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## **Between protection and care: building hosting from the local level**

**Ivana Belén Ruíz-Estramil**

Licenciada en sociología. Centro de Estudos Sociais (Universidade de Coimbra) /  
Instituto Hegoa (Universidad del País Vasco / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea)

[ivanabelenrues@gmail.com](mailto:ivanabelenrues@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7696-2770>



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## ARTICLE SECTION

### **Between protection and care: building hosting from the local level**

*Abstract:* This paper delves into citizen initiatives to accompany people requesting protection, with the aim of analyzing the potential for building a culture of hospitality. The objective pursued is to analyze the different bases on which “protection” is built by institutional reception, and “care” by citizen initiatives. For this, this writing is based on two investigative processes based on a qualitative methodology, with the use of in-depth interviews and secondary sources of information. The main results collected focus first on the recognition of protection needs by the asylum procedure, then attending to reception as a continuity of protection, to finally attend to citizen initiatives linked to the accompaniment of people in forced mobility. By way of discussion, the potentialities posed by citizen initiatives are collected, such as the opening of reception and criticism of the hegemonic notion of protection, collecting in the conclusions the risks and obstacles pending also within the initiatives of opening reception, finally collecting some future orientations to re-think the reception from the local initiatives.

*Key words:* refugees, asylum, migration, citizen participation, hospitality.

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## IDEAS CLAVE / HIGHLIGHTS / IDEES CLAU

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Es preciso descolonizar los principios que guían la protección.</li><li>2. La apertura de la acogida posibilita espacios de debate sobre protección internacional y cuidado.</li><li>3. Las iniciativas ciudadanas de acompañamiento muestran interés por fomentar una cultura de la hospitalidad.</li><li>4. Entre la protección y el cuidado se disputa una concepción de relaciones humanas.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The principles guiding protection must be decolonized.</li><li>2. The opening of the reception center provides opportunities for discussion on international protection and care.</li><li>3. The accompanying citizen initiatives show interest in fostering a culture of hospitality.</li><li>4. Between protection and care, a conception of human relations is in dispute.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cal descolonitzar els principis que guien la protecció.</li><li>2. L'obertura de l'acolliment possibilita espais de debat sobre protecció internacional i la cura dels altres.</li><li>3. Les iniciatives ciutadanes d'acompanyament mostren interès per formentar una cultura de l'hospitalitat.</li><li>4. Entre la protecció i la cura es disputa una concepció de les relacions humanes.</li></ol> |
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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT<sup>1</sup>

The main objective of this article is to analyse how protection is constructed by the institutional hosting for people seeking asylum, and how it relates to citizen initiatives that also offer alternatives for the hosting of people in mobility. In order to further this objective, two research processes have been carried out consecutively since 2013 following a qualitative methodology, in which it has been possible to analyse both the humanitarian framework constructed around international protection and the personal experience of the asylum seekers.

The theoretical background of the paper is mainly based on two strands. On the one hand, it focuses on the practices of recognition of international protection through the asylum procedure, for which the concepts of “biolegitimacy” and “moral economy” are fundamental to understanding how the humanitarian structure that gives access to the recognition of international protection takes structure. On the other hand, the theoretical framework is based on the practices of hosting in dialogue-dispute with the institutional logics of integration.

The article focuses on three main results: the exercise of governance that operates in the asylum procedure with the aim of providing recognition of the asylum seeker's protection needs; the institutional hosting as a continuity of protection; and finally, the citizen initiatives linked to the accompaniment of people in forced mobility. These three results make it possible to think about opening up protection outside the institutional sphere, with new actors, practices and relationship dynamics.

With regard to the exercise of governance that operates in the asylum procedure with the aim of providing recognition to asylum seekers, we find a management apparatus that determines the possibility of obtaining a legal residence that allows the displaced subject to move away from the zone of danger with a minimum of recognised rights. This is a first space in which the subject moves away from the previous danger and conditions of insecurity. However, in this space, other possible sources of insecurity also appear, no longer derived from persecution, war or conflict, but from the absence of citizenship and the fact of not knowing the new context in which they find themselves, as well as the rights that they have there. The hosting thus appears as the second element linked to protection, emerging as an approach in terms of care.

As for the second result regarding the hosting as a continuity of protection corresponding to what is understood as institutional reception, we find that the work of hosting represents for the organisations a protection against adverse conditions within the asylum context, with the identification of immediate needs related to the context in which the protection seeker is inserted. We thus see the first sign of the opening of the hosting to care, where it is no longer a matter of protecting the subject from previous circumstances (something that is taken care of by the asylum procedure and the recognition that is finally obtained), but the central point of attention is to protect the subject within the conditions that he/she will go through until he/she obtains the recognition of international protection. Furthermore, this openness can also be seen in relation to the actors involved, where Non-Governmental Organisations take on a strong role, both in direct relation to displaced persons and to citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> Traducción exclusiva de los autores / Authors' exclusive translation.

In relation to the third result regarding citizen initiatives linked to the accompaniment of people in forced mobility, it should be noted that these constitute a fundamental support for many people who do not have access to institutional hosting. However, it should be noted that they cannot be conceived outside the framework of political possibility in which they are developed. These initiatives arise in contingency with the protection frameworks provided by states and with the institutional hosting they provide. Citizen initiatives act as an opening of the hosting, but in some cases this opening involves a stronger component of demand than in others due to the framework in which both protection and hosting are conceived. We therefore propose to think of this relationship in terms of dialogue-dispute anchored in the socio-political context in which they take place.

By way of discussion, the potential of citizens' initiatives to open up the hosting and dispute the hegemonic notion of protection is presented. However, the frameworks of possibilities for action (mobility policies but also spaces for building citizens' initiatives) show us pending challenges in the construction of hosting and hospitality outside institutional frameworks, both structural and practical. There is still a long way to go, but citizen initiatives have been clear in showing an interest in claiming a space of dispute for a hosting that is closer to the care needs of people who arrive in search of protection. Their potential is evident in claiming hosting as a practice that is the responsibility of society as a whole, showing a re-politicisation of hosting in a framework of confrontation and contingency between hosting policies and practices developed on the margins of these policies, where emerge actions tend to claim the interrelation between the contexts of origin of displaced populations and hosting contexts, where the latter can be understood as critical spaces to rethink the geopolitical structure of mobility management.

In conclusion, it is important to promote a debate on hosting practices and the creation of a culture of hospitality in times marked by mobility, by a strong framework of control over this mobility, and by a context of resurgent anti-immigration attitudes. Citizen initiatives to accompany displaced persons have shown two issues: that it is necessary to build a culture of hospitality and that there is a disposition to do so at the social level, from this fact emerges the central future orientation proposed around the need to rethink the hosting from the local level.