

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN CIVIL MOVEMENTS: «MAREA BLANCA», «MAREA VERDE» AND *TELEMADRID*'S MOBILIZATION

### ESTRATEGIAS DE COMUNICACIÓN EN LAS MOVILIZACIONES CIUDADANAS: MAREA BLANCA, MAREA VERDE Y MOVILIZACIÓN DE *TELEMADRID*

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#### **Abstract**

This article analyses the importance of the communication strategies applied by three significant social movements: *Telemadrid* workers' mobilization (Madrid's public television), the «Marea Blanca» («White Tide»), which grouped up the healthcare professionals, and the «Marea Verde» («Green Tide»), which was done by teachers. These movements are a practical application of the «*indignados*» («outraged») movement and, following the 15-M steps, they improved these strategies in what refers to communication and mobilization. For this purpose, we carried out two investigations: twelve in-depth interviews with leading members of these social movements; and an online questionnaire passed to strategic planners who are the experts in communication strategies from the advertising agencies.

**Keywords:** Social movements; participatory communication; citizenship organization; creative strategies; information strategies.

## Resumen

En este artículo se analiza la importancia que ha tenido la estrategia de comunicación utilizada por tres movimientos sociales especialmente significativos: la movilización de *Telemadrid*, la Marea Blanca de los profesionales de la sanidad pública y la Marea Verde organizada por los maestros. Estos movimientos, los más importantes de su categoría realizados en nuestro país en los últimos años, son una aplicación práctica de los movimientos de «indignados» y han seguido los pasos del 15-M, avanzando sobre sus prácticas en términos de movilización y comunicación. Para ello se han realizado dos investigaciones *ad hoc*: doce entrevistas en profundidad a miembros destacados de estos movimientos más un cuestionario a los *planners* publicitarios, expertos en estrategias de la comunicación persuasiva.

**Palabras clave:** Movimientos sociales; comunicación participativa; organización ciudadanía; estrategias creativas, estrategias informativas.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Although there are numerous investigations on «how social organizations use the social media», the investigations on «how the communication actions and their respective strategies are created» are scarce. The rapid growth of Internet and specially the social media has allowed the appearance of a new context for communication and social participation (Del Fresno, 2012:319). And, in accordance to what can be observed, the social movements are perhaps the group that has best taken advantage of the historical change that permits to send messages from many people to many others in real time (Castells, 2009:88).

The relevance of this article lies in analyzing the movements that have spontaneously appeared and the strategies they have developed to disseminate their proposals, and how the strategic planners observe from a professional point of view those communication strategies. This comparison is extremely important when establishing the working models and efficiency in social media from the point of view of citizenship participation. The representation of citizens in new media and the freedom of speech that can be exercised through them implied a change in the political systems of some countries as the Arab spring has proven.

But, was there any prior communication strategy developed in those movements? If there was, do they match with the strategic planning of non-social strategies applied in social media? Is it appropriate to apply to social movements the strategic principles of professional communication? This article tries to think about the value of social media and its power when applying strategic and well thought planning, since it offers a very important tool for social movements.

## 1.1 Social movements and digital media

Thanks to the digital environments, the social media not only expand their messages and valuation of reality but, on a higher level, fight the propaganda that the mass media insert in public opinion in a subtle and underhanded way (Gelders & Ihlen, 2010), and bring into society new practices and actors defying the inevitability of conventional politics and regenerating the democratic roots (Castell, 2009:530). Also, social media are not only a vehicle to transmit information and social change questioning the *status quo*, but they also allow to extend the necessary feeling of hope to all those that create or divulge this alternative communication in a co-participative way. As Hessel affirms (2011: 16, 39), the outrage converts citizens in engaged militants but hope is necessary to achieve the results and it is accepted that the possibility of reaching our expectations is what gives a purpose to these expectations (Rodríguez et al., 2014: 103-4).

The digital environments, especially some social networks –Facebook and YouTube– and mobile apps –WhatsApp and Twitter–, seem to have assumed the role previously undertaken by people to people communication. If they are so successful it is, in addition to their immediacy and interactivity, because they embody two determining values, credibility and empathy, that are very active in interpersonal communication but blurred in media communication. Precisely, interpersonal communication has proven in multiple studies to be, among all forms of communication, the one that arouses in the public the higher levels of credibility (Lovett et al., 2013: 427-444), an outcome that, on the other hand, turns out to be already documented in the most classic and pioneering studies on the effects of mass media (Klapper, 1974: 65-8). And some social networks prove to activate similar trust and implication levels because they have the added value of first hand information shared by its author in this «from mouth to ear 2.0» (Beelen, 2006: 11) that is now established between two computers or mobile phones (García-Galera et al., 2014:38).

But the new forms of social activism not only use productively the digital resources; they implement as well a communication work that effectively combines the online and offline resources (García-Galera et al., 2014: 37). Therefore, there is little doubt about the huge importance of the strategic work, so that the impacts generated by the different media and actions converge in a coherent way in the minds of the general public (Jenkins, 2008:15), displacing the incomplete and biased information that appears in the media at the service of the *establishment*. As we know, modern multimedia society requires a delicate work of composition and balance to coordinate all the actions projected simultaneously on the public; an equation that can only be solved by adopting a strategy of competent communication.

## 1.2 Three social movements

Taking into account what was previously commented, this work is centered in three social movements:

- The movement of the workers of *Telemadrid*.
- The «White Tide» against the privatization of the Healthcare System.
- The «Green Tide» in favor of public education.

The three of them can be considered especially significant and are amongst the ones that have reached a major repercussion. All these mobilizations were directed against the politics and the manners of the same institution, the autonomous government of the Community of Madrid, which at the time was applying very aggressive privatization policies implemented with a complete lack of social dialog. Therefore, the first aim of these mobilizations was highly political, but they also turned into very important actions of social exchange.

As it has been explained, the object is to study not as much the movements themselves, but their communication actions and the strategy they used, observing especially the decision-making procedures. These analyses can be extrapolated to other similar movements with regard to the strategy models proposed. We have preferred not to study the 15-M movement, despite the big citizen mobilization it entailed, for various reasons. Mainly, for the heterogeneity of its objectives and in consequence of its dynamics and messages, that complicated the analysis of its communication strategies and actions. On the contrary, the three selected movements, which have in common their specific and immediate demands, have been able to establish defined strategies and a highly coherent communication. Also, in spite of their organizational and formal differences, these movements have undertaken discussion procedures far more pragmatic than those of the 15-M movement, allowing a more detailed follow-up. It therefore seems that the chosen cases constitute suitable cases of study, in which we can clearly observe the processes developed, the tools used and the results achieved in terms of communication.

## 1.3 Genesis of the movements

Without going into the details of the claims, extension or results of these mobilizations, we write down a brief record of their origins and characteristics, in chronological order, before addressing their communication actions.

- The Green Tide started when the government of the autonomous community of Madrid announced that it would increase the working hours of the secondary education teachers to lay off 3.000 interim teachers in July of

2011 (Díez, 2012:41). The movement extended to other communities of the country and lasted until the end of that year.

- In *Telemadrid*, the movement of its workers to demand informative independence started in 2003. But the algid point was reached on the second half of December of 2013, when a collective lay-off was announced to fire 96% of the workforce (861 workers), and the movement lasted until the following mid-January.
- The White Tide started at the end of October of 2012, when the government of the autonomous community of Madrid announced a plan to privatize six hospitals and 27 health centers in addition to closing other centers. The movement lasted until January 2014, when such plan was retired and the Health Officer resigned.

These movements have some differences amongst them. The workers of *Telemadrid* had a high knowledge of the use of media that they applied to their actions and were located in one work center. On the other hand, the other two movements had little communication experience and had to organize inter-center structures. According to the surveyed experts, the Green Tide showed an excellent logistic and mobilization capacity but the White Tide was able to develop a more notorious and effective communication.

As for general characteristics, these movements had a wide assemblers' base and a high grade of spontaneity and transparency, standing out the lack of specific leaders and renowned union directors, and the fact that different individuals or teams took turns in the exercise of responsibilities to avoid fatigue.

As a consequence of their federal structure and decentralization, they created a big variety of subsidiary organizations, both in organization terms as well as in the divulgation and communication tasks.

#### 1.4 The 15-M as a reference

As is known, the so called 15-M was a concentration carried out by dozens of thousands of people in the *Puerta del Sol*, the geographical center of Madrid, which began spontaneously on May 15, 2011 (hence its name 15-M), that lasted for several weeks, and was imitated in many other cities in the country such as Barcelona, Valencia or Seville (Errejón, 2011: 121). This movement originated spontaneously and developed in a self-managing manner, without the intervention of parties, trade unions or consolidated organizations (Marzolf and Ganuza, 2016:92). Most of their demands were the citizenship problems occurred as a result of the economic crisis and the political corruption (Sampeiro & Lobera, 2014: 15). The different authors who have written about 15-M agree to highlight a number of distinctive features of this mobilization:

- One of the main characteristics of the 15-M, due to its spontaneous and self-managed origin, was the democratic debate of ideas: this was done very horizontally and its main vehicle were meetings, open to anyone who would like to participate in them (Marzolf & Ganuza, 2016: 90-1). The opinions and ideas were expressed using a wide criterion that wished to solve the ideological differences through contrast, the propagation and the consensus rather than resorting to the hierarchy or authoritarianism (Errejón, 2011: 128).
- Another characteristic was its plural and open character. The public who composed it consisted of people of different age, gender, economic status and social origin (Sampedro & Lobera, 2014: 4). And in fact, in the 15-M, a remarkable number of people, eventually pertaining to previously constituted movements, such as *Juventud sin Futuro* (Youth without Future), *Democracia Real Ya* (Real Democracy Now), or the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (Platform of People Affected by Mortgages), coexisted.
- Another distinctive feature of 15-M was that, from its beginnings, it deserved the confidence of citizens: “That civic support has remained high through the time. (...) When compared to the *Outraged* in other Western democracies, the Spanish movement stands out and remains popular” (Sampedro & Lobera, 2014: 3). Thus, while in other European countries the sympathy of the people towards this type of movements was less than 30%, in Spain, between 2011 and 2013, 3 of every 4 citizens sympathized with the arguments of the 15-M and 1 of every 2 with its protest strategy; on the first anniversary of the movement (may 2012), the sympathy of the population level was 68% (Sampedro & Lobera, 2014: 3, 5, 15).
- Another feature of the 15-M was that, following American and European experiences of cyberactivism, as the “Battle of Seattle” and the mobilizations against the World Bank and the G-8, it adopted an intensive and widespread use of digital tools (Jiménez & Calle, 2012: 772, 776; Ríos 2015: 87-114) to give public visibility to its social mobilization, explain its demands and communicate with the rest of society.

Definitely, 15-M was the emergence of a new form of social activism in Spain that amplified and expressed opinions shared by a large part of the population that had been ignored up to then by the institutions (Sampedro & Lobera, 2014: 4). If we take into account the popularity of this movement, the impact that it had on the national and international media and, especially, its later social and political consequences, it seems to be suitable to affirm that “if we consider their scarce economic and organizational resources and their very short politi-

cal trajectory, we must agree that what has been called *15-M movement* or the *Outraged*, has achieved a considerable relative successes, transforming the extended citizen unrest in a political fact of the first order" (Errejón, 2001: 122).

The 15-M had supposed the hatching of a new informative ecosystem the main notes of which were collaborative production, horizontality and bi-directionality, empowering an alternative paradigm (Manrique, 2012: 98). As a consequence, it was the perfect reference of which the future movements learned and tried to copy (Taibo, 2013: 155-8), including the tides herein studied. Members of the Tides acted in the 15-M, like the workers of the Health Sector and the teachers, who were the most homogeneous and participative group, and the one that more links established with other organizations and activists of the sector; these facts are repeatedly documented in the in-depth interviews done and confirmed by other sources (Jiménez, 2012: 38-9; Díez, 2012: 41). During the 15-M they debated and rehearsed new communication forms; specifically, the importance of not being obsessed with the idea of appearing in big media and to use the digital environments to create viral contents (Postill, 2014: 64-5), looking for direct contact with citizens to raise awareness and mobilize them. Also, they debated on how to empower their messages with an appealing and participating focus without trivializing the seriousness of the content.

Although the majority of the participants in the three studied movements did not know cyberactivism techniques, during the 15-M they got to know these uses and later on, when they started their own movement, they received practical classes from 15-M volunteers and other cyberactivists, especially in the use of Twitter to intercommunicate, a resource which offered them great speed in the decision-making, and as a means of communication in general, to attract followers producing contents. This digital learning process unfolded with remarkable speed. In addition to these techniques, the studied movements adopted the most highlighted qualities of the 15-M movement, such as its determined character, spontaneity, the eagerness to participate and improvisation capacity (Nos-Aldás & Murphy, 2013: 333).

### 1.5 The planner, specialist in the communication strategy

In addition to studying the social mobilizations, it has also seemed important to count with the perspective brought on this subject by communication strategy professionals. As it is known, a figure exists in advertising agencies –the strategic planner– that decides the orientation of the persuasive communication based on several elements: the position of the brand, the evolution of the competence, market trends, etc., but, above all, studies the perceptions of the con-

sumer public. That is why the planner is considered «the representative of the consumer in the agency» (Sánchez-Blanco, 2009: 188), the person who tries to understand the public observing them more like a sum of people than just like consumers (Pollitt, 2000 and 2007:17-22); that is why he prefers qualitative research methods, while marketing prefers quantitative ones that allow to reduce consumers to numbers and percentages. In addition to establishing the communication strategy, the planner is, along with the creative (Club de Creativos 2012), the figure of the advertising agency that has been most interested in the new social movements. And it has come to establish an analogy between the protest movements and the disaffection of consumers towards the brands (Piña, 2012). Likely, the planners try to extend a kind of advertising communication that, in the words of Jenkins (2008:15), corners the figure of the passive spectator and definitely assumes the participation culture in which producers and consumers do not play separate roles but interact participating in the same reality.

Without a doubt, it is due to their interest as observers and actors in the social change that the planners, through their professional association, the APG-Spain –with great visibility in the advertising sector– have undertaken different activities to better understand the dynamics of social movements: this association allocated a session in the advertising festival *El Sol* for a joint debate with several leaders of the 15-M movement (Piña, 2012; Anuncios, 2012) and renowned planners have written about the new social movements (Salsó, 2012; Vázquez, 2012). The relevance of these movements exceeded the actions in the street and social networks: they became movements to be studied in communication schools and other areas, thereby their presence in professional forums.

As García-Marzá affirms (2010: 224), within the advertising agencies, planners are the avant-garde of the change process, pushing big companies to adopt a responsible social behavior and a coherent one, as they think this will be an essential condition for the companies and brands to earn the respect of a consumer that is increasingly conscious and critic (Vázquez, 2012:63-65).

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Different techniques were applied, one to study the social movements and others to gather the opinion of planners with regard to the social movements.

### 2.1 Qualitative methodology

For the study of the communication of the social movements, a total of 12 in-depth interviews to relevant representatives of such movements, like communi-



cation leaders and cyberactivists were carried out. The interviews were done face to face or by phone, between May and September of 2015, using a semi-structured questionnaire and following the usual methodology of this technique (Baéz y Pérez de Tudela, 2007: 111-126). The data and opinion obtained were checked up with other sources, preferably newspaper archives and expert opinions, including a journalist and a sociologist both specialized in social movements. Audience figures have been checked with Google Analytics.

## 2.2 Quantitative Methodology

Planners were in turn subject to an online questionnaire of 27 questions, either dichotomist, based on the Likert scale or multiple-choice, passed in July of 2015. In addition to questions about their affinity with the social movements, the questionnaire gathered the technical opinion of the planners about the efficiency of the communication of these movements and their strategies, with a special projection towards digital environments, asking about the three “tides” discussed in our research and other comparable social movements. It was done using Google Docs and the link to answer the questionnaire was spread by APG-Spain via email to all its associates, receiving back responses from 20.8% of them (27 answers of 130); this percentage can be considered significant due to the qualification of the surveyed people and because it is superior to the usual percentage in online surveys. The data obtained was exported to Excel sheets and frequency histograms for their interpretation and analysis.

## 3. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 3.1 General conclusions from interviews

Before entering the analysis of the communication actions and strategies, some conclusions of in-depth interviews conducted are offered comparing the three movements studied.

- As already mentioned, it is very clear that in the three social movements studied, the 15-M experience played a crucial role and acted as a referential and inspiring model, especially in terms of how to organize, how to create a movement based on grassroots discussions and the creation of a horizontal and democratic fabric, how to get presence in the media –both in the conventional as in the digital media–, and also by the conviction that it was possible that such actions reach a positive outcome.
- The three movements were different but shared many organizational elements and in their desire to connect with society and to this end, they

tried to use properly the media, by developing a tentative strategic approach.

- These movements were aware that individual communication actions, and the presence of news in digital media, ended up having an impact on conventional mass media, which do not want to be overwhelmed by reality.
- The *Telemadrid* movement was immediately highlighted by the experience that it had in handling the media. Many of the actions carried out to publicize their situation and demands were adopted and applied consciously seeking to obtain presence and visibility in the media. Despite being the least numerous of the three analysed groups, it was the most effective in terms of impact achieved in the media. It was the one that, from the beginning of their mobilization, obtained a clear and effective presence in the media, without the actions of first refusal and correction that the other two movements had to apply.
- Many of the people who articulated these movements, especially in the beginning, were people who already had some experience with trade unions and mobilization, although initially the trade unions did not support these mobilizations because of their independent origin and their organization outside of traditional unions. *Telemadrid* was the case where this happened the least and unions soon collaborated with the movement.
- In the White Tide, the structure of the own work centres and the working relationship between them –hospitals, health centres, etc.– greatly facilitated the organization and coordination, because these centres acted as basic units of debate and action. On the other hand, and despite the high number of people mobilized, the Green Tide had a greater difficulty of organization and coordination, especially in the beginning, by the dispersion of the centres and their lower structural strength.

## 3.2 Elements of the communication strategy

### 3.2.1 Creation of the strategy

In these three social movements, the communication strategy was decided, as well as the communication actions, in a democratic way. Initially they were not aware that they were deciding a communication strategy *per se*, as it was being adopted in an implicit way when they agreed the communication actions: which content to use, the tone and way of presenting the content... In their capacity as media professionals, the workers of *Telemadrid* achieved a high accuracy in these tasks from the beginning. In the other two Tides the process was initially more laborious until it was consolidated.

In the definition of the strategy and communication actions there were no «directors» as such; they were more like coordinators: their task was not much to «do a specific job» but to unify the ideas and initiatives that appeared, polish them and turn them into communication material. Later, these actions were valued and debated with the purpose of learning from them and of improving them. The feedback of the public obtained through digital media –number of downloads, comments generated, etc.– was a very useful reference.

### 3.2.2 Objectives of the communication

The general objectives of each movement were clearly defined from the start and barely changed. Actually they matched with the objectives expressed through their slogans: in *Telemadrid*, «Lets save the public television» («*Salvemos la radiotelevisión pública*»); in the Green Tide, «Public school of all and for all» («*Escuela pública de tod@s para tod@s*»); in the White Tide, «Health is not for sale, it is defended» («*La sanidad no se vende, se defiende*»). These main objectives, established by a collective agreement at the start of the movements, were detailed in other secondary or temporary objectives that acted in a coherent way with the main ones, fixing and renewing the objectives.

This gave place to a great variety of messages, channels and transmitters operating simultaneously. Although many of their proposals were not unified from the start, they tended to progressively match. Their variety trustfully transmitted a horizontal style of work from the bases which is common in these organizations (Fleshner, 2015), in which all the opinions and their nuances have their relevance and are respected by the others. In a parallel way, these practices built, in an intuitive way, a new model identified as an enhancer of persuasion in mass media: the repetition with variations (Klapper, 1974: 110-112), a technique used in advertising campaigns to maintain the conceptual consistence without boring the spectator. Likely, all this communication actions intertwined in the publics' mind with the movements and other news received, creating a diverse but matching perspective.

### 3.2.3 The official explanation

The *Comunidad de Madrid*, that had at its disposal a lot of media, applied a combined communication strategy before these movements: to present them as labor protests that were looking for salaries improvements or working conditions, qualifying them as divisive in a time of financial crisis and trying to obviate their civic background and their common good targeted objectives.

Against that, the three movements coincided in posing their claims as a defence of the public property and citizen rights –the need for a public and impartial information means, teaching quality, maintenance of a public and free health system–, above other specific objectives, in what seemed a very convincing strategy for the public opinion; thus seems to occur in the Green and White tides, but not so in the case of *Telemadrid*, where the defence of employment seemed to prevail over other aspects.

### 3.3 Two levels of communication

At the beginning, these movements tried to access the mass media using classical mechanisms like press conferences, sending information to media and press agencies, etc. But due to the scarce response obtained they started using digital environments.

In the tides, whose personnel was scattered in several centers, the communication tasks –as well as almost all the organizational decisions– were decided and applied in two levels:

a) A **local level**, within the scope of the geographical influence of each center. Their main publics were the neighbors and users of the Health center or teaching center. This first level of communication was organized and executed with absolute autonomy by the personnel of each center and granted the connection of the movement with the nearby citizenship, which intervened in the debates and brought in initiatives to enhance the communication actions.

b) A **general level** in which the representatives of all the centers converged and where they decided the joint and large-scale actions. While the local level was structured with those responsible for each activity or initiative, on the general level specific commissions were appointed: one dedicated to general communication, other ones for the relation with media, other for the digital environments...

The establishment of relations between centers and the application of a common communication strategy allowed to unify their actions and increase their efficiency: in the White Tide the uploaded videos in digital media, which obtained a mean of 300 downloads per piece, reached 40.000 downloads when unified criteria were applied (Fernández-Ulloa, 2015).

The ideas about the communication pieces that were to be used came up in different ways, especially within the specialized commissions and workers' assemblies. Sometimes, the commissions used ideas of a specific center to apply them in the general level.

The public of this second level was the citizenship, in general, the personnel of the centers mobilized in the tides and by extension the conventional

media. Indeed, as the digital media gained notoriety, the conventional media reflected those movements, as they could not ignore actions that, for example, were becoming trending topics, and would have discredited them if they had not reflected them. That is a consequence of the bidirectional influence between digital media and the conventional mass media that, according to Del Fresno (2012: 318), provokes a sort of «competitive cohabitation». We must also remember that one of the sources of income of news desks is the social networks. In this way, the movement of the White Tide appeared in international media like The New York Times and The Huffington Post, and those of *Telemadrid* in *Al Jazeera*, the *BBC*, the *ZDF* (German public channel) and the *RTP* (Portuguese public channel).

### 3.3.1 Internal and external use of digital media

Digital media were not only intensively used by the social movements for communication tasks –external use–, but were also applied to internal communication to coordinate their own organization. WhatsApp was used to communicate amongst them, Twitter to send information and summoning and other applications like TitanPad or Mumble to do collaborative works; also massive mailings were done to lists of emails of the workers, easing out the logistic coordination and communication between centers. The workers of *Telemadrid* used WhatsApp in a ciphered language based on emoticons to avoid leakages.

But the most relevant use of digital media was the contact with the citizenship using, by order of relevance: 1) web pages; 2) social networks, especially YouTube; 3) blogs; and 4) Flickr to share photography. The majority of this media were created expressly as the own activities of each movement and shared linked contents to increase their visibility. From the first moment, many other media arose, –especially blogs– managed by individuals and organizations sympathetic to these movements, creating a diverse digital ecosystem that encouraged the debate.

The use of web pages as the main communication channels of these movements was soon corroborated by their high social influence. During the *Telemadrid* movement, a digital television channel was launched, TMEX –«*Telemadrid en el exilio*» («*Telemadrid* in exile»), <http://www.tmex.es>, with 30 workers– to broadcast online in streaming. Also, the web «*Salvemos Telemadrid*» («Let's save *Telemadrid*», <http://goo.gl/PAEHbw>) which, hosting over 2.000 articles and 300 videos, has had close to 400.000 visits (years 2012 and 2013, table 1), surpassing the official *Telemadrid* web page; some of their videos reached 200.000 reproductions in YouTube.

Table 1: data from the audience of the web "Salvemos Telemadrid" (2009-2014)

|          | Visitantes distintos | Número de visitas | Páginas | Solicitudes | Tráfico  |
|----------|----------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Año 2014 | 160781               | 295753            | 606086  | 1249395     | 32.08 GB |
| Año 2013 | 201337               | 374137            | 911608  | 7882828     | 80.30 GB |
| Año 2012 | 232337               | 379705            | 900009  | 10800641    | 57.21 GB |
| Año 2011 | 167724               | 248941            | 494644  | 8714317     | 19.73 GB |
| Año 2010 | 122915               | 173768            | 676633  | 7123022     | 16.36 GB |
| Año 2009 | 78717                | 108962            | 324889  | 5566681     | 13.79 GB |

Source: *Salvemos Telemadrid*. Visitantes distintos = Unique visitors. Número de visitas = Number of visits. Páginas = Pages. Solicitudes = Requests. Tráfico = Traffic

In the White Tide, the web page «*PaTuSalud/Sanidad en lucha*» (<http://goo.gl/PAEHbw>) used its own channels of Flickr to divulge photos and of Tweeter (<https://goo.gl/PfjzpQ>) for messages and calls, exceeding 10.000 followers and achieving several local and international trending topics.

The videos and other pieces of communication were done at a domestic level, with technical material of individual members and almost without intervention of professionals except in the case of *Telemadrid*. Despite that, they achieved well considered executions with regard to interest, quality of the content and formal presentation. In some cases they used sophisticated material as steady-cams or drones.

To have an understanding of the magnitude of the combined effects of the personal mobilization summed to the digital communication, it has been recorded that the White Tide obtained in a few days almost a million and a half signatures –exactly 1.413.000 (Fernández-Pineda, 2013)– in support of the Public Healthcare, 183.000 euros in a crowd funding to pay for court expenses (Fernández-Ulloa, 2015) and almost one million votes –exactly 951.975– in a sort of informal referendum named «*Consulta por la sanidad*» done in May of 2013 (GTCS, 2014).

### 3.3.2 Iconic identification elements

Being aware of the importance of visual elements to activate the memory and the engagement of the public, the movements of *Telemadrid* and the tides advanced over the communication experience of the 15-M and set identification icons that must be seen as a significant part of their communication actions.



Image 1. Identification bibs with the star in the *Telemadrid* movement. Source: *Libertad Digital*, 14/January/2013 (<http://goo.gl/rSFA7d>) (10/sep/2015)

*Telemadrid* envisaged bibs with the silhouette of a giant star (image 1), of which they printed 5.000 units. The idea was adopted by the Green Tide, who did thousands of shirts of that color and the White Tide, that intensively used white color, popularly identified as the color of the hospitals. So, the health-care professionals went to demonstrations with their working clothes (white coats) and black bracelets as sign of duel; additionally, white sheets with black ribbons were hanged in the windows of hospitals and health centers, while groups of neighbors repeated that gesture as a sign of solidarity in their houses. Exploiting, in consequence, this visual position, the tides used profusely their representative color, applying it to all the iconography used.

### 3.3.3 Non-conventional actions

Being loyal to the innovative character of the 15-M and wishing to transform any situation in a communicative action, the three movements developed examples of street marketing like flashmobs, events and happenings helping themselves with a creative use of mobile devices (Himpe, 2006: 208-211; Granados, 2014: 13-4). The human chains around hospitals –«Hug your hospital», image 2–, the «Green Marathon» (YouTube, 2015) to deliver a message to the Education Counselor and the actions of *Telemadrid* workers appearing in live transmissions



Image 2. Capture of YouTube's website hosting the video made on human chain "Embrace your hospital" organized by the White Tide and developed around the Alcorcón hospital, Madrid. Source: YouTube, <https://goo.gl/tQL4At> (12/sep/2015)

showing banners with slogans or performing *escraches*<sup>1</sup> to famous politicians are some of the most outstanding.

Thus, they combined offline actions with those done in digital media following the practices of new activism that alternate between online and offline (García-Galera et al., 2014:37).

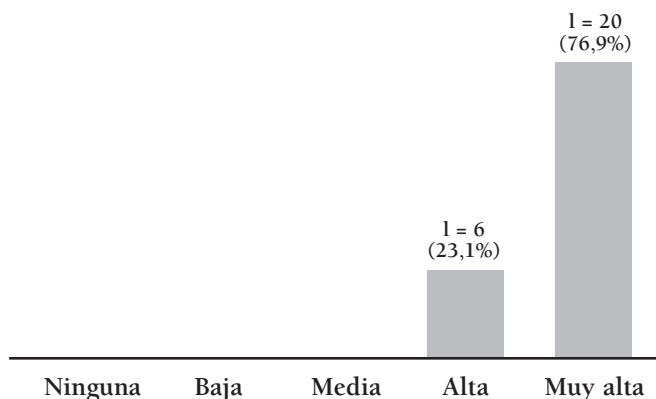
### 3.4 The valuation of the planners

After contrasting what has been studied up until now with the opinion of the planners and summing up the results of the investigation done about them, we found out that planners attach great relevance to the communication tasks of

<sup>1</sup> «*Escrache*» is the name given in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Spain to a type of demonstration in which a group of activists go to the homes or workplaces of those whom they want to condemn and publicly humiliate in order to influence decision makers and governments into a certain course of action. This term was born in Argentina in 1995 and has since spread to other Spanish-speaking countries (Wikipedia, 31/august, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escrache>).



Table 2: relevance of communication in the social movements



Source: investigation about planners APG-Spain. Ninguna = None. Baja = Low. Media = Medium. Alta = High. Muy alta = Veri High

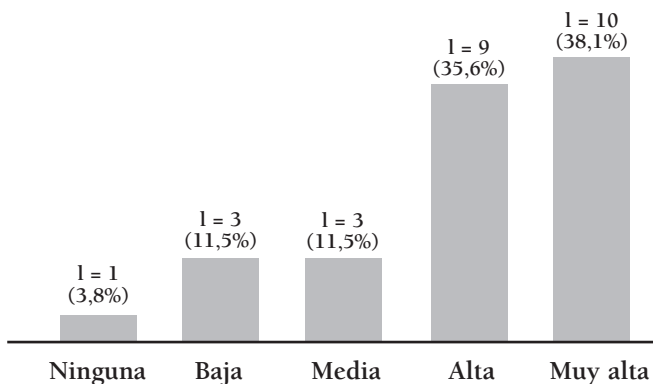
the social movements: for 23,1% of them it has a high relevance and for 76,9% it has a very high relevance (table 2). The main objective of this is, precisely, the proper divulgation function («so that the rest of the society knows their ideas», 84,6% answered this in the multiple-choice question) over the claiming function («as a way of social and political pressure», 57,7%) or the recruiter function («to summon manifestations», 38,5%).

But from a professional point of view, the planners are very critic with the quality level of communication achieved by the studied movements (White Tide: 53,8% of approval; *Telemadrid*: 34,6%; Green Tide: 15,4%), being situated under the 15-M (61,5%), the anti-eviction movement (57,7%) and the gathering of online signatures of Change.org or Avaaz, which obtain the highest percentage (73,1%).

With regard to the use of digital environments (table 3), 84,6% of the planners think that the digital media offer an exploitation rate more appropriate for the social movements than conventional media («medium»: 11,5%; «high»: 34,6%; «very high»: 38,5%), standing out amongst them the use of Twitter (96% of approval) and the use of web pages (73% of approval) in a multiple choice question, followed by WhatsApp and the sending of emails (both with the 34,6% of approval), but they also think that these movements make a use of general media that is in between «moderately innovative» and «very innovative» (53,9%). The planners also point out as «very important» that these movements have good internal communication (80,8%).

Taking into account what we see, the survey about the planners confirms the relevance of the communication tasks and the strategic approach to them,

Table 3: adequacy of the digital media vs. conventional media for the communication of the social movements



Source: investigation about planners APG-Spain

as well as the use of digital media, the creative use of conventional media and the capacity to auto-organize themselves managing adequately the internal communication, confirming although with subtle differences the teachings previously obtained in the in-depth interviews, in the first part of our investigation.

To finish the analysis of the planners' survey and reaching more personal matters, a large number of them considers «quite interesting» (34,6%) or «very interesting» (50%) to observe the evolution of those movements for their job as a strategic planner, especially because it allows them to «know and measure the social sensibility» (80,8%). 61,5% of them have actively participated in some of the recent movements, standing out amongst the reasons to do these things their personal identification with the movement (38%) or the sympathy with the proposed claims (23,1%). Their grade of affinity with this kind of movements is established in an intermediate (30,8%) or remarkable level (46,2%) but without being very high (only 3,8%). All of this allows us to reaffirm the interest projected by the planners towards the social movements and their implication with them.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Throughout our investigation we have been able to check how the 15-M has been the inspiring model of these movements and that these, in turn, have known how to evolve from the model including new initiatives, especially on an action and iconic level.

We have seen that the consistent use of the digital media allows passing through the information blockages and manipulations of conventional media and connect with the public in an even more complete way as it picks up and transmits the democratic foundation of these new social movements and allows the audience to feel they are part of them. The process of adopting the digital resources stands out for its speed and progressiveness.

Also, we have confirmed the main objective of our work: the relevance that social movements and planners attach to communication tasks and strategic approaches so that their claims are known, awakening the acknowledgement and citizenship collaboration. While the planners use a structured and verified process to establish the strategy and evaluate its effectiveness based on the knowledge of the public's opinion through a qualitative method (Sánchez-Blanco, 2014:135-6) –specially discussion groups and doing pretests and posttests to perfect the precision of the campaigns–, the social movements, despite their amateurism, seem to reach similar results employing a natural method that consists in incorporating the public opinions obtained in the democratic discussions before they do the communication actions and evaluate them later, testing the social response they get through digital media to correct and readjust the focus.

Likely, in advertising agencies and other communication companies, this tasks are developed by specialists or departments hierarchically connected that are responsible of each of the parts, while in social movements this is done through a horizontal relation and shared responsibilities and by people that rotate in their role in order to avoid wear. The model of social organizations seems to be slower and imprecise, at least at the beginning, but turns out markedly participative, achieving that all the members feel responsible of the initiatives developed, as expressed by José Juanco, strategy professor at the Complutense University of Madrid and Head of Planning of the agency Ogilvy & Mather Madrid, when he explains that the social movements show a way of organic communication inspired in living beings in contrast with advertising agencies that are organized in an architectonic way (in Piña, 2012).

We think, as a conclusion, that this investigation opens a new perspective: to analyze the organization systems and communication actions of social movements comparing them with the habits and methods used by professionals which apply structured and proven techniques. In this case it has been proven that the results obtained are notably similar although the process to achieve them has differed notably.

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