

Seven key points to create

NEW

NARRATIVES

on the movements of persons around the world

porCausa Foundation for Research, Journalism and Migrations

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*Border lines are also lines that cross and cut a body.  
They leave marks like scars or wrinkles, dividing someone not only from their neighbor,  
but also from themselves*

*Claudio Magris, Utopia and Disenchantment*

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## What is this about?

At the porCausa Foundation, we have worked on the migratory narrative since 2016. We analyze its creation, its characteristics, and how it infiltrated public opinion, most importantly, in large audiences and public debates.

**A large part of the migratory narrative originates specifically in the 11S.** At the root of this aggression, a narrative on securitization was generated with the purpose of creating fear in citizens and proposes that the primary solution should be to increase resources to control and limit the movement of people around the world. This primitive narrative has grown and evolved until now in which the **topic of migration has become a tool to support carefully crafted nationalistic and protectionist debates** that, from the Foundation, we call the “Franchise of Antimigratory Populism.”<sup>1</sup>

Today, it is generally accepted to twist the framework on the true migratory narrative. This guide presents the conclusions on a variety of projects in this field and gathers the information of a vast number of social studies, campaigns, and personal experiences.

Our conclusions are summarized in three rules to create content and four additional tools that permit better quality of the message and its absorption:

### 3 RULES FOR CREATING CONTENT

**AVOID** Reactive messages

**AVOID** the Us vs. Them

**PRIORITIZE** Emotions over Data

### 4 TOOLS TO KEEP IN MIND

The narrative must be **substitutive**

The **local** focus

The **subconscious** perception

The **Coca-Cola Effect**

Next, we explain how we have arrived at these conclusions and why we believe that these are the basic rules and tools that allow changes to the framework of the socially acceptable narrative. We should always keep in mind that the actual discourse is already solidified and will be difficult to change the very rules that they are rooted in. However, we rely on many examples that demonstrate that new discourses with other perspectives can be created.

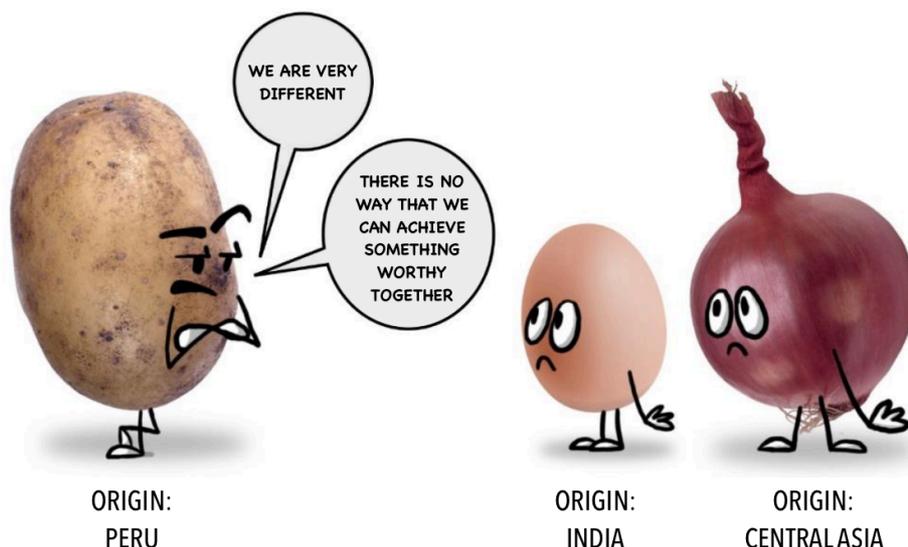
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<sup>1</sup> porCausa, *La Franquicia Antimigración. Cómo se expande el populismo xenófobo en Europa*, Madrid, 2019. Accessible through: <https://bit.ly/2JjSJJM> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

## Where do we begin?

The rules for creating new messages:

- **The messages must be new and must not be reactive** to another message that has previously been established.
- The messages **must not** depend on a narrative that is defined by the existence of two parts: “us” and “them”.
- The messages must be structured on **emotions** without relying on data as a narrative argument



### Avoid Reactive Messages

Geert Wilders, from Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), burst into the electoral campaigns for the Dutch national elections in March 2017. His entrance into the political debate was grounded in a simple question: What are we going to do about the Islamic problem in our country? The other political parties in the elections were not able to escape the framework created by Wilders, and they jumped onto the opportunity to respond to the candidate’s question. In a couple of days, the debate was centered on a topic that had previously been unthought of, and Islam had been converted into one of the “biggest problems” of the electoral debate.

The border fence that separates the United States from Mexico originated in 1994. It is an irregular fence that does not extend to the entirety of the border, rather than it covers the parts that potentially could serve as a way for people to travel. The desert

zones – which crossing means risking your life– don't need a physical barrier because they already form a natural border. Although a strong security policy exists, the border wall was not a central element in the American political debate. The entrance of Donald Trump introduced a new topic: There needs to be a wall. The wall narrative is here to stay, and once introduced, it created a framework in the social and political debate.

In Spain's case, Vox has unveiled a similar incentive by introducing arguments that were before seen as alien to the Spanish political debate. Among those new arguments, like witch hunts or the legalization of firearms, migration is seen as a problem. Today, like in Holland or the United States, the politicians, news media, and a significant part of the citizens have bought the framework.

These examples illustrate how **the narrative framework related to migrations has infiltrated our lives by introducing new arguments and worries**. Once they've become rooted, the terminology used in debates, particularly on security and witch hunts, contaminate the entire social sphere.

In this context, the people who wants to stop migrations lead the ideology that uses **belligerent language in an aggressive and polarizing way**. This makes compromise, the point of agreement, almost impossible. Be wary because a reaction to this framework makes the migrant seem like a passive subject that needs help. The alternative framework to the belligerence is humanitarianism. Currently, we debate between both, and we must create a new scene. **We need new debates on mobility, cultural diversity, and societies that integrate that diversity**. This means leaving behind the focus on migration as a problem or as an evitable act. A new, alternative narrative must develop that is not reactive and does not intend to contradict the existing narratives

### What is a narrative framework?

It is understood that *framework* is a lens through which the world can be perceived and interpreted, a block of values through which thoughts and acts are filtered. Frameworks establish limits as well as condition and orient perceptions. Once they are established, one perceives reality through the framework. The framework designates borders to a certain topic and establishes the mechanisms that define one's perception.

By definition, frameworks are exclusive – to include certain messages and eliminate others – and, sometimes, they are inclusive – to remove certain arguments means to talk about others. This double quality defines what should be thought and perceived. That is to say, the framework contains something while excluding something else.

Metaphorically, they can be understood as points of a square: they tell us what to pay attention to, what should be within the framework, and how and how not to read it. They mark the boundaries and the possibilities of a rhetoric<sup>2</sup>

### Why should we not react to the existing narrative?

The principles that establish the migrations discourse have been principally defined during the last 20 years. **Articulating the narrative as a reaction to them only serves to expand the original message.** To reject or debate a speech is only to evoke it and obligates one to move within the limits of the framework. **If you're told not to think of an elephant, you will automatically do so<sup>3</sup>.** The same applies in the current migratory discussion. If we react to the instrumented precepts, we will only accomplish to evoke them anew, continue to act within the same battlefield, and adopt the discourse we want to combat. We would play on a terrain where the assumptions are already established, and those with a disagreeing opinion, whoever it is, will not achieve the desired effect.

#### **Resilience, security, identity, past...**

The success of anti-migratory positions is based on that the debate is circled around the following values: **resilience, security, identity**, and more. They have created *the framework*. They have structured the conversation under their own terms and denominations. A pro-migration discussion that reacts to these premises possibly reframe how migration does not provoke insecurity, that there is no such migration as what the news shows, that they don't take jobs, and they flee terrible situations. But these affirmations inevitably invoke the threat to security, containment measures, and invasion. The principle myths that they want to dismantle leave their mark beyond the explanations and the data that refutes them. Expressions like "Stop Deportations", "Migrating is not a crime", or "No one is illegal" achieve that those who receive the information believe that they are protected from something negative and their minds create images of crime or illegality. They invoke the elephant.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> Bateson, G. *A theory of play and fantasy*, in Chihu Amparán, A., *Los marcos de la experiencias*, University Autonomy Metropolitan, Iztapalapa, 2017. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2VNxTep> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>3</sup> Lakoff, G., *No pienses en un elefante*, Ediciones Península, Barcelona, 2017, p. 3.

## Others have done it

This focus that considers avoiding reactions to the existing narrative is thoroughly used in the marketing field and in the electoral communications strategy field.<sup>4</sup> It is quite common that electoral campaign candidates not respond to any question and in its place present their platform. A notable, successful case in the change of the narrative framework was led by Manuela Carmena during the Telemadrid debate with Esperanza Aguirre. The popular candidate condemned Manuela Carmena by asking for her explanations to which Manuela responded with, “It is a shame that at your age you much say these things to be able to participate.” This debate, and specifically this response, changed the narrative framework of the election. People began to speak of respect, of dignity, and kindness, breaking the tension that had been the mark of the party.<sup>5</sup>

## Avoid the “Us vs. Them”

Find the 7 differences



- (1) The *Cobijado* is a traditional dress for women from *Vejer de la Frontera*. It has a Spanish origin that goes back circa the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- (2) A group of women take selfies in the Azhar park in Cairo, Egypt. Photograph from Ebrahim EIMoly.

**We simplify and reduce reality in order to understand it. What we simplify most is what we do not understand -- the unknown.** This way, the group of “the Others,” – the exo-group – appears more homogenous than our group, and we portray it through generalizations. That is to say, we consider how the members of the exo-group are cut up by an identical model. Whereas, our group – the endo-group – appears much more

<sup>4</sup> OXFAM Intermón, *Comunicación sobre las migraciones*, Brands & Roses, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Telemadrid Noticias, Archives, *Debate Manuela Carmena y Esperanza Aguirre*, Madrid, 2015  
Accessible through: <https://bit.ly/2VOEcw7>

heterogenous and we consider ourselves individually different from others.<sup>6</sup> The generalizations about the characteristics of the group members of the “Others” create stereotypes. Once a stereotype is created, we presume that all the members of the said group possess some of the pre-determined characteristics that come to our mind quickly. That is how this list of attributes that define a group suggests the first step towards polarization in the discussion between “us” and “them.”

The current migratory narrative is constructed around two contradicting concepts: “us” and “them.” **There is a strong tendency to divide the world between “us” and “them.”** The binary “us-them” is based on a false dilemma that pushes one to choose between two options that are depicted as exclusive and impossible to connect. We have made it a habit to polarize stories in conflict between Indians and cowboys; between victims and executors; between Christians and Muslims; between civilization and barbarianism. Ultimately, between good and bad.

In the case of Europe, the collective notion “us” is frequently defined by an identity which the common component is the superiority above all “other” people and cultures that are not European. This is a notion closely tied to Modernity and the colonial period. “The hegemony of European ideas over all the rest reaffirm European superiority over the undeveloped Orient<sup>7</sup> and normally voids the possibility that a more independent and more or less skeptical thinker can have different points of view over the material”<sup>8</sup>.

## Who is the other?



Photograph: José Palazón, Melilla, 2014

<sup>6</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., *Discurso racista*, Universidad Pompeu Fabra, 2007, p.4. Accessible from: <https://bit.ly/2nEw0vd> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>7</sup> In this context, we understand the term “Orient” refers to a “Other” – not only geographically and culturally located in the Orient – in which power relations has been historically established

<sup>8</sup> Said, W. E., *Orientalismo*, Debolsillo, Barcelona, 2016, p. 21.

Word choice is important, because it tends to be biased. “It is not only the explicit racial or ethnic insult, rather than the more subtle forms of discussion, beginning with the very problem of designating the Others”<sup>9</sup>. If we use George Lakoff’s elephant metaphor and ask “**Don’t think of an illegal immigrant,**” it is possible that a concrete image comes into mind, and this image has to do with the framework and focus that is used to communicate this reality. Surely, the profile that first comes to mind is that of a black, poor, and young male. We think of contraband, drugs, the border jumps to Ceuta and Melilla, boats for illegal transport, illegal mafias, raids, detention centers, and crime. This stereotype is what comes to mind.

There are various positions in the discussion on migration, but we can summarize two representative arguments that emphasize the difference between “us” and “them”:

- **The argument based on fear or rejection:** In this category, “**they**” are presented as a threat to “**us.**” The language used in these discussions distinguishes some people with which we cannot share anything in common and who we are separated from due to an impassable gap. This discussion is raised due to repetitive precepts with mantras in certain media, some political debates, and everyday conversations: “*They come to destroy our culture*”, “*There are too many of them*”, “*They steal our jobs and overbear the public welfare system*”, “*They are lazy*”, “*They are terrorists*”, etc. People are so worried that they will occupy our space, worsen our neighborhoods, take our jobs and housing, be the perpetrators of gender-based violence, increase crime rates, and more.
- **The humanitarian argument:** This perspective pertains to groups that want to help migrants, and they frame the charitable field. Migrating people are seen as victims who need our attention, aid, and compassion. A number of fundraising and awareness campaigns introduce guilt and condescension into their platforms that create the difference between **people that rescue and other people that are rescued**. The guilt separates us and situate us onto a place of moral superiority in that the “us” are givers of kindness, and “they” are passive subjects that receive that kindness. This narrative constructs hierarchical relationships marked by the patriarchy and the infantilization of the *Other*.

Both perspectives, for the most part, categorize migrating people as an “Other.” This “Other” is defined as subject without a name, without a past or future, as vulnerable, a victim, and illegal. This is someone who, from one side, we reject, exclude, and forget about; and from the other side, we infantilize and re-victimize.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.5.

## Elements that make it difficult to overcome the breakdown of “Us vs. Them”

- **The relationship among migration, security, and crime.** Permanently used in public debate are the qualifications “*without papers*”, “*clandestine*”, “*illegals*”, or “*undocumented*.” The migrant is associated with a threat to security. On the topic, migration is inevitably tied to the Armed Forces of the State, to FRONTEX, to safety equipment, to walls and fences as a part of a long list of attributes associated with the idea of *crimmigration*<sup>10</sup>.
- **The use of natural disaster and wartime terminology.** Describing the migratory phenomenon as an “*invasion*”<sup>11</sup>, “*assault*”<sup>12</sup>, “*massive wave*” or “*avalanche*”<sup>13</sup> contributes to the creation of a false alarm that does not match reality. If we are using terms such as “*crisis*,” the feeling of emergency and panic are magnified even more. The use of these types of striking and dramatic words, in addition to defining migration as dangerous, follows the desire of creating *breaking news* that attracts a bigger audience.
- **The use of differentiating terms.** Speaking of the migrant already creates a difference. The rhetoric of the “Other” activates – which does not include us – and it has to do with the guilt, the invasion, and the distance. For people who work in defending human rights, it may be necessary to use certain legal terms like asylum seeker, refugee, or applicant for international protection. Nevertheless, outside of this field, the use of these concept continues strengthening the otherness of migrating people, and reproduce, regardless of their best intentions, the stereotypes and prejudices that divide us. In this regard, it has been established that there is a subtle difference between immigrant and refugee that complicates the situation even more: it is believed that the immigrant moves for economic reasons and they do so voluntarily (because they want to); whereas, the refugee flees due to necessity because they can no longer live in their country due to fear of persecution. Thus, the refugee in reality needs a safe haven while an immigrant does not. There is certain legitimacy of displacement of one – although they are still different from us – and, a rejection of the person who leaves their country for economic reasons.

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<sup>10</sup> El País, 3 February 2017, “Crimigración.” Accessible from: <https://bit.ly/2VnEB9E> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>11</sup> The military metaphor *invasion* is often used. The definition of *invasion* according to the RAE (Royal Spanish Academy) is “armed aggression that penetrates the territory of another country with the intended result to take over it or to obligate the counterpart to surrender and accept the proposed conditions.”

<sup>12</sup> The word *assault* is constantly used. *Assault* is defined as “the action of taking over something with the use of firearms.” If used alongside the word “massive,” the tone is much stronger.

<sup>13</sup> The terms *avalanche*, *wave*, *flood*, among others are vocabulary words linked with natural catastrophes and reference large quantities of water or snow. Likewise, these terms are used to describe entries at Ceuta and Melilla.

## Others have done it

Justin Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister since 2015, is a clear model of the application of a new narrative that breaks the “us-them” dichotomy. The Canadian minister has always defended migration and an open policy that respects the different cultural manifestations of citizens, beyond that of their country of origin or religion. There are numerous discussions that precisely affirm that **diversity is the strength** of Canada. Trudeau set forth in a recent speech that Canada is a country built by migration<sup>14</sup>: “Waves of people came to this country welcomed by the folks who’ve lived here for millennia and built this society. These people came to Canada wanting to build a better life for themselves here than they had back home. And wherever they come from and whatever their circumstances, these folks all want the same thing: to live in peace and to create a better future for themselves and their communities. That is what generations upon generations have done here in Canada. That is what has created this extraordinary, diverse society that we have”<sup>15</sup>. It is precisely this diversity and pacifist coexistence among different people – who enjoy equal rights and opportunities – the composition of a national cultural identity, a source of pride.

Another example that demonstrates that it is possible to break the “us-them” narrative is given by the statements made by Jacinda Arden, Prime Minister of New Zealand, about the Christchurch attacks. In the middle of March 2019, a white supremacist committed two attacks on mosques causing the death of 50 Muslims. In light of hateful video messages and an extremist, terrorist manifesto, the Prime Minister with grief expressed that the damage has been committed against all New Zealanders: “Many of those who this morning were directly affected by the shooting could have been immigrants to New Zealand. They could have included refugees who chose to make New Zealand their home. Because this is their home. **They are us**. The people who perpetuated this violence against us are not us. They do not have a place in New Zealand. There is no place among us for these unprecedented, extraordinary acts of extreme violence.” This statement has been repeated since the attack and reinforced a collective identity that is not defined by origin, passport, or religion. It is a similar sentiment shared by Trudeau that declared New Zealand as a “proud nation with more than 200 ethnicities. Beyond this diversity, we share common values. And the one that we appreciate more than any other is compassion.”

## Emotions before Data

Within pro-migration positions, it is common to use data to combat provocative discussions that, instead of making solid arguments, are purely emotional. This tactic, without a doubt, is inefficient. **Data does not counteract perception nor emotions,**

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<sup>14</sup> Público, 17 January 2019, “Orgullo Nacional”. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2Fwjtpi> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>15</sup> Lila, M, 11 January 2019, “At a recent town hall, Canada's PM Justin Trudeau was confronted about why Canada admits so many immigrants, especially Muslims, because ‘they want to kill us.’ This was his reply” [Twit.]. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2LE8Jc6> (Accessed 08/05/2019)

**and they are difficult to remember.** With that in mind, emotional arguments are the ones that truly work.

The use of data as a form of debate is a response to an extraordinary faith in scientific methods that gained popularity in the Modern age and become into a general phenomenon in the contemporary West. The very origin of think tanks in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century reveals the importance of the role of experts. They come to offer advice and, ultimately, define the political and economic process of recent times<sup>16</sup>. The rise of data, experts, multidisciplinary and impartial research – that was established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the only valid model to build knowledge – is in crisis. Faced with scientific approach, populist politics use emotions to persuade and mobilize with great success.

### How do emotional discourses influence the narrative that shape our perceptions?

Three in the afternoon, the Usera neighborhood. A neighbor is watching the daily news while making a basted hake. Matías Prats says that, according to the latest statistics from the INE (Spanish National Statistics Institute), the foreign population percentage is at 9.79%, less than 10%. In fact, from 2013 until now, the number of foreign residents in Spain has decreased to 500,825 people. Our neighbor, Mercedes, simply does not believe it. When she looks down the street, she only sees “Chinese” people or “Indians.” She doesn’t even know where they are from exactly. The only thing she knows that is they are “not from here.” The grocer has always been a *Chinese man*. Our perception of reality is found within the limits of our experiences and shape our emotions. The reality of the information that reaches us through our senses can hardly be overcome by the coldness of the numbers or by data whose source is often unknown to us. The described scenario does not imply that Mercedes is potentially xenophobic. Nevertheless, the moment that an anti-migration discourse rolls out that uses terms such as “invasion” or “assault”, our neighbor in question, that observes many people that look foreign on a daily basis, will understand it. An image is worth a thousand words (data in this case), and she sees images every day. That perception can hardly be changed with data. **Data does not work when it interferes with perceptions.**

Let us think, on the other hand, about how easy it is to forget data: “the total population of Spain is 46,733,038 people, of which 4,663,726 are foreigners”<sup>17</sup>. Do you remember the numbers? Probably not. “*We do not all fit. We are too many.*” transmits an idea that is much more powerful and efficient although such a proposition does not support any data. A phrase such as “*if what*

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<sup>16</sup> Xifra, J., *Los think tanks*, UOC Publishing, Barcelona, 2016. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2VmW1Dd> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>17</sup> INE, 1 July 2018, “Población Residente en España”. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2DTJZX8> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

*immigrants want is to enjoy social welfare without respecting Spanish customs, the law, or the Constitution, they have come to the wrong country*<sup>18</sup>, are hard to overcome with data. **Dismantling myths about migration with data simply does not work: they are not remembered and do not changed our perception.**

The difficulty of data to work and to be remembered has given an advantage to those political platforms that have built their narratives on emotional terms. Where does this efficiency come from? In the case of antimigratory positions, their narratives constantly rely on emotions that channel to multiple social problems. These emotions are based on the nostalgia for a glorious past and point to a scapegoat responsible for the confusing and insecure present. This platform has developed by using migration as a turning point to allude and to take advantage of the presented problems and emotions; further creating a distorted image of migrating people. During times of crisis, people demonstrate a profile consisting of concern, fear, and insecurity about the future. This is used by anti-migration positions to wake up many fears: the fear of losing a singular cultural identity, losing access to limited resources, and the rejection or hatred towards the “Other,” the foreigner.

There is, however, a type of **data that works well in the discussion: “the emotional data”**<sup>19</sup>. How data is treated, apart from all references, converts them into emotions with a numerical form: “One million migrants wait to cross the Southern border” is a message indicative of the idea of invasion and assault and awakens concrete emotions that have to do with fear and aversion. Up until what point does this statistic constitute a datapoint? **A datapoint taken out of context is no longer a datapoint.** In turn, it can become a lethal weapon to channel emotions and act as an impactful transmitter.

## Others have done it

The campaign *Vote Leave* is evidence of the success of these emotional manipulation tactics during Brexit. The objective: convince British voters to leave the European Union. The emotional data: “We send 350,000,000 million pounds to the EU every week. We can finance our public health system with that amount.” This statistic that turned out to be false<sup>20</sup> hid, however, a very real emotion: a general discontent and frustration in a part of the population that felt that they were not being heard.

<sup>18</sup> El Confidencial, 21 November 2018, “Casado, sobre inmigración: No hay sitio para todos los que quieran venir a España.” Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2HbUO7I> (Accessed 08/05/2019)

<sup>19</sup> In this context, we call those figures whose numerical value or contextualization have no more value than its capacity to generate an emotional response to the message.

<sup>20</sup> Full Fact, 19 September 2018, “£350 million EU claim: a clear misuse of official statistics”. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2VUq2tq> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

The discussion that led to Brexit<sup>21</sup> is based on feeding the accumulated resentments held by part of the population. One part of the population felt marginalized, ignored, or with little opportunities to look forward to in the future. There was a general feeling of the loss of confidence in the establishment and a common enemy to which to direct offensive, simple, and forceful speech. The slogan that increased this unrest was “*Let’s take back control!*” Data that was released to unmask the deceptions did not have any effect, and the people felt that they could regain control of their lives if they voted “*leave.*”

### Hoaxes and Fact-Checking

If we take into account the informational disorder that exists, we will find a discursive panorama that is not very encouraging. Misinformation, intoxication, propaganda, manipulation, post-truths... There are multiple ways to describe a situation with an abundance of poor-quality information and discriminatory content. The use of misinformation methods is vitally important for the propaganda of the anti-migration virus. Hoaxes and half-truths spread like wildfire on social media. The “misinformation” is based on dubious sources, biased experts and provocative headlines shared by tens of thousands of accounts which magnify a problem. “The rumor always goes further than the denial”<sup>22</sup>.

**Fact-checking projects**<sup>23</sup> which have grown at an exceptional rate the last few years<sup>24</sup> **function as tools to dismantle the hoaxes and myths.** On one hand, this role allows a feeling to grow within the community that certain information is false; however, on the other hand, **to refute the hoax implicates a reaction and repeating it, thus spreading it.** Additionally, fact-checkers work in the revising speeches and public promises and corroborate the reliability of data and statistics in them. They contribute to creation of a better informed and more democratic society. However, it is not enough to offset the anti-migration rhetoric. **In light of the credibility crisis within mass media, data generates skepticism.** Although fact-checkers help to verify the information, they do not contribute to the construction of a new rhetoric.

<sup>21</sup> El Diario, 27 March 2018, “Fundador de Cambridge Analytica destaca el papel de AIQ en la victoria del Brexit”. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2DVzFxY> (Accessed 08/05/2019)

<sup>22</sup> CEAR, *Las personas refugiadas en España y Europa*, Madrid, 2018, p. 70. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2yYzF05> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>23</sup> Currently, there are over 126 websites and organizations dedicated to active fact-checking. In Spain, there are four: Maldito bulo, poletika.org, the Chistera blog, and the Objetivo.

<sup>24</sup> Duke Reporters’ Lab, *A better claim review to grow a fact-check database*, Sanford School of Public Policy, North Carolina, 2017. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2Jo9vaE> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

## How do we continue?



### Subconscious perception

Our opinion on a topic is shaped through the sum of a conscious and thorough thought with the unconscious impulse which is the acquired fruit from the social environment in which we grow.

In a poll conducted by the porCausa Foundation and Metroscopia in 2016, results established that a majority of Spaniards support immigration and sympathize with immigrants. Nevertheless, all demographic studies on this topic caution of the great variability in the results and, in many cases, vary depending on the current news (moments like the Aylan child vs. attacks). Whatever the case may be, this is our conscious and thorough thought.

The question raised is this: **What influence does the unconscious impulse have on our perceptions of migrations?** In 2017, the porCausa Foundation and the company Thisness Science Connected conducted an Implicit Association Test (IAT)<sup>25</sup>, with a significant sample, that ensures that 85% of Spaniards associate immigrants with a negative concept.

Even though their attitude toward immigrants is positive, the individual better absorbs information about immigrants that is associated with a negative or bad concept than information that is associated with a positive or good concept. This means that the individual will better accept negative information about immigration. This effect will be greater when they come across a lot of information and less as they have time to process it.

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<sup>25</sup> To conduct the IAT, click on this link: <https://bit.ly/2VqdavJ> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

### **What is the IAT?**

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a method developed to measure the strength of mental associations among concepts.

Contrary to explicit methods, in which individuals describe their own opinions or conscious attitudes (polls or interviews), the IAT tests the individuals' answers that are inferred from the results of a series of categorization assignments of distinct elements. The reaction times of the subjects are measured by categorizing elements in a series of repetitive tasks.

The IAT has been extensively developed by Harvard University through its Behavioral Studies laboratory. The test consists of using an algorithm to obtain an indicator of the degree of association between pairs of concepts. In the case of the test done by the porCausa Foundation and Thisness, the association between the pairs of concepts Immigrant-Good and Spanish-Bad vs. Immigrant-Bad and Spanish-Good was analyzed. The test required the subjects to rapidly categorize various stimuli. The time necessary to complete the pairings and the errors made during the process reflect the strength of association among different classes of stimuli.

## **Substitutive Narratives**

### **We do not want to win a war. We want to prevent it.**

A substitutive narrative would initially create a compassionate and empathic environment towards those who logically feel fear or rejection. The polarization dynamic makes empathy and compassion a rare species, opening the way for reactions, insults, the want to be right, and triumph. However, in order to win over narrative spaces, we must first have the favorable preference of these recipients through a dialogue in which all parties feel like they are heard. Diverse studies on the perception of migrations show that part of the people who do not have a clear favorable or unfavorable feeling about migration have felt ignorant, ignored, ridiculed and dismissed by the discussions that define migration as a fundamental right. Whatever approach you want to take, it is essential to construct it by keeping this type of audience in mind, accepting their fears and doubts as a starting point for the creation of the narrative. Only by crediting the fieldwork can we achieve the right approach and listening to create a narrative that will substitute the existing one.

Attention! Reframing the acts perceived by each person requires a proactive attitude, a capacity to assimilate new ideas, and question the ones that we already have. It requires a high level of psychological flexibility, an elastic mind capable to question what we want to know. This way we dismantle the ingrained frameworks and create

new ones. It is important that the stories are recreated from the ground up. The way it is told is the first determining factor of the perception of a story. The responsibility of the media and organizations is to tell stories without the traditional polarizations. We must refrain from the defensive communication before anti-migration groups. It is preferable to show the possibilities of change, opportunities, and solutions of migrants to the audience. We should not forget the elephant appears if it is mentioned.

## MENAS or kids?

One example turning up in migration arguments is that of the MENAS. The so-called *foreign, unaccompanied minors* (menores extranjeros no acompañados in Spanish, or *MENAS*) live, after their migration journey, without their families, and, in some cases, without any protection. This reality, hard if we think about lone kids and teenagers, is nevertheless imposed in an aggressive way when speaking in legal terms or highlighting their possible link to street crime. The discussion of MENAS, a dehumanizing concept that is repeatedly linked to news of petty theft, crime, and insecurity, makes the reaction of general rejection a logical one. The reality of abandonment and the needs of these children, including their inherent rights in their status of children, is eclipsed by the narrative that has been created about them<sup>26</sup>.

The substitutive narrative we would create begins with accepting the social reality: “It is normal that you feel scared.” Subsequently, we would provide arguments that break the rigid image of crime: “I believe that you forgot that they are children. They are teenagers that, by definition, are children in the bodies of adults. Any teenager, in plain hormonal chaos, is in a war against the world. I am sure you know many like that.” To begin to talk about children, about teenagers, about kids, is supposed to change the discussion and offer nuances, another type of option to tackle the issue. These kids are alone. They do not have anyone to orient them. If we leave them in the streets, if we do not offer them safe spaces, if we treat them like criminals, it’s more likely that they will become so. Instead, if we attempt to care for them and give them a home, we would have good and responsible adults.

## Others have done it

The possibilities for social transformation through a substitutive narrative have already been used by different social movements and social thinking. Nonviolence promoted by civil disobedience advocated non-reaction against the direct abuses by authorities. Starting with Henry David Thoreau<sup>27</sup>, the history of social mobilization tells about

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<sup>26</sup> Público, 23 February 2019, “Cuando Chavales y chavalas se convirtieron en menores”. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2Vhpmuf> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

<sup>27</sup> Thoreau, H.R. *La Desobediencia Civil*. Editorial Alianza. Madrid, 2012.

illustrious rebels who, far from reacting and even talking about the oppressions suffered, developed rhetoric in positive terms.

Martin Luther King who was against racial segregation in the United States spoke about the transgressions of the discriminatory laws through nonviolence. His famous speech in Washington, D.C. which has gone down in history and formed part of the popular culture, revolved around the liberation of the black population in terms of fellowship, peace, and justice. “I have a dream, a single dream, to keep dreaming. Dreaming of freedom, dreaming of justice, dreaming of equality, and, hopefully, no longer having to dream them”<sup>28</sup>. His words do not affect the hierarchy established by the segregation system, but run in non-reactive terms, radically opposed to the belligerence of the discussion on the civil rights of the Black Panthers or Malcolm X.

Another rebel that created a powerful substitutive narrative was Mohandas Gandhi. The pacifist Asian had also read Thoreau. When he returned to India, independence from the British Empire was not the center of his discussion. Gandhi’s strategy until finally achieving independence was the progressive conquest of the negotiation ground through concrete struggles that could be considered marginal but that, together, strengthened the legitimacy of the Indians to demand decolonization<sup>29</sup>. Gandhi, in accordance with his religious and pacifist principles, renounced the use of violence. Violence as a response to violence constituted, in turn, a reaction that was difficult to achieve taking into account the British military power. Whatever the reason, nonviolence constituted a strategic mechanism of non-reaction that was very effective.

## Local Focus

Speeches are more easily grasped if they allude to a local environment, to nearby and recognizable spaces. The rhetoric of changing the world, changing the system, or offer geographically distant examples are difficult to use in order to arouse long-term emotions. A thin polar bear on a melting block of ice in the Arctic can hit us at first but the possibilities of taking action seem so distant that we do nothing. The fight against climate change, from which this image is so iconic, seems enormous. To appeal to the justice of humanity, to achieve world peace, and to end inequalities is abstract and excessively broad, an immeasurable challenge for an individual. Besides, we must bear in mind that examples distant from our everyday life are quickly forgotten; they apparently share very little with our lives and, even though they are closely related to

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<sup>28</sup> King, L. M., “I have a dream”, Washington, 1963. Accessible on: <https://bit.ly/2LGfskT> (Accessed 05/08/2019).

<sup>29</sup> In 1918, he organized the resistance of thousands of peasants in Champaran who were forced by the British government to cultivate indigo instead of food for themselves. Later, he encouraged the exclusive consumption of Indian products, which was a boycott against the British products, and he advocated the self-production of homemade fabrics to be used by the Indians. Then, against the wishes the majority of his political party, Gandhi requested the autonomy of India under British rule. The rejection by the government led him to organize the campaign in opposition to the tax on salt, in a 400 km march which thousands of Indians joined. After the consequent imprisonment of more than 60,000 people, the government decided to sit down and negotiate independence.

us, they put a desert between such realities and ours. Images and news of foreign wars or abstract slogans will have little impact on our degree of long-term involvement.

All societies understand and construct the world based on their own sociocultural parameters. We think, even unconsciously, that we are the center of the world. We understand the world in our image and likeness, and beyond our social borders, the outside often makes us strange and alien. This phenomenon is known as ethnocentrism, and it is universal. If we want to influence and generate a narrative that resides in people, we have to develop a recognizable image that appeals to something we hold close. The narrative must be able to be incorporated into that social image in which we move daily and in which our neighbors are closer to humanity than to strangeness. A discourse that can mobilize us because we consider it ours, and in which we feel capable to intervene as individuals.

To think about changing the narrative from a local perspective means thinking of ourselves as agents of change, with the capacity to transform our environment. From the personal and from the everyday, it is possible to change the narrative. When we have a close and shared space, this becomes everyone's responsibility. On the contrary, impotence in the face of large and distant events leads us to derive from our responsibilities. In turn, the denial of such events meets our insensitivity. As Kume Appiah recounted, a person could be horrified momentarily by the news of the destruction of all the inhabitants of China by an earthquake, but he would sleep peacefully that night. On the contrary, he would not be able to sleep knowing that the next day his finger would be cut off<sup>30</sup>.

## Others have done it

Sanctuary cities are cities in the United States that decided not to cooperate with the enforcement of immigration law and stand against the policies of persecution and detention of undocumented immigrants. There are many sanctuary cities in the United States, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Seattle. The interesting thing about this phenomenon, beyond the project itself, is that it constitutes a very interesting and effective way to rhetorically unite people through hospitality. It seeks to unite neighbors in an environment where the distinctive profile is in welcoming. This story conveys the idea that you are primarily a Los Angeles resident rather than being American, as your identity is not defined by documentation but by the city in which you live. This is also experienced by your possibly immigrant neighbor, and, as such, you do not allow that they are treated badly.

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<sup>30</sup> Appiah, K.A., *Cosmopolitismo. La ética en un mundo de extraños*, Ed. Katz, Madrid, 2006, pp. 204.

## The Coca-Cola Effect

*Uncap diversity.  
Migration, Catch the Wave.  
Where There's Migration, There's Hospitality.*

Coca-Cola is a sweet, non-alcoholic beverage that was created in 1886. It is consumed practically all over the world, but most people do not know how it is made, and its formula is secret. And yet, Coca-Cola has managed to position itself in the minds of millions of people as one of the referential products to eliminate thirst and is a source of emotional well-being that makes it an indispensable beverage in any event. This is the result of fine and very intelligent marketing work that we call the "Coca-Cola effect". Thanks to that idea, Coca-Cola has managed to convert something supposedly *unfit for consumption* into a successful product.

In order to implement a new narrative, we need that Coca-Cola effect that turns our proposals into something irresistible. It is essential to have the support of creatives, marketing experts, and young and innovative people who transform the slogans designed following the premises of this guide into something very attractive.

### Others have done it

Large social organizations have spent years using marketing tools to polish their recruitment campaigns. Through marketing you can sell almost anything and create emotions in the recipients of the message that predisposes them to become donors given in to a narrative framework that is sometimes ridiculous and biased. To visualize this, in 2012 the Fund for International Assistance of Norwegian Students and Academics (SAIH) launched the "Radi-Aid: Africa for Norway" campaign<sup>31</sup>, a very emotional marketing project that convinced us that we needed to urgently send heaters to the Norwegians because they were dying of cold. The content of the campaign is unbelievable; but the production was great, and the videos manage to reach several million viewers through YouTube. This campaign is the paradigm of what a good Coca-Cola effect can achieve.

In the 1970s, New York had a financial crisis, had high crime and drug trafficking rates, suffered a crack and cocaine epidemic, and suffered a degradation of many of its neighborhoods. This deteriorated image immensely affected New York tourism and its residence who were leaving the city. In 1977, the New York Department of Commerce developed a marketing campaign to improve its reputation and attract people back to the city in order to change their perspective and show that it is a good place to live and to have fun. That is how the "I love New York" logo came to be, establishing the

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<sup>31</sup> Reference on the official Radiaid website. <https://bit.ly/2VkeIHE> (Accessed 08/05/2019) and the SAIH Norway YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/303CVRq> (Accessed 08/05/2019).

city's identity and optimistic symbol that still exist all over the world and generates a lot of profit.

## Summary

All of this was reflected in a speech on new migratory narratives by Lucila Rodríguez-Alarcón in the Hello Spain event organized by Ashoka España on April 10, 2019.

At the porCausa Foundation, we work so that credible information on migration processes reach as many people as possible. This is why we analyze the past and present of migrations so that thanks to this information we can all create a better future together.

Within the framework of our work, we can share in confidence that the generalized perception of migrations as something new and negative is not accidental. It is dictating what we can think and framing what we can talk about. The reality is that migrations are inherent in nature and cannot be stopped. However, all debates and political proposals are focused on how to stop and prevent migration.

In accepting that migrations will always happen, we should be working on how we can best manage them, so that they are as beneficial as possible for the people who migrate and for the people who receive the travelers. However, we know that, right now, any proposal of change towards policies that don't compromise the containment and repression of migration would generate fear and rejection by the majority of the public sphere.

Therefore, no change will be possible if we do not start by establishing a new narrative on the stage for public debate.

Next, a few key points on how we can achieve this:

"First and foremost, the most important thing to do is to create our own narrative and condemn the anti-immigrant and dehumanizing narrative that is imposed on us. The one who sets the framework wins the debate, that is why it is very important not to fall into the temptation of entering fruitless discussions that lead to nothing. At porCausa, we have a slogan that says, "shit is not shared", that is, we have to remember that what is not communicated does not exist. Let's work on talking about what interests us. We are comprised of many people who want change, and the sum of all our actions and desires is essential to achieve it.

The second thing that we have to deconstruct is the gap between "us" and "the others". Every time we call someone a migrant, we are separating them from us. Every time we use the word refugee, which is a legal term, we establish categories among those Others: the refugee is the migrant who deserves our compassion and our support. Every time we feel pity, we make the space between them bigger. Nevertheless, we are all migrants. I am a migrant, and always will be. Surely, most of you are too.

Third, we have to build our new discussion so that it is accessible to all people. For this, we have to work mainly on emotional concepts. Data, unfortunately for people

who are specialized as is my case, has come to its end in speeches. Statistics are not remembered. Statistics does not change perception. If someone feels that there are more and more new people in their neighborhood, nothing will work if we give them data that proves otherwise. They will not believe you. The data can be rejected, manipulated, and wears out. So, we must avoid statistics in our speeches. Emotions yes, data no.

When the basis of the current discussion is already created with this criteria, there are three more things to keep in mind.

We must avoid polarization. Polarization is a tool in new anti-migratory discussions. They force us to take sides in topics in which we should not takes sides. We must turn ourselves against them. We must understand complex positions, accept that fear exists, apprehensions exists, that there are feelings of the system overloading. All this could be true, but it does not signify that the solutions offered are the right ones. We should not attempt prove that we are correct. **It is not about winning a war. It is about avoiding one.**

We must apply our ideas to familiar examples. **We work within the local space.** Neighbors, people who are nearby, are full of stories and realities that break with all lies. What is close by and familiar helps a lot to better understand things.

Finally, if we are professionals and we are looking for a new professional narrative, let us apply the Coca-Cola effect. I call it so because Coca-Cola, a product that is over 100 years old and overly sugary, has become the paradigm in the fight against thirst. Using their foolproof communication skills, we can achieve making migration, which can be tremendously positive, into a desirable state for all.

To conclude, I want to remind you all that love was the tool for social change in India used by Ghandi in that we will not permit them to take it from us. We have the individual and collective power to change things. Let us use it.”

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