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Top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal

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Master in International Studies

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SOCIOLOGIA
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Resumo

Após o regresso dos Talibãs ao poder em Cabul, no Verão de 2021, milhares de cidadãos afegãos começaram a deixar o país. Esta situação foi alarmante para os países europeus, que ainda estavam a recuperar dos desafios gerados pela crise de refugiados de 2015. Neste contexto, vários políticos e organizações da sociedade civil demonstraram estarem disponíveis para receber refugiados afegãos, enquanto outros apresentaram um discurso de exclusão relativamente a estes refugiados. Esta dissertação centra-se no retrato que os media fizeram das narrativas “top-down” e “bottom-up” da aceitação de refugiados afegãos em Portugal. Por narrativa “top-down”, refiro-me à narrativa construída pelo Estado português e por narrativa “bottom-up”, refiro-me à narrativa construída pela sociedade civil portuguesa. Para além disto, esta dissertação procura compreender como é que estas narrativas retratam as políticas de integração de refugiados em Portugal. Considerando que a nível das políticas de integração de refugiados, o Estado português é influenciado e regido pelas leis da União Europeia (UE), será, também, analisada a narrativa construída pela UE em relação à aceitação de refugiados afegãos. Desta forma, foram recolhidas 87 notícias do *Público* e do *Jornal de Notícias*, que apresentam a argumentação dos actores investigados neste estudo. Posteriormente, estas notícias foram analisadas e interpretadas, com base na revisão de literatura, especificamente na “human security approach” e, conseqüentemente, foram destacados os seguintes temas: a aceitação e proteção de refugiados afegãos, a integração e o empoderamento de refugiados afegãos e o multilateralismo, a cooperação internacional e interdependência.

Palavras-chave: refugiados, narrativas, acolhimento, integração, empoderamento, proteção

Abstract

When the Taliban regained power in Kabul, in the summer of 2021, after the rapid withdrawal of the United States of America and the international forces, thousands of Afghan citizens began to leave the country. This situation was alarming for European countries, that were still recovering from the challenges created by the 2015 refugee crisis. In this context, several politicians and civil society organizations demonstrated their willingness to accept Afghan refugees, while others presented a speech of exclusion regarding these refugees. This dissertation focuses on how the media portrayed the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal. By top-down narrative, I mean the narrative constructed by the Portuguese State and by bottom-up narrative, I mean the narrative constructed by Portuguese civil society. Furthermore, this dissertation seeks to understand how these narratives portray refugee integration policies in Portugal. As in terms of refugee integration policies, the Portuguese State is greatly impacted by the laws of the European Union (EU), the narrative constructed by the EU in relation to the acceptance of Afghan refugees will also be analysed. For this reason, it was collected 87 digital news items from *Público* and *Jornal de Notícias*, which present the arguments of each narrative. Subsequently, these news were analysed and interpreted, based on the literature review, more specifically on the “human security approach” and, consequently, the themes that were approached were: the acceptance and protection of Afghan refugees; the integration and empowerment of Afghan refugees and multilateralism, international cooperation and interdependence.

Keywords: refugees, narratives, acceptance, integration, empowerment, protection

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Introduction

The proposal of this dissertation is to understand how the media portrayed the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal. By top-down narratives I mean the narratives that were built by the Portuguese state and as for bottom-up narratives I mean the narratives that were built by the Portuguese civil society. As in terms of refugee integration policies, the Portuguese state is greatly impacted by the laws of the European Union (EU), the narrative constructed by the EU regarding this issue will also be analysed and included in the top-down narrative (Sousa & Costa, 2016).

On April 14, 2021, the President of the United States of America (USA), Joe Biden, announced the full, rapid and unconditional withdrawal of all international military forces from Afghanistan by September 11 of the same year. In the sequence of this announcement and in a short period of time, the Taliban managed to occupy the northern, north-western and western parts of the country and the provincial administrative centres. Then, on August 15, 2021, the Taliban took over Kabul without resistance (Valijonovich, 2022). Due to this situation, thousands of Afghans left the country. The neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, now host about 2.1 million registered Afghan refugees. Furthermore, the UNHCR released a non-return advisory for Afghanistan, on that same month, calling for a halt on forced returns of Afghan nationals, including asylum seekers who have had their claims rejected (UNHCR, 2022). For that matter, today Afghanistan faces a huge humanitarian crisis that needs a global response, which is why it is important to understand the narratives that were built in Portugal regarding the acceptance of Afghan refugees, considering that Portugal is a receiving country, and it is a member of two refugee protection systems, the United Nations (UN) and the EU.

Therefore, this dissertation proposes to answer the following research questions: what are the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal?; and how do the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal portray integration policies? Furthermore, this investigation aims to offer a human security approach to the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal and how these portray integration policies. The human security approach places individuals and communities above the state and it has two main strategies: the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities (Annan, 2001; Edwards, 2009; Commission on

Human Security, 2003). In addition, the human security approach defends multilateral and preventive actions to respond to global crises (Edwards, 2009). Overall, by following the human security approach I am able to understand whether the top-down and bottom-up narrative of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal is inclusive or not and whether the integration of refugees is seen as a fundamental part in the process of accepting Afghan refugees or not.

In previous experiences, such as the 2015 refugee crises, Portugal was an example of government openness and willingness to receive refugees and of civil society mobilization (Costa & Sousa, 2017; Góis, 2019). However, this time around, the Portuguese politics has been marked by the growing power of the right-wing party CHEGA, that was the third most voted party in the January 2021 presidential election and it has, since the January 2022 general election, twelve seats in the parliament (MAI, 2022). Regarding immigration policies, CHEGA has defended that “these new dangers to which it becomes imperative to be vigilant also pass through uncontrolled immigration” (Amaral, 2020, p. 47). Therefore, it is also important to understand if the rise of a anti-immigration party has reflected negatively in the top-down and bottom-up narrative of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal.

Regarding the research design of this dissertation, it was adopted the case study, which is defined by the investigation of a specific case, well delimited, contextualized in time and place, so that a detailed search for information can be carried out (Ventura, 2007). To answer to the research questions, it was collected 87 news articles from the Portuguese newspapers *Público* and *Jornal de Notícias*. These news articles were analysed thematically, based on both the literature review (deductive coding) and the themes that emerged from the data (inductive coding), which resulted in the following main topics: acceptance/protection of Afghan refugees; integration/empowerment of Afghan refugees; and multilateralism, international cooperation, and interdependence to respond to the Afghan refugee crisis.

I begin this dissertation with the review of the literature in Chapter 1, which sets out the views of the main authors in this area of studies and also presents the theoretical framework that will be used to analyse and discuss the results. Then, Chapter 2 focuses on the methodology adopted to develop the study, that is, to collect the data and analyse it, as well as the limitations of the study. While Chapter 3 presents the results of the analysis and

discussion. Finally, the main findings of this study are presented in the conclusion, as well as the expectations for future developments.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

I begin this chapter by exploring the literature, by setting the views of the main authors in this area of studies, that is, on the topic of narratives that are built about refugees and on the different refugee protection systems, going from the United Nations to the European Union and to the Portuguese state, in order to understand the process of accepting and integrating refugees. Finally, I present the theoretical framework of this study - the human security approach - that will guide me through the whole investigation.

Narratives Built About Refugees

Those in positions of political power make the ultimate decision when crafting specific policies regarding refugees. While political elites are in charge of promoting certain narratives over others, public opinion plays a role in the process of policy formation and change, as well as it influences which narratives become more salient (Chu, 2019).

In the political discourse and debate regarding refugees, the question of security is always the defining element. Either refugees are viewed as victims of insecurity or as potential threats to national and international security (Edwards, 2009). For that matter, these are the two dominant narratives to portray refugees: the inclusion narrative, which typically frames refugees as beneficial for destination societies; and the exclusion narrative, which sees migrants as invaders of the host country and that contribute to the degradation of the nation, exposing the country to violent instability (Chu, 2019). Furthermore, Verkuyten (2021) argues that these narratives are built according to many factors, namely: contextual factors (e.g., immigration and emigration history, the political context and the immigration and integration policies), migrant characteristics (e.g., the size of the immigrant population, its composition in terms of country of origin, religion and level of educational and work skills) and personal characteristics (e.g., professional occupation, education and age).

In terms of the contextual factors, Verkuyten (2021) found that anti-immigrant attitudes are more evident when the economic situation is declining and the ideological climate in society is dominated by hierarchy enhancing and status quo preserving norms and values. For example, the refugee crisis of 2015, generated a heated debate among citizens and stimulated a surge of political populism across the EU. On the one hand, a large group of citizens expressed humanitarian concerns and pointed at the moral duty to help people in

need. On the other hand, a large group of citizens was worried about the threat that Islamic refugees would bring to their own culture and safety, and for instance, feared that terrorists would enter the EU by joining the stream of refugees. These ideological differences reflect onto the political left-right dimension, where the political left placed relatively more emphasis on providing aid to refugees and the political right placed relatively more emphasis on stricter border control to protect the safety of the EU citizens (Prooijen, Krouwel & Emmer, 2018).

Nevertheless, most often, the threats perceived by host countries have been conceptualized in economic terms (Quillian 1995; Heath & Richards, 2020). A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found that adults who believe economic conditions in their country are “fair” or “poor” are almost twice as likely to say immigration levels should decrease as those who say conditions are “excellent” or “good” (Esipova, Ray, Pugliese, & Tsubutashvili, 2015). Similarly, those who say conditions are getting worse, are nearly twice as likely to favour decreased immigration than those who say conditions are getting better (Esipova et al., 2015).

Regarding the migrant characteristics that contribute to the construction of these narratives, Verkuyten (2021) found that countries often make distinctions between types of migrants in their immigration policies - Western and non-Western or EU and non-EU immigrants - and the public tends to do the same. Public attitudes tend to be more negative towards immigrants who are culturally less similar, such as Muslims in Europe (Bansak, Hangartner & Hainmueller, 2016). In addition, the rise of populist and nationalist governments has boosted hate speech and xenophobic rhetoric towards refugees. This resort to anti-refugee/anti-immigrant ideas promote fear and distrust of foreigners. In some cases, leaders are expressing complete denial of any need to respond to refugee crises around the world (Miller, 2018).

Furthermore, Verkuyten (2021) also found that anti-immigrant attitudes are more evident when the proportion of immigrants is higher. Thus, according to Esipova et al. (2015), countries that receive large inflows of immigrants tend to be split – with about half saying they would like levels to decrease and half saying they favour levels remaining the same or increasing. At the same time, people in receiving countries are more negative than other groups – like top origin countries and countries seeing recent large changes in immigration numbers (Esipova et al., 2015).

In terms of the personal characteristics of each individual that contribute to the construction of narratives regarding refugees, Esipova et al. (2015) found that in every region and in every country there are people who are more open to immigration and who have the potential to become “change leaders”, these are: business owners - these are more positive about immigration levels than non-owners; young people - due to the increased globalization that has taken place in the past few decades, these are more aware of immigration, and they are more likely to favour increasing immigration levels; and educated people with a college degree - these are more likely than those with less education to want to see immigration kept at its present level or increased. There are also those who are more likely to resist immigration, these are: the unemployed - compared with others in the workforce, those who are not working, but actively looking for work and are able to begin work, are considerably more likely to want immigration decreased (Esipova et al., 2015).

Having described the two dominant narratives that are built regarding refugees (inclusion or exclusion) and the factors that contribute to the domination of one narrative (contextual factors, migrant characteristics and personal characteristics), it is fundamental, now, to understand what are refugee protection systems and the role they play in the process of accepting and integrating refugees. Thus, the following chapter will explore the different refugee protection systems, going from the United Nations to the European Union and to the Portuguese state.

Refugee Protection Systems

The international refugee regime comprises a series of laws that define refugees and determine their rights and obligations, and a series of norms to which, although not necessarily legally binding, states are expected to adhere. To deal with the huge flows of displaced persons, this regime is implemented and monitored by a number of institutions, being the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), the most important systems for the Portuguese state (Koser, 2007; Léonard, S. & Kaunert, 2019).

Furthermore, to understand these refugee protection systems, it is important to clarify what a refugee is and what status can be legally given to people who have fled their homes. According to Koser (2007) refugees are defined as “people who have been forced to leave their own country for another, because of conflict, persecution, or for environmental reasons

such as drought or famine” (p. 16). This concept is different from an asylum-seeker, which is defined as a person who has applied for international protection. The appliance for international protection can be done once the asylum-seeker has reached the country in which it is seeking protection, which is what most of them do, or it is possible to apply for asylum outside the country where they are seeking protection. These applications are judged by the criteria of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which will be discussed later. This way, successful applicants are granted refugee status and become refugees and unsuccessful applicants can normally appeal and if their appeal is rejected they are expected to leave the country (Castles, Hass & Miller, 2014).

Beyond this, receiving countries can also offer temporary protection for war refugees or humanitarian protection for people not considered refugees (Castles et al., 2014). In addition, in Europe there is a range of other statuses, usually grouped together under the description of Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) that are granted to people who are not refugees but still cannot return to their homes. Furthermore, there are also Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), which are people who have fled their homes but have been unable to leave their countries (Koser, 2007).

The United Nations

The core of the international refugee regime is the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, that is upheld, implemented and monitored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Castles et al., 2014; Koser, 2007). In the 1951 Convention, a refugee is defined as a person residing outside his or her country of nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return because of a “well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or a political opinion” (UNHCR, 2011a: 3, in Castles et al., 2014, p. 222). Therefore, the signatories of the 1951 *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* undertake to protect refugees and to respect the principle of non-refoulement (Castles et al., 2014).

According to the UN refugee protection system, there are other series of norms that states have to obey regarding refugee flows. These derive either in law from the 1951 Convention or other legal instruments, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, or in non-binding but widely applied customary law or agreements. Among these norms are: the right to leave one's own country; the right to access the territory of other states; that asylum be provided as a non-political act; that refugees should not be returned to their own country forcibly (non-refoulement); that full economic and social rights should be extended to refugees; and that states are obliged to try to provide lasting solutions for refugees. Furthermore, refugees can be resettled, which means to move from countries of first asylum to countries able to offer long-term protection and assistance. In general, these resettled refugees are selected by the UNHCR, in cooperation with the governments of resettlement countries (Castles et al., 2014). In that same way, refugees also have obligations, primarily, they have to obey the law of the country providing asylum (Koser, 2007).

Since 1997, the UNHCR has been defending the idea that the international refugee protection system is under unprecedented pressure. At that time, the UNHCR argued that humanitarian action has a valuable role to play in the effort of protecting refugees, but it has to be founded on the principle that everyone has the right to security and freedom: security from persecution, discrimination, armed conflict and poverty; freedom to fulfil their personal potential, to participate in the decisions which affect their lives and future and to express their individual and collective identity (UNHCR, 1997).

The European Union

The international refugee protection regime created by the UN, in particular the 1951 Convention, had a strong influence on the European Union's policies regarding refugee protection. The EU became an actor in the field of refugees in 1993, when the Treaty of Maastricht came into force. This treaty created two new EU pillars - on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and on Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) respectively, that integrated asylum, migration and borders issues for the first time within the institutional framework of the EU. However, the treaty did not lay down any precise policy objectives, it just stipulated in Article K.3 that Member states should "inform and consult one another within the Council with the view to coordinating their action" and they should "establish cooperation between the relevant departments of their administrations" for that purpose (Léonard & Kaunert, 2019).

Afterwards, in 1999, The Treaty of Amsterdam, entered into force, introducing several important changes that significantly contributed to the communalization of the asylum, migration and external borders policy venues. Issues concerning “visas, asylum, immigration, and other policies related to free movement of persons” were brought under the first pillar of the EU - European Communities. (Castles et al., 2014). In addition, the EU received the competence to draft proposals on various aspects of asylum, migration and external borders. (Léonard & Kaunert, 2019). In that same year, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) was created, to guarantee the existence of a common asylum procedure and a uniform protection status throughout the EU area. The CEAS is structured based on the following foundations: the asylum application will be examined by only one Member state; criteria is established to determine which state is responsible for examining the application submitted; refugees do not have the right to choose the state in which they wish to apply for asylum or in which they wish to settle (Sousa, Costa, Albuquerque, Magano & Backstroke, 2021; Costa et al., 2019).

Later in 2004, the EU adopted the concept of international protection, that covered situations in which people can benefit from refugee status and those in which people can obtain subsidiary protection, in reason of the existence of a serious threat to life or physical security due to a situation of indiscriminate violence or violation of human rights, as well as the risk of being subjected to the death penalty, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment (Costa & Sousa, 2018; Sousa et al., 2021). It is important to emphasize that this concept is much broader than the 1951 *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, and its 1967 Protocol, in which, as we have seen before, the definition of refugee is much more restrictive (UNHCR, 2011a: 3, in Castles et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, in 2007, the Lisbon Treaty was signed (and later ratified in 2009), marking the complete inclusion of migration and asylum within the framework of European treaties (Castles et al, 2014). Significant new competences were transferred to the EU level. Previously, it was only allowed to legislate on minimum standards for asylum measures., but the Article 78 of the Treaty of Lisbon granted the EU the following: the competence to adopt laws for a uniform status of asylum, valid throughout the Union; a uniform status of subsidiary protection; a common system of temporary protection; common procedures for the granting and withdrawing of protection; criteria for determining Member states

responsibilities for considering an application for protection; standards for reception conditions; as well as partnership and cooperation with third countries for the purpose of managing inflows of people applying for protection. Article 79 also listed several measures that were to be adopted in order to ensure the development of an EU common immigration policy. Finally, the Treaty of Lisbon emphasized in its Article 80 that the EU's policies on border checks, asylum and immigration and their implementation should be "governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between the Member states" (Léonard & Kaunert, 2019, p. 82-83).

The capacity of the EU to deal with a massive wave of refugees, was put into test in 2015, when a sudden massive flow of refugees from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq, took place. This wave of migration placed high pressure mainly on Italy and Greece, which were used as gateway to the entire Schengen area. Consequently, the political response of the EU was to resort to Article 78(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows for the adoption of interim measures to deal with emergency situations (Sousa et al., 2021). This way, the EU implemented an approach called "hotspot", which consisted in the creation of registration centres in Greece and Italy, in which refugees were identified, registered and fingerprinted. At the same time, the EU created a relocation programme for these refugees to be redistributed to the other Member states (Sousa et al., 2021). In that same year, the European Council deliberated the transfer of 120 000 applicants, that had entered by Greece and Italy, to the all the Member states, for international protection. For this reason, It was also deliberated the allocation of financial support to each Member state per relocated person (Sousa et al., 2021).

Furthermore, on March 18, 2016 the EU signed a deal with Turkey that outlined several initiatives for jointly addressing the Syrian refugee crisis and managing irregular and refugee migration into Europe. Turkey agreed to admit irregular migrants and in exchange send Syrian refugees in Turkey to Europe for resettlement - a type of population swap (Sousa et al., 2021). This so-called "one-to-one initiative" stipulates that for every Syrian who has travelled without authorization to Greece and been returned to Turkey, the EU Member states will resettle one Syrian from Turkey (European Council, 2016).

Regarding integration policies, these vary widely across Europe, however these policies seem to prioritize housing, education and health. More recently, there is a European

tendency to value resettlement, with the policies of some countries favouring certain profiles of refugees with “better” integration capacity (Selm, 2014; European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 1999; Sousa et al., 2021).

According to many authors, in the European context, the exclusion narrative is the dominant one. The issue of refugees has been politicized by right-wing and anti-immigration parties, representing immigrants as threats to Western values, culture, religion, jobs, school, health systems and other public services and a source of terrorism and crime. According to these parties, hosting refugees is an issue of national security (Castles et al., 2014; Chu, 2019; UNHCR, 2022). This idea ignores the basic notion that one has the right to flee for safety (Miller, 2018.).

The Portuguese State

Portugal does not have a great tradition of receiving asylum seekers. Thus, the Portuguese law regarding refugees and asylum seekers is closely linked to the process of harmonization with the asylum policies promoted by the European Union (Sousa & Costa, 2016). In Portugal, the reception of refugees is the responsibility of the Portuguese state. The Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF) is the institution responsible for granting refugee status. The SEF, which is supervised by the Ministry of Internal Administration (MAI) is the Portuguese police authority responsible for the entry, stay and departure of foreigners in national territory, and this institution manages the Office of Asylum and Refugees (GAR) which is responsible for the organization and instruction of asylum processes. Therefore, the refugee and subsidiary protection status is granted by the Minister of Internal Administration (Ribeiro, 2017).

It was in 2006 that Portugal began to receive an annual quota of refugees, through the resettlement programme signed between UNHCR and the Portuguese state. The answer to this reception is given by the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR), which is the UNHCR's operational partner in Portugal, maintaining a cooperation protocol aimed at the legal and social protection of asylum seekers and refugees. (Ribeiro, 2017). In addition, there are currently three different ways for refugees to enter Portugal: refugees hosted under the Resettlement Programme; refugees hosted under the Relocation Programme; and spontaneous refugees. The first programme – the Resettlement Programme - is coordinated by the Institute of Solidarity and Social Security (ISSS) and the second reception programme is coordinated by the SEF. These two reception programmes are distinguished mainly by the place where the

refugees are located when applying for refugee status, as well as by the responses given by the Portuguese government. The resettlement programme consists of the “selection and transfer of refugees from a first country of asylum in which they are in precarious conditions, sometimes over generations, to a country that accepts to receive them and grant them a right of permanent residence” (Ribeiro, 2017, p. 13). In this programme, the country where the refugee is when applying for international protection is outside the borders of the European Union (Ribeiro, 2017).

The second programme - the Relocation Programme - was created to respond to refugees who were already on European soil, mainly in the hotspots of Italy and Greece. This programme is a result of the response given by the Portuguese government, through the Working Group on the European Agenda for Migration (GTAEM), to the 2015 humanitarian crisis. This group's main mission was to assess the existing capacity to reception and prepare an action and response plan on matters of resettlement, relocation and integration of immigrants. The group includes the SEF, the ISSS, the Institute of Employment and Training (IEFP), the Institute for Housing and Urban Rehabilitation (IHRU), the General Directorate of Health (DGS), the General Directorate of Education (DGE), the High Commissioner for Migration (ACM) and representatives of local authorities may also be invited to participate in this group, whenever deemed necessary, and non-governmental organizations, and the Refugee Support Platform (PAR), the Portuguese Red Cross (CVP), the Union of Portuguese Mutualities (UMP) and the CPR are also part of this group (Ribeiro, 2017).

Furthermore, in the Relocation Programme there is a national strategy aimed at rapid integration. The reception proposals were defined according to several reception criteria, such as: favouring reception by Institutions to the detriment of reception by private citizens; the decentralization of refugees by distributing individuals throughout the national territory, thus avoiding the concentration of refugees in large cities; mobilize local consortia of institutions, these consortia together being able to ensure the full integration of refugees; provide an integrated response to the various needs of each person, such as accommodation, food, employment, education, health and access to the Portuguese language and, finally, a welcome that promotes autonomy and the capacity of presenting solutions that allow the gradual independence of refugees. In this protocol, refugees are hosted by institutions distributed throughout the national territory that will be responsible for the reception for a minimum

period of 18 months, 24 months in the case of the reception carried out by the Support Platform for Refugees (PAR Families Programme) and which will respond to a set of essential needs for the integration of refugees. Refugees hosted by the relocation programme are guaranteed the right to accommodation, support with food and clothing, access to health care, education and learning Portuguese, support in accessing employment and a monthly pocket money of €150.00 for current expenses (Ribeiro, 2017).

Furthermore, refugees can also arrive in Portugal spontaneously, later assuming the status of asylum seekers. The asylum process has many steps and it begins when the necessary documentation is presented to the police authorities, namely the SEF, the Public Security Police (PSP), the National Republican Guard (GNR) and the Maritime Police (PM). Once the application is accepted, entry into national territory is allowed, followed by the instruction phase, lasting 6 months, extendable up to 9 months, with the issuance of a residence permit, valid for 6 months, renewable. If the request is unfounded or inadmissible, the applicant is notified to leave the country within 20 days and, if he is in an irregular situation, the SEF promotes his coercive removal. Another existing refugee reception programme is the Global Platform for Syrian Students, founded in 2013 by the former President of the Republic Jorge Sampaio, which in 2017 had hosted already around 40 Syrian scholarship holders to complete higher education (Ribeiro, 2017).

In spite of the European context, Portugal has been an example of government openness and willingness to receive refugees. In 2015, Portugal offered to accept 10,000 people, more than the triple of the number set by the European Commission (Costa & Sousa, 2017). This attitude has been mirrored by the positive feedback from the mass media and from the mobilization of civil society. As a result, it was built a network of different actors (from religious organizations to NGOs) working together with municipalities to mobilize resources for the reception of refugees (Góis, 2019). However, this time around, in Portugal, the right-wing is also growing, being represented by CHEGA, that was the third most voted party in the January 2021 presidential election and it has, since the January 2022 general election, twelve seats in the parliament (MAI, 2022). CEHGA in its electoral programme defended that “these new dangers to which it becomes imperative to be vigilant and sermon combative also pass through uncontrolled immigration (...)” demonstrating that, just like the European far-right parties, it sees migration as a problem of security (Amaral, 2020, p. 47). If

Portugal presents new opposition to migration, this can represent a major social and political disruptive force and cause security problems for refugees in Portugal. In other countries, the safety during asylum is already being threatened, whether it is due to violence or because of other forms of insecurity, such as, a situation of hardship and uncertainty while the asylum seeker waits for a decision on the claim to refugee status, or even due to systematic discrimination and deprivation of the sense of belonging and identity that citizenship normally provides (Verkuyten, 2021).

Conceptual framework: Human security as a people-centered approach

The contemporary human security understandings date back to the early 1990s. The end of the Cold War brought awareness to the multiplication of non-military threats to security on local, regional, national and international levels. This gave stage to a growing theoretical and practical debate about the traditional concepts of security, that had driven the actions of countries for much of the 20th century (Goucha & Sane, 2008).

In 2000, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, argued that “a new understanding of the concept of security is evolving. Once synonymous with the defence of territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence” (Annan, 2000, pp. 43-44). Later on, in 2001, Kofi Annan, emphasized the importance of individuals over the state, which is clear in his argument “peace belongs not only to states or peoples, but to each member of these communities” (Annan, 2001).

Thus, the human security approach differs from the traditional state-centered concept of security, because it opts for “a more inclusive and multifaceted notion of security based on the individual” (Tabyshalieva, 2006, p.13). Even though, human security has been debated for approximately three decades, there is no universal definition (Lee, 2000; Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012). However, there are some characteristics that are emphasized in every text about human security, such as, the fact that human security is people-centered, it defends multilateral and preventive actions and it has two main strategies: protection and empowerment of refugees (Edwards, 2009). Protection strategies, set up by states, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector, shield people from threats, while empowerment strategies enable people to develop their resilience to difficult conditions

(Commission on Human Security, 2003).

Therefore, the human security approach acknowledges that the proliferation of new threats results in humanitarian crises, such as the mass flight of refugees. According to human security, individuals experience high levels of physical insecurity as a consequence of high crime rates, high human rights violations and high levels of violence against women (Goucha & Sane, 2008, p. 49; Kaldor, 2007). Beyond physical insecurity, individuals also deal with material insecurity, considering that these new threats involve high levels of population displacement, rapid urbanization, loss of rural livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure and productive assets and greater vulnerability to disasters (Kaldor, 2007). Kofi Annan (2000) resumed this idea, stating that human security is a matter of human rights, of good governance, of access to education and to health care and of ensuring that all people have opportunities and choices to fulfil their potential in life. Furthermore, Annan (2000) noted that freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment as being the interrelated building blocks of human security and, therefore, of national security.

The fact that the human security approach is people-centered is conceptually powerful for refugees and other non-citizens, who have typically been outside the remit of state's national interests (Edwards, 2009). As non-citizens who are on the perimeters of the citizen-state protection system, refugees have been reliant largely on specific legal regimes for their protection. However, as Edwards (2009) argues, these legal regimes have been increasingly eroded by state non-compliance and exploitation of legal loopholes. Human security helps to identify gaps in the infrastructure of protection of refugees in the national and international norms, processes and institutions, as well as it helps to strengthen and improve them. Strengthening the protection of refugees requires a better understanding of the causes and actors forcing people to flee. The narrow state-centric understandings of persecution and protection do not take into account people who have fallen victim to rebel groups and criminal triads and whom the state fails to protect. A broader understanding must include threats of generalized violence, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights and other serious disturbances of public order. This means that the criteria for refugee status needs to be harmonized among countries to avoid people who are rejected in one country moving on to another (Commission on Human Security, 2003).

In addition, the human security approach also embraces multilateralism, international cooperation and interdependence, by recognizing that threats to human security in one part of the world affect individuals in other parts and that this needs to be taken into account in designing solutions and responses. Therefore, this approach revisits the notions of territory and sovereignty as far as they inhibit global action in the face of transnational threats to our shared security and humanity. This means that no matter how vigorously a state defends its natural borders, today's global threats do not respect them (Edwards, 2009). Regarding this, Kofi Annan (2001) argued "no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from national security crises in another", thus, global governance is necessary to avoid humanitarian crisis.

The empowerment of refugees, defended by the human security approach, is also very important because it allows people to develop their potential as individuals and as communities. Supporting refugees' ability to act on their own behalf, means providing education, employment, health care, support for community development and integration activities. Empowered refugees can demand respect for their dignity when it is violated, can create new opportunities for work and address many problems locally, and can mobilize for the security of others (Commission on Human Security, 2003). Thus, beyond immediate sanctuary and protection, refugees also need to be respected as human beings capable of becoming active and contributing members of the communities in which they live (Edwards, 2009).

In terms of prevention, Edwards (2009) explains that, while the system of international legal protection is reactive in nature, the human security approach is preventive, which means that it is oriented toward early action and response. The human security approach acknowledges that the failure to deal with the human security issues of individuals and refugees can have an impact on national, regional, or global security, and hence should be framed as a universal concern requiring early intervention (Edwards, 2009).

Overall, the human security approach is characterized by placing the protection of the individuals and communities above national security. This approach breaks with traditional concept of security and the idea of protecting the state from external threats, thus, focusing, primarily, in the protection of individuals from internal threats. This interest in protecting individuals is extended to the protection of refugees, being that, the human security approach

presents specific strategies to respond to refugee crises, that is, through protection and empowerment. Therefore, these are the main aspects and principles that will be taken into consideration when analysing the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees and how these portray integration policies.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Having presented the review of the literature, the current chapter provides an explanation of the methods used to conduct the investigation. The chapter begins to provide an explanation of the chosen research design and research questions, followed by the description of the data collection and analysis strategies. Then, the chapter will conclude with an overview of the limitations of the study, since they have an influence in the conduction of this research.

Research Design: The Case Study

To develop the current investigation, I opted for a qualitative research design, more specifically, the case study. This choice was made based on the character of the topic being study, that is, the acceptance of Afghan refugees in Portugal, which in itself represents a nindividual case. A case study is understood as the choice of an object of study defined by the interest in individual cases, it aims to investigate a specific case, well delimited, contextualized in time and place so that a detailed search for information can be carried out (Ventura, 2007).

By adopting a case study design, I am able to investigate a topic that little is known about (Gilliam, 2000). There are a great number of studies about the acceptance of refugees in Europe, however, the acceptance of refugees has not been explored enough in Portugal. In addition, Portugal does not have much experience with refugees (Sousa & Costa, 2016). Therefore, this in-depth approach taken In case studies, such as this one, means that, by documenting and analysing phenomenons that are still happening, it is possible to provide timely insights into the factors that the research considers to be critical to the outcomes of the case under examination (Moriarty, 2011). Thus, with this research I am able to explore the complexities of the narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal and contribute to this discussion with timely insights, considering that this issue remains current and fundamental.

Research Design: Research Questions

As mentioned before, the purpose of this study is to understand how the media portrays the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal and how these portray integration policies. For this reason, I developed rigorous and specific research questions to make sure that I would not deviate from the purpose of the investigation (Bryman, 2012; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Through these research questions, this dissertation will

contribute to the wider field of research on narratives built about refugees and integration of refugees in Portugal. Table I presents the questions that give direction to this research:

N.º	Research Question
1	What are the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal?
2	How do the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal portray integration policies?

Table 1: Research questions

Data Collection

To answer the research questions, I searched for reliable sources of information that would allow me to extract the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal. Therefore, I opted to collect news articles from two Portuguese newspapers - *Público* and *Jornal de Notícias*. Overall, 87 news articles were collected, 47 about the Portuguese state and 27 about the Portuguese civil society. The remaining 13 were about the EU.

Público and *Jornal de Notícias* were the most read newspapers in Portugal in 2021, following *Expresso* and *Correio da Manhã* (APCT, 2021). However, I chose *Público* and *Jornal de Notícias* over the *Expresso* and *Correio da Manhã* for two reasons: in January 2022, *Expresso* suffered a cyberattack, which compromised a lot of the news articles that were published online; *Correio da Manhã* uses the same sources as *Público*.

To select the news articles, I developed the following two criteria: (1) the news articles had to either expose the top-down narrative or the bottom-up narrative of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal; and (2) the news articles had to have been posted during the time period being studied, that is from 1 August 2021 to 31 December 2021. The time period was chosen based on the date of return of the Taliban to Afghanistan (August 2021).

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected, I used the analytic method of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clark (2006). According to these authors, thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes a data set in (rich) detail. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. There is no hard-and-fast answer to the question of what proportion of your data set needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a theme. A theme might be given considerable space in some data items, and little or none in others, or it might appear in relatively little of the data set (Braun and Clark, 2006).

I began the thematic analysis by a deductive approach, which means, that I brought the existing theoretical concepts or theories that provide a foundation for “seeing” the data and a basis for interpretation of the data (Braun & Clark, 2015). Afterwards, I began to inductive coding and theme development, which is working “bottom up” from the data and developing codes (and ultimately themes) using what is in the data. This means that the data is providing the bedrock for identifying meaning and interpreting data. Furthermore, I intended to provide a rich thematic description of the entire data set, to understand the predominant and important themes. After identifying the themes, the analytic process involves a progression from description, where the data is organized to show patterns in semantic content, to interpretation, where there is an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Patton, 1990; Braun and Clark, 2006).

Therefore, this strategy for the data analysis allows me to understand what themes are emphasized in the construction of the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal and how these portray integration policies. Thus, thematic analysis fits perfectly in this investigation, considering that a case study research design results in the interpretation of qualitative data, that might not have significant results (Gilliam, 2000).

Limitations

There are four main problems with case study research: a lack of controllability, deductibility, repeatability and generalizability, where the latter two limitations stem largely from the aforementioned lack of power to randomize (Lee, 1989). Nonetheless, these problems are not endemic nor insurmountable, but they remain relative to other research designs (Lee, 1989). Even so, case studies are essentially descriptive and inferential in character. To the case study researcher all evidence is of some value and this value has to be carefully evaluated. Therefore, the results consist in evidence that enables the researcher to understand the answer to its research questions. In the same way, a judge presiding over a judicial inquiry turns no evidence away but assesses what faith can be placed in it and relates it to other evidence to hand (Gilliam, 2000). Therefore, with this research design I am aware that I am not able to do deductions and generalizations, but I am able to understand a complex and understudied topic, through the description and interpretation of narratives being portrayed by the media. As Gilliam (2000) argues, “facts do not speak for themselves - someone has to speak for them” (p.10).

Chapter 3: Results and Discussion

This chapter aims to offer a human security approach to the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal and how these portray integration policies. As mentioned before, the human security approach places individuals and communities above the state and it has two main strategies: the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities (Annan, 2001; Edwards, 2009; Commission on Human Security, 2003). Furthermore, the human security approach defends multilateral and preventive actions (Edwards, 2009).

Therefore, the current analysis focuses on specific themes that had been approached in the literature review and that, ultimately, emerged from the data, these are: (1) the acceptance and protection of refugees; (2) the integration and empowerment of refugees; (3) multilateralism, international cooperation and interdependence to respond to the Afghan refugee crises.

The acceptance and protection of Afghan refugees

As mentioned before, breaking the pattern of the European context, Portugal has been an example of government openness and willingness to receive refugees (Castles et. al., 2014; Chu, 2019; UNHCR, 2022; Costa & Sousa, 2017; Góis, 2019). However, in recent years Portugal witnessed the rapid growth of the right-wing party CHEGA, which like other right-wing parties, sees migration as a problem of security (Amaral, 2020). Therefore, it is fundamental to understand if the rise of a new right-wing and anti-immigration party has reflected negatively in the top-down narrative of the acceptance of Afghan refugees in Portugal.

In 92% of the news articles about the Portuguese state, it was mentioned that the state agrees with the acceptance of Afghan refugees. In the remaining 9% (n=4) this issue is not addressed (Figure1). Furthermore, the most mentioned reasons to accept Afghan refugees, were the following: “to protect Afghans that are in a vulnerable situation” (n=13/21%); “to protect collaborators of the international community” (n=11/18%); “to protect collaborators of the Portuguese forces” (n=8/13%) (figure 2).

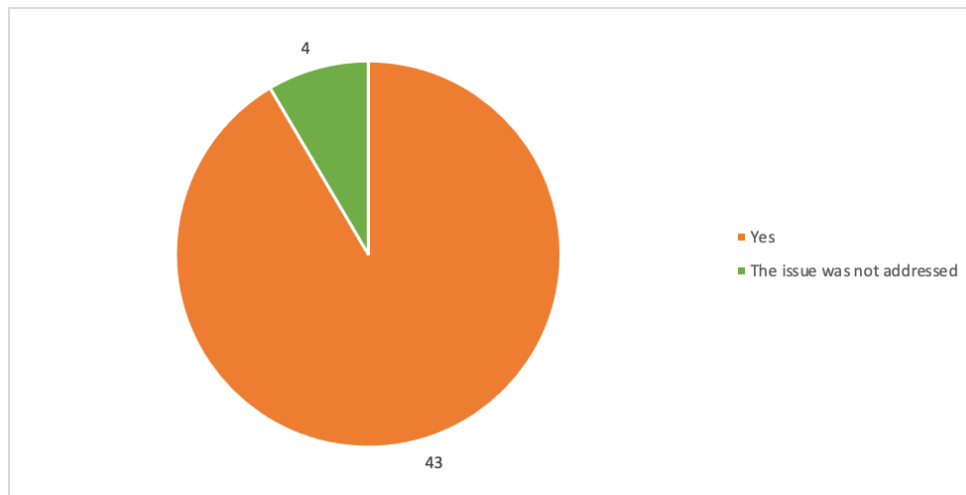


Figure 1 - The acceptance of Afghan refugees by the Portuguese State

This data shows that the Portuguese state aimed undoubtedly to receive and protect Afghan citizens, namely those who collaborated with the Portuguese and the International forces or that were in a vulnerable situation due to the threats of the Taliban regime. The day after the Taliban took over power in Kabul, the Minister of Defence, João Gomes Cravinho stated that Portugal was available to receive Afghans and it was going to integrate the EU and NATO operation to protect citizens in Afghanistan. According to Gomes Cravinho, the number of refugees to be received in Portugal was still being evaluated, but the Portuguese force deployed in the country in recent years totaled “243 Afghan officials, plus their families”, previewing that there are “about a thousand people who will need to leave the country” (Lusa, Público, 2021). A few days later, on 18 August 2021, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Augusto Santos Silva, reinforced Portugal's intention to accept Afghan refugees, despite mentioning a much smaller number of people being rescued. Santos Silva declared that Portugal was going to welcome 50 refugees from Afghanistan, 30 who collaborated with NATO and the rest who cooperated with the services of the European Union. Regarding the future, Santos Silva admitted the Portugal would continue to provide support to Afghans (Ribeiro, Público, 2021).

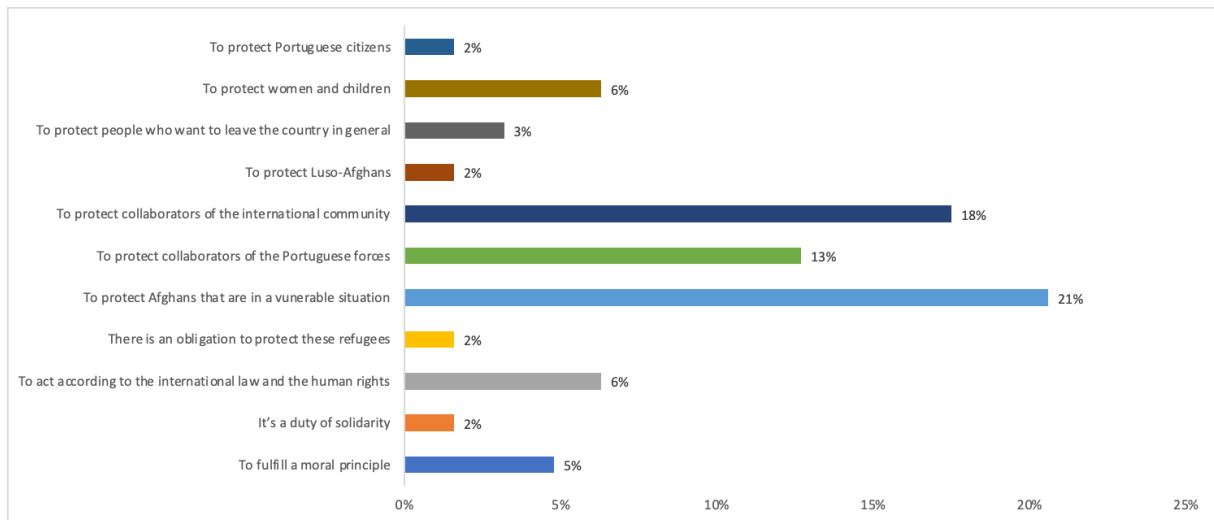


Figure 2 - The reasons mentioned by the Portuguese state to accept Afghan refugees

Beyond accepting Afghan refugees, the Portuguese state also gave emphasis to the Portuguese that were affected by the Afghan conflict. On 24 August 2021, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Augusto Santos Silva, confirmed that 20 Portuguese citizens who worked in the EU delegation, in NATO and in the civilian airport in Afghanistan were withdrawn, thus, “In this way, the evacuation of Portuguese citizens who were in Afghanistan for work reasons was concluded”, announced the Ministry in a statement (JN, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

Regarding the European Union, it was perceived from the data collected that the EU also aimed to accept Afghan refugees, mainly those who collaborated with the international forces or that were in a vulnerable situation due to the threats of the Taliban regime. The EU, also, highlighted the need to rescue European citizens. In 58% (n=7) of news articles about the EU, it is mentioned that the institution agrees with the acceptance of Afghan refugees. In the remaining 42% of news articles, this topic was not addressed. However, this narrative was not shared by all Member states. On 22 August, 2021, the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša said it was not up to the EU to “help and pay everyone on the planet who are on the run rather than fighting for their homeland”. Nonetheless, the President of the European Parliament, David-Maria Sassoli, replied that “it is not up to the current presidency of the Council to say what the European Union will do. All our institutions are working to see what solidarity is necessary for those who are at risk with the new regime and not just the Afghans they worked with” (RP, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

Therefore, it is argued that regarding the acceptance and protection of refugees, the top-down narrative is portrayed as inclusive, giving the clarity of the Portuguese state in

aiming to accept and protect Afghan refugees. As the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa argued “(Portugal) is doing what it can and what it cannot do” (regarding refugees) (JN/Agências, Jornal de Notícias, 2021). It is also important to notice that there was no registration of opposition to the acceptance of Afghan refugees in Portugal, not even from CHEGA.

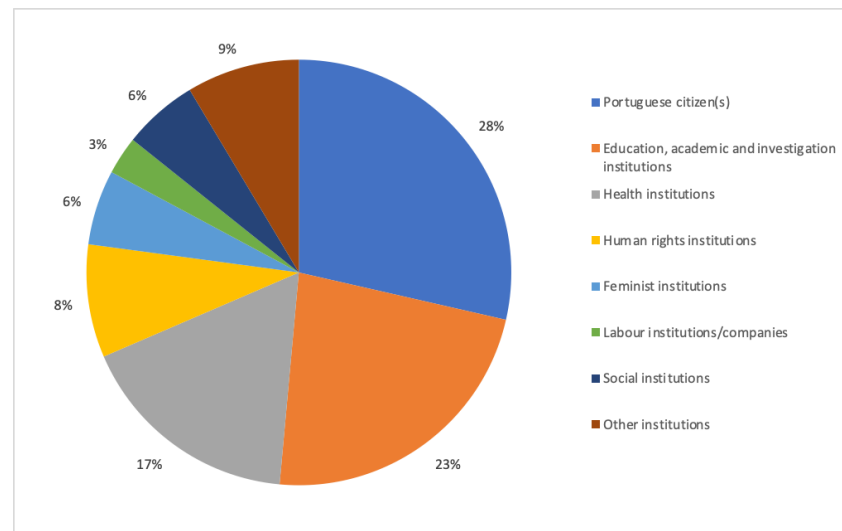


Figure 3 - The elements from the Portuguese Civil Society that were mobilized to accept Afghan refugees in Portugal

In the 2015 refugee crises, the Portuguese civil society was mobilized towards accepting refugees, building a network of different actors (from religious organizations to NGOs) to work together with municipalities to mobilize resources for the reception of refugees (Góis, 2019). Therefore, to understand the bottom-up narrative of accepting Afghan refugees, I considered that it would be interesting to understand what elements of society were mentioned in the news articles to perceive what groups of the society were most mobilized for this cause. Thus, the most active members of the Portuguese civil society were the following: 29% (n=10) were “Portuguese citizens”, 23% (n=8) were “education and academic institutions” and 17% (n=6) were “health institutions” (Figure 3). In addition, in 100% of the news articles about the Portuguese civil society, it was mentioned that the civil society agreed with the acceptance of Afghan refugees. Furthermore, the most mentioned reasons to accept Afghan refugees, were the following: 16% (n=5) “it is a duty of solidarity”, 13% (n=4) “to act

according to the international law and the human rights”, 13% (n=4) “to protect women and children” (Figure 4).

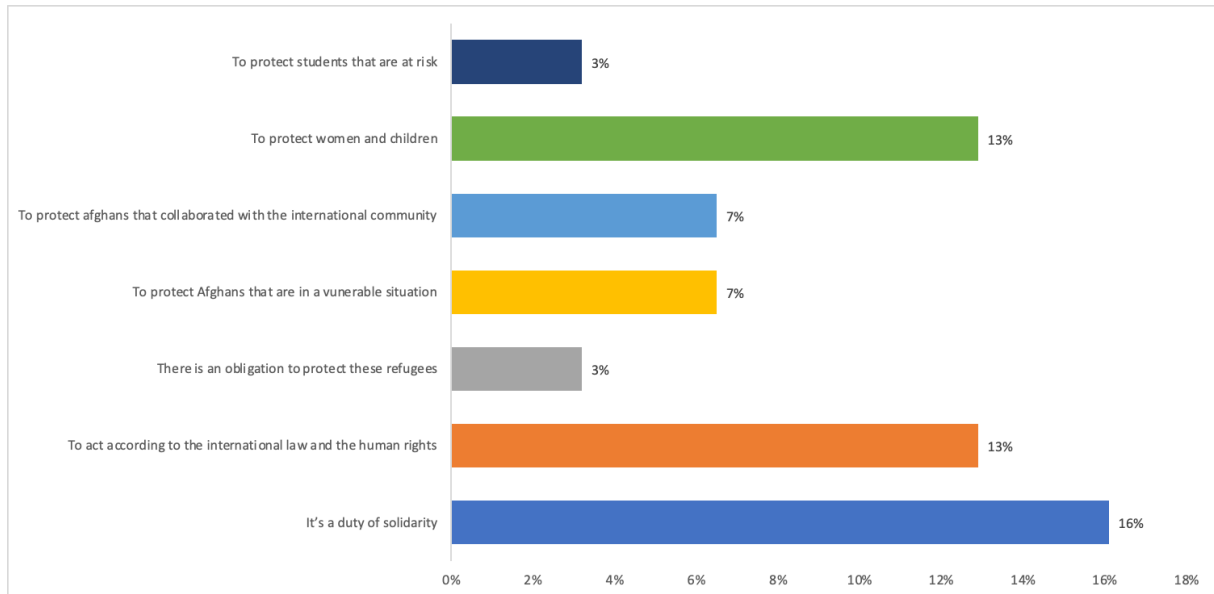


Figure 4 - The reasons mentioned by the Portuguese civil society to accept Afghan refugees

In this way, the Portuguese civil society showed, also, an undoubted will to accept and protect Afghan refugees, mirroring the narrative of the Portuguese state. In general, the Portuguese civil society was mobilized to accept Afghan refugees. At the height of the withdrawal of the international forces from Afghanistan, on August 26, 2021, the Portuguese universities and polytechnic institutes, expressed that they were available to welcome Afghan students, given the “humanitarian and human rights” crises that the country was experiencing (Lusa, Público, 2021). In the same day, the Former President of the Republic, Jorge Sampaio announced that the Platform for Syrian Students was going to offer an emergency scholarship and academic opportunity programme for Afghan youth and he encouraged other organizations to provide support and resources to help Afghan refugees (Jorge Sampaio, the Former President of the Republic - Público, 2021).

However, differently from the Portuguese state, the civil society does highlight a specific group of vulnerable refugees, that is, women and children. This probably related to the fact that some of the institutions that advocated for this cause were feminist institutions (n=3/60%). This way, on 27 August 2021, dozens of people demonstrated at Rossio, in Lisbon, in defence of Afghan women and their rights. One of the protesters, Cristina Vieira

told Lusa that at the moment what civil society could do was "move around, make noise and welcome refugees with all the love and affection", and adding that fears that the media attention the topic now receives will be quickly replaced by oblivion (JN/Agências, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

Therefore, it is argued that regarding the acceptance and protection of refugees, the bottom-up narrative is portrayed as inclusive, giving the clarity of the Portuguese civil society in receiving and protecting Afghan refugees. Thus, there is a variety of members of the civil society that are mobilized towards this cause, just like in 2015 refugee crises (Góis, 2019).

The integration and empowerment of refugees

As mentioned before, Portugal does not have a great tradition of receiving asylum seekers. This means that the integration of refugees in Portugal is an issue that has been little addressed. Everything that it is related to refugees and its integration in Portugal is closely linked to the policies promoted by the EU (Sousa & Costa, 2016). Furthermore, we know that there are currently two different Programmes for refugees' integration in Portugal, beyond the spontaneous refugees, these are: refugees hosted under the Resettlement Programme and refugees hosted under the Relocation Programme.

Regarding the news articles about the Portuguese state, in 81% (n=38) of them the state considers that there should be additional measures to deal with the Afghan refugees crisis and in the remaining 19% (n=9) this question was not addressed. It is argued that the Portuguese state considers important to implement integration policies that promote the empowerment of Afghan refugees. This is not only seen in measures such as "accommodation support" (n=12/17%), but also in other measures that were less mentioned in the news articles, such as "employment support" (n=5/7%) and "health support" (n=3/4%) (Figure 5). In reference to this, on August 26, 2021, the Government stated that "all efforts are being made to prepare for the arrival of Afghan citizens to the national territory, in close collaboration with these partners, with the ACM having promoted follow-up meetings, visits to accommodation and daily updating of the availability shown" (JN/Agências, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

Furthermore, once again, the Portuguese state shows that it not only wants to host Afghan refugees in Portugal, it also wants to protect Afghan refugees in general, even if it is

in international territory. This is shown by measures such as "the protection and rescue of Afghans abroad" (n=17/25%) and other measures less mentioned in the news articles: (n=17/25%) "the protection and rescue of Afghans abroad", (n=4/6%) "to support the withdrawal from Kabul airport", (n=3/4%) "to support the neighbouring countries" and (n=2/3%) "help in refugee camps" (Figure 5). For example, on 24 August 2021, the *Jornal de Notícias* reported that four Portuguese soldiers deployed by the Ministry of National Defence were on their way to Kabul to join the Spanish contingent in the "effort to withdraw Afghan citizens" (JN, *Jornal de Notícias*, 2021). In addition, on 3 September 2021, a contingent of 11 Portuguese soldiers, from the three branches of the Armed Forces, left for Kosovo, to select and relocate Afghan refugees, in a NATO operation that will last about two months (Lusa, *Público*, 2021).

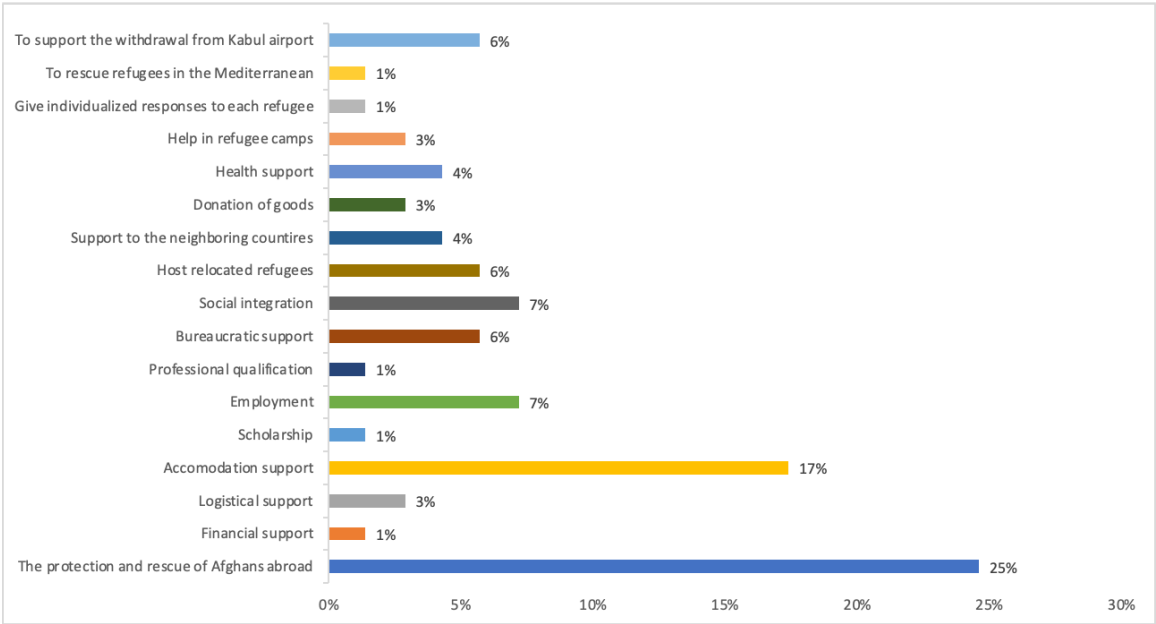


Figure 5 - Additional measures mentioned by the Portuguese state to respond to the Afghan refugee crises

Regarding the news articles that were about the European Union’s response, in 69% (n=9) of the news articles about the response of the EU to the Afghan refugee crises, the EU mentioned that it was taking additional measures to respond to this crisis. However, the most mentioned measures were the following: “to protect and rescue Afghan refugees abroad” (n=5/25%), “dialogue with the authorities in Kabul” (n=3/15%) and “financial support” (n=2/10%). This means that the EU, differently from the Portuguese state, seems not so focused on the

integration process of Afghan refugees in European territory, but rather concerned with the well-being of Afghans in Afghanistan. This has probably to do with the capacity of the EU in intervening in the territory, as a supranational institution.

Even though, the EU is not as focused on the integration process of Afghan refugees as Portugal, it is argued that regarding the integration and empowerment of Afghan refugees in Portugal, the top-down narrative considers to be fundamental. This is seen in the providence of accommodation support, employment support, health support. The defence of integration and empowerment policies of Afghan refugees is aligned with the human security approach, that defends the empowerment of refugees because it allows them to fulfil their potential as individuals and communities (Edwards, 2009).

Regarding the Portuguese civil society, as mentioned before, Portugal did not have much experience with refugees, however, the civil society was very mobilized during the 2015 refugee crises in order to help integrate refugees (Góis, 2019). Therefore, the civil society does have an important role to play in terms of responding to the various needs of each person, regarding accommodation, food, employment, education, health and access to the Portuguese language (Ribeiro, 2017)

Therefore, regarding the news articles that were about the civil society, in 83% (n=24) of them the civil society agrees with the implementation of additional measures to deal with the Afghan refugee crises and in the remaining 17% (n=5) this issue was not addressed. For those who thought that there should be additional measures, the most mentioned measures were: “providing scholarships” (n=8/17%) “employment” (n=8/17%) and “accommodation support” (n=7/15%) (Figure 6).

From this standpoint, it is argued that the Portuguese civil society is mobilized for the cause of the integration of Afghan refugees in Portugal. A lot of organizations from the civil society came forward to provide different types of support. For example, the Portuguese Red Cross updated its available accommodation capacity, through the local structures distributed across the country and within the community, in order to welcome more refugees (JN, Jornal de Notícias, 2021). In addition, the Former President of the Republic, Jorge Sampaio, who was one of the first people to speak up in favour of the acceptance of Afghan refugees, also advocated for companies, foundations, other organizations and individuals, to collaborate

more, provide support, academic and professional opportunities, internships and vacancies for young Afghan women (JN/Agências, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

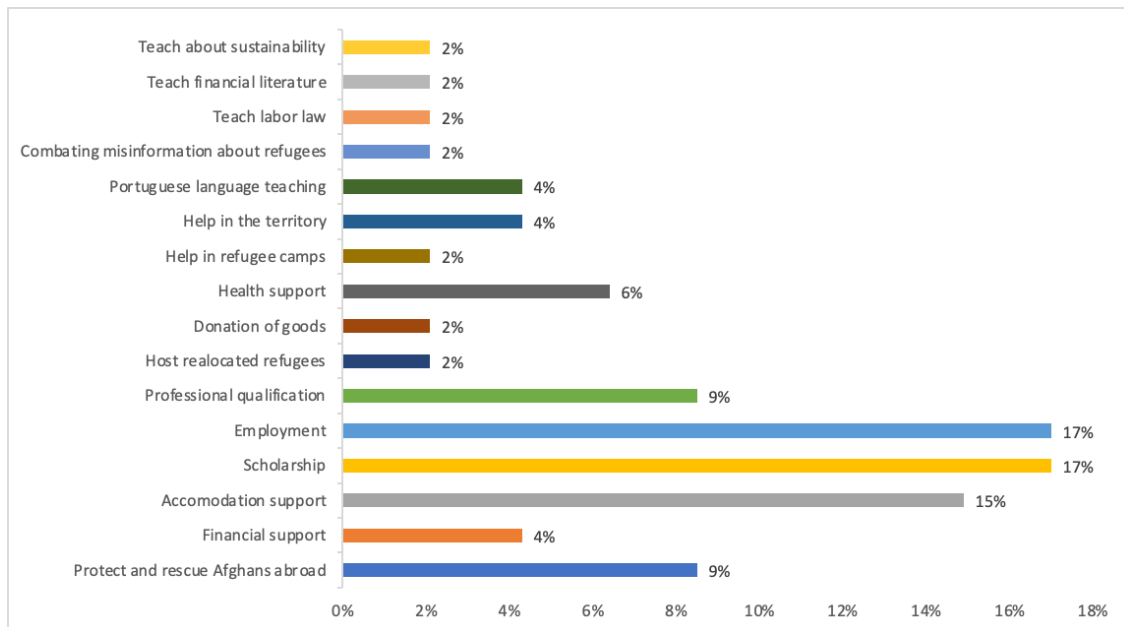


Figure 6 - Additional measures mentioned by the Portuguese civil society to respond to the Afghan refugee crises

Therefore, it is argued that regarding the integration and empowerment of Afghan refugees in Portugal, the bottom-up narrative portrays the implementation of integration policies as fundamental. Overall, the bottom-up narrative showed, once again, to be aligned with the human security strategies, namely, the empowerment of refugees, having promoted measures, such as, the providence of scholarships, employment and accommodation support.

Multilateralism, international cooperation and interdependence to respond to the Afghan refugee crises

To understand in what other ways did the Portuguese state and the civil society responded to the Afghan refugee crises, I analysed in the data the partnerships that these actors established with other institutions, having in mind that multilateralism, international cooperation and interdependence is an action considered fundamental for the human security approach, in order to design solutions to respond to a conflict and avoid a global problem (Edwards, 2009, p. 804).

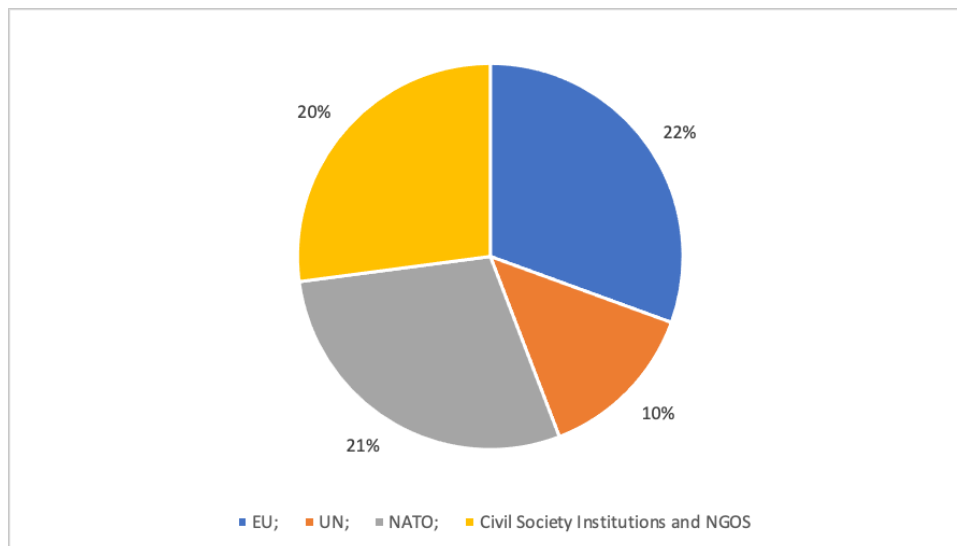


Figure 7 - Institutions that collaborated with the Portuguese state

Regarding the news articles that were about the Portuguese state's response, I found that in 72% (n=34) the state confirmed to have collaborated with other institutions, being the EU the most mentioned institution (n=18/22%), followed by NATO (n=17/21%), the civil society (n=16/20%) and the UN (n=8/10%) (Figure 7). In terms of the goals of these collaborations, the news articles mentioned mostly the following goals: "to host Afghan refugees" (n=17/32%) and "to protect and rescue Afghan collaborators abroad" (n=12/23%). Furthermore, I found that in 36% (n=17) news articles the state mentioned the existence of collaboration with other countries, being Greece the most mentioned country (n=6/30%) (Figure 8). In this specific type of collaboration, the most mentioned goals were: "to host Afghan refugees" (n=8/32%), "to protect and rescue Afghans abroad" (n=6/24%), "to reallocate" (n=4/16%) and "support the neighbouring countries, namely financially" (n=3/12%).

Therefore, the Portuguese state definitely approached the Afghan refugee crises through collaboration with other Institutions and other countries. For example, refugees have come directly from Afghanistan, but Portugal also is receiving many Afghan refugees from different countries, including Afghans that fled to Greece. This has to do with the Administrative Agreement signed in 2019 between the two countries (Portugal and Greece) for the relocation of beneficiaries and international protection applicants (JN/Agências, Jornal de Notícias, 2021). According to a joint note from the ministries of state and the Presidency, of Internal Administration and Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, in March 2020, the

Portuguese government responded to an appeal by Greece and the European Union to help with the relocation of around 5,500 unaccompanied children and young people who were in refugee camps. In addition, it was argued that Portugal was still "the 6th country that welcomed the most refugees under the EU's relocation programme, receiving 1550 refugees from Greece (1190) and Italy (360 between December 2015 and April 2018" (Erika Nunes, Journal de Notícias, 2021).

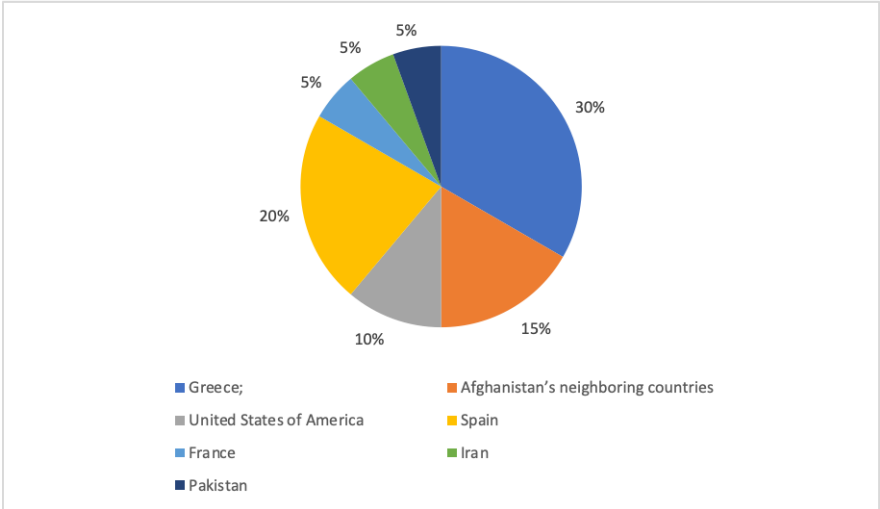


Figure 8 - Countries that collaborated with the Portuguese state

Regarding the news articles that were about the EU’s response, 30,80% (n=4) show that the EU collaborated with other institutions, being that the most mentioned Institutions were: the UN (n=2/50%), followed by the civil society (n=1/25%) and others (n=1/25%). It is interesting to note that the collaboration with NATO was not mentioned. In addition, these collaborations had the following goals: “to provide financial support” (n=1/20%), “to donate goods” (n=1/20%), “humanitarian help” (n=1/20%) and “to dialogue with the authorities in Kabul” (n=1/20%). Furthermore, the EU also collaborated with non-Member states, especially with Afghanistan (n=4/40%) and the United States of America (n=3/30%). In addition, the most mentioned goals of these collaborations were: “to dialogue with the authorities in Kabul” (n=5/46%) and “to provide financial support” (n=2/18%). In that sense, the EU is definitely also responding to the Afghan refugee crisis through the collaboration with other Institutions and other countries. On October 12, 2021, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, participated in a summit of the G20 and argued

that “we must do everything in our power to prevent humanitarian, social and economic collapse in Afghanistan” (JN/AGÊNCIAS, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

Therefore, it is argued that the top-down narrative is definitely working in multilateral ways to respond to the Afghan refugee crises, having the State collaborated with institutions such as the UN, the EU, NATO and also other countries, such as Greece. The goals of these collaborations are people-centered in the sense that the priority is to protect of Afghan refugees. Once again, the top-down narrative shows to be inclusive and aligned with the human security principles.

On the contrary to the Portuguese state that has many potential collaborators, the Portuguese civil society seeks, mainly, to work with the Portuguese state in order to protect Afghan refugees. Therefore, multilateralism was not approached, regarding the Portuguese civil society, but rather the partnership with the Portuguese state.

In 37% (n=10) news articles about the Portuguese civil society, it was stated that there was collaboration with the state, in 3,70% (n=1) news articles it was mentioned that there was no collaboration with the state and in the remaining 59,30% (n=16) news, this issue is not addressed. Those who collaborated with the Portuguese state, mentioned the following goals of collaboration: “to provide accommodation support” (n=5/22%), “to provide scholarship” (n=3/13%), “to provide employment” (n=3/13%), “to provide health support” (n=3/13%) and “Portuguese language teaching” (n=3/13%) (Figure 9).

Accordingly, on August 18 2021, the Former Minister of the Foreign Affairs, Augusto Santos Silva, stated that the Government was receiving information from civil society, noting that universities were already making estimates of how many Afghan students could receive and also the local municipalities had already evidenced the availability to receive Afghan refugees (Nuno Ribeiro, Público, 2021). On 25 August 2021, the University of Évora said that it had already communicated its willingness to welcome Afghan students and women to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES), (Lusa, Público, 2021). The one case where there was no collaboration with the Portuguese state is related to the Airbnb, which is an online community service for people to advertise, discover and book accommodations, providing free accommodation for Afghan refugees (JN/Agências, Jornal de Notícias, 2021).

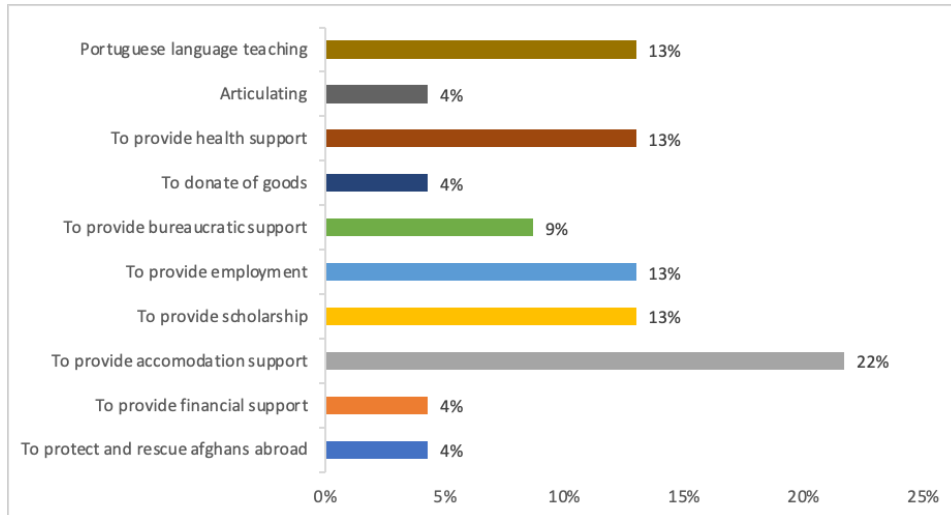


Figure 9 - The goals of the collaboration between the Portuguese state

Therefore, the data shows that the bottom-up narrative is opened to collaborate with the Portuguese state for the protection and integration of the Afghan Refugees. This argument reinforces the idea that the bottom-up narrative is aligned with the human security principles, portraying integration policies with great importance and collaborating with the Portuguese state for the protection and empowerment of Afghan refugees.

Conclusion

In the first place, to answer to the research question “what are the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal?” it is argued that both the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal are inclusive. This means that both the Portuguese state and civil society see refugees as victims and not as threats to national security (Edwards, 2009). As we have seen before, the acceptance of Afghan refugees was justified on moral duty, solidarity and the conformity with the international refugee protection system and the human rights. Furthermore, It is important to notice that all the actors being studied wanted to accept and protect Afghan refugees and there was no opposition to the acceptance of Afghan refugees in Portugal, not even from CHEGA.

Regarding the second research question: “How do the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal portray integration policies?” It is argued that the aim to protect Afghan refugees was extended to the implementation of integration policies. Both the Portuguese state and civil society agreed that there should be additional

measures to deal with the Afghan refugees and most of these measures were related to integration policies, such as: accommodation, health and educational support. This shows that the both narratives gave emphasis to the empowerment of refugees. As mentioned before, the empowerment of individuals and communities allows them to fulfil their potential (Edwards, 2009). Furthermore, it is perceived from the data analysed that some of these integration policies were done in collaboration between the Portuguese state with other Institutions, such as the EU, the UN and NATO and other countries, being the most mentioned one Greece. The Portuguese civil society was also willing to work with the Portuguese state in order to help with the integration of Afghan refugees.

At last, it is argued that the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal are aligned with the human security principles, mainly because these narratives placed the protection of the individuals and communities above the national security. The Afghan refugees were viewed by these narratives as people who needed help due to being in a vulnerable situation. In addition, it was also given great emphasis to the strategy of empowerment of individuals and communities, that is defended by the human security approach. Furthermore, the top-down and bottom-up narratives also approach multilateralism, which corresponds to another strategy of the human security approach, that is seen as fundamental to respond and solve global problems (Edwards, 2009).

Conclusion

This dissertation has mapped out the top-down and bottom-up narratives of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal, using news articles as a source of extracting arguments from both parts. The dissertation identified some of the themes that were most relevant to the human security approach and that appeared various times in the data, those were: the acceptance and protection of refugees, the integration and empowerment and multilateralism, international cooperation, and interdependence. As a result, It was shown that, both the top-down and bottom-up narrative of accepting Afghan refugees in Portugal are inclusive and give great importance to integration policies as part of the process of hosting Afghan refugees.

It was found that there are no differences between the top-down and the bottom-up narratives. All the actors being study have expressed one type of narrative, the inclusion narrative, that is, both the Portuguese state and civil society aimed to accept and protect Afghan refugees. This acceptance of Afghan refugees was justified on moral duty, on solidarity with the most vulnerable groups and on the conformity with the international refugee protection system and the human rights. In addition, it is perceived that these narratives gave great importance to the protection of refugees, not only because they agreed with the acceptance of Afghan refugees, but also because they showed that they wanted to help even in international territory, rescuing Afghans abroad and helping in refugee camps.

The Portuguese state and the civil society also focused on what more they could do to help Afghans in Portugal, giving emphasis to the integration and empowerment of Afghan refugees, through integration policies, such as providing scholarships, employment, accommodation and health support. Furthermore, to respond to the Afghan refugee crises, these actors also promoted various types of collaborations with different institutions and countries, also seeking the protection and empowerment of Afghan refugees.

By embracing the philosophy of the human security approach, the hope with this dissertation is that I can have an impact on how the acceptance and integration of refugees in Portugal is portrayed and what strategies are chosen to respond to these issues. I hope that future investigation is developed in order to delve into the different issues of refugee integration in Portugal and the challenges that this process poses for the government, for local and civil society organizations and for communities. Also, it would be interesting to see future investigation with an ethnographic analysis of the narratives that are built regarding the

acceptance of refugees. At last, It is important to continue the studies in this field, specially in the coming years due to the political and economic situation, that seems to be worsening with the recent increase in inflation and the war in Ukraine, having this last issue generated a wave of refugees and solidarity regarding this.

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