# WOMEN´S MARCH AND ITS COMMUNICATION

## *MARCHA DAS MULHERES E SUA COMUNICAÇÃO*

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**Abstract**
This article discusses the concepts of Social Movement and Grassroots Movements applied to the Women´s March that happened in Washington, Jan, 21st, 2017. It also presents a documental analysis of the digital communication strategies of this movement in three spheres: national, state wise (Maine) and local, focusing on the communication efforts made by a group from Mount Desert Island, in Maine. The results reveal an aspect to which Castells refers to as the internet's role in serving as an Ágora for Social and Grassroots Movements to echo their voices.

**Keywords:** grassroots movements, communication, women´s march, social movements, internet.

**Resumo**
Este trabalho discute o conceito de Movimento Social e de Movimento Grassroot aplicado à Marcha das Mulheres, que aconteceu em Washington, em 21 de janeiro de 2017. Traz também a análise documental da comunicação digital desse movimento em três instâncias: Nacional, estadual e local, focando nos esforços de comunicação feitos por um grupo localizado em Mount Desert Island, no estado do Maine. Os resultados trazem o que Castells tenta explicar sobre a Internet estar servindo hoje como a Ágora dos Movimentos Sociais, para que eles proponham suas vozes.

**Palavras- chave:** movimentos grassroots, comunicação, marcha das mulheres, movimento social, internet.

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Women's March was an event that happened on Jan, 21st, 2017, one day after the inauguration of the most controverted president in United States, Donald Trump. News diverge[2], but in general they say that were more than a million people in a cold Washington D.C. that Saturday. This number does not take into account all the Sisters' Marches happening in over 630 places. The Women's March website counted around 4.5 million people worldwide marching for the same reasons.

What arose as a sign of dissatisfaction with the government's position about Human Rights and other issues, could be compared to the 15M, a movement that started waves of indignation in Spain in 2011, and turned out to be an umbrella for lots of grassroots movements with demands in different spheres.

The study being presented here aims to discuss the communication strategies used by the Women´s March in general but focusing on the local actions in the town of Bar Harbor in Maine. Here we are going to analyze if the Women´s March can be called a grassroots or social movement, and what kinds of communication strategies are being used by people that participated in the march and some results of those communications.

To achieve this goal, we are going to use documental analysis of the Women´s March national website, the national Facebook page, the website maineresist.org, and the two event pages posted locally (Mount Desert Island[3]) on the social media website Facebook. The two events were posted to gather people for the march on January 21st and after that, to hold a post-march gathering, on February 3rd.

Another methodology used was the observation of that second gathering that had promised to plan actions after the march, to continue the pressure and to "be loud". These were some march's goals.

Finally, we conducted a semi-structured interview with M.D., the woman that organized two buses, taking people from MDI to the march in Washington.

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[2]  https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/womens-march-on-washington-a-sea-of-pink-hatted-protesters-vow-to-resist-donald-trump/2017/01/21/ae4def62-dfdf-11e6-acdf-14da832ae861_story.html?utm_term=.d55805ff078e
http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/01/23/womens-march-in-washington-was-3-times-the-size-of-trumps-inauguration-analysis-show/
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/21/us/womens-march.html?_r=0

[3] MDI is an island that assemble four towns with villages in each one: Mount Desert, Bar Harbor, Southwest Harbor and Tremont. The whole population is around 10 thousand people from the census of 2000.

**Grassroots Movements or Social Movements?**

What is studied and known as a Social Movement in Latin-American or European research (also known as a New Social Movements), in the U.S. includes another classification: grassroots movements. Therefore, to truly analyze the Women's March and its way of communication, it is necessary to clarify if we are talking about a grassroots movement or a social movement.

Alger & Mendlovitz (1987) say that a definition of grassroots can show "the absence of consensus where the term 'grass roots' is concerned" (p.335). They add that there is no 'analytic precision' or a definition that can be accepted by everybody. But they believe that "[it is] this very ambiguity that gives the term its vitality which invites more attention to the reality that it symbolizes" (p.335). To explain this broad way in which the grassroots concept can be understood, they state that the first time the expression was used widely was in the 1936 presidential campaign of the Republican Party. After that, the Dictionary of Social Reform, accepted as being grassroots movements ranging from the school board, Rotary Club, to the church. To this list, we can add the kind of grassroots movement that is populist, has its origins in the countryside, and has its bases in left-wing ideology, anarchism or communism and aims for participation, equality and equity. After all, there is the grassroots movement that was born in the urban scenarios. They lead the neighborhood sentiment into action, fighting to empower most poor, black or ethnic minorities. In short,

> Thus, "grass roots" seems to cover everything from the individual who may be apathetic – even hostile – with regards to electoral politics, to the highly focused and organized political cadres working from a fixed Marxist ideology, who, as a matter of strategy or tactics, has decided to work within a confined, generally circumscribed territorial political entity. (…) To the extent that there is an *operative meaning,* it is "working at the local level". However social activists who have a populist or political/ideological left perspective tend to use the phraseology: "working from the bottom up" (ALGER & MENDLOVITZ, 1987, p. 336).

What we can gauge from this discussion is that a grassroots movement is preferably local and works from the bases, a kind of action that mobilizes the community towards some practical and tangible result or goal.

On the other hand, taking into consideration the concept of Social Movements, we can find slightly differences. According to Goodwin and Jasper (p. 4, 2015), "a Social Movement is a collective, organized, sustained and noninstitutional challenge to authorities, power holders, or cultural beliefs and practices". This would lead us to believe that Social Movements, in general, are against everybody and every institution currently in place, which may not always can be true. Sometimes, a Social Movement, which can also be called a Countermovement, serves to maintain the status quo in society, to resist against change.

John McCarthy (1997) understands that a Social Movement in some ways wants to change a social order.

> A social movement is composed of a set of constituent elements. These include activists, who devote extensive effort to the ongoing movement struggle, constituents, who provide labor and material resources to support these collective endeavors by joining groups and taking part in movement activities; and adherents, or those individuals and groups who support the goals of the movement yet may never or only now and then actively work to bring them about (1997, p.473).

McCarthy also explains that Social Movements can have a Social Movement Organization, that is something more organized to meet the demands of the Social Movement. These "mobilizing structures" can be small and local networks or highly bureaucratized national structures (p. 473).

If we read Allan Touraine, we are going to learn that Social Movements focus on a collective answer motivated by questioning a social domination form (TOURAINE, 1998, p.113).

Still, in order to help build this conceptual basis for the analysis, we can use what Gohn proposes as "progressive social movements which work according to an emancipatory agenda, carry out diagnoses about social reality and construct proposals" (2003, p.14).

The concept of Social Movement has gone through several discussions throughout its history and carries in its name all the expressions arising from complexities related to a subject (which is often collective) in conflict, a central conflict of post-industrial society, as Touraine explained (1998, p 112). For him, no matter how many people deny it, the

idea of a social movement seeks to demonstrate the existence of a central conflict. This same conflict that opposed the prince and the nation, workers and employers.

> The notion of social movement is only useful if highlights the existence of a very particular type of collective action, that type by which a social category, always particular, questions a form of social domination, simultaneously particular and general, invoking against it values and general guidelines of society, which it shares with its adversary to deprive it of legitimacy. It is possible to reverse the formula and to recognize the existence of movements conducted by dominant categories and directed against popular categories considered obstacles to social integration or to economic progress (TOURAINE, 1998, p.113).

Scherer-Warren (1987, p.9) adds that Social Movements arise when groups organize themselves to seek liberation, to overcome some form of oppression and to work for a modified society. This author (1993, p.116) also states, following Touraine, that we have a "social movement when it comes to a social conflict that opposes social forms contrary on the use of resources and cultural values whether this is from economy, Science or ethics ".

However many of the authors and researchers point out that, in general, Social Movements are constituted from social conflict and originate from the bases of people organized against a form of domination, undeniably, other movements end up being formed by the elites, or "dominant categories," as Touraine (1998) says, and mentioned above. But Touraine does not delve into this possibility as deeply as Mccarthy does, the latter giving them a name: Countermovement. Although Touraine understands they exist, he believes Social Movements are much more than interest groups or instruments of political pressure, because they question the social use of resources and cultural models (TOURAINE, 1998)[4]. Maybe McCarthy points to them in a specific way because of the context. In the U.S., the differences between democratic (left wing) groups and conservative (right wing) groups are somehow balanced. Both sides have organized groups to defend their interests. One example can be the pro-life and pro-choice groups.

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[4] An example of interest groups that couldn't be called social movements in this Touraine concept are the hate groups. They don't challenge the system in a general way. They are focused on one form of acting. Here, a map that shows them in the U.S. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/02/mapping-hate-rise-hate-groups-170222085001012.html.

Both could be called Social Movements, in theory, and some of their actions could be seen as being grassroots actions, depending on the place or organizations involved.

Later, Touraine, rethinking his concepts, delved into the body of his work stating that a Social Movement is, at the same time, a social conflict and a cultural project and that "in all conflicts and in all Social Movements it is possible to hear a claim for equality, freedom, justice and respect of each one". (TOURAINE, 2006, p. 140).

From this discussion, in this article, we are going to understand the Social Movement as a group of activists and sympathizers claiming for social changes that aim to better everyone's life, based on equal opportunities and rights. Also, we are going to accept that a Social Movement arises when a group of people does not have access to all rights and opportunities, giving rise to conflict between those who want them for everybody and those who think that only part of the population can have such access.
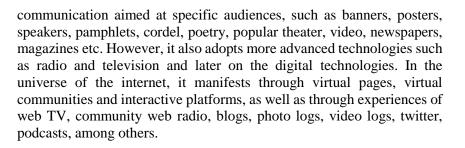
## Communication in/by these movements

Social Movements, depending on the context, have a specific way of communicating their demands or mobilizing more adherents. Frequently, they are alienated by the conventional media. Their subjects do not often make the news on TV or the front page of newspapers because of the media's biased view of society based on its own interests. Therefore, throughout history, Social Movements around the world have engaged in different communication strategies, almost always called alternative media, alternative journalism, or, as John Downing called it (2001), radical media. This "radical media" includes protests, rallies, theater, music, radio shows, street TVs, gatherings, events, interpersonal communication (often building networks), printed fliers or brochures, alternative newspapers, and signboards, among others.

However, nowadays, another kind of medium is taking an important place and helping with the spread of demands. This allows some Social Movements to provide their version of some stories, and to give a voice to those who are disenfranchised. Thus, the Internet has provided an alternative solution for the problem of not having space in the conventional or mainstream media. As Peruzzo (2012, p. 67) explains:

> […] community and alternative communication happen through group participation and physical presence, as well through instruments of

communication aimed at specific audiences, such as banners, posters, speakers, pamphlets, cordel, poetry, popular theater, video, newspapers, magazines etc. However, it also adopts more advanced technologies such as radio and television and later on the digital technologies. In the universe of the internet, it manifests through virtual pages, virtual communities and interactive platforms, as well as through experiences of web TV, community web radio, blogs, photo logs, video logs, twitter, podcasts, among others.

It is worth noting that the Internet had its origin in a free, countercultural atmosphere. This could be read as an indicator that this environment could finally provide the tools for Social Movements to develop strong far-reaching actions.

As Castells (2003) says, the Internet was born of the unlikely intersection of big science, military research and libertarian culture. Important university research centers and defense research centers were essential meeting points among these three Internet sources. With the original name of Arpanet, the network that was born in the US Department of Defense had characteristics that are still maintained: "a decentralized network structure; distributed computing power through the network nodes; and redundancy of functions in the network to reduce the risk of disconnection. They translated into flexibility, absence of a command center and maximum autonomy of each node " (CASTELLS, 2003, p.20).

The policy of academic freedom gave loose rein to the creativity of American scholars and provided resources that became viable technologies. The creation took place within the government and research centers. It was not on the market. "And so, for the benefit of the world, a corporate monopoly has lost the internet" (CASTELLS, 2003, 24). The author points out that the Internet was developed in a secure environment, provided by public resources and mission-oriented research, but did not stifle freedom of thought and innovation so much that students who participated in the creation of the Internet were not linked to counterculture movements or activists in the beginning.

Today, the Internet represents a way of establishing diverse thoughts and voices in the digital arena. In itself, the Internet represents the communicative process that all effective Social Movements desire; Its software code is still open and it has been set up in information exchange networks, long before it is explored by market companies. Since its origin, the Internet has proposed a system of potentially egalitarian access (without

referring to access to the equipment and education necessary to become an effective user) for various expressions, activities or forms, as Moraes evaluates: "Cyberculture universalizes the most disparate world views, the most contrasting modes of social organization, the most diffuse ambitions, without favoring single thoughts or domains by coercion" (2000, p.143). Internet ends up being the "Agora" of the third millennium, another configuration of space in which organizations can freely express themselves. Even facing the mainstream media inside of this medium:

> made by technical producers (journalists and editors), the discourse that can be considered unilateral, unified around a specific meaning. There is also the use of the Internet in another type of mediation, but also serves to reinforce this discourse that intends to be dominant. The piece of news here appears in the use of this same medium, the Internet, to supplant this homogeneous discourse and give access to other voices, to other versions, to multilateral possibilities. Internet access provides to groups that previously did not have a voice (often because they do not have a medium that favors or gives them access) the space to make the same informational discourse heterogeneous and multiple (BONA, 2014, p.152).

The yearnings for voice and communicative democracy end up having, in the digital communication, the possibility of freedom of versions, demands and exchanges. Small networks, which often existed and exist in real society, become potent and renewed in the great network (SCHERER-WARREN, 2002).

In addition to promoting the structure and maintenance of information networks, digital communication ends up leveraging the processes of mobilization, since it brings together in only one sphere the movements of the globe and their demands. Teixeira (2007) reflects that "there are many concrete examples of large social networks built in the virtual environment that have not only achieved great global reach, as materialized in the real world, with the dissemination of manifests and the articulation of protests in various parts of the world through networks that involve political and civil groups", meaning that much of what has happened in the digital realm has gone out into the real world, and so does communication. Suzina and Pleyers go beyond:

> it is in the joint and cross-fertilization between everyday life and politics, between the internet world and the public squares, between social networks and militant spaces, that claims are expressed and mobilizations

and social movements emerge to affirm citizenship and build public space (SUZINA; PLEYERS, 2016 p.6).

Through the construction of websites, blogs, posting videos on YouTube or even using email and social networks, Social Movements find a space for communicative actions. In this ambience that is digitized and often reflects what is outside the virtual, several types of communication take place.

Castells (2003b, p.256) proposes that the internet would be "the medium of communication and the essential relation on which a new form of society would be based – the one I call network society." Thus, according to Castells (2003b, p.277), there are three characteristics that define the interaction between the Internet and Social Movements. The first is that "there is in society in general a leap from organized Social Movements to networked Social Movements based on coalitions that are built around values or projects." The second characteristic, according to the author, is that "Social Movements in our society are developing more and more around cultural codes of values", and through the internet it becomes fundamental to launch the messages about the values that these movements carry. As a third characteristic, Castells (2003b, p.278) affirms that increasingly "power works in global networks and people have their experiences and build their values, their resistance and alternative trenches in local societies." It can be said, then, that the networks formed in the concrete world are now transposed to the digital world and this process that occurs in the digital environment is also transported to the concrete world, in order to strengthen the mobilization of movements in different actions. To prove that, feminists' groups start the use of it, with the goal to change the reality. As Druek and Zobl (2012, P.12) explain, "feminist movement make use of their own media for information and as a means for mobilization. In addition, the media forms a platform for criticizing the dominant structures and the contents of the mainstream media". So, we are going to check how the Women's March understood the Internet and what this medium offers as a way to maximize their requests.

**The Women´s March: how it happened**

It was right after the elections held on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 that a grandmother, called Teresa Shook, posted on her page on Facebook that she was really sad with the results of the elections and she would march on Washington, saying she did not accept the kind of government would come. The excerpt from Washington Post explains:

> Teresa Shook never considered herself much of an activist, or someone particularly versed in feminist theory. But when the results of the presidential election became clear, the retired attorney in Hawaii turned to Facebook and asked: What if women marched on Washington around Inauguration Day en masse?
> She asked her online friends how to create an event page, and then started one for the march she was hoping would happen.
> By the time she went to bed, 40 women responded that they were in.
> When she woke up, that number had exploded to 10,000[5].

And, like wildfire, her proposition got a response in the whole country and on January 3, 2017 more than 100,000 people had registered their intention of going to the march. Local events were arranged. People gathered to be together and participate. A website was created by a group of people, orchestrated from the backstage what would be the biggest demonstration of contrariety to an election result in the US history. After the inauguration day, diverse news media were saying there were around three times more people at the march than at the inauguration[6]. That says a lot. But what says more is how all these people got together so quickly and arranging some different groups or even people that had never marched before. All sorts of ages, professions, backgrounds, religions, beliefs were together on buses and in cars heading towards Washington and many other sisters' marches around the world.

In this paper, we are going to take a detailed look at the communication within the group from Mount Desert Island that went to the Washington march, keeping an eye on the national organization and its website.

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[5] https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/it-started-with-a-grandmother-in-hawaii-now-the-womens-march-on-washington-is-poised-to-be-the-biggest-inauguration-demonstration/2017/01/03/8af61686-c6e2-11e6-bf4b-2c064d32a4bf_story.html?utm_term=.57bb70984ede

[6] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/22/us/politics/womens-march-trump-crowd-estimates.html?_r=0

M. D., a Finnish counselor who arrived in Bar Harbor (village on MDI) when she was 4 years old was feeling bad after the elections, like Teresa Shook. She, who works with lots of people that need to be encouraged to face problems in life, a large portion of them women that need to be reconciled with their image and relation to the world, understood she needed to do something. She tells:

> I think it must have been an announcement printed in the Washington Post, something like that. So, I saw the headline. And I have been to marches before in DC. I was like: I'm going. Sure! Why not? And, you know, because after the election there was so much needed to feel. We have to do something. (…) people are constantly complaining about anxiety, fear, and nausea, and all the beginning impact of trauma, thinking of war. You know? People are scared[7].

She decided to go. It would be something she was used to, somehow, since she had participated in others marches. She just did not think she would be organizing two buses, with 110 people just from MDI.

> You know, I never know who was reading anything I write anyway, but I was just… And I don´t actually post on Facebook. But I just put: "I´m going. Who is with me?", thinking that I had a friend or two and we could go in my car together… And, before long, I had 10 or 20 people responding: yes, let's go. Yes, how do we get a bus? (…)
> It was just Facebook. And then I said: I wonder if I could get a bus. And then, so, I called the bus company, I asked them: would you do this? And they sent some astronomical fee, and I was like: hum. ok. But then I calculated it all and I said, you know, and even though it did seem like a lot, but then I recognized our bus was cheaper than anybody else´s bus. (…) When the day came, (…) within a few hours, the one bus was full. I announced at 8 o´clock in the morning and within a few hours the first bus was full. And people were like: "where is the second bus? We need a second bus. (…) And then again, within less than a day I had two buses, I had 110 people assigned to the bus.

From what we can see, what happened in the big scenario, with the "grandma from Hawaii", happened in the micro scenario, with M.D. and her willingness to go to the march. She had not planned at all to be a leader of two buses going to the Women´s March and suddenly she was somehow responsible for a trip that included 110 participants. Interestingly, everything happened through Facebook. Yet, even though the

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[7] Personal interview feb, 10, 2017.

march was mainly organized by Facebook, some other digital material was created to help to spread the information and to organize the gathering.

## National Women´s March website

From the time Teresa Shook introduced her idea until the event took place on January 21st, two and a half months had passed, and a lot was organized in that period. The march had an identity, a brand[8], some colors were chosen: reddish orange/ beige and black, and a website was organized. A national committee was formed and suddenly guidelines for expected behavior, mission and values, and a page with full resources for the march such as app, maps, ways of being safe in the activism, were developed. Products were being sold and a way of donating to the march was made available.

The website was fairly clean in layout and colors, giving more emphasis to the message. It had six main keys with sub keys: take action (with "a day without woman", "10 actions/100 days", "divestDAPL", "grabyourwallet", "a day without woman faq") , the march (with event details, speakers, honorary co-chairs, artists' table, regional transportation to D.C., accessibility in D.C, sisters marches, women's march global); resources (with no sub keys in the menu, but in the page, lots of subclicks), "about" (with "mission and vision", "national committee", "youth initiative", partners, sponsors, FAQ), press (with three links carrying official statements) and "store". Besides that, still on the main page, there was one highlighted key: "donate". This last key takes users to the crowdfunding for the march, called Crowdrise[9]. The explanation about the investment is: "All dollars raised will support Women's March efforts moving forward". No details were provided, as some crowdfunding campaigns are normally expected to show.

The list of the partners found in the key "About" might help explain why this march was organized so quickly and professionally.  Over 600 organizations were part of the Women's March. All those groups worked, somehow, locally or with the digital and

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[8] It was created by a woman from Portland-OR, Nicole Larue.
  http://www.underconsideration.com/brandnew/archives/womens_march_logo.php
[9] https://www.crowdrise.com/marchforward/

concrete network they had. In this way, they helped the march become as successful as it was.

The national website provided all the information one needed to join the march. It is clear is that the march did not want to replace any movement, but somehow support lots of those existing movements, suggesting some actions with them, like grabyourwallet.com, a movement that influenced consumer behavior to change the world.

The speech about sending the money in this or that direction was strong in the website. Other groups that were part of the march, or were being at least ideologically supported by it, had space in the website. One example is the Dakota Access Pipeline[10], that, under the key "Take Action", explains how we can help the movement by divesting our money from the banks that are supporting the construction of an oil pipeline in Native people's land. Moving that money could be a way of pressuring banks not to finance the transportation of oil under the Dakota territory.

Another interesting piece of information that our documental analysis picked up is that the national committee is formed by activists, mostly, of other previous groups. What this means is that the top leadership and the "brains" of the march have some roots in movements and organizations that were active before, locally or nationally, on different themes, like Planned Parenthood (reproductive and sexual research) or Natural Resources Defense Council – NRDC (environmental demands). This gives us the idea the march could work as an "umbrella" that could fortify other demands and actions.

**Facebook National page**

At the time of the observation, the National Women´s March Facebook fan page had 729.486 likes[11]. The "about" was fairly broad: "We are the Women's March."

The National Women´s March page works in the way stated in "about": fed people with information regarding different actions and movements.

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[10] https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/09/20/this-is-why-environmentalists-are-targeting-energy-pipelines-like-the-north-dakota-project/?utm_term=.39ed0c79fbc3
[11] Observation made on Mar/12/2017.

Posts bring reflection about Black People's rights, about solidarity around the world, about the immigrant situation in the U.S. and so on. The range of themes dealt with by the movement was large. Some posts had more participation, but we did not see inflamed discussions. It appeared that everyone that signed the page were trying to be on the same path of beliefs and action. We did identify passionate discussions and some people spreading hate, reactions that are really common in social media platforms open to everybody and with movements that confront the status quo. There were no erasing posts, but people in general did not encourage the haters.

**Maine March**

Moving towards the state "level", we analyzed the page organized by Maine for the Women's March. With the address Mainemarch.com the page was simpler than the national one but offered vital information for people who wanted to get engaged in local actions. The main keys were: "Updates" that provided news from the march, "get involved" (that includes: about, donations, contact info, regional hubs and guiding principles), "contact us", and register now. The hubs send the user to the Facebook page of each city. They decided to concentrate the news on the Facebook pages of each hub. The "Get involved" tab offers a presentation and contact information of local groups that provide concrete action with a list of movements, organizations and groups located in Maine. Some examples: Equality Maine, Maine Conservation Voters, Showing up for Racial Justice, among others.

A slight difference can be seen on the donation page. The goal was to mobilize people to the march and, after the march, the text was not edited to direct the donation to the national march or other organizations.

What can be perceived is that the Mainemarch page had a strong role on the days around the march. There were no updates about local actions on Women's Day or about any other concrete action. The website did not show who is responsible for the movement in the state, but directs the user to the Facebook page.

**Maine Resist Page**

This page works as a space of resistance against the whole political agenda that is being built after the presidential elections. Part of the presentation in the "About" tab explains: "The policies of the current U.S. administration do not reflect the values of Mainers. We believe in love not hate, kindness not fear, and equality for all. Maine Resists is a centralized resource for upcoming protests and other political actions happening in Maine that support social and economic justice."[12]

The website does not seem to be directly linked to the Women's March, but welcomes all kinds of groups, events, actions and agendas of different movements and themes, including women's efforts and obviously, the Women's March and its post-march events.

In short, Maine Resists is a calendar of actions taking place in the state. The main keys are: events, about, submit an event, by location and by issue. The last two are filters where users can find a specific event or action by the place where it is going to happen or by theme. Themes can vary from the Constitution, to LGBTQ, to Women's issues or religion and environment.

**Facebook Women´s March in Washington – Maine**

On March 12, 2017 this page had 2030 likes. For Maine, which has 1,328,361[13] residents, over half of whom are women, 2030 likes is a respectable number of users in a Facebook fan page.

The information shared in the page sometimes comes from the National Women´s March Facebook page, but there was some local information too. One example was a post, before Women's Day, that shares a report about women's life in the state[14]. What was highlighted in the post is the lack of protection offered to female workers based on the numbers:

> As we look forward to March 8th, a Day without a Woman's call for Strike, here is a document about the economic status of women in Maine. Something to think about: "Women make up just less than half of the

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[12] http://maineresists.org/about/
[13] https://suburbanstats.org/population/how-many-people-live-in-maine
[14] http://www.maine.gov/sos/womens-comm/2-2015WCReport.pdf

labor force in Maine, work for nominally lower wages than their male counterparts, and account for less than half of the State's unemployed. Women, however, also represent more than half of Maine's part-time workers. Part-time work is associated with lower wages and often offers little or non-monetary benefits such as health insurance, paid sick time, retirement plans, or disability insurance. Lack of paid sick time, for example, can put a mother's job at risk or at the least reduce her income when she has to miss work to care for a sick child. Lack of retirement plans means women rely to a greater degree on social security income in their later years. So, while girls and women in Maine are employed, many are in jobs that do not lead to long-term economic security and success." How about asking our legislators to pass bills that increase economic security for women in our state, like caregiver tax credits, preserving the ACA's individual access to health insurance, right to sick pay for part-time workers, and holding firm on boosting the minimum wage.

The post shows what the Women´s March on Washington - Maine Facebook Page proposed as a medium of communication between women in Maine. The goal was to offer what interests the women locally with some attention given to the national movement.

The difference from the Women's March National Facebook Page was that the participation and discussion in the posts were scarce. There were only some comments saying thanks for the information and asking for more information. From what we can observe in this research, the page exhibited a mix of options to participate but a lack of engagement in some actions.

**Facebook event page for the Women's March MDI**

Two event pages were organized by M.D., locally, for MDI´s community. One, as already mentioned, to gather people in MDI to go to the march, on January 21st.

We asked to be "invited" to do the analysis, since this "group" in the Facebook was private. The first message, which had the purpose of organizing people to go to the march, was posted on November 14th, 2016 with 29 different messages exchanged only on that day.

On March 12th the event page had over 600 people invited. However, that does not mean M. D. invited all these people. What happened is that after the event was held, this page became the page to get updates about post-event actions.

Support for the bus trip to Washington was quickly manifested, as told by M.D. and shown in the event page, and so grew the network of supporters for the idea. This support included ladies knitting hats (the pussycat hats), others making orange scarves (orange was the color chosen by Mainers to recognize each other at the march) and just giving them away, or even some preparing snacks for marchers or signs to support them at the town exit – there were all kinds of strong, favorable reactions. The community, somehow, wanted to be the voice, to give strength to their neighbors and friends. M.D. talked about the energy felt by people during the trip, and that can be sensed reading the whole thread. A fundraising campaign was launched to help people go, and it was posted in the page.

Another observation made in this analysis is that some people were acting as go-betweens for people that did not have a Facebook profile. This tells us a lot about whether or not social media are the main way of communicating and mobilizing.
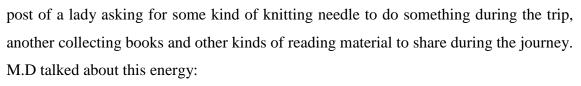
The registration platform to go on the trip was a Google survey, shared in the event page. The first bus was full on November 17th, 2016.

All the preparation for the event can be seen in the event page, also, some of the energy shared between the participants. It was clear that it was a reaction to all the fear people experienced from the election. One post in the thread, around inauguration day, showed it:

> I am feeling so upset about the inauguration I can hardly breath. It's like having the most terrifying nightmare, the kind you wake up from all sweaty and decide it's just not worth going back to sleep for the rest of night for fear the nightmare might return, except you realize that it's not a nightmare - it's really happening. It's really happening folks. I'm trying to focus on my family, on my community, on the amazingly beautiful island I live on- but to be perfectly honest, it's not working.

Despite this kind of feeling, or because of it, the whole thread is a testimony of a community being united around a goal. M.D. said people from the ages of 9 to 75 went to the march on the two buses. Men were a minority. Seventeen people traveled for free because of the fundraiser organized for the community. People went to a training session before the trip to understand the concept of a Non-violent Active Bystander. The thread showed all sorts of exchanges of care and motivation. Special note is made of the

post of a lady asking for some kind of knitting needle to do something during the trip, another collecting books and other kinds of reading material to share during the journey. M.D talked about this energy:

> Six million people worldwide were marching that day. How beautiful is that? How beautiful that our sisters and brothers from the other countries could see what we needed? Even if it wasn't seemingly, immediately, affecting them? To stand in unity! That is so beautiful. That was the most amazing thing… after recognizing, after being so afraid. The reason why we went, because we were afraid. And coming together and just feel nothing but connection, unity and peace.
> So, when the election happened it was so confusing and I felt so rotten with racism, prejudice, misogyny, that I was just: what? How did this happen? It shook me to my core…!!! It made me question my foundations. And what made me want do is to crawl into a hole. But whenever I feel that way, I know that I need to become really loud. Nope, you can't crawl into a hole[15].

The Facebook event page launched to residents of MDI and surrounding areas turned out to be an informal page of local mobilization on the island. The region does not have a Facebook page for the local actions because M.D. thought it would be too much and no one created a page.

In this way, the event page continued to be some sort of source for everybody that wants to get information or exchange feelings. It is a protected one, since in an event only participants can comment. It is like a sanctuary. It is close to M.D.'s goal for MDI: a sanctuary for all sorts of people. She says how and why that could be done:

> Yes, and to create sanctuary here. You know, literally, on Sunday I´m meeting some of the town councilors to talk about making Bar Harbor a Sanctuary City, making this a place that we are announcing that you would be safe here. And you will not be persecuted coming here. I mean, we are a tourist community, for Christ's sake. You know, it's good for business, which is not my priority. This is a diverse community. People come from all over the world[16].

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[15] Interview to the author given on feb/10/2017.

[16] On June, 6, 2017 Bar Harbor, the main village in MDI, by citizens votes, decided to turn itself a Sanctuary City, which will welcome immigrants and diversity. https://www.mdislander.com/opinions/sanctuary-supporters.

**Facebook event page for the post-march event**

Finally, our last digital document observed and analyzed was a little simpler than the event to go to the march. What we are going to include in this analysis is the observation in loco made at the event. The author was part of this event as an observer.

The page invited 404 people, had 33 confirmed there and around 100 effectively present. Other forms of communication could have motivated some other people that did not know about the Facebook event page.

The Post-March gathering was hosted by the YWCA that had, in that current week, a sign in front of the building. News in the local newspaper pointed to the event, too.

Originally, it was planned to be a potluck, a gathering of people that went to the march and wanted to go but could not. The goal of the event was to plan future actions. At this moment, this event turned out to be a small mirror from the big march. Local groups, active before the march had time to talk to the people. The event started with M.D. talking about the march and how people should take care about their lives and find the strength to fight longer. After that, there was a five-minute presentation with pictures from the march. Subsequently, the local state representative talked to the people. Then, people from A Climate to Thrive, Indivisible MDI and Down East Civil Action Alliance presented their ideas for action, inviting people to join their organizations. Also, a professor from the local college gave a concrete idea on how to support these groups.

On the event page, the participants had access to the speeches and picture presentation. There was no action after the event on this page.

**Conclusions**

We understand that the Women´s March, from Touraine's perspective, can be called a Social Movement because clearly it arose from a concrete conflict between people's beliefs for society and the government actions and rhetoric. No doubt that the misogyny and prejudice in the aggressive stance of the new president led a vast number of people to be mobilized and to speak out loud. The Hawaiian grandma invitation and the huge and quick response from so many average people, those that were not former

activists, said that a conflict was leading people to action. A Social Movement is, almost always, the answer to that.

The new element added to this case in special is that this movement arose and was created using as base several Grassroots Movements - local or national movements that have been fighting for different kinds of demands for years before this government took power. These can be called of Grassroots Movements because local action defines their routine. That means that what we can see in this case is a crowd that is originally engaged in a large Social Movement because a conflict provoked their action, becoming part of Grassroots Movements to establish a concrete base for the changes they want to bring about.

From this perspective, we can see the Women's March as a big umbrella for the other organizations and demands, as 15M was in Spain, in 2012[17]. The march fed the grassroots groups and they fed the march.

We can offer support for Castells' theories in this case since the internet and, specially, Social Media were the platforms where the ideological wildfire spread. It was through Facebook and its features that voice was given to the dissatisfaction of Teresa Shook, that it was made public and reflected others' dissatisfaction. The Greek Agora is now virtual, established by posts and events. At a local level, the pattern is repeated: all the communication regarding the march from MDI was performed through Facebook and Google surveys. However, the reaction was against what people could see in the same digital environment, but other mediums too, like newspapers, TV and radio. The network between movements, regardless of whether they are social or grassroots movements, is the result of Internet´s use. They can exchange information, speak out loud, share plans, talk about their version or their plan and mobilize actions that are going to be in concrete world, like the Women´s March in Washington.

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[17] To know more: Toma las Calles, toma las redes: el movimiento #15M em internet de José Candón Mena. [S.L.] Atrapasueños. 2012.

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