

## Development Discourse under the Economic Crisis: An Analysis of the Communication Strategy of Spanish NGO

Beltran Roca

*Universidad de Sevilla, C/Doña María de Padilla s/n, 41004 Sevilla, Spain  
Mobile: 0034652037683 E-mail: broca@us.es*

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**ABSTRACT** The economic crisis has radically and rapidly transformed the Spanish non-governmental sector. The present research analyses the discursive evolution of the 'Development' Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in Spain between 2003 and 2013. It focused on the case of Oxfam Intermón, the Spanish affiliate of Oxfam International, which is a representative and paradigmatic example of an NGO that has incorporated a discourse which represented 'development' as a matter of capabilities and rights. This paper consisted of a critical discourse analysis of two documents of the annual reports of 2003/2004 and 2012/2013, paying attention to the context, semantic propositions, and discursive strategies. It concluded that the NGO's 'development' discourse has been partially 're-politicised' as a result of adaptations to economic crisis, changes in priorities of the Spanish population and the emergence of new social movements, such as the M15.

### INTRODUCTION

The present study analysed the discursive evolution of the Spanish 'Development' Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) since 2003 to 2013. It focused on the case of Oxfam Intermón, Spanish affiliate to Oxfam International. This organisation is a paradigmatic and representative case of a set of NGOs which has been incorporating a discourse that represented 'development' as a matter related to capabilities and rights and, hence, consolidating a practice which combined social intervention by means of projects and programs, and political advocacy. In this sense, Oxfam is a reference for an important sector of the Spanish NGOs (Roca 2014). Of course, not all NGOs shared the same discourses; neither all the members nor factions within a given organisation.

This research aimed at contributing to the current academic debate on the third sector strategy to combine its grassroots culture and professionalism (Valeau 2014; Roca 2014) and the ethical and organizational dilemmas of resource mobilization (Khieng 2014). Some authors—mostly close to the world of the NGOs—use the term 'generations' to describe the evolution of the discourses, approaches and practices of these organisations. According to this view, most NGOs are evolving from initial charitable and paternalist ideas to more critical and politicised positions (Gómez Gil 2004). The result of the reflections and experiences of certain actors is the

move from one generation to the next. In addition, it could be pointed out that the evolution of the social and political context, the interaction with new protest cycles and social movements (Roca 2007) and organisational factors (Moose 2004) have been fostering changes in NGOs' discourses, which are not static and monolithic. The current economic crisis has profoundly affected the Spanish non-governmental sector (Fundación Lealtad 2013; Hernandez and Rodriguez 2014): a part of it has changed and adapted its discourses and strategies, advocating for a 're-politicisation of development'.

### Purpose of the study

This research aimed to study the discursive transformations of the Spanish development NGOs. It will use the methodological tools of the critical discourse analysis to examine the case of one of the leading and paradigmatic Spanish NGOs: Intermón Oxfam.

### 'Development' Discourse as a Practise

Since it was popularised in the 1940s to even today, the 'development' has become a buzzword which has been massively used by governments, international agencies, corporations and third sector organizations. As Rist (2002) addressed, the 'development' must be understood as a discourse where certain things can be said and others not; representations and related practices

have varied throughout time depending on the context and the positions held by those who used it. It is a Universalist, a historical, teleological and ethnocentric power discourse (Pieterse 1991). Hence, 'development' discourse has a truth effect. It constitutes an evolution of the founders' notions of progress and growth, and has been incorporating new features and has been transforming just as the social environment has been changing: such as the modernization theory, dependency theory or the human and sustainable development paradigms.

Post-structuralist perspective allowed carrying out a radical critique of the concept of 'development'. The authors such as Escobar (1997) and Rist (2002), to name just a few, focused on the analysis of 'development' as a set of practices and discourses by means of which a part of the plan is subordinated and imagined, hiding domination interests under a label of rational planning. In his classical work, Ferguson (2005) investigated an ambitious program in Lesotho by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Bank between 1975 and 1984; he concluded that the 'development apparatus' worked as an 'anti-politics machine': it depoliticised everything it touched whilst it carried out, without being noticed, its own political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power. Thus, the problems related to poverty and powerlessness are perceived as 'technical' issues which should be solved by experts. NGOs, according to this author, are associate part of this scheme. For Ferguson, 'development' is today a core value from which different legitimate positions can be chosen. Entire governments and philosophies are assessed depending on their ability to promote it. In fact, it is much difficult to speak about great parts of the planet without making reference to it.

There is a vast literature arguing that the rational model of 'development' achieves cognitive control and social regulation; increases state capacity and expands bureaucratic control (mainly over marginal groups and impoverished population); reproduced knowledge hierarchies (scientific over indigenous) and social inequalities ('developed' over 'developing') and fragmentises, subjugates, silences and erases the local; whereas it displaces these political effects outside the view by means of technical discourses which naturalise poverty, objectifies the poor and de-politicise 'development'. 'Development', in

its multiple versions, can be understood as a set of policies and practices which has both institutional (reproducing power relations) and ideological effects (de-politicisation). Nevertheless, as authors have highlighted (Fisher 1997; Moose 2004), the analysis of 'development' discourse cannot be set aside from the examination of every-day practices and organisational dynamics of the agencies which drive it. Only a rigorous and detailed analysis of these realities can reveal if and under which circumstances social actors and extensively the third sector are part of the institutional scheme which perpetuates North-South inequalities or, on the contrary, act as challenging elements.

Further, to study the constrictions and structural interactions which influence the inception of the 'development' discourse, it can be useful to understand the concept of the 'linguistic market' of Bourdieu (2000). The French sociologist affirmed that discourses are produced within social spaces which are operated by the means of logics similar to those of the market. From this point of view, discourses can be seen as social practices which are produced within particular socio-historical frameworks, in which power dynamics determinate its legitimacy and structure. Foucault (1999) viewed that, there is a close relationship among power, discourse and truth. By the means of the discourse, a given truth is instituted in a power relation. Thus, it can be stated that social actors are able to deploy discursive strategies depending to the institutional context and social situation.

This analysis on the shift in the 'development' discourse of the Spanish NGOs under the context of economic crisis is based on this theoretical framework. The initial hypothesis is that austerity policies and the social environment created by the economic crisis which seriously affected the Spanish population, has provoked a discursive turn in Spanish NGOs. This turn, among other issues, consisted on pointing out the connections between the 'development' problems of the countries of the global South and the problems of the Spanish society.

#### **METHODOLOGY: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

To study the changes in the representations of 'development' of the NGOs in Spain, the researcher opted for the critical discourse analy-

sis, which combined qualitative and quantitative tools. The observation unit selected for this study is the NGO Oxfam Intermón, which constituted both a representative and a paradigmatic case of *professionalized* and innovative NGO (Roca 2009). This organisation acted as a reference for other NGOs, and its innovations use to be imitated by a significant part of the Spanish 'development' sector. Oxfam Intermón was founded in the 1980s from a Jesuitical missionary organisation created in the late 1940s in Spain. In 1997, it joined the Oxfam international network and undertook meaningful organisational changes. It has been selected, especially due to the fact that it has introduced several innovations in the Spanish cooperation industry, for instance, adapting Sens's theory on the capabilities or the 'generations approach' mentioned above.

Among the wide documental production of Oxfam Intermón, the *corpus*—or documental material to analyse—for this study are the letters of the directors on the annual reports of the NGO of the years 2003/2004 (Intermón Oxfam 2004) and 2012/2013 (Oxfam Intermón 2013). These documents have been chosen for several reasons: firstly, because they summarise in one or two pages those activities and representations that the NGO's members consider more important; secondly, because the letters of the director have been written carefully due to the fact that they are thought to foster loyalty to current supporters and to attract new members, donor and volunteers. To sum up, it can be said that the letters of the director are the most important and meaningful part of the annual reports, since they reflect predominant symbols, identities and representations in the organisation. The period of selection—years 2003/2004 and 2012/2013—has the aim of providing comparative elements to identify the effects of the economic crisis on organisational strategy and discursive production. In 2004 Spain was not affected by the economic retrenchment, the country was under economic expansion; in 2013 the crisis had profoundly altered the Spanish society, and had disrupted the worries, priorities and perceptions of its population.

The researcher agreed with Van Dijk's (2008) idea that discourse analysis cannot be separated from the study of social contexts and cognitive processes in which communicative practices

take place. Thus, the first part of this analysis describes generally the context in which the discourse is issued, focusing on the categories of stage, participants, acts and cognition. In relation to the texts, this examination is interested in two interrelated aspects: the *semantic macro-structures* and the *rhetorical strategies*. The macro-structures are the global semantic content of the text, that is, the set of relationships among its propositions or main ideas. The analysis of the semantic macro-structures allows for exploration of the global representations of this NGO in relation to 'development', poverty and solidarity. Paying attention to the semantic contents which appear more frequently and the hierarchic relations among the different propositions, it is possible to know the macro-structure of Oxfam's discourse. This macro-structure, as the global semantic content of the document, represented the sense of the discourse and gave coherence to the text. It consisted of a set of global propositions called macro-propositions or topics which contain the most relevant information of a given discourse; this is according to the speakers of the communicative act (Van Dijk 1998).

In addition, this macro-structure played a fundamental cognitive role, because it provided hierarchically organized information which allowed the audience to select the most important and general content, storing the information and building mental models, which are their personal representation about a given event (Van Dijk 2008). In other words, they make it possible to retain the representations in the long-term memory of the audience. To analyse the macro-propositions, a list of the thematic (implicit and explicit) labels will be made, its structure will be studied and it will be quantified the number of times that it appeared in the documents. The comparison between the documents published in 2004 and 2013 will further expose discursive changes.

Further, due to the fact that understanding the macro-structure required the knowledge of micro-structural levels of the text, this analysis aims to focus on the lexical-semantic structures such as associations, designations or pragmatic implications. This will clarify, from a diachronic perspective the discursive tools used by Oxfam Intermón, to justify its decisions and actions before its participants, its allies and the public.

## RESULTS

### Context and Cognitive Processes

The socio-political contexts in which both documents are framed are very different. On one hand, the 2003/2004 annual report of the NGO was published at a time the Spanish economy was growing, and the NGO itself was expanding. Besides, the 2012/2013 report is framed within a context of severe economic crisis and weakening of the non-governmental cooperation. Many indicators reflected these differences. The 2013 report of FOESSA (*Fomento de Estudios Sociales y de Sociología Aplicada*, in Spanish), which provided an annual depiction of the Spanish social structure, started in a convincing way: 'Spain has reached historical maximum of unemployment and huge rises in inequality, whilst household impoverishment and economic insecurity processes have achieved a point of no return' (FOESSA 2014: 2).

The public policies of the Spanish government in this context of crisis aimed to reduce public deficit by means of cuts in social welfare. Education, health care and social services are experiencing serious adjustments but, as the NGOs have claimed; 'development' cooperation is the most affected one. In 2012 the Official 'Development' Relief of Spain fell to the same level as the year 2000. It was around the 0.15 percent of the Spanish GNP, whilst in 2009 it was 4.6 percent of the GNP (CONGDE 2014: 1). This budgetary cut drove most of the NGOs to make redundant part of its staff, re-adjust its structure (including merging with other NGOs) and even disappear.

Two other events of the immediate history of Spain that affected the NGO severely are: Firstly, the emergence of the *indignados* (outraged) or M15 movement in May 2011, which marks the beginning of a cycle of citizen mobilisations for a deeper social democratization and against austerity measures implemented by the government and motivated by the European Union. The second event which differentiated the contexts of 2003/2004 and 2012/2013 report is the scandals of several NGOs in 2007, whose directors were accused of diverting funds to private bank accounts. The deterioration of public image affected the whole of the non-governmental sector which had to double its efforts to provide an

image of accountability and transparency before its members and supporters.

The participants, the communication act and the cognition can be understood within the economic and socio-political context. The participants are the director and technical team of Oxfam Intermón as authors of the document, on the other hand, members, contributors and the public opinion are the audience. The act referred to the goal of the annual report, which is to legitimate and to justify the activities, decisions and conceptions of the NGO before the partners and donors to preserve its support and to persuade the general public to attract new contributors. At last, according to the framework analysis used in this research, it is worth identifying the cognitive processes involved in the discourse production. In this case it must be highlighted that the managers of the NGO, who wrote the document, and are decidedly identified with the organisational mission and objectives, have a high level of academic training and a vast knowledge about the work of the entity. The communication act, hence, aims to persuade the audience to support Oxfam Intermón. This support can be materialized in different manners: mainly becoming a member or a volunteer, helping in particular campaigns, making donations or buying fair trade products.

### Themes and Macro-propositions

Themes are the principal issues addressed in a document. They are formulated in an abstract manner. However, due to the limited space for the annual reports and, especially, the letters of the director which introduce them, the authors must formulate extremely the main activities, decisions and positions of the NGO during the year. That is why the authors must have undertaken a thorough process of selection and rejection of themes to include in the letter of the director. The selection of themes, thus, must reflect the predominant representations, interests and agendas of a given organisation. Consequently, the letter of the director of the annual report is an excellent document for carrying out a critical discourse analysis.

It is worth noting that this analysis is interested not only in the appearance, or not, of a theme in the document, but also in the number of times it appears, because this second data helps to understand the relative importance given to

the themes. Thereby, the researcher included the main themes identified in the documents (Table 1). Both in 2004 and 2013, the documents make reference to the following themes: 'development and the impact of the projects', 'poverty, inequality, injustice, exclusion', 'fair trade' and 'advocacy campaigns and rights defence'. In 2004, in opposition to the 2013 report, the letter made reference to 'violence' and 'suffering' in the life of the inhabitants of the global South, as well as to the 'growth of the NGO'. The new themes mentioned in the document during the period 2012/2013 are: 'humanitarian relief', 'economic crisis', 'organisational changes' in Oxfam Intermón, 'collaboration with other organisations', 'accountability' and 'work, enthusiasm and effort' of the NGO staff.

**Table 1: Themes included in the letters of the director of the annual reports 2003/2004 and 2012/2013 of Oxfam Intermón**

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Number in 2003/2004</i>	<i>Number in 2012/2013</i>
Development and impact of the projects	3	2
Poverty, inequality, injustice, exclusion	4	2
Violence	1	-
Suffering	1	-
Fair Trade	1	1
Advocacy campaigns, rights defence	2	3
Growth of the NGO	1	-
Humanitarian relief	-	1
Collaboration with other organisations	-	3
Economic crisis	-	2
Organisational changes	-	4
Work, enthusiasm, effort	-	3
Accountability of the NGO	-	2

*Source:* Own elaboration.

Paying attention to the number of times that a theme appears in the text, it is possible to identify tendencies and agenda. In the year 2003/2004, the letter of the director emphasised 'development' projects and the problems of the population of impoverished countries. Whereas, in the year 2012/2013, it emphasized working together with other organisations, putting into consideration political advocacy, the economic crisis and, the organisational changes that has adversely affected Oxfam Intermón to adjust to the new environment.

This analysis has also identified the main macro-propositions of the texts, that is, those propositions which synthesise the most significant semantic content of the document. Table 2 included the principal macro-propositions of the analysed documents:

As can be seen in Table 2, there is only one macro-proposition in the document 2003/2004 which is not also in the document 2012/2013: 'Oxfam Intermón is growing'. This idea appeared in the sentence: 'This is a "family" that does not stop growing and in years 2003-2004 it achieved the amount of 210,267 members and partners' (Intermón Oxfam 2004: 3, lines 3-5). In effect, as it was pointed out in the depiction of the context, Spain was by that time in a situation of economic growth and the non-governmental industry was at its peak.

There are also a set of macro-propositions which can be found in both reports. This meant

**Table 2: Principal macro-propositions in the letters of the director of Oxfam Intermón in 2003/2004 and 2012/2013**

<i>Macro-propositions Letter</i>	<i>Number in 2003/2004</i>	<i>Number in 2012/2013</i>
Our activities and development projects improve people's living conditions	♦	♦
We need the Spanish population to support us	♦	♦
Oxfam Intermón is growing	♦	
We work hard and with enthusiasm	♦	
The ethical principles which rule the corporate activity must be changed	♦	♦
Public policies must be changed by means of campaigning	♦	♦
Economic crisis has been used as an excuse for reducing development cooperation		♦
Oxfam Intermón advocates for transparency		♦
We need to cooperate with other organizations		♦
Economic crisis is driving us to undertake organisational changes and to find new funding sources	♦	
The social problems of Spain and the problems of developing countries are related		♦

*Source:* Own elaboration.

that despite the different contexts, these ideas remain in existence. These macro-propositions are: 'Our activities and development projects improve people's living conditions', 'We need the Spanish population to support us', 'We work hard and with enthusiasm', 'The ethical principles which rule the corporate activity must be changed' and 'Public policies must be changed by means of campaigning'. Consequently, in the last ten years Oxfam Spain has maintained its development projects and activities in countries of the global South, has demanded the support of the Spanish population and has emphasised the need to correct corporate and State behaviour by means of advocacy campaigns.

At last, there are five macro-propositions in the letter of the director of 2012/2013 which did not appear in the one of 2003/2004. These are: 'Economic crisis has been used as an excuse for reducing development cooperation', 'Oxfam Internómón advocates for transparency', 'We need to cooperate with other organizations', 'Economic crisis is driving us to undertake organisational changes and to find new funding sources' and 'The social problems of Spain and the problems of developing countries are related'. The stress on transparency and accountability seems to be a response to the corruption scandals of 2007. The need to work with other organizations, both in Spain and in other countries, is another novelty. It appeared in several clauses (lines 51-53 and 30-32). In relation to the macro-proposition about the connection between North-South problems, it is worth saying that it is clearly an adaptation to the context of economic retrenchment since it aims to facilitate the Spanish population to empathize with the inhabitants of the global South. This idea appeared in the following quotation: '[We are] overcoming the false dilemma which divides "the poor from here and those from outside". Poverty has many faces and degrees, although, most of its causes are very similar' (lines 57-62). Lastly, the idea about the organisational transformations in the new context appears in several clauses.

To sum up, these macro-propositions can be regarded as discursive innovation, the result of adaptations of the NGO to a new economic and socio-political stage: economic crisis and public cutbacks which reduced drastically the resources for cooperation; scandals of diversion of funds for personal uses by directives of several NGOs; and the eruption of new social movements which

motivated the citizens to protest against the dismantling of the Welfare State and against the extension of poverty.

### Discursive Micro-strategies

Among the discursive micro-strategies, the present research explored, first, the lexical-semantic strategies, that is, the way in which certain social groups, events or processes are *designed* in the document, since it reflects the ideologies and positions of the authors. In relation to 'development', the semantic contents used by the NGO representatives in their documents reflect the predominant conceptions. If besides designations one pays attention to *associations*, that is, those terms which appear related to 'development', it will allow to acquire a more complete view on the implicit meanings attributed to the concept of 'development'. To quantify, in addition, the number of times that it appears a given concept can also contribute to identify the relative weight of each meanings in the organisational discourse. Thereby, Table 3 provided a list and a quantification of the designative and associative terms related to the concept of 'development'.

A first conclusion of this analysis of the designations and associations of both reports is that the NGO maintains an economic and production-centred conception of 'development'. In both reports 'development' is represented with terms related to production, economy and trade: 'To set up a store', 'Manufacturing workshop, tinned food, soap production', 'To get income', 'To sell products', 'To increase the capability of production and trade', 'Growth', etc. However, it must be added that in the 2012/2013 report this production-centred perspective of 'development' is combined with the reference to 'rights' (three times), 'capabilities', 'struggles', and 'improvements in corporate labour and environmental practices'. Thus, the researcher could distinguish an evolution of the conceptions of 'development', from a production-and-economy-centred view to a perspective which combined production with a 'rights approach' that represented poverty or underdevelopment not only as a lack of resources, but especially, as a lack of power or capabilities. Further, consequently, according to this perspective, the action of the NGOs must be focused on both enhancing the economy of 'developing' territories and changing the global

**Table 3: Designations and associations related to ‘development’ in the letters of the director of the annual reports of Oxfam Intermón in 2003/2004 and 2012/2013**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Number in 2003/2004</i>	<i>Number in 2012/2013</i>
To improve life	2	-
To found an association	1	-
Training	1	-
To recover enthusiasm	1	-
Education	1	-
“Everyday miracles”	1	-
To set up a store	1	-
Manufacturing workshop, tinned food, soap production	1	-
Seeds distribution and farming tools	1	-
To create a handcraft centre	1	-
To get income	1	-
To restore livelihood	1	-
To sell products	1	-
To increase the capability of production and trade	1	-
Change	-	2
Growth	-	1
To increase in food reserves	-	1
To increase investment in small family agriculture	-	1
To recover capabilities	-	1
To stand up for (labour, to the land) rights	-	3
To spread struggles and initiatives	-	1
To improve labour and environmental practices of the corporations	-	1

*Source:* Own elaboration.

power structures by means of campaigns and collective action.

To complement the analysis of designations and associations over the term ‘development’, the designations used to make reference to the population with which the NGO is working has been examined. As can be seen in Table 4, the terms used more frequently in both reports are: ‘women’ and ‘persons’. Nevertheless, the 2003/2004 report included terms which emphasized the productive and economic role of the beneficiaries: ‘workers’, ‘peasants’ and ‘artisans’; whilst in the report 2012/2013 new terms appear which define a more emotional load: ‘friendly people’, ‘those who most suffer’ and ‘refugees’. It also appears a new designation, ‘protagonists’, which implied providing a more active role to the beneficiaries in social transformations. These designations helped to corroborate the former con-

clusions: in the report 2003/2004 predominated a productivist view of ‘development’; in the report 2012/2013 this production-centred perspective was combined with a greater interest on the capabilities of the beneficiaries (‘protagonists’) and with a recognition about the need to persuade the audience to support mainly financially the NGO due to the cutbacks in official international cooperation. This need to persuade is reflected on the terms with emotional load used to name the beneficiaries of the projects.

**Table 4: Designation terms used to make reference to the beneficiaries of the ‘development projects’ in the director’s letters 2003/2004 and 2012/2013**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Number in 2003/2004</i>	<i>Number in 2012/2013</i>
Women	3	4
Families	3	-
Persons	2	3
Population	2	-
Workers	2	-
Peasants	2	-
Artisans	1	-
Those who suffer the most	-	1
Refugees	-	1
Friendly people	-	1
Men	-	1
Protagonists	-	1

*Source:* Own elaboration.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the transformations of the discourse of the Spanish NGO Oxfam Intermón using the tools of the critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk 2008). This NGO has been selected because it is representative of an important sector of the NGOs which have incorporated political advocacy campaigning to its discourses and practices, and because its conceptions of ‘development’ have evolved significantly (Roca 2014). Its current view, in addition, has become hegemonic within the federations which represents the whole industry at national and regional levels. Oxfam Intermón is an organisational reference for other NGOs in this sense.

This study aimed to describe to what extent contemporary Spanish NGOs are part of what Ferguson (2005) called the ‘anti-politics’ machine. Some of the researchers and practitioners claimed that Spanish NGOs are adopting a ‘fifth generation’ character, that is, they are ‘re-politicising’

its discourses and practices, spreading their networks and actions through new social movements. This discourse analysis aims to guess whether it is true or not.

The analysed documents were the letters of the director of the annual reports 2003/2004 and 2012/2013 of Oxfam Intermón, published with 9 years of separation between them and under very different socio-economic and political contexts. This array of documents synthesises, probably better than any other, the predominant views and ideas in this organisation, because they provide a general value of the events and activities of the periods in which they were published, and because they included a discursive framework which attempted to legitimise the NGO and its decisions. First, this research has described the general context in which these documents were published: the year 2004, a moment of economic growth in Spain and a historical peak in the public funds managed by the NGOs; and the year 2013 (Fundación Lealtad 2013; Hernandez and Rodriguez 2014), under the economic crisis, increase of unemployment rates, radical cutbacks in cooperation and emergence of new social movements. Secondly, it has analysed the macro-propositions and themes of the documents. The emergence of new themes and its frequency reflected organisational views and agendas. Thus, whereas, in the year 2003/2004 the letter highlighted 'development' projects and the problems of the population of the global South, in the year 2012/2013 the letter underlined the work with other organisations, political advocacy, economic crisis and the organisational changes experienced by the NGO. Besides, macro-propositions, which are propositions that synthesises the semantic content of a text, also were different in both periods. Both the documents included several similar propositions. However, there were five new propositions in the document of 2013: 'Economic crisis has been used as an excuse for reducing development cooperation', 'Oxfam Intermón advocates for transparency', 'We need to cooperate with other organizations', 'Economic crisis is driving us to undertake organisational changes and to find new funding sources' and 'The social problems of Spain and the problems of developing countries are related' (and disappears the proposition about the growth of the NGO of 2004). These new macro-propositions were clearly a reflection of organisational strategies for adapting to a new context of crisis, unemployment, new social movements and corruption

scandals of several NGOs. The link to Spanish contemporary social movements reflected an attempt to 'politise' its action, which is a way of solving the dilemma between maintaining the original grassroots culture and professionalism (Valeau 2014).

Thirdly, this inquiry has analysed the discursive, syntactic and argumentative micro-strategies. It explored the designations and associations referring to 'development'. In general terms, it can be said that the NGO maintained an economic-and-production-centred conception of 'development'. 'Development' is represented with words related to production, economy and trade, such as: 'To create a handcraft centre', 'To get income', 'To restore livelihood', 'To sell products', 'To increase the capability of production and trade' and 'Growth'. Nonetheless, in the 2012/2013 report this production-centred perspective on 'development' is combined with references to 'rights' (three times), 'capabilities', 'struggles' and 'improving corporate labour and environmental practices'. In other words, it is possible to identify the evolution of the concept of 'development', from a production-and-economy-centred approach to a perspective which combines production with issues related to politics, 'rights' and 'capabilities'. The analysis of the designations to make reference to the beneficiaries of the international cooperation also confirms these conclusions.

## CONCLUSION

This research has analysed the context, macro-propositions, themes and discursive, syntactic and argumentative micro-strategies of two documents which synthesises the representations and agenda of the Spanish NGO Oxfam Intermón. The analysis concluded that, in general, the new context marked by economic crisis, radical cutbacks in 'development' official budget, emergence of new social movements and changes in the priorities of the Spanish population is favouring discursive transformations and adaptations, which include a re-politicisation of the concept of 'development' a concept which certain authors define as inherently de-politicising.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Since this research studied the discursive strategy of one of the biggest Spanish NGOs, the results must be compared with other cases



of small and medium-sized NGOs. This operation would increase the scope of the findings. In addition, further researches would help to verify what extent these discursive strategies are translated into practices and sincere entanglements with new generations of social movements.

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