The Construction of Citizenship. An Approach from the Social Representations of Participation and Social Memory.

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Postmodern social problems include: multiple identities marked by a strategic political system and market rationality; the depoliticization of citizenship, stressing the political prestige and selflessness for the common good; and the political, economic and social crisis of the nation states. These are some of the lines of inquiry that lead us to investigate the meaning of citizen participation and active policy through social representations and social memory. When looking at the construction of citizenship, these approaches are conducive to a view of participation as an essential tool for strengthening practical civic and political culture. This research focused its analysis on the social representations of the participation of young people, and how they guide their styles and participative practices. It highlights their attitudes, motivations, and expectations. This psychosocial analysis aims to situate the context of the construction of citizenship, and the process of societal change, that is, of what we have called 'the paradigm from the individual to the social'. We are dealing with social representations (Castorina, Barreiro & Toscano, 2005; Moscovici, 1961) of participative and non-participative subject participation, and discussions of social memory (Jodelet, 1993). The hypothesis is that the participating subjects do not integrate a reference to historical thought in their social representations. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 40 participating subjects and distributed a questionnaire to 300 subjects from the population of Monterrey and its metropolitan area. The interviews were analyzed

using content analysis, and descriptive statistics were used to present the questionnaire findings. The results confirm the hypothesis and show that historical thought is not present in the social representations of citizen participation (Carretero & Voss, 2004). This provides scope for critical reflection. It is concluded that historical thought is not a necessary element for the formation of a shared identity or for the construction of citizenship, in the case of the population studied.

Some aspects that lead us to investigate the social representations of citizens and their political participation are the current social issues linked to a strategic political system and market rationality. These include the multiple identities marked by such systems and rationalities, and the citizens' link with the social memory (Jodelet, 1993; Moscovici, 1961). The depoliticization that comes from the political loss of prestige and growing weariness is another aspect, in addition to the political, economic, and social crisis, and lack of interest for the common good. In the construction of citizenship, citizen participation is considered, in actual practice, as the essential mechanism that strengthens democracy and political culture. The formation of active and critical citizenship involves the conversion of individuals into social agents with the possibility of projecting a societal change. In participatory terms, a less hierarchical interaction between citizens and State institutions would be favored, achieving a mutual improvement that entails an improved adjustment of democratic processes and positive results in terms of good government and perception of governance.

The research focuses on the social representations of young people's participation, and how these representations guide their practices or participatory exercises. Some elements are taken from a retrospective methodology used for the analysis of memory. Three important elements of socialization are considered in the life of the subject: family life, school, and social life, together with their influence on the integration of social representations of participation. From the topics approached retrospectively, the importance of critical and historical thought and its relation to collective memory (Carretero & Montanero, 2008; Carretero & Voss, 2004; Haas &

Jodelet, 2007), and social identity (Tavani et al., 2017), is discussed. Emphasis is places on the importance of citizen participation, and the value of the common good. This paper analyzes the findings on social representations (Moscovici, 1961) of citizen participation, social practices (Abric, 1994, 2001), and social memory (Haas & Jodelet, 2007).

The purpose of this psychosocial approach to participation is to include it in studies of citizenship construction and democracy processes. This would demand the comprehensive investigation of social sciences through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies addressing its complexity by stressing the challenge of building active and participatory citizenship that influences processes of societal change. Other important aspects concern the concept of citizenship related to rights acquisition and issues related to residence.

The name of this constructive process of citizenship is *the paradigm from the individual to the social*. It consists of taking individuals from the context of the market economy that favors a consumer lifestyle and social isolation (Durkheim, 1975; Venegas, 2017) to a context that favors the formation of social individuals with agency and power to change the society through their participatory practices, subjectivities and meanings, which can provide them the possibility of reflection and critical knowledge.

Other social psychology research (such as Hosftede, 1991; Swartz, 1999; Inglehart, 1991), showed the relation of the cultural context with different social dimensions. Their outcomes indicated cultural differences amongst nations in relation to individual and collective systems. If one considers the outcomes on different dimensions in relation with the participation topic, Mexico shows a high percentage of 81% in power distance and 2.35% in hierarchy evaluation (Ortega, 2018; see Table 1).

It is observed that the higher the score, the greater the power distance, and the greater the hierarchical distance, individualism, masculinity, conservatism, egalitarian commitment, competency, harmony (understood as there being no need for changes in the establishment), and intellectual autonomy.

Table 1. Summary of scores from two nations in connection to cultural differences

Nation	I	C	PM	CIn	DP	J	C I	M	Masc	Comp	EI	A	AA	Al
Mexico	30*	4.03	21	33	81*	2.3*	4.99	-.11	69*	4.34	82	4.67	3.23	4.20
France	71	3.35	27	23	68	2.16	5.45	.01	43	3.89	86	4.31	4.41	5.15

Note. Source: Hofstede, G. (1991), *Cultures and organizations. Software of the mind.* London: Mc Graw Hill.

I = individualism; C = conservatism; PM = post materialism; Cin = interpersonal trust; DP = distance from power; J = hierarchy; CI = egalitarian commitment; M = modernization; Masc = masculinity; Comp = competence; EI = uncertainty; A = harmony; AA = affective autonomy; Al = intellectual autonomy.

In his research, Hosftede (1991) noted that individuals belonging to collectivist societies hold significant degrees of power distance, as is the case of Mexico. Acceptance and obedience are mainly valued in these collectives, and this fact is helpful for interpreting the results obtained on representations of participation. In his paper, Hosftede also notes autocratic and authoritarian attitudes. These behavioral characteristics are shared by individuals in charge of organizations and institutions within collective systems. Studies on ethno-psychology conducted in Mexico by Diaz-Guerrero (2002), mention that in Mexican the problems are faced through family support and filial obedience, and love and feelings are preferred over gaining power. Within Mexican culture the historic and traditional way of achieving power is through love, affection, sympathy, friendship, and comradeship (Diaz-Guerrero, 2002). These are spaces where corruption grows and is invigorated (Ortega, 2018).

Educating citizens for citizenship participation so as to obtain an active citizenship would become the completion point of a social thinking formation process (Rouquette, 1973). By proposing the integration of social memory – which is related to historical thought in this research – the intention is to generate critical social thinking. What is thought and how it is thought reveals what it is transmitted, and the motivation and identities of the actors. Social thinking either generates a social shift or does not. Cultural bases are also fortified, so that in the case of citizens' participation, democratization expands and penetrates all spaces and timings of society. In this sense, studies on social representations of participation, social practices, and social memory are essential for understanding this process.

The research was conducted on youngsters inhabiting the City of Monterrey and its metropolitan area. It involved participatory and non-participatory practice. The results showed the content of social representations and social practices as generators of meaning. This aids an understanding of participation and collective action, considering the specifics of the sample and the prospective reflection on changes required by citizen participation related to quality and effectiveness.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN THE CITIZENSHIP CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES

Evolution of contemporary societies has accelerated during the last 30 years; shifts are evident in economic, social and political aspects, and undoubtedly affect the lifestyles of people. Current lifestyles are influenced by market neoliberal rationality, frequently generating societies characterized for being apathetic, indifferent and hedonistic. These characteristics hinder people from upholding community and social values, such as the common good. Such characteristics therefore keep people from switching from the belief that the common good has no ownership to the knowledge that the common good belongs to all and an awareness of the co-responsibility that this implies.

Currently, the values that govern contemporary societies are hedonism and individualism, placing the human at the center of seduction and personal desire, with values related to immediate desires and instant, materialistic, and ephemeral happiness (Lipovetsky, 1986, 2003). Individualism is the criterion by which individuals are architects of their own destiny, where self-merit is highlighted and reality begins in the self (Lipovetsky, 1986, 2003). Putting aside social values such as living within society, social duty, and the co-responsibility of our actions at a social level results in disinterest in politics and the management of public interest (i.e., the management of the common good), along with apathy for citizen and political participation.

In their work, Bréchon and Galland (2010) indicate that a society with a materialistic-individualist tendency loses the sense of collective interest in the common good. People are more concerned with personal fulfillment and less concerned about the Other, or the future of humanity. As a consequence, there exists vulnerable and scarce citizen participation.

This has been addressed and analyzed by authors such as Tocqueville (2002), and Lamberti (1970) who stressed the self-centered features of contemporary democratic societies. For Durkheim (1976), any life in common would be impossible if no values above individual interests exist, such as freedom, justice, equality, and political pluralism. Durkheim mentions the individual who, despite being free, cares for others and defends the human and the common. The determination to establish a society and school accountability that results in "socially" focused education, forming children and youngsters empathic with the collective is important. It is then considered that the education of citizenship should involve learning that reinforces the path going from critical thought to action, from a situation assessment to decision making, and definitely, to the understanding of consequences and responsibilities.

Citizen participation requires a prior reference related to willingness to participate, considering psychosocial factors (commitment, attitudes, motivation and identity), related to social meaning and accessibility to participation. Participation implies, then, synchrony between representations and social practices that allows subjects to guide their behaviors (Moscovici, 1961).

The study of attitudes points out that favorable attitudes become behaviors, when the object is accessible, this is, there is a strong object-evaluation association, and the resulting attitude is an essential tool to predict the relationship (Javaloy, Rodríguez & Espelt, 2001). Moscovici (1989) defines the attitude as the more or less favorable disposition a person has towards the object of representation, and therefore expresses the evaluative orientation in relation to that object.

Concerning motivation to participate, it is considered a process generated through the object-evaluation relationship that integrates the construction of meaning, meaning in the way of representing the subject and related practices. Motivation is the dynamic that determines whether or not to participate, participatory styles and places of participation. According to the theory of the mobilization of resources (Klandermans, 1983), the motivation to participate mainly in collective actions depends on the perceived success of the action.

MEXICO AND THE REFERENTS OF PARTICIPATION

In Mexico, citizen and political participation is considered a result of corporatism and political bargaining. Historical events such as the Mexican Revolution show the failure of fusion between society and the State in terms of social and political representation (Olvera, 2009). Contrary to the creation of an active and participatory citizenship, an authoritarian state project was founded that culturally established the lines to be followed, such as authority cult education, submission, favors exchange, domination, and repression, among others (González & Garduño, 2006). A political system under a state-centric model was established (Cavarozzi, 1993; Ténzer, 1992), with clear dimensions for public management, together with a devaluation of the public realm and an emphasis on the dynamics of corruption and stagnation of collective action and political culture. The notion of citizen and political participation masked with forms of direct democracy such as referendum, plebiscite and popular initiative are rarely used within the authoritarian government model.

According to González (2004), collective action and participation then resort to vindication, criticism, protest, and negative evaluation and the pursuit of respecting human rights. In most cases, collective action manifests through protest and confrontation from civil associations intending to lessen domination of the state through exercise of power. These forms of participation characterize contemporary collective action. Access to a democratic-participatory model requires civil society mobilization with collaborative collective action frameworks, and establishing mobilization strategies that initiate, build and cement a new citizenship structuring a new participative identity. The democratic model Mexico aspires to requires participation as a fundamental premise, and organized citizens' participation to generate influence when taking important decisions for society. Citizens are to take part in the formulation, execution, and evaluation of political actions. Management of public affairs, as well as the recognition of social problems, and their accountability when it comes to the same problems, and mechanisms and tools that allow their resolution, are also duties of the citizen. Orfali (2016) points out social representations as essential support in the appreciation of concepts linked to the political realm and its function in social dynamics. As for citizens' participation, following Rouquette (1988, 1998), the proposal to include different types of citizens, in this case, an actor citizen with

knowledge of the world, may represent a transformation of political practices and social representations. The identity and stance of such a citizen are then induced by his citizen positioning.

PARADIGM OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE SOCIAL

The influence of the current social economic context causes the detriment of social values and significantly increases their individualization. Most important to note is that individualism fostered by the global economic context generates, according to Castel (1995), a positive and a negative individualism. A positive individualism exists mainly at the middle and upper layers. With resources possessed, these layers become more independent from social ties and integrate lifestyles which, although not ideal due to their close relation to consumption, tend to a more positive and empathic attitude in social terms. Research on values in France conducted by Bréchon and Galland (2010) shows that the values of autonomy referred to, do not imply distancing from interest for the social, the public or the collective. Continuing with Castel (1995), individualism with negative tendency occurs mainly in vulnerable groups, with no economic, cultural or educational resources, and suffering from social ruptures and the dysfunction of social ties (Paugam, 2014), translating into the decomposition of family, sociality, employment, and education interactions, among others. This vulnerability process undermines a set of social relations and social cohesion.

In this sense, it is important to note that in the current context, young people live with multiple difficulties to achieve personal and social development. They feel restrained by a system or economic-structural power that defines them and largely controls them. This gives rise to an attitude of resistance that can be favorable or unfavorable. On the one hand, it opens the possibility of becoming an inward reflecting individual who manifests outwards with resistance, reflection, critical thought and participation towards social change. This individual sees themself as a principle of meaning in a continuous effort path under the principles of the actor and agency. On the other hand, there is unfavorable resistance reflecting inward and manifesting outward the frustrations and inequalities faced. This annihilation of the individual could explain the current violence. Authors like Boucher, Pleyers and Rebughini (2017), and Wieviorka (2015) point out the concepts of subjectivation and de-subjectivation as the means to become a subject or to be

subject. The construction of citizenship and the process of democracy are linked to this theoretical perspective that provides a basis for the analysis of the paradigm *from the individual to the social*.

The challenge of the paradigm *from the individual to the social*, is to transform the individual installed in a neoliberal political-economic market environment, favoring social isolation under a socialization imposing a normative lifestyles guide (Durkheim, 1975; Venegas, 2017), into a social subject with the power of agency and social change, identified and characterized for their practices, subjectivities and inter-subjectivities that define their identity, allowing them to reflect, give meanings, integrate social representations, and to conform to a critical and divergent social thought from which to build active citizenship with the ability to participate in their environment and promote social changes (Sánchez & Gil, 2015).

This paradigm establishes three continuous processes: resistance, agency and social change, where everyday life, social representations, practices and social memory acquire epistemological relevance in the study of citizen participation and the construction of citizenship. For Jodelet (1989), social representations offer the possibility to go in depth when it comes to daily practices favoring the perspective of intervention and change.

Citizen and political participation are a form of appropriation of the public space belonging to society. They involve being part of, taking part, and being actively present in the processes that concern and interest all. This means taking interest in the public good, to influence the processes of decision making on social, environmental and cultural resources. According to Aduriz and Ava (2006), participation consists of three basic conditions: involvement, commitment and sense of identity. In addition to another condition of great importance is social meaning, that is, its social representation.

Formation of participation in the process of building an active citizenship, is the culmination of a formation process of social-critical thought from which social change is formulated and cultural bases are strengthened so that democratization extends and penetrates all spaces and times of society.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS, SOCIAL MEMORY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CITIZENSHIP

Before approaching social representations (Moscovici, 1961) and social memory (Jodelet, 1992), and their relationship to the construction of citizenship (Ortega, 2014), it is important to give space to the concept of social thinking as the framework for understanding these relationships.

Social thought is a socio-cognitive process underlying observable behaviors, arises in interactions between individuals, and funds society's form of operation (Rouquette, 1973; Garnier, 2002). It manifests in society and it expresses itself in daily life assuming different forms, shapes, dynamics, symbols, meanings, beliefs, judgments, values, and rules. It is everyday life where social thinking is formed and transformed. It is immersed as the genesis of rumors, religions, rituals, dogmas, value judgments, social representations, and social memory.

Present in intra- and inter-individual interactions, social thinking links closely to reality through participating in its construction (Garnier, 2002). The presence of social thought is in the configuration of everyday meaning, such as, health, education, environment, citizen and political participation, and communication among many other social issues. Analysis of social thinking becomes essential to understand the formation and dynamics of social reality, the logic of processes and the impact on behavior and action. Windish (1989), Moscovici and Hewstone (1984), as well as Doise, Clémence and Lorenzi-Cioldi (1992) distinguish *social thinking* from *scientific knowledge* as of the notion of common sense corresponding to thought on social objects, and emphasizes different systems of thought, worldviews, and above all underlines an epistemology of everyday life. For Moscovici (1961) and Jodelet (1989), it is a natural thought innately acquired, shared and elaborated socially for the purpose of immediate solutions, starting from experience, from individuals that articulate their meaning in their daily life and not in views with a precise objective.

Rouquette (1996) marks the great lines of the architecture of social thought, providing consistency to his analysis under two fundamental and important principles, so as to integrate the diverse elements composing it. These principles range from the most unstable to the most stable, and from the most particular to the most general, where social representations show less inter-

individual variability and greater level of integration in connection to attitudes and opinions (Flament & Rouquette, 2003).

The study of knowledge stresses the investigation and understanding of these, and not an analysis of action and behavior; consequently, it points out the relevance of the study on social representations (Moscovici, 1988). The study intends to explain: how do individuals think in their daily lives? How do they understand their world? How do they use information transmitted by science or common experience? Why do individuals think in their daily lives? How are the objects represented?

From the study of social representations considered forms of everyday knowledge or common sense, shaped and shared in social interaction, from practical perspective of organization and control of the environment by giving meaning to objects (social, material and imaginary), social representations lead and guide behaviors and communications (Jodelet,1989).

The common reality is observed from the social representations through the contents and representational processes, and from its double aspect: the constituted *(the products)* and the constituent *(the processes).* The social representations refer to appropriations of contents that can be ideal, imaginary and symbolic; they are recovered individually or collectively, and communicated through discourse, language, material dispositions and practices. The social representations appear as perfectly observable phenomena with different complexities according to the societies, their culture, their beliefs, the specific experiences of the groups and the social memory. The socio-cognitive processes determine the formation, organization and transformation of the contents of the social representations and give an account of their functions and social effectiveness (Jodelet, 1989).

Social representations distinguish from other individual cognitive phenomena and from socially produced knowledge systems such as science or ideology due to their genetic and functional characteristics and their form. Social representations such as knowledge establish a relationship between an object circumscribed in the social, ideal or material environment and a subject (individual or collective), in interaction with other subjects where the sense of belonging, identity and social communication appear as relevant. Symbolization and interpretation mark this

relationship expressed by the subject through their social representations. As mentioned, social representations are practical knowledge as they encourage position statements in connection to the object and they guide behaviors. Social representations are related to the social insertion of the subjects originating them, this is, with the place that the individuals have in the social structure, their belonging in the groups, and their context of life. At the collective level, social representations are a tributary of their forms of production (media and institutional).

Moscovici (1961) developed two processes for understanding social representation: *objectifying and anchoring,* that show how the social realm transforms scientific knowledge into representation and, when anchored in society, the representation transforms the social realm. Social representations have two systems: the *socio-cognitive system*, composed of a cognitive component with psychological texture, and another social component in which cognitive processes are conditioned by the social context in which the representation is elaborated and transmitted. The second, *the contextualized system*, is doubly determined by the discursive context that formulates or discovers a social representation, and by the social context integrating the ideological context and the place occupied by the individual or group in the social system.

The first theoretical developments on social representations emphasized the study of the content of representation considering the generating and functional processes, as well as dimensional and logical aspects of social representation (Moscovici, 1961). Recent research addressed another important aspect of social representation, its structure and the dynamics of its dimensions. For instance, the research by Abric (1984, 1994a, 2003) mentions the theory of the central nucleus and the peripheral system. This research approaches both references as to complement the analysis.

According to Abric (1994a), all representations organize around elements called central and regrouped in a structure called central nucleus, composed of elements strongly connected between them, giving representation its significance, where two social representations can have the same content and vary in their organization presenting different central elements. The centrality of the elements is not only defined by its prototypicality or its quantitative aspect, but also by the qualitative element that gives it meaning. This aspect was conducted with open questions on the significance of citizen participation in this research. And, jointly with different

topics, e.g., motivation for participation, and participatory styles. This paper does not show data on these topics. For the hierarchical evocation, there was no centrality test for verification of the centrality of elements. However, it is inferred on the elements of the central core when comparing the results obtained in the open questions. The social strongly determines the central nucleus, and holds links with standards and values. The central nucleus is the fundamental element of the representation because it determines the meaning and the organization of the representation at the same time, having two functions, that is, as a generator where it creates or transforms the meaning of the representation's constituent elements and as organizer determining the nature of the links by holding together the elements of the representation, unifying and stabilizing the representation.

The central nucleus is the most stable element of the social representation, being resistant to change. Every modification of the central nucleus entails a complete transformation of the social representation. Peripheral elements organize around them; the central core determines their value and function. The peripheral elements constitute the essence of the content of the social representations, they are its most active and most concrete part. From the point of view of significance, the peripheral elements depend on the central nucleus due to the close relationship they hold. They are the most accessible, communicable, and variable elements and, being more flexible and dynamic, they are more open to the variability of particular circumstances in the social and cultural contexts of groups. They have several functions: concretization, regulation and defense. The social representation and its two components – the central nucleus and the peripheral elements - function as an entity where each part has a specific role but which is complementary to the other.

The approach of the social perspective of the concept of citizenship presents an opportunity for the social sciences to investigate social thinking through social representations (Moscovici, 1961), culture and the subjectivities constructed in the social interactions of everyday life and life experience. Undoubtedly, to deepen in social thought is the task of our time, analyzing the social logic of reasoning (Doise, 1993). Also of importance is the need to consider the practical subject whose cognitive activities are motivated and conditioned by social

insertion, in other words, by its citizenship in the etymological sense of the term (Rouquette, 2009).

As to social memory, integrated by meanings and experiences of everyday life where time and language appear as social frameworks (Halbwachs, 1994, 1950), memory intervenes in the process to make the past approach the present, coming from its influence and from symbolic and significant memories. In memory, time is sense and meaning, and language is the vehicle of the meanings that memory brings to the present; it is a pillar of edification and of firmness of culture. By giving meaning and significance to past events and displacing it to the present through language and memory, the past becomes present, anchored in reality, exerting influence on identity and on construction of society through continuity.

Memory exposes a group from within, from the recognition of its past (Halbwachs, 1950; LeGoff, 1991), and history exposes a group from the external context, from official memories, from power. Memory has no limits, history has concrete limits. The interests are different, what remains is within the domain of memory, and what changes is within the domain of history (Corcuera, 2005, as cited in Juárez, Arciga & Mendoza, 2012).

In the process of building an active citizenship, the memory's role is to create and renew meaning, beginning by the frames with which citizens feel identified when sharing certain social values and historical stories with which they adhere emotionally. Memory favors the understanding of what happens in the present.

Through important official historical accounts, history loses its integrating force, yet, it is important because it is necessary to strengthen the identity of new generations. Historical greatness is intended to continue feeding young people, as long as it is done in a responsible manner. Primarily, the task of memory enrichment must continue creating firm societies with identity, with the knowledge that despite of constant human mutability and changes in humanity, something essential always remains in society (Álvarez, 2007).

For Álvarez (2007), a rational understanding of the past is as important as any basic scientific knowledge. Undoubtedly, the existence of a social memory reworking and digesting past processes and conflicts is one of the most solid foundations for social cohesion, and for

concretization of citizenship. Although, at present, society shares a complex daily life under important conditions, with contemporary societies continuously shifting between global-universal values and national-local values, each with particular readings and perspectives, this complexity unquestionably influences the relegation of the importance of the common good, the political disinterest, and poor citizen and political participation.

This research analyzes social representations of participation and some aspects of social memory, considering it as a motivational element of critical thought, and an important source for identity and social cohesion. The interest in social memory underlies that it constituted an awareness interested in the past, which could eventually transform the present through an effective force of action (Carretero, 2007; Carretero & Voss, 2004).

METHOD

The main objective of the research is to identify the dimensions that make up the content of social representations of participation, with interest in the meaning of participation. It also addresses the motivations, expectations and participation forms of young people. For reasons of extension of this article, data related to these topics is not included. In addition, social memory is explored by relating it to socialization issues with possible influence on the construction of citizenship, e.g., education, or the family or social context. The analysis of the participatory dynamics used the retrospective technique, including these three topics: the influence of history and its characters, the influence of education and family dynamics. The objective is to identify links between social representations and social memory. All three topics favor the understanding of the citizen formation process. The analysis stresses the influence of memory and history in the motivation for participation, intending to demonstrate that acquiring a critical thought and a historical reflection adds to the formation of a participatory citizenship (Ortega, 2014, 2011, 2006).

Type of Study and Sample

The study is descriptive and correlational. It comprises two methodological application phases. The first phase involves a quantitative and qualitative study with qualitative predominance. In the first phase, the sample comprised young people from Monterrey city and its metropolitan area (7 municipalities), aged between 18 and 35 years old. The choice of sample is justified given the

importance that current lifestyles represent for young people, who give priority to individuality in the sense mentioned in the introduction section, where the value of common goods and critical thought is diluted when seeking hedonism (Chávez & Ortega, 2017, 2018). Hence, the relevance of the proposal called the paradigm "from individual to the social", in terms of changing social thought.

The sample is not probabilistic, it includes 300 subjects from different socio-economic strata. Their ages range between 18 and 35 years old, with or without participatory practices. Distribution of the sample for the first stage of the research is as follows (see Table 2):

Table 2. Sample Distribution

MUNICIPALITIES	Monterrey	Guadalupe	San Nicolás de los Garza	Apodaca	Gral. Escobedo	Sta. Catarina	Juárez	San Pedro
	25%	15%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
GENDER	Male		Female					
	49% (147)		51% (153)					
AGE	15 to 19 years old		20 to 25 years old		26 to 35 years old			
	33%		33%		33%			

Note. Sample characteristics for the first stage of the research.

The second phase consisted of interviewing 40 subjects from different socioeconomic strata of ages ranging between 18 and 35 years old considering the inclusive variable typology proposed by Ziccardi (2004), this is, political, citizen, social and community participation.

Instruments

In response to the triangulation methodological proposal (Apostolidis, 2003; Caillaud & Flick, 2016), three instruments from different methods were used to approach the social representations.

These instruments allow a global vision of the object of study and the validity of the elements or dimensions' integration present in the social representation of participation. It is noted that when using different resources to approach the object, triangulation would occur in a weak first level considered by Flick (2011; as cited in Caillaud & Flick, 2016). However, the research intends to approach a strong triangulation (Flick, 2011, as cited in Caillaud & Flick, 2016), such that each method and instrument used – questionnaires, scales (evaluation and participation), interviews, and retrospective interviews – allows a better approach to social representation of the participation and to understanding of the object.

Description of the different methods to approach the object is as follows: for the first phase, the data was collected through an open- and closed-questions questionnaire on participation. The questionnaire includes questions about motivation to participate, forms of participation, participation spaces, and participation evaluations by means of scales. Descriptive statistics supported the analysis. This article includes no data on these instruments for reasons of space. Nonetheless, aspects related to findings do appear.

The approach of social representations of participation was through a hierarchical evocations test, making a first association of words and then selecting the most important ones, assigning to each one a number from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and so on, consecutively (Abric, 1994b). Then, the test was analyzed using the crossing of frequency and range of importance from the Abric's (1994a, 1994b) proposal on central nucleus and peripheral elements, organized in the table into 4 spaces. No centrality test was applied to confirm the elements of the central nucleus, although, conducting comparison of these data with data obtained from the answers to open questions about the social representation of the participation, and the meaning of the participation, and then, analyzed with a content analysis identifying the most significant categories.

The second phase of the research consisted of semi-directive interviews on participation, relating it to memory, in a retrospective way. This involves bringing fresh memories to present, addressing three topic areas with influence on the learning of participation. The topics investigated in the memory were: family, school and the social context. The data collected from

the interview were analyzed using content analysis (see Table 3 for the topics addressed in the interviews).

Table 3. Topics addressed in the semi-directive interview

Family topic	School topic	Social topic
- Family influence to participate - Family link and participation - Family decision-making (education, holidays, interpersonal relations)	- Influence and encouragement to participate, motivation from teacher to participate - Memory of a historical event, a character of influence motivating participation - Evaluation of history and civic education courses - Discussion practice in class, debates - Importance of history for one's participation	- Socio-economic conditions at the start of the participative practice - Feelings and emotions motivating participation - Evaluation of participation (difficulty/ feasibility) - Attitude in the face of participation - Assistance, support from any person for participation

Note. This table details the topics addressed in the semi-directive interview.

THE RESULTS

Following are the results obtained in relation to the content of the social representation of participation in young people. Due to the extent of the research, this article only shows results of the social representations, hierarchical evocation, and the main categories derived from the content analysis of open questions on the significance of participation.

Data shows that social representations of participation in young people could mainly comprise elements related to, or characteristic of, a *social participation* (Ziccardi, 2004), where individuals belong to associations, and organizations who defend the interest of others, frequently under vulnerable conditions. Results of contents rarely indicate associations and speeches linked to a citizen or political participation, such as voting, discussions, or participating in society decisions. The closest to citizen participation or political participation are associations

commenting on a topic or event, but also showing low percentage of response in open questions (see Table 4).

Table 4. Results obtained from main replies on meaning of participation (content analysis)

SIGNIFICANCE OF PARTICIPATION		
(content analysis – open questions, main answers)		
CATEGORIES	**%**	**LINKED TOPIC**
SUPPORTIVE SUSTENANCE	43%	*Aid or support* low income people and under vulnerable conditions
COLLABORATIVE	28%	*Team work* for altruist activities
EVALUATIVE	19 %	*Opinion* on any current topic or event
CHARITABLE	10%	*Donate* to people in need
TOTAL	100% (300 subjects)	

Note. The percentages were calculated by dividing the number of participants whose responses were classified with that category and the total number of participants or the sample size. These percentages show that the categories most mentioned in the discourse are related to the social representation of participation as an activity related to help and support for people in need. Source: the present research.

The supportive sustenance category mainly expresses elements related to *"aid"* and *"support"* for low income, and needy population. Such activities take place in spaces as churches, schools, and the vulnerable community due to natural disasters. This participation is understood within a most individual context. As to the term *"collaboration",* it is understood as a team work participation, performed in sporting, work, and family settings.

The word *"cooperation"*, links to an action stressing individuality. The evaluative category shows a low percentage when they give an *"opinion"* on a topic or event. The same tendency appears in the hierarchical evocation test. Results of contents rarely indicate

associations and speeches linked to a citizen or political participation, such as voting, discussions, or participating in society decisions. This space is where less participation motivation exists, and where it is considered ineffective in political matters.

The figures below shows data from the stimulus item hierarchical association *participation*, and shows the three words ranked as the most important in relation to the word stimulus, stressing the fact that the same no ranked words mentioned in the first spontaneous free association. These relations also appeared in the open questions content analysis concerning meaning of participation. Then, these could constitute the semantic universe of the object studied due to the explicit and latent feature in the discourse that allows access to the figurative nucleus of social representation (see Figure 1 for *free evocation*, and Figure 2 for *hierarchical evocation*)

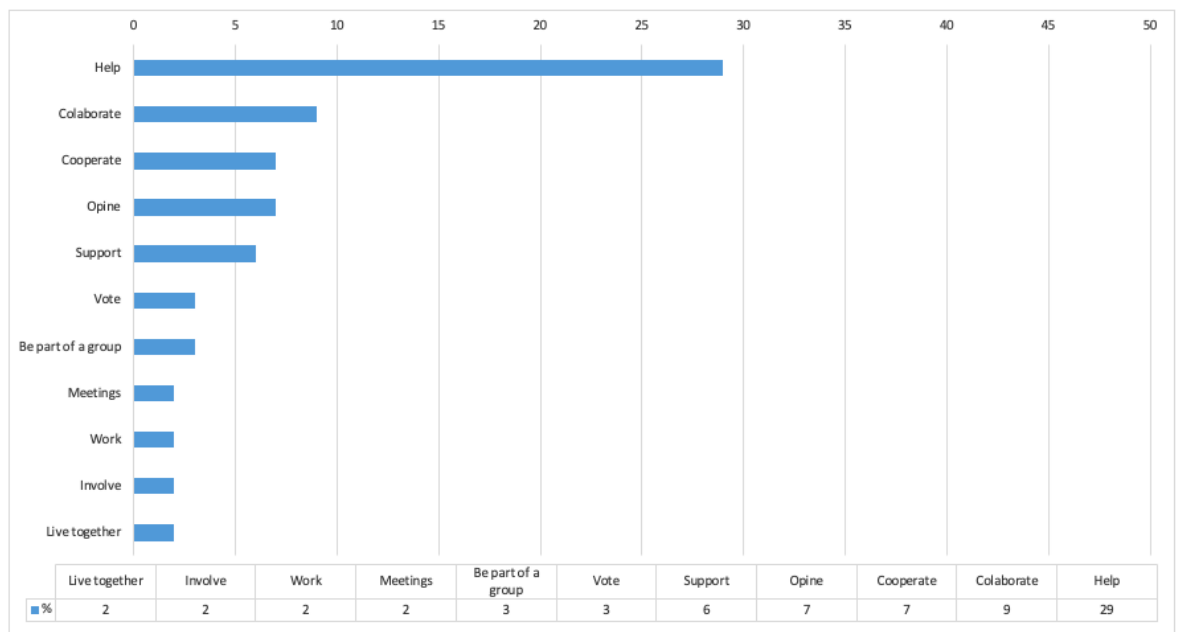|	Live together	Involve	Work	Meetings	Be part of a group	Vote	Support	Opine	Cooperate	Colaborate	Help
%	2	2	2	2	3	3	6	7	7	9	29

Figure 1. Associated words in the first 3 places of the free evocation test data, presented in percentages, and based on 300 subjects.

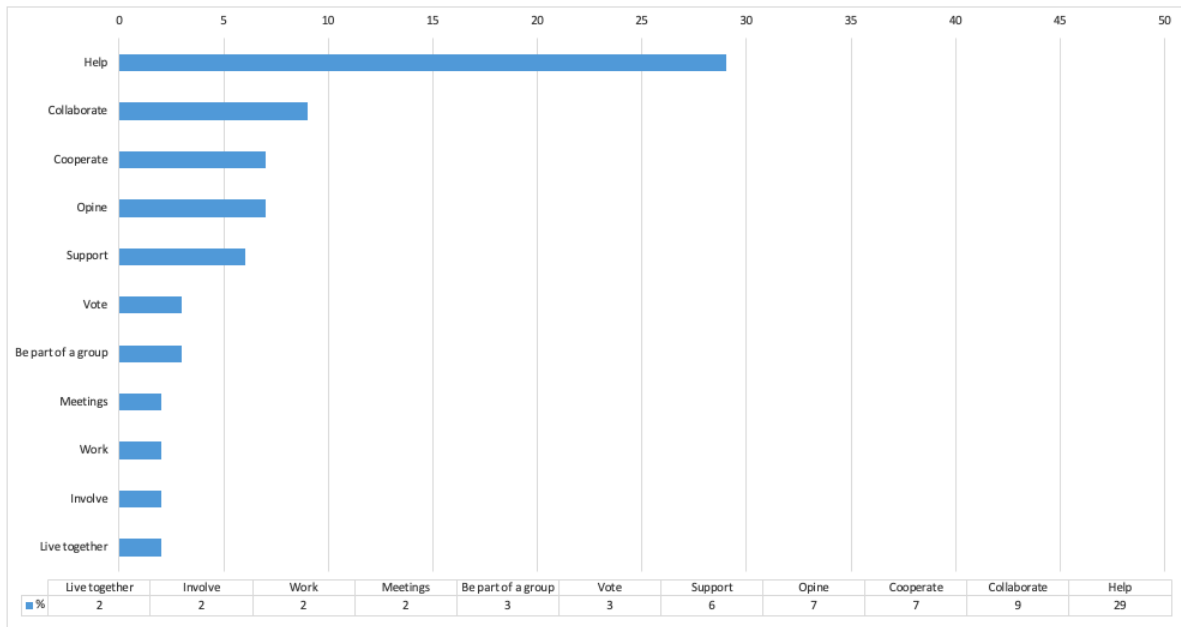The following figure shows the words chosen in *hierarchical evocation* data in percentages:

Figure 2. Analysis of hierarchical evocations on participation. Hierarchical evocation data presented in percentages.

In the analysis proposed by Abric (2003), inspired by Vergès (1992), about crossing the frequency of appearance of the item and the rank of importance given by the subjects (hierarchy), we can conclude that the central nucleus of the social representation of participation is made up of prominent elements such as *"highlights"*, this is, *aiding, collaborating, cooperating, and supporting,* indicating possible centrality and sense of belonging to the central nucleus (see Figure 3 for the analysis of hierarchical evocations on participation). This is also confirmed by the open-question content analysis about the meaning of participation (see Table 4).

Frequency	Range of importance					
	< 2.5			≥ 2.5		
	Central nucleus			*Fist periphery*		
≥ 37.5	Help	165 F	1.3 RI	Cooperate	48 F	2.7 RI
	Collaborate	60 F	1.6 RI			
	Support	39 F	2 RI			
	Second periphery			*Third periphery*		
< 37.5	Working	33 F	2.4 RI	Review-Think	36 F	3 RI
				Vote	18 F	2.5
				Be part of a group	24 F	2.8 RI

Figure 3. Analysis of hierarchical evocations on participation.

Note. F = Frequency: the number of times in which each category was used in the sample. The cut-point corresponded to the sample median (Mdn = 37.5).

RI = Range of Importance: average in a scale of five points that ranks the importance or representativeness of each category. One is the highest order of importance and five is the lowest order. The cut-point was the mean point between 1 and 5 (2.5).

In the upper-left quadrant (central nucleus of representation), there are words with high frequency (≥ 37.5) and first rankings of importance (< 2.5). In the upper-right quadrant (first periphery), there are words with high frequency (≥ 37.5) and last rankings of importance (≥ 2.5). They are used a lot, but they are given a low value of representativeness. In the lower-left quadrant (second periphery), there are words with low frequency (< 37.5) and first rankings of importance (< 2.5). They are used little, but they are given a great value of representativeness. In the lower-right quadrant (third periphery), there are words with low frequency (< 37.5) and last rankings of importance (≥ 2.5). They are used little and they are given a low value of representativeness. Source: the present research.

The upper-left box shows the most frequent and important elements indicating a significant possible conformation of the central nucleus in the social representation of the participation. The upper-right box identified as the first periphery, includes the associated elements corresponding to the peripheral elements. Here, the word *cooperation* appears as an important and complementary element to the elements of the central nucleus. The lower-left box (R3) shows contrasting elements possibly complementary to the important elements of the first periphery, although with low frequency as the word *working*. And finally, the lower-right box (R4), the second periphery, shows the elements not frequently present, but important in the social representation of participation, and the associated words such as *opinions, voting,* and *being part of a group*, are associations mostly related to political and citizen participation.

These types of participatory practices relate to emotions such as *joy, happiness, satisfaction and pride*, and the motivation to help a vulnerable population in need. Here, the difference between *feeling rebellious* and *feeling powerful* is noticeable (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Relationship between participatory practices and emotions.

Young people consider the field of politics as one where they are least motivated to participate and where they would be least effective. On the other hand, they would feel motivated to participate more effectively is in school-related activities, sports and the community.

As to memory results and the relationship with the social representation of participation, the following table shows the significant differences (see Table 5):

Table 5. Retrospective memory analysis topics

| Family topic	School topic	Social topic
- 70% had a relative who actively participated in different types of participation (brother, father) - 80% say it influenced them to participate, having some examples of family members - 20% did not have any close example of participation - 50% mentioned that they were considered in family decision-making, while 50% said that they were not considered	- 79% consider that the school neither encouraged dialogue, nor discussion in class, nor analysis of social problems - 70% said that they had at least one teacher in their school career that motivated them to participate, these professors were from the subjects of history, ethics, and civics - Only 10% mention historical events of the recent past that left them marked (September 11, the Zapatista movement, Tlatelolco) - 70% have in their memory historical figures such as Zapata and Villa (Mexican Revolution); Benito Juárez, Lázaro Cárdenas, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz 70% mention that the influence to participate on behalf of a relative was more important than the influence of history	- 70% started their participation, personally participating in a social movement, and 5% mentioned that they started when they were aware of social problems - 85% believe that the reasons that motivated them to participate were injustice, poverty, lack of equity, solidarity - 75% began their participation in adolescence - 70% had stable socio-economic conditions, most were in the family when they started their participation - 65% think it is difficult to participate because of the risks involved (criminalization of the protest) -70% are satisfied with their participation

Note. Content analysis results linked to the 3 topics analyzed retrospectively in 40 participatory subjects.

Content analysis results was applied on the 3 topics analyzed retrospectively in 40 participatory subject. It is of importance that from the people who actively participated on the influence of memory on participation practice, a significant percentage had a family member or close acquaintance as role model for participatory practice motivating them to participate. This social and cultural sample context has significant ties to a historically conservative population, with important religious and Catholic faith affiliation. The sample context also includes individualistic economic thought where each individual is responsible for their present and future, and culturally dominated by the influence of a cult to work (Chávez & Ortega, 2017).

The education results show that schooling is not considered a space or tool for teaching participation. Clearly, they were not taught or motivated to participate through class discussions, or to promote debates. However, they did mention some teachers who motivated them to participate or at least led them to more critical and analytical thought on problems such as poverty, inequality, and non-compliance with rights.

It is important to underline the importance of the memory of contemporary social movements that marked Mexican society and are brought to the present day through remembrance. Concerning historical figures, the link with reformist characters and promoters of change at the political and ideas level is evident. The analysis observes that the social problems unfortunately present today in Mexico – such as poverty, inequality, injustice and others – are the motivators of participation. The remark that participating is risky is one element to point out. It is a discourse linked to the authoritarian and repressive government system characterizing the State and the dynamics of the democratic process in the history of Mexico (see Figure 5 for information on the social representation of participation).
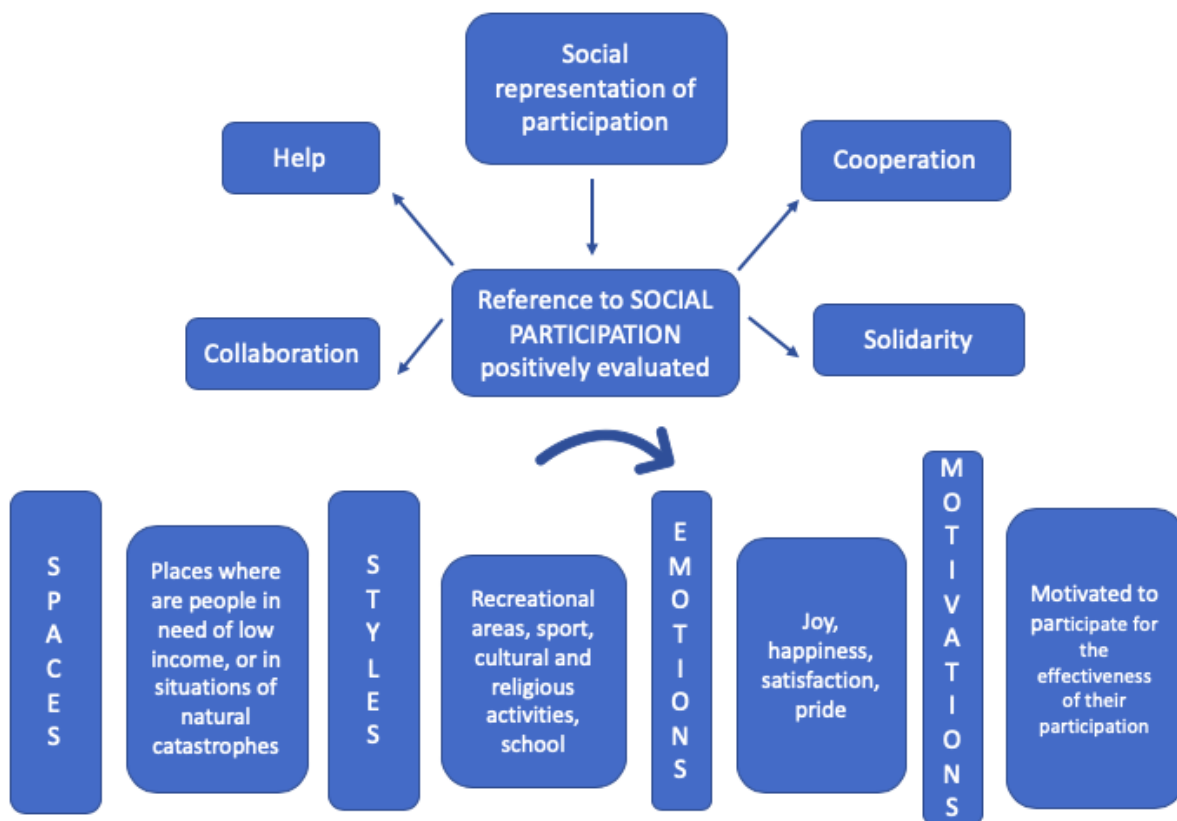
Figure 5. Social representation of participation.

CONCLUSIONS

The contents presented in the social representations of participation indicate the current problem on participation. This is the case mainly in the northern region of the country, specifically in the State of Nuevo León where there is scarce citizen political participation. Recent demonstrations related to the disappearances that shook Mexican society such as the disappeared from Ayotzinapa (Juárez & Aduna, 2015). This was an example of persistent disinterest in participation. During three of the demonstrations at national level in the city of Monterrey and its metropolitan area, the first one was considered the first major demonstration in the region. However, for the following demonstrations the participants' number diminished considerably to the point where there were practically no critical individuals interested in confronting the "historical truth" imposed by the State. Other results not shown here, due to the extension of this paper, show a negative evaluation (scales) of street demonstrations.

The social representation of participation integrated by dimensions of aid, support, and cooperation, stresses the charitable, philanthropic characteristic promoted by religious and conservative institutions. It also exposes dimensions characterizing participation where individuals come from associations or organizations. This fact points out the urgency of the formation of citizen and political participation. The objective of participation education is to promote citizen involvement in representative organizations and institutions of the political system. Society must have direct interference with the State, and broader vision of the common good and public order so as to achieve social cohesion in terms of citizenship, and a democratic society. The goal is to find strategies to guide society towards social change and generate a new civic identity for Mexicans. The proposal of this research is to shift from the individual to the social paradigm through critical-historical thought, knowledge and new social representations.

The results obtained conclude that no significant relation exists that stems from the influence of history and or from the social memory concerning the formation of critical thought and the motivation to participate. The research results reflect a lack of educational strategy aimed at generating critical, reflective and historical thought based on remembrance of the recent past in an analytical and critical form. Mexico is a country that forgets events rapidly. Learning to reflect in a historical manner is fundamental for the integration of critical thought on the past, and for

constructing an identity and social cohesion that allow an efficient citizenship and democracy process.

History is linked to the formation of social identity, and the objectives of contemporary societies are to teach critical thought on the past and present to integrate a collective memory and imagine a possible future and go towards it. The confrontation with the recent past through memory leads society to a cathartic practice on traumatic events. Although, in Mexican history there is no dictatorship regime, the State's worst afflictions are corruption, power abuse, injustice, repression, and violence among other social problems. Reviewing the past is a moral obligation linked to the acceptance of shared social accountabilities, it is a tool that allows people to imagine different possible futures. Hence, maintaining memory alive avoids repeating flaws from the past, and delivers the awareness that we are a consequence of the past. The research shows a viable space to move towards a more democratic society, where participation extends to other public spaces. A more democratic society is one where individual guarantees, legal frameworks, as well as the reinforcement of information are respected. Above all, it is one where trust in institutions is restored.

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