' 'of those who come to take advantage of our health system.'

But that's all fear is: fear. Our fear of living a little less well against their fear of not surviving. Our fear of having to share a small part of our well-being against their fear of hunger and death.

Fear versus fear. And theirs is stronger. So, Europe, Europeans: let us open our eyes. There won't be enough walls or barbed wire to stop it. No tear gas, no rubber bullets. Either we approach a human drama with the ability to love that makes us human, or we will all end up dehumanized.

(Colau Ballano 2015a)

These are the first comments the Mayor published on her Facebook page about the migration situation, at a time when the City was receiving hundreds of messages from its fellow citizens asking how they could help migrants (Respondent 1 2018). This pro-reception and very active part of Barcelona's population has thus allowed Ada Colau to freely mobilize a certain lyricism and pathos that are not found in Anne Hidalgo's remarks. On the contrary, in Paris, the question of reception creates significant tensions, mainly via the question of makeshift camps which are located in neighborhoods already suffering from many socio-economic problems. As a local elected official explained (Respondent 2 2018), the aim in Paris is to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, between the ambitions of humanist welcome and solidarity, and the 'legitimate' claims of the inhabitants not to welcome 'again' poor and immigrant populations in already disadvantaged neighborhoods. Parisian citizens seem more divided on the reception issue than in Barcelona. Thus, the mayor of Paris sticks to a more factual, pragmatic discourse, basing it on the actions carried out in the city to resolve the humanitarian situation, hoping to satisfy those who wish to see migrant camps disappear, whether for compassionate reasons or for rejecting ones.

Among the factors that explain the differences between the discourses, speakers' backgrounds should be taken into account. Both cities were then run for the first time by women, who tended to strongly embody their city and personalize their mandates. Therefore, their words are significant, because they actively participate in the construction of their cities' identities. Analyzing their backgrounds is useful to understand the different types of discourse that each can mobilize. Indeed, the two mayors are quite far apart on this point. Anne Hidalgo can be considered a political professional: after studying law and social sciences, she passed the civil service exams to become a labor inspector, then worked in various ministerial cabinets under Lionel Jospin's government. Before becoming Mayor in 2014, she was first Deputy Mayor of Paris and Regional Councillor for the Île-de-France region (Bacchi 2014). Socialized for a long time in this professional environment, her discourse is therefore more institutionalized than that of Ada Colau, who has recently joined politics. The Mayor of Barcelona has not had a traditional political career. Before arriving at Barcelona City Hall, she was above all an activist, particularly known for having been the spokesperson

for the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca*, an organization that prevented thousands of evictions of over-indebted families during the 2008 economic crisis. Prior to that, she was involved in anti-globalization and anti-Gulf War and Iraq war movements (Sust 2013). Her political career therefore began with her position as Mayor of Barcelona in 2015. Claiming to be herself 'daughter of emigrants' (Colau Ballano 2015b), Ada Colau then proposes an 'unfiltered' speech, an activist speech from her militant trajectory, particularly on social networks.

The analysis conducted here has highlighted the importance of the link between the context and the mobilized values: although humanism is based on broad and fairly general ethical principles, the values it promotes are linked to specific situations.

The aims of humanism

Despite their lexical differences, Anne Hidalgo, and Ada Colau's speeches tend towards the same objectives. We can see positioning their respective cities as humanist 'refuge cities' as a double political opportunity for these metropolises: first, to regain local legitimacy and assert themselves in the face of central power; and second, to become a political actor on the international scene.

First of all, and as was pointed out in the introduction, it should be recalled that immigration remains a state prerogative both in Spain and France. So, by denouncing the inaction or shortcomings of the central government and by setting up new reception systems that complement national systems, these two cities are asserting a strong political role in this 'crisis.' In this context, public speech is essential to accompany and legitimize political acts not provided for in the national legal framework. We can see here an attempt to create a new system of norms and values, by emphasizing humanism, solidarity, mutual aid, or dignity of all. This system of 'collective consciousness' (Becquart-Leclercq 1977: 230a) can be a mean of rediscovering a form of political legitimacy for local power: 'specified and objectified, this system of norms becomes a 'paradigm' (Becquart-Leclercq 1977: 230b). The local power legitimacy then comes from a 'concordance between a concrete power and a power paradigm.' Barcelona and Paris correspond to this framework of interpretation, with on the one hand, a 'concrete power' they hold from the law and that they use by taking significant and visible measures such as the *Centre de Premier Accueil* and the *Nausicaa* program,⁴ and on the other hand a value system they have objectified in their speeches and more particularly in their two official 'plans': the *Barcelona, ciutat refugi* plan, published in September 2015, and the *Mobilisation de la communauté de Paris pour l'accueil des réfugiés* plan, published in October 2015. These two plans formalize the rhetorics we have analyzed above and thus constitute 'power paradigms,' supporting the legitimacy and the necessity of local reception.

Then, such systems based on humanist values can allow the production of a certain form of consensus. It is indeed difficult to speak out ‘against’ solidarity or respect for human rights, for instance. According to Didier Fassin (2012: 3), ‘this language has become established today as the most likely to generate support among listeners or readers.’ Thus, by mobilizing these values, our two refuge-cities bring together a group of actors from various positions, sometimes belonging to the political opposition, around this issue of humanist reception, which can be then analyze as an ‘urban project,’ according to Gille Pinson’s conception. For this researcher, ‘the notion of project refers to situations in which collective action is organized around relatively small groups of actors, mobilized to solve a specific problem or to deal with the difficulties of a circumscribed territory, over a limited period of time’ (Pinson 2005: 200a). It is therefore a public ‘mode of action’ (Pinson 2005: 200b) in itself that makes it possible to create a new collective actor by uniting a whole set of organizations around common principles and constructions, around an identity. This strong identity dimension of the project functions as a unifying background framework between the actors. It is in this sense that project dynamics become an ‘instrument of social mobilization’ (Pinson 2005: 201): the humanist values used to describe the project are considered relatively consensual in Western societies and therefore serve here to federate, to unify.

The rhetoric of hospitality can also be a challenge in political arenas, both nationally and internationally. Indeed, at the national level, in France and Spain, governments have not particularly taken up the issue of welcoming refugees to build up a humanist and generous image. On the contrary, various institutions – such as the Rights Defender in France (Défenseur des droits 2018), or the European Court of Human Rights for Spain (European Court of Human Rights 2017) – have been able to denounce significant violations of the fundamental rights of migrant persons, rights of which the States are *a priori* the guarantors. By playing on the register of values and feelings, the cities of Paris and Barcelona clearly distance themselves from the governments’ discourse, which is more based on legal or security logics. This gives these two cities an image of being a more sensitive, and more humane public actor within national political arenas. Finally, holding this type of compassionate discourse enables the cities to align themselves with a group of cities and metropolises in Europe that make similar statements. It is thus possible to find support, recognize allies, and set up inter-urban mutual assistance systems on reception issues, as Ada Colau had wished to do, for example, with the mayors of Lesbos, Lampedusa, and Athens in March 2016 (Gonzalez 2016). But there is also some competition for the spotlight, with several cities, including Paris and Barcelona, claiming to be pioneers in welcoming migrants and thus hoping for symbolic repercussions through the creation of a particularly solidary, generous, and therefore honorable, image.

Conclusion

Following this analysis, initial conclusions on the welcoming rhetorics in the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Paris can be presented, allowing for a better understanding of what the expression 'refuge-city' means to them. As seen above, both have mobilized an important repertoire of words with high humanistic and ethical value, but each has emphasized different notions, such as 'dignity' in Paris, or 'solidarity' and 'human rights' in Barcelona. The explanatory factors of these nuances are obviously multiple, the first of them being the migratory and humanitarian context of each city, a decisive factor in determining the angle of approach to be prioritized. In Paris, it is a question of responding to the urgency created by makeshift camps, an urgency experienced by migrants, but also by some residents. Indeed, this critical situation has pushed Anne Hidalgo to talk about the solutions she has put in place, or wished to put in place, and to focus her speech on the duty of hospitality and respect for the dignity of all. This urgency is not present in Barcelona, therefore a freer discourse – especially in tone – is more permissible for Ada Colau, who can express herself on the whole reception problem at the European level, referring to multiple general ideals. We therefore have to deal with two rhetorics of welcoming that share their humanism, but which are nevertheless distinguished: one by its pragmatism, the other by its idealism. In both cases, however, they follow the same ambitions: to produce consensus, and to position the issuer in political arenas – local, national, and European.

However, local executives' speeches, and particularly their use of humanist ethics, have often been criticized by other actors, such as associations and citizens' collectives. They have denounced words without action and seen in them utilitarian ambitions among their authors. According to them, it would be a question of giving oneself a 'humanist varnish' as well as a 'good conscience' (Respondent 3 & 4 2018). On Barcelona's side, the refugees' reception would above all be a pretext to 'be in the spotlight' (Respondent 5 & 6 2018) and obtain a good image, in a very complex political arena divided around the question of Catalonia's independence. It is also a miserable vision of migrants that is denounced on these two fields, but mainly in Paris. The fact that mayors' speeches cannot be accepted by the actors on the ground underlines the limits of these rhetorics' mobilizing capacities. For many of these supportive citizens, welcoming rhetoric playing on ethical values are more than inappropriate here, especially in Paris where cases of police harassment against migrants are frequently reported (Human Rights Watch 2017; Dearden 2017).

Notes

- 1 Main far-right French party, formerly known as Front National (FN) until June 2018.
- 2 A second center was created in Ivry, a city close to Paris, reserved for women and families.

- 3 The Generalitat de Catalunya is the political institution representing the autonomous community of Catalonia.
- 4 The Municipal reception program, called Nausica, was launched in 2015 to protect and provide shelter for asylum seekers and refugees who are excluded of the state care program (e.g. refused asylum request, end of the state care programme for refugees).

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