

SOCIAL MOVEMENT STUDIES

Bringing the future into the present: The notion of emergency in youth climate movement

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In 2019, after decades of attempting to raise awareness of the need to take action, the climate movement saw a surge in its ability to mobilize citizens and influence political agenda. A younger generation leading the movement has given renewed vigour to the movement's discourse by emphasising the need to act immediately by expressing the idea of emergency. This article suggests that this notion, one that is central to the current youth climate movement, includes an acceleration of time and a discourse based on hope. These ideas have worked as an activator of action complementing or nuancing narratives about future and climate change. The analysis of the discourse of Fridays For Future Barcelona on social media (Twitter and Instagram) with a mixed methods approach shows firstly the centrality of the notion of emergency in the public discourse of the movement and its role in making the future seem not so distant. Secondly, it shows how the use of emergency speech is linked to a positive view of the future and to a generational discourse. And, finally, it has been detected that using emergency speech together with references to a hopeful future increases the impact of the movement's social media posts.

Keywords: Fridays For Future, Social media, Youth, Emergency, Future, Climate movement

Introduction

The global climate movement has gained momentum in recent decades and established international ties through global mobilizations. However, since mid-2018 and the noticeable emergence of *Fridays For Future* (FFF) and *Extinction Rebellion* (XR), there have been significant advances in the movement, in which at least three major aspects can be highlighted. First, there has been a surge in the number of people involved in protests. FFF estimates that 12.8 million people participated in the various climate protests called by the movement during 2019 (Fridays For Future, 2020) in contrast to the 400,000 who attended the 2014 *People's Climate March*, which had been the most attended protest till date. Secondly, this latest wave of climate mobilization has come with a rejuvenation of the

movement. As recent studies point out (de Moor et al., 2021; Wahlström et al., 2019), FFF has been characterized as a youth movement that appeals to the younger generations. As a result, those participating in the FFF mass protests were on average much younger than in previous protests, including a significant number for whom it was their first activist experience. Finally, the climate movement has made significant progress towards the goal of spurring immediate action with regard to global warming. During this latest wave, the idea of emergency has become prominent in the media and political agenda. We suggest that, although the use of emergency is not new in environmental movements, FFF has successfully conveyed the need to take immediate action combining emergency with the notion of acceleration of time, the idea of hope and the youthful nature of the movement.

This article relates these aspects by focusing on how youth leadership has triggered new discourse on the future and climate change through the idea of emergency. To do so, social media narratives of the FFF movement have been analysed in an attempt to answer questions arising when facing the study of time in the climate change movement. Does emergency speech play a central role in the movement public discourse? Do narratives about emergence contain a particular vision of the future that could contribute to understanding the movement's success among youth?

The relationship between the current generation of young people and the future is influenced by the acceleration of social time (Rosa, 2015) and the combination of despair and hope with which young people face the uncertainty before them (Arnett, 2000; Leccardi, 2008). Consequently, we suggest that both the acceleration of time and the idea of hope in a context of vulnerability are the main traits of this new wave of climate change movement's social media discourse about the future and that the idea of emergency encompasses both traits that this movement has recently pushed into the public agenda.

Social media have become a communicative tool for political mobilizations, information access, calls for action and sharing collective identities and narratives (Fernández-Planells et al., 2014; Pérez-Altable, 2015). This most recent wave of climate change movements has continued this trend, especially since the lockdowns due to COVID-19. As previous studies have shown (Polleta & Gharrity, 2015), an analysis of a movement's narrative allows for a greater understanding of the movement's positions, proposals, topics and relationships with other actors. This paper analyses FFF Barcelona's social media posts to study the use of the notion of emergency in the movement's narrative and strategy. The FFF, despite being a global movement, operates on a local level at which the socioeconomic

and political contexts play an important role. This has prompted several studies on the new global climate movement to focus on national and local cases (e.g. Marquardt, 2020; Nairn, 2019; Saunders et al., 2020; Soler-i-Martí et al., 2020). Barcelona, where a local FFF group was created in early 2019, offers a good case to perform an analysis of the FFF movement with a focus on the emergency narrative. As a matter of fact, a recent study comparing the messages of Fridays For Future Barcelona with Greta Thunberg discourse has shown a shared collective action frame discourse, including the use of “climate emergency” notion (Díaz-Pérez et al., 2021). Moreover, the climate emergency frame in Catalonia has rapidly become a part of the political agenda. As an example, on May 14, 2019, the Catalan Parliament approved a climate emergency declaration weeks after the initial declaration of the Scottish Parliament.

Despite the attention this wave of the climate movement has received and the growing literature on the ‘new’ climate movement, the role played by the idea of emergency in the movement narratives still need to be explored in relation to activists' visions of the future, acceleration of time and the generational speech. Based on the analysis of the FFF Barcelona messages on social media, this article aims to first ascertain if the notion of emergency has a central role in the public discourse of the climate movement; secondly, analyse any relationship between the use of emergency speech and other key aspects of the message of the movement, such as a generational speech and a hopeful or fearful vision of the future and thirdly, to detect whether using the notion of emergency together with hope has a positive impact on the distribution of the movement’s message through social media.

Climate change movements, future time and narratives

Studies on social movements have increasingly identified the relevance of time and visions of the future in the values and beliefs of activists and in the construction of narratives for mobilization (Gillan & Edwards, 2020; Yates, 2015). This central role of time has been particularly relevant in environmental and climate movements. Climate change is a phenomenon characterized by its relationship with time, especially with the present and future visions of global warming consequences. The discourse of climate change movements faces the narrative challenge of highlighting the intrinsic link between present action and the future consequences of climate change (Salleh et al., 2015). However, the direct consequences are not easy to explain as many of its effects are only seen in the long-term.

This poses a narrative challenge for climate change defenders as people tend to struggle with concepts that manifest themselves over time. Here, how climate change is framed can influence how the public understand it and eventually take actions (Wahlström et al., 2013).

Applying framing theory to collective action, regarding which specific aspects of a reality are highlighted in a communicating text to promote a particular problem approach and interpretation in audiences, the climate movement has tended to use more pessimistic narratives based on dystopian and apocalyptic visions of the future (Anshelm & Hultman, 2015; Vaidyanathan, 2018; Yusoff & Gabrys, 2011). This approach has implied offering representations of environmental change by “making scenarios, narratives, and contingency plans that project toward or back from uncertain futures” (Yusoff & Gabrys, 2011, 517). This is likely rooted in the perception that environmental concern will only be activated by a great ecological disaster. This perspective, however, has been contested from the literature examining the role of emotions in collective action by pointing out that discourses based on fear can have a disabling effect (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Miller et al., 2009). O’Neil and Nicholson-Cole (2009) hold that while apocalyptic discourses may be potentially successful in drawing attention to the issue of global warming, fear is an emotion that does not foster personal engagement. Narratives based on fear speech tend to make the imagination of an alternative future extremely challenging as the ultimate message was that there is no alternative (Kenis & Mathijs, 2014).

In front of the apocalyptic imaginaries, there is an alternative view based on the belief that modernization and technological innovation can offer a rapid adaptation of capitalism to forms of production, mobility and sustainable growth (Carter, 2018). This ecomodernism, which underpins the discourses of “green growth”, is based on the idea that scientific and technological advances can ensure a control of humanity over nature that overcomes environmental problems (Jasanoff, 2015). According to Chatterton et al. (2013), this framework isolates the problem of climate change from the deep dynamics of the political and economic system and avoids the problems of social justice intrinsically linked to the climate issue. The belief that science and technology offer alternatives to the effects of climate change sends a message of confidence in the natural development of societies that can also have a demobilizing effect.

In contrast, ecomodernist views coexist with what Cassegard and Thorn (2018) have called post-apocalyptic environmentalism. This new dystopian narrative emerges from the realization that the consequences of climate change (displacement of population,

environmental destruction...) are inevitable and already ongoing. According to these authors, by accepting loss “rather than inducing passivity, postapocalyptic visions can be empowering and even attain a utopian function” (Cassegard & Thorn, 2018, 14).

Studies on recent climate change movements show elements of both change and continuity regarding previous climate change movements (Saunders et al., 2020; Walsthrom et al., 2019). According to de Moor et al. (2021), these new climate change mobilizations show a more politically ‘neutral’ framing of climate change but still need to develop stronger visions for the future. In this sense, Marquardt (2020), studying the case of Germany, shows how the apocalypse frame and ecomodernism coexist in the discourses surrounding the FFF movement. However, this vagueness does not prevent the movement from making a clear use of emotions and, in particular, a use of the idea of hope in a context of despair. This article argues that the vision of the future and the emotions associated with it must be understood in relation to the youthful nature of the new climate movement. The next section, therefore, deals with the vision of the future linked to the young generations.

Youth in an uncertain and accelerated future

Youth is a time when young people decide which direction they wish their life to take and when significant individual changes that will have a greater impact on their future lives take place. It is also the time of crystallization of social and political orientations that lay the groundwork for the future (Alwin, 1994). At the collective level, the contextual-historical circumstances shared by the same age cohort during this sensitive period of political socialization constitute the political generations (Braungart, 2013). This individual-collective biographical construction is heavily influenced by present social circumstances and perception of the future (Mannheim, 1927/1991). Two major processes of late modernity that have a crucial impact on the relationship of the current young generation to the future can be identified: uncertainty and acceleration.

On the one hand, studies on youth transitions in recent decades have shown how youth trajectories expand over time, become less linear, more reversible, and de-standardized (Pollock, 2008). These changes, stemming from the great transformations of post-industrial societies, create more flexible, uncertain and vulnerable biographical trajectories. The internalization of these risks, uncertainties and vulnerabilities when young shapes the construction of the life project (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). On the other hand, acceleration of

social time has become one of the main characteristics of advanced modernity. It is expressed in the intensification of the technological sphere, the immediacy of personal relationships and the speed of social change (Rosa, 2003, 2015). The idea of acceleration emphasizes the present, pushes concerns or expectations about the future to the background, reduces the experience of time, and draws it towards what Agnes Heller (1999) calls “absolute present”.

Leccardi (2008) shows how young people and their vision of the future are traversed by this experience of uncertainty and the acceleration of social time. The future is not projected as a gradual path with various seemingly predictable phases but rather it is built on the basis of immediacy and flexibility. The contemporary world, with an accelerated, uncertain and contingent social time, does not facilitate the idea of a long-term project that is intrinsic in young people. Even if long-term planning loses its meaning in this context and there is a focus on the ‘extended present’ (Nowotny, 1994), young people still care about the future and try to shape it through more flexible strategies (Leccardi, 2008; Woodman & Leccardi, 2015). On this basis, various studies that have analysed young people’s perception of the future have found a negative or pessimistic view of collective development that contrasts with a much more optimistic view of their individual future (Arnett, 2000; Bryant & Ellard, 2015; Franceschelli & Keating, 2018; Woodman, 2011). Thus, young people seem to face the uncertain and accelerated future in a way that combines pessimism and optimism, despair and hope. However, as Bryant and Ellard (2015) argue, hope plays a key role in young people’s perception of the future despite the assessment of the context not being positive. This is a mechanism that operates as a form of agency in future thinking for youth at an individual level and, at the same time, it is also fundamental to understand how the future at the collective level is perceived. Hope seems to be a necessary mechanism for collective action insofar as it allows us to build a better vision of the future than is expected and one which is worth taking action for (Ahmed, 2013; Dinerstein, 2015).

Interaction with others plays an important role in building hope in younger generations. In an uncertain future, Woodman (2011, 111) argues that “thinking about and shaping the future and enjoying, and coping in, the present are not individual pursuits but shaped collectively with significant others.” Leccardi (2017) and Morán and Fernandez de Mosteyrín (2017) analyse discourses on the future in two of the European countries (Italy and Spain) that saw the greatest impact from the 2008 crisis on the young population and they reach very similar conclusions: vulnerability and uncertainty of the future, the experience and expectations shared with members of the same generation are a source of identity, shared

strategies and agency that is sometimes conveyed through forms of expression and political involvement.

Climate change cause, youth and emergency

Uncertainty and acceleration are both a source of identity and agency that Greta Thunberg, the Swedish environmental activist who inspired young people around the world to participate in student strikes against climate change, has used in her speeches for creating a “we”, or rather a collective identity built on their young age. It also identifies a shared cause of “the grievance of the future at risk”; identifies “others”, that is to say adult politicians and directors of large multinationals guilty of failing to address the climate crisis; and generates a sentiment of hope about the future (Díaz-Pérez et al., 2021).

In parallel, recent climate change activists have emphasized hopeful positive messages for creating change through collective processes, which in turn help the climate change cause (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Nair, 2019). Yet in a recent experiment on emotions in the context of climate change, Ettinger et al. (2021) show that both feelings of hope and fear have no direct effect on risk perception, nor on propensity to activism. These emotions seem to work with interactions with other elements. In this article, we analyse precisely how discourses about visions of the future operate in interaction with the acceleration of time, emergency and the generational speech. As hope plays a key role in projecting the future in young people, it appears to have been used together with calls for action in the present in current narratives about climate change as a way of facing uncertainty about the future. The FFF activists focus on actions that need to be taken in the very near future. Moreover, FFF mobilizations in 2019 have consolidated the use of concepts such as “climate crisis” and “climate emergency” instead of the narratives of “climate change”. Beyond climate change, emergency situations have been used to justify more disruptive or costly repertoires of collective action, such as direct action or civil disobedience (Humphrey, 2006; Sommier et al., 2019). The notion of emergency, therefore, seems to be intrinsically linked to the need for activation, even if this entails a transgression of established norms or dynamics.

As Greta Thunberg, young activists of the FFF Movement in Barcelona appear to have introduced their own perception of the future, emergency and acceleration as key contributions of the movement to fight against climate change (Díaz-Pérez et al., 2021). The

idea of emergency can be understood in the important context of youth and how the notion of acceleration and hope are present in their everyday experiences of social time (Leccardi, 2008). Thus, this article contributes to the study of the role of (acceleration of) time and hope in FFF Barcelona narratives through the analysis of their public speech in social media, key tools for the identity construction of young people. Although previous climate change movements referred to emergency, the novelty here lies in the combination of emergency narratives with acceleration of time and visions of future.

Data and methods

In order to identify the notions of emergency and of acceleration of time present in the discourse of FFF Barcelona, data from the movement's official Twitter and Instagram accounts were analysed. According to previous studies about social movements and media use, social media has become a place for activist engagement and social movements spread of information (Fernández-Planells et al., 2014; Mattoni & Treré, 2014). The platforms have been chosen as both are the most used by the FFF movement, where the movement has more followers and where more social media engagement the movement have had. The dataset consisted of 728 tweets published by the @f4f_barcelona Twitter account, 123 Instagram posts and 83 Instagram stories, all of which were published by the @fridaysforfuture.bcn Instagram account. All data were gathered between February 2019, when FFF Barcelona launched their social media accounts, and June 2020, when the state of emergency and the lockdown caused by the first wave of COVID-19 crisis in Europe ended in Catalonia. The accounts are managed by a small group of people who communicate decisions taken by assemblies or other forms of group decision-making. We collected only public tweets and Instagram posts and analysed only official social media accounts of the FFF Barcelona. Therefore, data disseminated through these accounts cannot be considered personal data and personal data processing legislation is not applicable to these data. The data research plan was approved by the Data Protection Office of the Pompeu Fabra University.

A mixed-method approach that involved a first phase of a quantitative analysis, followed by a second phase of qualitative analysis was used. This approach focuses on the methodological implications of merging quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2009).

The authors developed a code book and defined the categories by taking an inductive approach: while some categories formed part of the analysis from the outset (Stage 1: Initial set of categories), others were included iteratively as we analysed social media posts during the testing phase (Stage 2: Category refinement based on evidence). The codebook has been tested by four members of the research project: firstly, the variables of coding have been discussed and secondly, the variables were tested by applying them to a selected sample of social media publications.

After this process, we obtained 33 variables, including 4 variables related to interaction information (e.g. the number of likes, comments or retweets), 6 related to content type (e.g. photo, video or meme, among others), 21 for frames used by the movement (e.g. focus of the social media message, links to national or international allies or antagonists) and 2 related to the notion of emergency and future present in their public discourse. Each variable was coded as present or absent as nominal variables. Categories were not mutually exclusive, and each publication could be included in more than one category. Regarding the main variables, the notion of emergency was coded in terms of whether the concept explicitly appeared in some way within a sentence (e.g. “this is an emergency”) or in a hashtag (e.g. “#ClimateEmergency”) and also whether it appeared as an expression of immediacy or urgency (e.g. “we have to act NOW” or “there is no time to lose”). Generational speech was coded in a similar way including all references to youth, young generations or future generations. However, ‘future’ is coded only when an explicit reference to future was made (e.g. “our future is at risk”). Here, we distinguish between posts that contained only pessimistic visions or predictions about the future and those that had a positive connotation of the future. The latter includes both exclusively positive messages (such as about the ability to transform the movement or new generations) and posts that combine positive with negative views (such as those that warn of the dangers of global warming yet still contain elements of hope).

Finally, after carrying out pilot testing on the codebook, each of the 728 tweets and 206 Instagram posts (including Instagram stories) was then analysed by one of the researchers involved on the test who has manually coded using the evaluation model. After this codification, we ran a statistical analysis focused on the presence of future and emergency speech and its relation to the other variables.

Following the quantitative analysis, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to draw meanings from the interpretation of text data produced and shared by FFF Barcelona

movement on their social media accounts. We analysed the tweets, Instagram posts and Instagram stories that had been identified as containing emergency speech in the previous analysis (n=264). This was done by employing an inductive analysis to our data analysis, identifying all elements regarding the notion of emergency, future and the acceleration of time and subjecting them to cross-thematic comparisons with other variables (Poole & Chick, 2017). Although the results presented in this article are based on the analysis of social media, other qualitative methods were employed. These included offline and online participant observation, in-depth interviews with young people, and a workshop with FFF Barcelona activists during which preliminary results of the social media analysis presented in this paper were discussed. This direct engagement with the movement has contributed decisively to the interpretation and validation of the findings presented below.

Results

In this section, we first present a descriptive analysis of the presence of the notion of emergency in FFF Barcelona's messages on social media and its evolution. Second, the relationship between emergency speech and other key elements of the movement's message such as the idea of hope (positive future) or generational calls is examined. Finally, the relation between social media engagement with FFF posts and the use of the notion of emergency, future and hope in Twitter and Instagram posts is analysed.

Emergency in the Fridays For Future Barcelona discourse

To measure how emergency plays a central role in the message of Fridays For Future-Barcelona, Figure 1 shows the percentage of publications on Twitter and Instagram that contain this idea based on the post's main purpose, of which four different categories were identified: 'Call for action' (posts with an explicit call for readers to participate in the movement's actions), 'Coverage of actions and media' (posts aimed at describing actions taken, media appearances or highlighting goals that the movement has accomplished), 'Recruitment' (posts which call for becoming involved in the movement itself such as participating in an assembly or other decision-making events and internal work spaces) and 'Discourse only' (posts which do not contain any of the above objectives but contain messages with the movement's discourse). In cases where the post appears to have more than one purpose, the main one was used for coding.

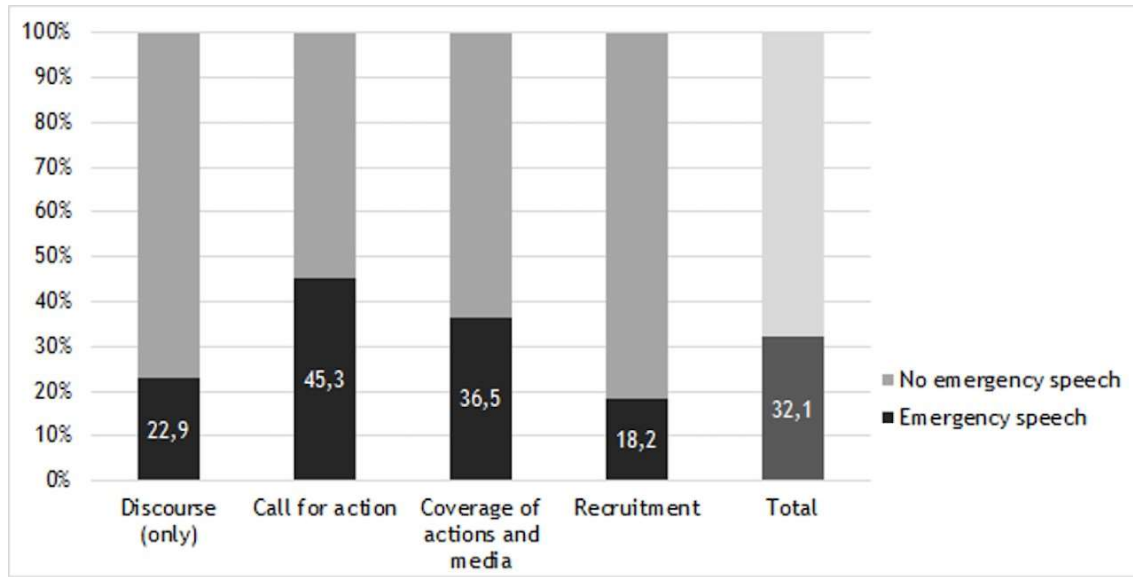


Figure 1. Presence of 'emergency' by main purpose of the post

One out of three FFF Barcelona social media posts contains the notion of emergency in some way, either with the textual word or another expression that denotes urgency or imminence. The results show that the presence of emergency speech is quite cross-cutting, although it is mainly used in posts calling for participation in offline and online actions for the movement. Emergency speech, therefore, is used especially when there is an explicit goal of mobilizing the social audience to protest as seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. @f4f_barcelona Twitter post, Mar 14, 2019. Translation: TOMORROW IS THE DAY and we hope you're all ready to protest!! We will fight for our future and put the CLIMATE EMERGENCY at the centre of the political and media agenda. See you tomorrow! #fridaysforfuture #climate strike

Figure 3 shows the monthly evolution of the percentage of posts using the notion of emergency according to the main purpose of the post.

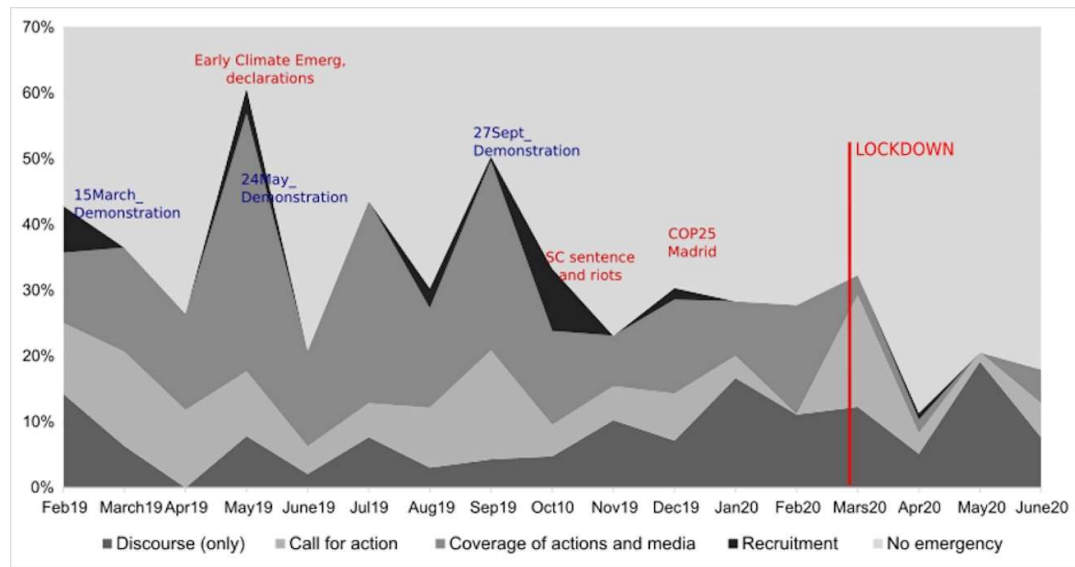


Figure 3. Evolution of emergency posts by type of content

As seen in Figure 3, there are times when the use of the idea of emergency is more frequent. These times coincide with events related to the movement activities or achievements. For example, on May 14, 2019, following the example of Scottish, Welsh and UK governments, the Catalan government declared the Climate Emergency. In the following weeks, several governments and institutions worldwide formally recognized the climate emergency and issued similar declarations. This was one of the main symbolic achievements of the last wave of climate movement and had a clear impact on its emergency speech.

The peak of emergency speech in May 2019, due to the increased number of posts falling into the “Coverage of actions and media” category, is also related to the political situation between April 28 and May 26 in that it was when local, national and European elections were held. For the European Parliament elections, the FFF Barcelona Twitter account published a series of tweets with short videos about the importance of this election for the present and future of the climate movement in Europe. ‘What you decide is going to determine the future of all life on Earth’ or ‘It’s the last chance we have’ were the main ideas

conveyed by these short videos. As the movement grew, FFF Barcelona's presence in the media intensified. In fact, throughout this first period, the political and media agenda highlighted climate change (Thompson, 2020).

As seen in Figure 3, there was an increase in the relative number of tweets with the idea of emergency in September 2019 related to the celebration of the biggest demonstration of the climate movement in Barcelona on September 27, 2019, that brought together over 100,000 people. The demonstration, hashtagged #ClimateEmergency27S, was part of the Global Week for Future, during which a series of actions against climate change took place from 20-27 September. This was the moment when FFF Barcelona had a greater impact on social media receiving on average 800 interactions per tweet.

In fall 2019, coinciding with a slowdown in the global movement (Thompson, 2020), FFF Barcelona began a process of internal retreat and debate. This coincided with the Supreme Court sentencing of pro-independence Catalan leaders, which was followed by a few weeks of mobilizations and riots led by young people that caught the media's attention. Against this backdrop, the peaks of emergency speech incidence the movement's messages social networks linked mainly to the call and coverage of actions disappear, while its relative presence increases in discourse posts. Even COP25 held in Madrid in early December 2019 failed to create a new impetus in the movement's impact and mobilization.

The coronavirus crisis and the strict lockdown in Spain, starting March 13, had a huge impact on the entire movement and also on its message on social media. First the number of posts related to outdoor FFF activity plummeted. Second, although the movement increased its activity on the networks, the audience interaction diminished (Soler-i-Martí et al., 2020). Thirdly, the use of emergency in posts linked to the movement's actions coverage practically disappeared, although it remained in posts in the 'Discourse' category and followed the pattern of the previous period (Figure 3).

Despite this adverse situation, the idea of emergency remains central not only to the movement but also beyond it. FFF posts during lockdown show that emergency is increasingly used to refer to other social issues beyond climate change, bringing together other causes and alliances in the youth climate movement (Figure 4).



Figure 4. @f4f_barcelona Twitter post, Mar 23, 2020. Translation: ' COVID-19 has created a huge health crisis. We know that the economic and social ones are coming. That's why we demand #RentSuspensionsNow, this time the rich are going to pay! #EmergencyMeasures'.

Generation, future and emergency

After detecting the centrality of the notion of emergency in the messages of FFF Barcelona on social media, this section explores the relationship between the concept of emergency and other key aspects of the message and identity of the movement, such as its generational nature and the future. In order to analyse the effect of the presence of generational speech or the explicit reference to the future on the emergency, a logistic regression analysis was carried out with the emergency speech as a dependent variable. The model includes several control variables such as the social network (Twitter or Instagram), the month of publication, the presence of movement discourse on climate and other topics, the post's purpose ('Call to action' or 'Coverage of actions and media') the presence of generational speech and the explicit reference to the future, which was also categorised as either positive or negative. The results show the predicted probabilities arising from the model for two key variables of our analysis: Generational speech and explicit references to the future (Figure 5).

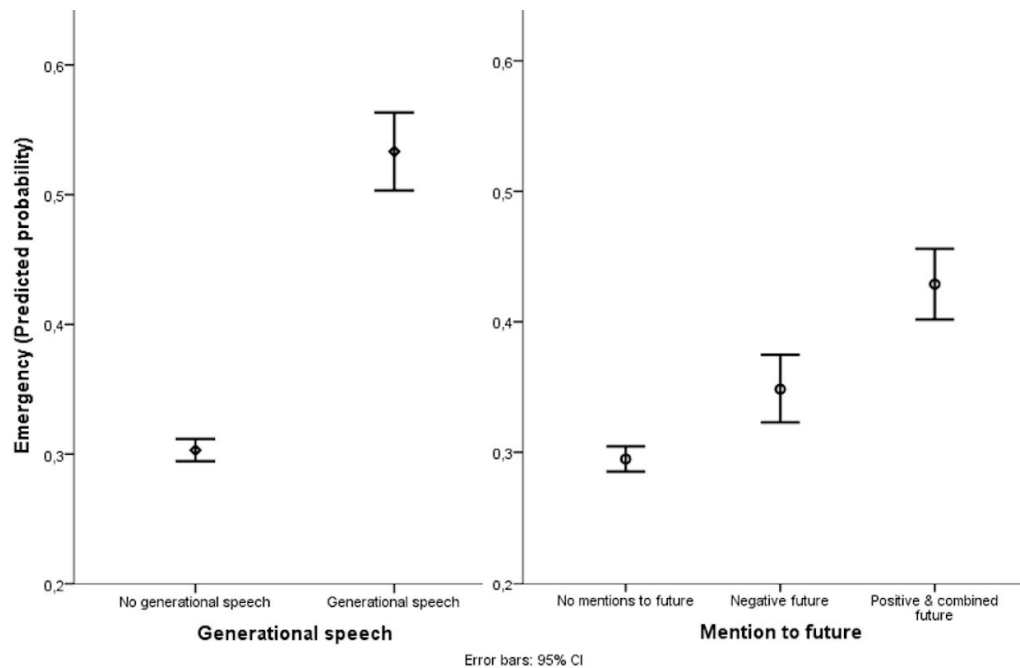


Figure 5. Predicted probability of appearance of emergency notion in posts by generational and future speech

The model data reveal that when a post contains generational speech (that is, any reference to youth or new generations) it significantly increases the probability of also referring, explicitly or implicitly, to emergency. That is, when there is no mention of youth or new generations the probability of using emergency is 0.3 while when generational speech is used this probability increases to 0.53. This data confirms the close relationship between the generational nature of the movement and the notion of emergency, not only because, as seen above, the youth climate movement uses the concept in a cross-cutting and recurring way, but also because age is explicitly referred to, there is more emergency speech. Figure 7 also shows the effect of referring to the future on the likelihood that emergency will appear controlling for the other variables in the model. A higher incidence of emergency speech with explicit reference to the future also happens in Twitter and Instagram posts. This relationship between emergency and future gives an insight on how emergency is used to accelerate the perception of distance between the present and the future. The following tweet (Figure 6) is an example of the combination of these elements.



Figure 6. @f4f_barcelona Twitter post, Mar 6, 2019. Translation: CLIMATE EMERGENCY! NOW is the time to make some noise worldwide about CLIMATE CHANGE [...] WE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF THE FUTURE WITHOUT A FUTURE, WE'RE FIGHTING FOR LIFE!

The aim of including a differentiation between 'Negative future' and 'Positive and combined visions of future' in codification was to understand the role of hope in the movement's discourse about the future in a context of climate crisis. When comparing the probabilities predicted by the model of the two types of references to the future, it is clear that posts with references to the future containing elements of hope are those which are most likely to also contain emergency speech. Therefore, contrary to what might be expected, the idea of emergency is more closely related to hope than to dystopian visions. The use of emergency is primarily linked to a call to action precisely because there is still time to change (see Figure 7 below).



Figure 7. @f4f_barcelona Twitter post, Jul 5, 2019. Translation: 'If we young people decide to protest, it's because we still believe that there are solutions, but we must act now'.

Impact of future and emergency speech

This final results section analyses the impact on the engagement of social media followers that FFF Barcelona has of the use of two concepts that have become central to the message and positioning of the movement: Future and emergency,

To quantify the impact of posts on follower engagement, a variable was created to group the interactions the post received by adding together all the ‘Likes’ on both Instagram and Twitter, and ‘Retweets’ only in the case of Twitter. For this analysis, Instagram stories (N = 83) that cannot be interacted with in this way were omitted. To analyse the effect of future and emergency on the impact of posts among followers, a linear regression model with ‘Post impact’ as a dependent variable was created. This analysis allowed for analysis of other post features and content. The model includes the following variables: type of social network (Twitter or Instagram), month of publication, presence of movement discourse on climate and other topics, a ‘Call for action’ purpose, a ‘Coverage of actions and media’ purpose, presence of generational speech, presence of emergency speech, explicit reference to a negative future and explicit reference to positive or combined future. Figure 8 shows the standardized predicted values of the impact of the posts based on the use of the notion of emergency and the mention in the future distinguishing between those negative references or those that contain a positive view.

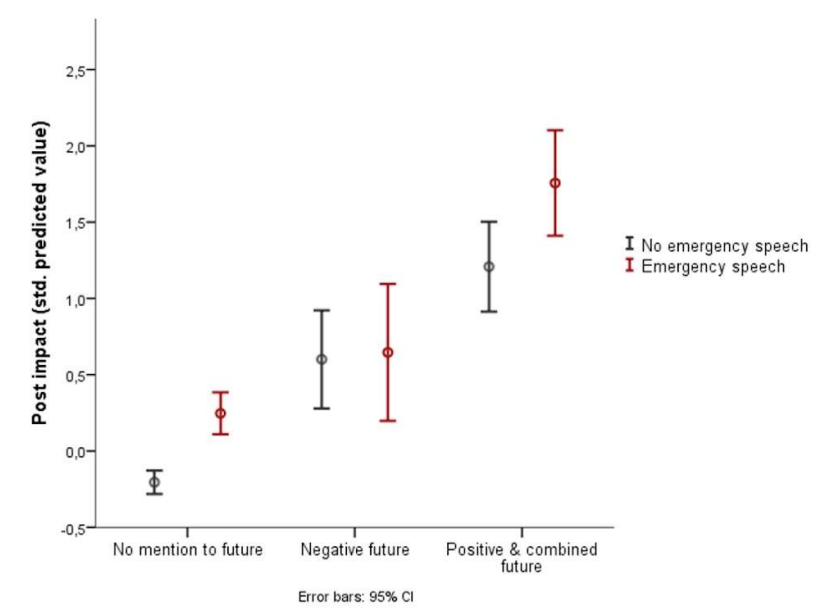


Figure 8. Standardized predicted value of post impact (number of likes and retweets) by future and emergency speech

The data show that reference to the future has a positive effect on the number of interactions a post receives. The analysis also allows for further exploration of the impact the type of reference to the future has. Posts containing a positive view have higher predicted values of impact. When the message contains an explicit but negative reference to the future, such as the consequences of global warming or biodiversity loss, the model predicts a greater impact than when no reference is made to the future but less than when hope is expressed. Specifically, the model predicts that when there is a positive reference to the future the number of "likes" and "retweets" received by the post is two or three times higher than when a negative future is presented.

Figure 8 also shows the effect of emergency speech combined with the different uses of the future in the posts. In general, reference to the concept or expressions of emergency have a positive effect on the number of interactions the post receives. This is clearly seen in posts that do not contain any explicit mention to the future. In this type of message and according to the model, the inclusion of emergency speech boosts the visibility of the post by significantly increasing in 0.5 the predicted standardised value of its impact. As seen above, the notion of emergency has a function of accelerating time and emphasizing urgency, which means that although the post has no direct reference to the future, there is an implicit suggestion of the need to act immediately. The positive effect of including the idea of emergency is also seen in the posts with an explicit and positive reference to the future (increasing the standardised predicted value of post impact from 1.2 to 1.8), although here the smaller number of cases makes the margin of error offered by the model greater. As shown in the graph, the impact of emergency speech is not seen in the case of negative messages about the future. In these cases, it seems that exclusively dystopian or pessimistic messages about the future are not favoured by expressions of urgency or imminence. If the future is bleak and no alternatives are seen, the emphasis on urgency loses its meaning.

Concluding discussion

The study has analysed the centrality and nature of the idea of emergency in the FFF Barcelona through the analysis of their social media posts. Although it is a notion used in various types of posts, it is especially used when a call for action is made, usually coinciding with relevant events such as demonstrations, the emergency declaration, political activity (such as elections), presence of the movement in the media or when FFF appear as political

actors. Emergency speech seems to be used by the FFF movement to accelerate the perception of distance between the present and the future. However, despite the possibility of the notion of emergency being linked to dystopian futures, the movement is using it to spread hope when facing uncertain futures.

The climate movement has always had to face the challenge of discussing what the consequences of current actions are on society and the planet. The narratives of the future in the climate movements have often relied on imaginaries of apocalypse and dystopia to draw attention to the gravity of climate change. The apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic imaginaries can lead to awakening a feeling of fear, which can have a demobilizing effect (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; O'Neil & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). On the other side of the climate change narratives, the ecomodernist vision, which relies on the ability of science and technology to deliver responses to climate change without questioning the foundations of the economic and political system (Carter, 2018; Jasanoff, 2015) can also lead to demobilization based on the perception that there is time to find solutions. Since mid-2018, the new wave of climate change protests linked to a young generation of activists seem to have changed the way the future has been portrayed by placing a strong emphasis on the notion of emergency that contains the idea of acceleration and hope. These two ideas, which are intrinsically linked to the orientation that young generations have towards the future, seemed to have had a highly mobilizing effect in the latest wave of climate movement.

On one hand, in front of ecomodernist imaginaries, the idea of emergency denotes an acceleration of time that does not allow us to trust that the response to global warming will come alone thanks, for example, to technological innovation. And, on the other hand, the positive vision of the future linked to FFF emergency speech sends a message of hope contrasting to fear discourses that could be linked to apocalyptic imaginaries. As previous studies pointed out (Ahmed, 2013; Dinerstein, 2015; Wahlström et al., 2019), hope has a positive effect on collective action. Here, this study has shown that, when talking about engagement with the movement in social media, posts talking about emergency and future with a positive focus tend to have more interactions. Thus, the notion of emergency, incorporating acceleration of time and hope, seems to function as an activator of social awareness and collective action in response to both optimistic and pessimistic imaginaries about the future of climate. Even during the lockdown, emergency was increasingly used to refer to other social issues beyond climate change that needed to be faced as they were already ongoing.

To conclude, all the detected traits of the FFF Barcelona narrative, including the acceleration of time, the vision of hope for an uncertain future, or even the orientation to link climate discourse with other causes, need to be framed within the youth leadership of this latest wave of climate movement. The notion of emergency adopted by the movement is closely linked to the experience of the future of the current young generation. The “we” emerges here not only as climate change activists but also as a generation. It is a young generation confronting an older one because the latter has made decisions about the former’s future without taking them into consideration. They are using their youth as an identity trait to conform to a “we” that wants to act now to change a future that is already here. As a result of the 2008 crisis, the role of generational identity and agency takes on increasing importance and is expressed through forms of political involvement (Leccardi, 2017; Morán & Fernández de Mosteyrín, 2019) present in some of the most relevant movements of the last decade, such as the Arab spring, the Hong Kong protests, the Spanish 15M and the Occupy movement. The year 2019 may be the year when the climate movement found youth. The COVID-19 crisis has drastically reshaped any expected evolution of the cycle of mobilization for the climate by young people that began in 2018. However, it is expected that some elements of this convergence of youth and climate movement will remain in the post-COVID-19 era. A greater awareness and involvement of the younger generation in the fight against global warming can be expected. This might mean a turning point in the dynamics of the climate movement because, although sometimes obscure, the contribution of young people has been crucial in emancipatory movements throughout history (Bessant, 2020). Also, the centrality of the idea of emergency will likely remain in the climate movement narratives for bringing the future into the present.

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