Youth's Social Representations of Politics in the Contemporary Chile. Continuity and Disjuncture in Political Social Representations from Different Generational Narratives

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Introduction

The coup of September 11th in 1973 became a milestone in the study of political history in Chile. Under the Chilean civic-military dictatorship, youth became a relevant actor in politics. On the one hand, it was employed as a symbol of future by the dictatorship. On the other hand, it was turned into the main political actor during political protests and demonstrations against the dictatorship (Salazar, 2012). In particular, secondary and tertiary student's organizations structured political alliances with popular classes in order to destabilize the autocratic government. This first political generation before the coup is able to press for a reform process that finished with a plebiscite during 1988 that ended with the civic-military dictatorship (Aguilera, 2009).

The dictatorship finished with the plebiscite in 1988, giving path to a political process called "democratic transition" (Munck et al., 1994). The political stability achieved by the country during the 90 was characterized by the decrease of political participation during the elections, specifically in the case of young citizens (Drake & Jakšić, 1993). During the period, different studies revealed the mistrust in traditional democratic institutions. In the case of youth, just one of every three young citizens participated in the elections (CEJU, 2010). During the beginning of the new century, the "absence of interest" hypothesis became the mayor explanation to describe the lack of youth engagement (Candía, 2004). During the second part of the decade two major youth political movements rejected that idea. As a result, the necessity of including others spaces in a political engagement analysis was revealed (Zarzuri, 2006).

In 2006, thousands of students organized a social movement during more than two months. During this process called "Revolución de los Pingüinos" (*Penguin revolution[1]*), the students developed practices that included direct interpellations to authorities and school occupations

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[1] In Chile, secondary students are called penguins due to its uniform's colours (White, Gray and Black).

(Bellei & Cabalin, 2013). Then, during 2011, a new movement called "Chilean Winter" was articulated (Barrionuevo, 2011). As a result of this process, new spaces for the articulation of politic engagement outside the traditional forms were highlighted (Reguillo, 2012) including youth, sport and cultural groups as element for political engagement analysis. In conclusion, for this generations, the politics are built from the daily experience (Salazar, 2010).

The contemporary process of youth political participation demands to understand the main conjunctions and disjunctions in the political engagement of contemporary youth, emphasising its socio-historic construction. Thus, the present article aims to comprehend youth social representations about politics configured in Chile. At the same time, this research put at the center the generational component in the production of narratives and practices about politics. Because of that, the research focus in understand youth as a socio-historical category, which is able to build ways of imagining the social reality, in a particular place and time (Bourdieu, 1998; Muñoz, 2011; Reguillo, 2012; Santibáñez-Rodríguez & Ganter, 2016). In addition, the politics are understood as something polemic and heterogeneous, that must avoid universalisations (Mouffe, 1999; Rancière, 1996). Finally, stablishing that youth articulate narratives and discourses about the world and its interactions(Moscovici, 1984.).

Method

In order to achieve the objective, the methodological approach is subsidiary mixed (QUAL→Quan) in two steps (Creswell, 2008). The data was collected via focus groups, allowing to comprehend in a detailed way the social representations that emerged(Ruiz, 2012). During three months six focus group were organized. Three representing males (one representing the 80s generation, other the 2006 generation and other representing 2011 generation), and three representing females (one representing the 80s generation, other the 2006 generation and other representing 2011 generation). In the case of previous generation (80's and 2006), the design of focus group included music and pictures from their youth, in order to create a recall context. Totally, more than 30 secondary students from different generations and gender participated.

For the data analysis the next strategies were applied:
a) Structural analysis of the speech: Descriptive categories, valorization indexes and their structural interconnection (Martinic, 1992, 2006). In particular, parallel and hierarchical structures were analyzed.

b) Social network analysis (SNA): Based on the relation between categories, semantic networks as models for complex system were developed (Guérvos, 2008). In social network vocabulary, linguistic units were understood as nods, and parallel and hierarchical relations as edges.

c) Cluster analysis: The SNA created the possibility of stablish quantitative measures for the narratives. The approach from the theory of social representations (TSR) stablishes the existence of core and periphery, adding a productive relevance to the core(Abric, 1993; Jodelet, 1986). According to SNA, core/periphery in a social network could be quantified (coreness) (Borgatti & Everett, 1999). After that process, a cluster analysis with the coreness index was developed, allowing us to define which concepts are in the core of each focus group social representation.

d) Symbolic models of action: A model for explain the symbolic organization of the discourse was developed. In order to create that organization, subjects, purposes, actions, allies and enemies and objectives in the social representations of politics were analyzed (Martinic, 2006).

Findings

Based on the analysis previously described, continuities and disjuncture about politics were founded. After the analysis, issues regarding political principles, objectives and values were consistent independently from the generation variable. The major findings were:

a) Traditional political participation in tension: First, the three generations negatively reflect about traditional political parties. In particular, its negative effect in individuality was criticized.

b) Justice as objective for political engagement: A second point, was related to the state role. According to the analysis, the political generations agreed in the need of justice guaranteed by the state. This justice, rather than being focused on legal conceptions was focused on social and political justice.

c) Historical youth ruptures and subjectification: A final element of agreement, was related to the relevance of specific historic processes as a subjectification moment. Consequently, as milestones for the rupture of hegemonic models of politics.

At the same time, some differences between generations were discovered.

a) Context for political participation between generations: the case of the 80's generation, spaces like the church and the *"poblaciones"* (popular suburbs) were relevant. In the case

of 2006, the schools became the context for their participation. Regarding 2011's generation, the cyberspace was highlighted, as a space for information, organization and mobilization.

b) Conceptualization and practice for political participation: A second rupture was related to the participation repertoires presented. A transition from violent protests in the marginal locations during the 80s to cultural demonstration in the center of the city was discovered.

c) Citizenship as a concept for political participation: Finally, a non-traditional conceptualization of citizenship for the generations of the XXI century was developed. A transition from a nation-state conceptualization of citizenship, to a global a critical approach was found.

Conclusions and Implications

After the research, different elements for the study of political generation and work with youth were concluded:

a) Political participation conjunctures and disjunctures in generational storytelling: An emergence of political social representation convergences and divergences was discovered. Consequently, binary analyses that highlight the relation between generations as "ruptures" must be avoided. In the same way, approaches that study political engagement based on adultcentric perspectives must be evaded. In particular, new generation narratives must be included in policy decision-making.

b) The consensus crisis: The results revealed the necessity of thinking political engagement from a polemic view. In particular, the idea that different positions about politics coexist in a democracy must be recognized.

c) Thinking new spaces for political engagement: Policy about youth design political engagement, must think outside a traditional perspective of politics. According to the study, new (cyber)spaces are becoming highly relevant for new generations, and stakeholders must recognize that as an important variable.

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