# Indian and Indigenous at the North, South and Center of the Country's Collective Representations, Recollections and Ideology in Mexico

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Even when both the indigenous and Spanish cultures are essential components of miscegenation, the widely spread stories about the Conquest do not grant a clear and positive position to the *Indigenous* nor to the term *Indian*. On the contrary, in the case of the word *Indian*, we are aware that it is devaluated, while the word indigenous has been proposed to bring a positive value to that culture and past. We can state that these social objects: *Indian* and *Indigenous* are linked to the ideology of our culture. Our study aims at exploring the words and ideas associated with these terms: *Indian* and *Indigenous*, as well as the values associated to each one of them within the social thinking of the surveyed groups. Furthermore, we asked ourselves whether those ideas are a social or collective representation, to the extent that they are strongly linked to the country's ideology.

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Three groups of university students were interviewed: 500 in Monterrey, Nuevo León; 500 in Tabasco and 500 in Mexico City. A remembrance and hierarchization instrument was designed. The results allowed the identification of the elements that hypothetically compose the central core of a social (or collective) representation, and also allowed the identification of the types of categories associated with the words *Indian* and *Indigenous*.

## INTRODUCTION

This article offers a psychosocial view of two subjects that are and have been historically controversial within Mexican society: the representations of the *Indian* and the *Indigenous*, which will be analyzed through social thinking, emphasizing the role of ideology and collective representations along with its architecture. In this context, we performed three studies, within the methodological framework of the RS theory, specifically the Vergès prototype. The results were analyzed using the *singularity and variety* scheme proposed by Rouquette (2003), which allows to illustrate the collective character of these representations.

For a long time, psychology and social psychology insisted in taking the idea that human behavior was the result of an impeccable and "perfect" rationality as a starting point to construct their explanations. It is until the 70's that the proposal of assuming "the existence of a concrete universal subject, who makes mistakes constantly, uncultured, as compared with the pattern of an ideal universal subject who would be perfectly rational and without fails" (Rateau, Ernst-Vintila, & Delouvée 2013, p.43) gains strength. These perspective proposes to stop "seeing fundamental errors" in the persons' cognitive biases and to recognize, in turn, a concrete and practical subject, located in a definite social context, which exercises considerable influence on him/her through a value system, a set of beliefs and the regulations that shape it. So, recognizing the importance of the social factor in the definition of reasoning is rather new and fundamental to understand the social behavior of groups, according to Guimelli (2005) within social psychology and confirmed by Wagner, Hayes and Flores-Palacios (2011) in the social sciences.

This view we have on individuals assumes recognizing the existence of "intention", of a given *social* order and not only the existence and predominance of a *rational* order in the making of cognitive and behavioral responses of the subjects, who are socialized under a regulative system that establishes what is *good* and what is *bad*; along with a system of beliefs that defines the meaning of life, death, work, justice and society itself. This grants a higher weight to history and ideology in our studies, and to question group, social ideology and history in how it contributes to the construction of their reality; it leads us to question about the articulation of history, beliefs and ideologies with the social representations, attitudes and opinions of groups. It also assumes that they are not separate and independent entities and to recognize them as part of a whole.

## 1. Collective representation, ideology and social thinking

Social thinking was defined by Rouquette (1973) as something that "at the same time, designates the specificity of thought when it takes *a social phenomenon* as an object, and the constitutive determination of this thought *thanks to social factors* (Rouquette, 1973, p. 299)1. The social factor appears as the final influencing and modelling, constructing and regulating factor of cognition, explaining the importance that the author places on *sociability* in various works.

Roquette (1998) recognizes three properties in social thinking: *heritage, otherness and individual expression*, which allow us to identify the weight put on the social factor in his proposal (Rateau, et al., 2013; Rouquette & Rateau, 1998) They account for the importance of the groups' daily life, memory and beliefs system(s) in the production and definition of behavior. On the other hand, the articulation and communication between its elements is emphasized in the architecture of social thinking (Rouquette & Flament, 2003); we rely on it to propose and emphasize the existence of collective representations strongly anchored in an inherited way of thinking, transmitted from generation to generation.

Besides, to explain the architecture of social thinking in Mexico, we recognize the existence of four articulating axes (see Figure 1): the first one is *social-historical (past-present-future)*; the second is the *ethnic-civic axis*; the third is *generic-specific* and the fourth is the *psychosocial axis*, which we explain below. The *social-historical axis* shows that

1 The emphasis is ours.

history shall be envisioned in a *transversal trajectory* rather than evolutionary or longitudinal line, as Wundt (1990) pointed out in his psychology of the nations. If we assume this as the result of a series of values and relationship schemas that have their origin in the past, we may better understand the current events according to Wundt (1990). The second axis is the *ethnical-civic*: two central currents may be recognized in Mexico, as indicated by Durkheim (1898); one is ethnic, more associated with the past and the explanations that arise from it at the origin. The second current is of civic nature, associated with the actions and practices, with the rights granted by the Constitution to the citizens, for example. It is also possible to identify a *generic-specific* axis, that accounts for the subjective aspects, myths of origin, legends (such as the reference to the collective origin of groups, for example, the Conquest), as well as for the specific ones (the practical aspects such as obtaining a voter's badge).
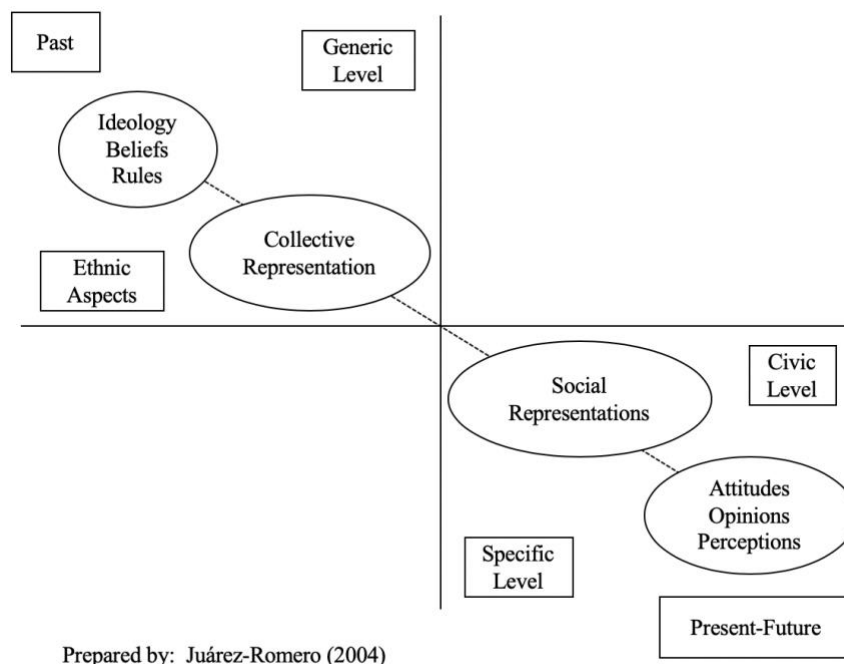


Prepared by: Juárez-Romero (2004)

*Figure 1*. Social Thinking in Mexico

And last, but not less important, we find a fourth psychosocial axis that shows the articulation between those three, composed of ideology, collective representations, social representations, attitudes and opinions. This way, all those psychosocial processes make sense when viewed from the *social - historical*, *ethnic - civic* and *generic - specific* axes, as

Juárez-Romero (2004) mentions. This allows us to emphasize the need to recognize opinions, attitudes, social representations articulated with more ample and generic ways of thinking such as collective representations, beliefs systems and ideology. We also point out the weight of the historical past in the construction of social thinking.

In figure 1 we want to emphasize that, even when the past has "gone by", it is a major influence and is a determining part of the present. The past is more than an events archive and national holidays catalog, it is more than a mere chronology of facts. Memory –as indicated by Jodelet (1989/1992)– is a kind of socially built and shared knowledge, with a practical objective, that participates in the construction of the common reality of a given social group.  So, group's memory plays the main role in the definition of their social reality. It nurtures the meanings and each one of the social processes that take place on different levels: family, school, society and work (Juárez-Romero et al., 2012).  As González and Tinoco (2012, p.125) indicate, "the construction of memory represents a group's effort to give historical sense to the present". In short, memory feeds and gives sense to the groups' daily life, identity and cohesion, according to Álvarez (2012).

On the other hand, the concept of collective representations was initially proposed by Durkheim (1898) to account for the "social significance models" shared among diverse individuals within a given society. In Durkheim's view, such models are some sort of "direction organizing" axes that compose socially constructed signification systems. Those axes are transversal in a society and their validation is the result of the ample consensus to which they are subject. Archetypes or epistemic schemas originate from the existence of those axes and ideology takes shape from them, which – as indicated by Rouquette (2009, p.146) –, is usually considered as a limit, as an "explanatory last resource" and is also an ambivalent notion "used in a negative sense to mean that masses are bad thinkers". In a positive sense and in a rather diffuse way, ideology is recognized as something *that links groups*, therefore recognizing its functional character (Rouquette, 2009).  This author describes it as a genetic category which allows "a set of beliefs, attitudes and representations [to be] possible and at the same time compatible within a group of population" (Rouquette, 2009, p.149).

Additionally, Gramsci (1967) describes ideology as an understanding of the world implicitly manifest in art, laws, economic activity and *all manifestations of intellectual and*

*collective life*. Ideology is the "mortar" of society, ensuring its cohesion. Althusser (1988) notes that ideology is always unified and in possession of the so called "dominant class", who controls the State and, therefore, has the power and control of the repressive apparatus for the service of a social class, which arbitrarily imposes a way of thinking on societies. While, according to Geertz (1973), an ideology is an interacting symbols system, they are "... structures of interweaved significations that turn feeling into signification and make them socially accessible". Billig (1998) holds that an ideology or a way of life implies more than the application of stereotypes on the ego, it necessarily includes collective assumptions and representations, as well as social habits and practices. It is possible to identify some of the characteristics indicated by Moscovici (1989) in each one of those definitions as pertaining to collective representations, and sharing with ideology: the *homogeneity* (generality) of which they are subject, their *stable and lasting character*, and their *coercive* character, given the implicit imposition to which they are subject.

Ideology encompasses, more than a series of logical meanings, a series of highly functional *social meanings*. This way, even when an ideology includes a series of logical propositions that have a certain consistency and continuity, it is above all its "functionality" that explains its permanence and validity within the groups (Guimelli, 2005; Moscovici, 2002). As Deconchy (1984, p.453) indicates: "Within an orthodox ideologic system, the *fragility of rationality* is compensated by the *energy of regulation*"[2]. In fact, the force with which the relationships are regulated within an ideology explains its continuity in time more than its cognitive coherence. We can therefore state that the existence of collective representations explains and furnishes society's ideology or ideologies. While, for a long time, collective representations have been assumed as a stage in the development and evolution of society, it is now time to review that certain types of objects are still strongly linked to religion, to politics and even to the economy, in other words, they are closely linked to ideology. Collective representations of individualism are a good example (Doise, 1999). So, we stand in front of the hegemonic representations proposed by Moscovici (1988) which, given their high degree of consensus, correspond to collective representations, according to this author. We therefore stress the importance of the notions of *Indian* and *Indigenous* for the ideology of a country like Mexico, playing an essential role in the definition of identities.

[2] First emphasis original, second is ours.

In this sense, Rouquette (2009) indicates that ideology is the particular sense of a system of generic ideas that would finally justify the postures taken by social subjects, on the basis of irreducible values[3].

## 2. The analysis of history from *singularity*, *variability* and *generality*

For the analysis of past events and their force and continuity in the present, we use a model proposed by Rouquette (2003), who suggests three principles to analyze **historical matter**, dealing either with historical facts or documents: *sufficiency*, *contingency* and *notoriety or recurrence*, which allows the analysis of these types of historical events.

The **sufficiency** of the material(s) that account for a historical fact. Facing the importance granted on the idea of "representability", with which we tend to judge a fact or piece of information, a different view is proposed, aimed at recognizing the *importance* or *significance* granted to a fact itself. This assumes the recognition of such event's *impact* or *influence* on society, to become a unique expression for social groups. The sufficiency principle refers to the fact that each historical event and material possesses its own characteristic rationality which makes it sufficient by itself. Today, for example, many historians and scholars recognize the Conquest, the Independence of Mexico and the Mexican Revolution as historical events that characterize and accompany the development of society, since they constitute the country's foundational myths on which our past and present are usually explained.

**Contingency.** When *sufficient* events or materials multiply and various cognitive productions, such as conversations and images that confer an external rationality to the event itself, are available, we need an additional principle to analyze an event or material: contingency. This principle allows us to recognize an event as a *specimen* corresponding or pertaining to a specific generic class. To discover what kind of *specimen* (or *generic class*) we are dealing with, we need to identify the following aspects: *variety*, *singularity* and *generality*. It is important to keep in mind that any event and any social representation possess

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[3]"More abstract than the *themata*, the epistemic schemas organize the expression of ordinary knowledge itself to make it *admissible* within a given cultural community." (Rouquette: 2009, p. 152).

those three attributes. Then, for example, we may assume that the way of thinking about the Indian in the North of the country is different from the one in the South, this because there is less indigenous population in the north than in the south. Such differences allow us to identify the *singularity* that characterizes each area: "the relative *singularity* of a representation is the correlate of the relative singularity of the population that manifests it" (Rouquette, 2003, p. 432).

On the other hand, relating to *generality*, it is possible to identify a general feature or property in historical events and materials when it enjoys a strong consensus among the members of a group or some groups. This is a property or set of properties common to a class or group of persons, which are widely shared. The third attribute or index is *variability*. As we know, a given social representation shows different expressions according to the corresponding group, or according to the conflict context or its absence in which it manifests, in other words, variations are present. Variations "correspond, in short, to the modulation of the representation in terms of the situations... it does not create a new representation, it is in itself the expression of the instrumentality of the representation and its adaptation resources" (Rouquette, 2003, p. 432).

**Notoriety** or **Recurrence** in the collective conscience. Notoriety is associated with the materiality of things. It manifests through communications, this is, in day to day conversations or the media. Some of the subjects to which we pay attention in our daily conversations, and those that we hear and read in the media, tend to be more recurring than others, account for the present, touch some particular fibers, make us take sides for or against some matter or personality, in short, they feed our daily interactions and conversations. In other words, an event is not notorious or recurrent by itself, but to the extent that it is picked up in daily communications and practice according to Rouquette (2003).

## 3. The *Indian* and the *Indigenous* are the ideological origins of the country

The ethnic aspect plays an essential role in the explanation of the origins of Mexican society and constitutes the starting point to explain Mexico's present. So, throughout the development of the country, ethnic groups have acquired two ways of being identified and named. The expressions used to name them hold opposite valuations, one positive towards the *Indigenous* and the other, negative, towards the *Indian*.

So, the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* constitute two sides by which the same social group has been defined and on which ideology has been shaped; nowadays, the *Indian* is seen and qualified as negative and not too desirable, while the *Indigenous* recalls a positive sense and ethnic groups are qualified in a more positive way when this term is used. The strong consensus enjoyed by the two views on the ethnic matter throughout the country allows the evaluation of the force acquired by such images, and also invites us to think on their weight on the definition of the relationships and interactions with the "other".

The word *Indian*, according to anthropologist Manuel Gamio (1935), accounts for a colonial category, referring to those that "... besides speaking only their native language, maintain in their nature, way of life and thinking a number of their pre-Columbian ancestors' cultural features and very few western cultural features". And those features explain their economic and social inferiority against the rest of the population.

It is reasonable to assume that such negative connotation and valuation may have its origins, most probably, in the view of the conqueror towards the Indians. They were categorized from the western point of view, which understands *civilization* according to some features and forms that the population of this land "did not have", according to the *interpretation* of the Conqueror.[4] According to O'Gorman, 1976). The chronicles of the conquerors and the preachers themselves display a contrast between the marvelous descriptions of landscapes and cities, and the repeated despise and disqualification of their inhabitants, constantly deemed as "savages" or "possessed by the devil" in the words of Villoro (1996). From this first view of the Indian, during the colonial era as well as the times of the independence and the revolution, the objective of "integrating" the Indians to the new mixed-race society prevailed; various formulas and policies were developed for this purpose (Juárez-Romero, 2006b). Under the logic of a stock of lies and a negative assessment, the

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[4] "… it is true that indigenous civilizations were integrated to the course of world history; but, for this same reason, they were not excluded from the consequences of its hierarchical conception. So, these civilizations could not aim to be considered as *sui generis* expressions of a particular way of human life and were subject to the corresponding judgment relating to the Christian culture, established as the dispensing model of historical significance.

... even under the most favorable thesis for the Indians, no more positive sense could be granted to their civilizations than deeming them as high range human life forms; but not surpassing the sphere of possibilities of man as an entity of nature; having been out of the teachings of the Gospel, Indians had not been able to reach "real" humanity. Such is, in essence, the thesis of the *Apologetic* history of father Las Casas..." (O' Gorman, 1976, p. 150).

Indian and the Indigenous are identified as undesirable, not pleasant. Hence defined from pro-indigenous policies. It is in this context that, in the eighties, an initiative emerged that seeks to justify the relationship of dominance between indigenous communities and the Mexican State: the "pro-indigenous" policy, as Gamio pointed out (1922, 1935).

According to Favré (1998), such policy had no other objective than creating a current favorable opinion towards the Indians, held or promoted by non-indigenous. In summary, it did not seek, and did not attain, to break the label stuck on the *Indian*; at most, it had some impact on establishing a differentiation that makes the indigenous a positively qualified actor in his past origins. However, it did not succeed in building a positive view towards the indigenous in the present. To know how ethnic groups are conceived by university students, we used the two most common words to identify them: *Indian* and *Indigenous*, to perform a research in three regions within the country: South, Central and North. To establish to what extent the meanings that we assign to those words are similar, we built an associative instrument and two surveys: one on the *Indian* and the other on the *Indigenous*. The results are shown below.

One way to account for the importance of the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* is their languages. Mexico has 68 linguistic groups (INALI, 2015), however, they are endangered. The problem with the extinction of languages is more complex than their mere disappearance. Not only sound and a recollection may be lost, but also certain peoples and their culture. Therefore, to value and grant proper importance to languages in our culture is to remember that they give us a sense of identity. Despite the low value given to indigenous languages, the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI) makes some efforts to integrate them to public policy, writing basic school textbooks in some of the indigenous communities' languages.

According the 2010 census (INEGI, 2010), 6'695,228 inhabitants in Mexico speak an indigenous language. Five years ago, the autochthone language speaking population was six million, therefore, we now have 695,228 more people who know and speak an indigenous language. However, this growth is not significant when we compare the size of this small group with the country's total population.

## 4. Three views on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous*: the South, the North and the Central Area

The methodology and the results of the studies on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* in three regions within the country are shown below. It shall be noted that only 14.4% of the population in Mexico is indigenous (INEGI, 2005)[5].

*Methodology*

Two instruments were designed using the SR theory as a reference, particularly the structural approach, with the inducing term as essential difference: in one case we used *Indian* and in the other, *Indigenous*. Those instruments were applied in three different geographic areas.

We also investigated about the importance given by each one of these groups to the *indigenous language*: Shall we learn it? We also asked each group of undergraduate students if they knew their *origin*, that is, if they consider themselves having ethnic or European ancestry. The objective was to discover the way in which the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* are represented in each one of the areas. Are they social representations? Or, being a component closely linked to the country's ideology, we face representations that enjoy a higher homogeneity among the populations, so, are we facing Collective Representations?

*Instrument*

Two identical surveys were designed; the only difference between them was the inducing term: in one case we placed *Indian* and in the other case, *Indigenous*. The first task in the survey requested five reminiscences; then, each term should be evaluated (positive or negative) and, finally, each of the terms should be hierarchized. Some open questions were also added to investigate about: language, origin and ancestry, with the same surveys for each population.

*Population*

1,500 undergraduate students from three different locations were surveyed: 500 bachelor's degree in Psychology students from the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL), 500 bachelor's degree in Psychology of the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de

[5] The 2005 population census recorded that only 4.7% of the total indigenous population reaches higher education.

Tabasco (UJAT) and 500 bachelor's degree in Social Psychology of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa (UAM-I), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
*Surveyed population*

| Groups | *Indian* | *Indigenous* |
|---|---|---|
| North Area *UANL* | 250 | 250 |
| South Area *UJAT* | 250 | 250 |
| Central Area *UAM-I* | 250 | 250 |
| Total | 750 | 750 |

Those universities were chosen for their geographic location: in the North, the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León; in the South, the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco; and in the Central Area, the UAM-I. This distribution allowed us to compare between the different geographic areas, relating to the social representation held about the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* in those three areas, and to establish the students' interest to speak a language, even if they do not come from an indigenous community. 1,250 terms for each population were obtained from the answers given by the students in free association. A list was prepared including the words associated to *Indian* and *Indigenous*, respectively, as were recalled by the students. Then, we performed a prototypicality analysis of Vergés (1992, 1994). For each case, we categorized the list of obtained terms, organizing a set of elements around a prototype.

None of the recalled terms was mentioned less than ten times. According to its ranking in terms of the importance of each word, this one reached 3.1 for each one of the studies. Once this information was collected, the two indicators (frequency and ranking) were cross-referenced to obtain our results.

## 4.1 The view on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* in the North of the country

The state of Nuevo León is deemed as the third state in Mexico in terms of economic importance, responsible for 7.5% of the Gross National Product (INEGI, 2010). The state gathers 213 corporate groups, so its capital is considered the second most important city in the country. Besides the geographic difference, this region has no remains or historical monuments from pre-Hispanic times and native ethnical groups are not present either. The

indigenous population living in this area, and that speak an indigenous language, is not native to Nuevo León, but has been forced to migrate from their states of origin seeking a better quality of life. Table 2 shows the characteristics attributed to the term *Indian* by the group of students in Nuevo León.

Table 2.
*Northern Region (UANL) students' views towards* Indian

|    |          | High               |       | ≤3.1  | Low                |      | ≥3.1 |    |
|----|----------|--------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|------|------|----|
| Q1 | High     | language           | 200*  | 3.1** | dirty              | 166  | 3    | Q2 |
|    | ≥20      | poverty            | 170   | 3.1   | domestic help      | 70   | 3.5  |    |
|    |          | ignorant           | 150   | 3.2   | construction workers | 65 | 3.6 |    |
|    |          | traditional customs | 110  | 4.1   | rural towns        | 30   | 3.7  |    |
|    |          | past               | 50    | 4.1   |                    |      |      |    |
|    |          | street vendors     | 49    | 1.9   |                    |      |      |    |
| Q3 | Low      | humility           | 22    | 3.3   | oblivion           | 18   | 3.4  | Q4 |
|    | ≤20      | mixed race (*mulatto*) | 20 | 2.2  |                    |      |      |    |
|    |          | nation             | 130   | 2.1   |                    |      |      |    |

*Frequency
** Range of importance

Quadrant 1 shows, in the first place, the frequency observed for each category and then the value that indicates the degree of importance placed on each one of them. Quadrant 1 is the location of the hypothetical core of a social representation. We found words that refer to specific aspects, such as: *language, poverty, ignorant, traditional customs and street vendors,* and a generic aspect: *past*. It is also observed that negative words or attributes are dominant in the table as a whole. Even when *language*, which is a specific aspect, gets a higher frequency or mentions, it is followed by specific-qualifying aspects such as: *poverty, ignorant,* and an element that refers to socio-historical time: *past*.

Quadrant 2 shows the elements hypothetically pertaining to the peripheral portion of the representation; we found words indicating specific aspects, such as: *dirty, construction workers*, and a more generic aspect: *rural towns*. Finally, quadrants 3 and 4 show the most

ambiguous elements of a representation. We find specific words such as: *humility, mixed race (*mulatto*), oblivion*, and a generic one: *nation*. Where *humility* is understood as modesty and also as a modest way of living, so that, along with *mixed race (*mulatto*)* and *oblivion*, constitute specific - qualifying categories. While *Nation* is a generic, more abstract category. Now we turn to the results for the word *Indigenous* (Table 3).

Table 3.
*Northern Region (UANL) students' view towards* Indigenous

| | | High | | ≤3.1 | Low | | ≥3.1 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | High ≥20 | original people | 383* | 3.2** | nation | 62 | 3.5 | Q2 |
| | | language | 191 | 3.1 | history | 29 | 33.7 | |
| | | traditional customs | 164 | 3.1 | laborious people | 22 | 3.3 | |
| | | culture | 125 | 4.1 | | | | |
| | | reminiscence artifacts | 54 | 2.1 | | | | |
| | | mixed race (*mestizos*) | 41 | 1.9 | | | | |
| Q3 | Low ≤20 | gods | 15 | 2.9 | respect | 14 | 3.4 | Q4 |
| | | environmental wealth | 13 | 2.2 | Spaniards | 12 | 3.7 | |

*Frequency
** Range of importance

For the remembrance of *Indigenous*, quadrant 1 shows, in the first place, the frequency observed for each category and then the value that indicates the degree of importance placed on each one of them. This quadrant hypothetically shows the elements that constitute the core of a social representation. Here we find words indicating generic aspects, such as: *original people, culture, memory artifacts*, and specific aspects, such as: *language, traditional customs* and *mixed race*.

Quadrant 2 shows the elements hypothetically pertaining to the peripheral portion of the representation. The words used were more generic: *nation, history*, and others, more specific, such as: *laborious people*. The categories in this quadrant are positive. While quadrants 3 and 4 show the most ambiguous elements of the representation, we find generic

words such as: *Gods, environmental wealth*, and specific aspects such as: *respect* and *Spaniards*. As may be observed as a whole, there are more positive than negative terms.

### 4.2 The view on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* in the South of the country

Tabasco is placed in tenth place in terms of GNP contribution in the country (INEGI, 2010). Despite its location in an oil rich area and being a strong participant in the economy of the country, poverty in the region reaches 11% of the population. The decline in oil production during the last years means a situation of unemployment and economic crisis for the people of Tabasco, placing them in a lower standard as compared with the Northern area.

The southern area of our country is characterized by its natural wealth in rainforests and rivers, the predominance of ethnic groups, and the existence of multiple artistic and craftwork expressions; the area has a number of pyramids and pre-Hispanic objects (Olmec heads) that remind us and allow us to preserve the historical past of Mexican origins.

Table 4.
*Southern Region (UJAT) students' view towards* Indian

|  |  | High |  | ≤3.1 | Low |  | ≥3.1 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | High | language | 200* | 3.1** | dirty | 166 | 3 | Q2 |
|  | ≥20 | poverty | 170 | 3.1 | domestic help | 70 | 3.5 |  |
|  |  | ignorant | 150 | 3.2 | construction workers | 65 | 3.6 |  |
|  |  | traditional customs | 110 | 4.1 | rural towns | 30 | 3.7 |  |
|  |  | past | 50 | 2.1 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | street vendors | 49 | 1.9 |  |  |  |  |
| Q3 | Low | humility | 22 | 3.3 | oblivion | 18 | 3.4 | Q4 |
|  | ≤20 | mixed race (*mulatto*) | 20 | 2.2 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | nation |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*Frequency
** Range of importance

Based on this, prior to the execution of this study, it was thought that the evaluation towards the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* would be positive as compared with the other two regions where the survey was applied. However, the results show an astounding turn. From

their almost full extermination during Mexico's Conquest to these days, the Indigenous have been cast into oblivion in the mind of Tabasco's people. Below, we show the results obtained in Tabasco for inducing term *Indian* (Table 4).

The first box of quadrant 1 shows the most recalled categories (this is, the ones with a higher frequency as well as their value). The obtained categories are almost the same as the ones shown in the case of the North (Nuevo León). We found specific aspects, such as: *language, poverty, ignorant, traditional customs* and *street vendors*, and a socio-historical aspect, such as: *past*. As may be noted, the qualification is mainly negative in the students' descriptions.

Quadrant 2 shows specific aspects, such as: *dirty, domestic help, construction workers*, and a more generic category: *rural towns*, all of them categories with a nature of negative qualification. Finally, quadrants 3 and 4 show words for specific aspects such as: *humility, mixed race (*mulatto*), oblivion*, and also a generic aspect: *nation*; the set of terms is of specific-qualifying and negative nature, with the exception of the word *nation*.

Table 5.
*Southern Region (UJAT) students' view towards* Indigenous

|    |             | High               |      | ≤3.1  | Low              |    | ≥3.1 |    |
|----|-------------|--------------------|------|-------|------------------|----|------|----|
| Q1 | High        | language           | 250* | 3.1** | history          | 70 | 3.5  | Q2 |
|    | ≥20         | original people    | 240  | 3.2   | origin           | 65 | 3.5  |    |
|    |             | culture            | 140  | 3.1   | laborious people | 50 | 3.3  |    |
|    |             | traditional customs| 180  | 4.2   |                  |    |      |    |
|    |             | reminiscence artifacts | 80 | 2.1 |                  |    |      |    |
| Q3 | Low         | gods               | 19   | 3.3   | respect          | 17 | 3.4  | Q4 |
|    | ≤20         | environmental health | 19 | 2.2   | diversity        | 16 | 3.9  |    |
|    |             |                    |      |       | nation           | 14 | 3.3  |    |
|    |             |                    |      |       | Spaniards        | 12 | 3.7  |    |

*Frequency
** Range of importance

In the case of *Indigenous* (Table 5), quadrant 1 shows the most recalled words and the hypothetically core elements of social representation. Same as the Northern (UANL)

zone, specific terms such as the following were identified: *Language, traditional customs* and *memory artifacts*, and more generic aspects, such as: *original people* and *culture*. The absence of the term *mixed race (*mestizo*)* shall be noted, as contrasting with the results obtained at the North of the country. The second quadrant shows the following categories: *history, origin* and *laborious people*, where history and origin are generic aspects and laborious people is a specific aspect. The positive trend of the categories shall be noted in these two quadrants as the *Indigenous* is recalled, in contrast with the results obtain on recalling the *Indian*. Quadrants 3 and 4 show generic aspects: *gods, cultural wealth* and *nation*, and specific aspects, such as: *respect, diversity* and *Spaniards*, showing a positive trait.

Table 6.
*Central Region (UAM-I) students' view towards* Indian

| | | High | | ≤3.1 | Low | | ≥3.1 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | High | language | 195* | 3.1** | dirty | 272 | 3.0 | Q2 |
| | ≥20 | poverty | 160 | 3.1 | domestic help | 56 | 3.5 | |
| | | ignorant | 172 | 3.2 | rural towns | 42 | 3.7 | |
| | | traditional customs | 108 | 4.1 | | | | |
| | | street vendors | 45 | 2.1 | | | | |
| | | past | 31 | 1.9 | | | | |
| Q3 | Low | humility | 19 | 3.3 | oblivion | 16 | 3.4 | Q4 |
| | ≤20 | mixed race (*mestizo*) | 13 | 2.2 | | | | |
| | | nation | 14 | 2.2 | | | | |
| | | construction workers | 11 | 2.2 | | | | |

*Frequency
** Range of importance

## 4.3 The view on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* in the Central Area of the country

Mexico City is located in the geographic center of the country, holds the first place for its contribution to the GNP and is considered a cultural kaleidoscope with thousands of people native to different states. According to the 2015 intercensal survey published by the

National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI), Mexico City (CDMX) holds 784 thousand 605 inhabitants who recognize themselves and indigenous citizens. This is equivalent to 8.8% of the city's total population (INEGI, 2015).

There are two kinds of indigenous population to be recognized in CDMX: native population and population that has migrated from their native states. Both groups compose a multicultural kaleidoscope that enriches the capital's life. The native population lives in those delegations that still maintain rural areas[6]. This population recognizes itself as indigenous, confirmed in the 2015 intercensal survey, although, unfortunately, they do not retain their native language. The information obtained for the case of Indian in Mexico City are shown below.

As shown in quadrant 1 (Table 6), the word *language* is the most frequent reminiscence, followed by the words *poverty*, *ignorant*, *traditional customs*, *street vendors*, that constitute specific aspects, and *past*, which is a generic aspect; these terms were also identified in the two previous groups. In the quadrant that holds the hypothetical core of SR, we note the negative character of the set of words. Quadrant 2 is composed of the specific aspects: *dirty, domestic help* and a generic aspect *rural towns*. Finally, quadrants 3 and 4 show words for specific aspects such as: *humility, mixed race, construction workers, oblivion*, and a generic aspect: *nation*. It may be noted that the categories used to refer to *Indian* show a negative trend in each one of the quadrants, as in the other groups. We finally show the results obtained for the case of *Indigenous* in Mexico City, central region of the country.

The results place generic aspects in the first quadrant (Table 7): *original people* and *culture*, as is the case in the Northern region (UANL) and the Southern region (UJAT), along with specific aspects: *language*, *culture*, *traditional customs* and *memory artifacts*. While the second quadrant shows generic aspects, such as: *history*, *nation*, and specific aspects: *laborious people*. As may be noted, the words used to describe *indigenous* are positive, same as the previous groups. Quadrants 3 and 4 are composed of generic words *Gods*, *environmental wealth*, and specific aspects: *respect* and *Spaniards*. These last two quadrants

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[6] Such as Milpa Alta (20.3%), Tláhuac (14.36%), Xochimilco (12.4%), Tlalpan (11.8%). 2015 Intercensal survey.

account for the existing relationship with the indigenous, who in this case is highly valued and respected in the thoughts of the students.

To this point, we may note a rather negative specific description and qualification towards the *Indian*, in the three regions under study, while, in contrast, we note a rather positive specific description and qualification towards the *Indigenous* in the three regions. For a deeper analysis of the results, the singularity - variability schema will be used.

Table 7.
*Central Region (UAM-I) students' view towards* Indigenous

|     |      | High              |      | ≤3.1   | Low             |     | ≥3.1 |    |
|-----|------|-------------------|------|--------|-----------------|-----|------|----|
| Q1  | High | original people   | 560* | 3.2**  | history         | 66  | 3.5  | Q2 |
|     | ≥20  | language          | 220  | 3.1    | nation          | 60  | 3.5  |    |
|     |      | culture           | 173  | 3.1    | laborious people| 19  | 3.3  |    |
|     |      | traditional customs| 110  | 4.2    |                 |     |      |    |
|     |      | reminiscence      | 62   | 2.1    |                 |     |      |    |
|     |      | artifacts         |      |        |                 |     |      |    |
|     |      |                   |      |        |                 |     |      |    |
| Q3  | Low  | gods              | 19   | 3.3    | respect         | 16  | 3.4  | Q4 |
|     | ≤20  | environmental     | 18   | 2.2    | Spaniards       | 12  | 3.7  |    |
|     |      | wealth            |      |        |                 |     |      |    |

*Frequency
** Range of importance

## 4.4 *Singularity* and *variability* in the view of the *Indian* and the *Indigenous*.

Relating to the level of *variability* and *singularity* of the obtained representation, a table is shown below that displays, for each group, the categories identified as hypothetically central for the case of *Indian* and *Indigenous*, according to Vergès' prototype analysis. The tables show the results for each category and region, which are analyzed under the *singularity and degree of variability* schema for each word and group, respectively. This has allowed some comparisons that show the existence of a strong homogeneity within each category. Besides, this homogeneity allows us to identify important differences between each other (Juárez-Romero, 2006b).

According to table 8, in the second column, a series of features shared by the word *Indian* in the three regions may be observed, so that the arrow under the schema accounts for the existence of a particular singularity, which is different from the singularity associated with *Indigenous*. Then, a singularity is compared between the features associated with each one of the terms.

Table 8.
*Collective Representation of* Indian *and* Indigenous *among students of three regions (North - South - Center) of the country*

| Place | *Indian* | *Indigenous* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| North UANL | Language, poverty, ignorant, traditional customs, street vendors, past | Original people, language, traditional customs, culture, reminiscence artifacts, mixed race | ↑ Variability |
| South UJAT | Language, poverty, ignorant, traditional customs, street vendors, past | Original people, language, traditional customs, culture, reminiscence artifacts | |
| Center UAM-I | Language, poverty, ignorant, traditional customs, street vendors, past | Original people, language, traditional customs, culture, reminiscence artifacts | |

Singularity →

Besides, we may note the strong coincidence among the north, south and central areas in the way they recall and characterize *Indian*; in the same way that we note a coincidence in those same regions when *Indigenous* is recalled and characterized. So, the arrow on the right side of the table identifies a null variation between the populations for each one of the categories under study. Only in the case of the Northern Region (UANL), we note that the term *mixed race* appears associated with the word *Indigenous*, term that does not show in the other two groups. We can therefore assert that a strong degree of homogeneity is present for both terms in the three regions, this is, that a strong consensus exists for those features for both terms in each region. To the extent that "ideology then appears as a set of cognitive conditions and restrictions that guides the construction of a family of social representations,

it positions itself conceptually at a higher generality level than the latter" (Rouquette, 2009, p.154), which allows the assumption that we are facing collective representations.

Besides, the degree of generality, homogeneity and consensus identified among the three regions under study allows the proposal of the hypothesis that, for the case of the *Indian* and the *Indigenous*, we face collective representations as described by Durkheim and Moscovici, when referring to collective representations.

We also used the *singularity* and *variability* schema to analyze the results obtained from three open questions: Why do we not speak an indigenous language? From which pre-Hispanic origin are you a descendant? From which culture do you believe to be a descendant? In the case of the first question, we obtained the following information, which allow us to propose the existence of a social representation in these aspects. In the final part of our instrument, we sought the reasons behind the answers to "Why do we not speak an indigenous language?" for each one of the surveyed populations. The results could not be more consistent and at the same time contrasting with the observations of the first tables.

Table 9.
*Social representations about 'Why do we not speak an indigenous language', for the three regions: North, South and Central*

| Why do we not speak an indigenous language? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Answer | North UANL | South UJAT | Center UAM-I |
| Conquest | 75% | 50% | 100% |
| Due to Spaniards | 25% | 50% | - |

Variability

Singularity

We observe, through the obtained percentages for each type of answer, a *singularity* in this table, characteristic of each one of the regions and that differentiates one another. The students in the northern part of the country identify mainly the Conquest and the Spaniards as the ones responsible for not speaking an indigenous language. The results in the southern region are similar, although in different proportions. And, finally, in the central region, in Mexico City, only the *Conquest* was identified as the event that explains why we do not speak

an indigenous language. So, a social representation mostly shared between the south and north of the country is found, with some modulation degrees that grant a particular singularity for each one and distinguishes it from that of the central region. In this set of answers, we did not find any strong homogeneity among the three populations, we rather found a certain level of differentiation. Another revealing question for its results was: From which pre-Hispanic origin do you believe to be a descendant? In this case, it is also possible to observe the existence of a particular social representation for each one of the populations.

Table 10.
*Social representations about pre-Hispanic origin, for the three regions: North, South and Central*

| From which pre-Hispanic origin do you believe to be a descendant? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Answer | North UANL | South UJAT | Center UAM-I |
| Olmec | - | 100% | 40% |
| Mayan | - | - | 50% |
| Aztecs | - | - | 10% |
| None | 100% | - | - |

Variability

Singularity

While *no pre-Hispanic or ethnic origin* is identified in the North, the South refers mainly to the *Olmec* as the group of origin, in contrast with the Central region where the *Mayan, Olmec* and *Aztecs* are recognized as the ethnic groups attributed as origin. Again, a singularity is present in each set of answers, as well as some variation within each one of them (between the regions), which allows us to identify the existence of social representations.

Finally, we asked about their beliefs in terms of their ancestry: From which culture do you believe to be a descendant? The answers obtained are consistent with the results displayed in the last two tables. These were open questions.

As may be observed in table 11, in the North, Europeans and mixed race are recalled as ancestors; while, in contrast, in the South, the indigenous and mixed race are identified, in coincidence with the Central region of the country. Even while the south and central areas share the contents of their representation, the proportions obtained in the south for these two

concepts shall be noted, since they are much different to the weight granted to the Indigenous and mixed race in the Central area. The answers obtained show a clear variety in the results, this is, when ancestry is involved, a clear difference exists within the regions, which allows us to indicate a relationship between context, culture and indigenous languages, and the way of thinking and recognizing or not recognizing an indigenous ancestry.

Table 11.

*Social representations about origin in three regions: North, South and Central*

| From which culture do you believe to be a descendant? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Answer | North UANL | South UJAT | Center UAM-I |
| European | 90% | - | - |
| Indigenous | - | 60% | 20% |
| Mixed race | 10% | 40% | 80% |

Variability →

Singularity →

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As may be observed through this analysis, when the participants of the three regions were shown the inducing word *Indian*, a stereotyped answer was obtained corresponding to the organization of a negative logic; this is a characterization based on a first precedent found in the stories of the conquerors, missionaries and intellectuals of the Conquest. So, the features attributed to the *Indian* at that first moment have not changed in a significant way over time. While the inducing word *Indigenous*, a generic characterization was obtained, which accounts for a positive logic attached to a story built in the 20th century aimed at giving a positive sense to ethnic groups. In fact, the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* are objects built by the stories and memories hatched in the history of the country. They are, therefore, a historical subject.

It shall be noted that *Indian* recollects aspects such as *Indigenous language*, *street vendors* and *traditional customs*, which account for a heritage passed from generation to generation and are expressions of the remembrances of the groups. These constitute *specific aspects* of ideology, memory and collective representations in the present. Finally, negative

qualifying categories such as the following are observed, such as: *poverty, ignorant*, as well as a reference to their origin, located in the *past*. A negative qualification on the word *Indian* may be observed; this identified logic takes shape through specific aspects, with were identified and are shared by the three surveyed university groups (see Figure 1).

On the contrary, for the term *Indigenous*, even when reference to specific aspects is also made in the first place, such as *indigenous language* and *traditional customs*, generic categories follow, such as: *original people*, *culture* and *memory objects*, which evidence *both generic and specific ethnic and civic aspects*. We identify a logic where a positive qualification prevails, with components recalling ideology, ethnic group memories, articulated mainly to the past and in a lesser degree to the present (see Figure 1). And these aspects are also shared between the three surveyed university groups.

So, the singularity in each one of the subjects: *Indian* and *Indigenous* is verified due to the null variation between the groups of the three regions for each one of the categories. This allows us to identify the level of homogeneity shared among the groups and evidences the existence of two kinds of specimens. Each one *sufficient* by itself and owner of particular qualities according to Rouquette (2009) that, due to their homogeneity, allow us to assume the existence of a negative collective representation for *Indian* and, on the other hand, a positive collective representation for the *Indigenous*. At the same time, it allows us to identify, according to Rouquette's proposal, the positive and negative sides of the ideology that characterize the ethnic subject in our country.

In fact, these results account for the social thinking system associated to Mexico's origins and ideology, and evidence the contradiction to which the original peoples are currently subject. Paradoxically, in the ideology on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* we observe those opposite components that assume two aspects by which they express two different positions with different logics: one where the *Indian* is "bad", "negative", "poverty", "ignorance", "customs", and is the present. While on the other hand it is possible to identify a logic that refers to the *Indigenous* as "good", "positive", "historical heritage", "origin" and "culture", and constitutes the "past".

On the other hand, the study allowed us to also identify a series of differentiations in the answers when we asked more particularly on two aspects: a specific one, the indigenous language, and a generic one, origins (see Figure 1). This allowed us to identify the presence

of social representations. It was possible to identify for these cases the way in which each group represents its origins, as well as the importance placed by each group on the *Indigenous language*. This allows us to assume that proximity and nearness to the *Indigenous* and the *Indian* modulates the qualification that each group has on them, on their origins, and the value placed on the indigenous language. The scarce and inexistent identification, in some cases, with the ethnic as origin allows us to evidence the stigma fixed on the *indigenous* and the *Indian* in our country.

Investigating in parallel about the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* allows the recognition of a thought system about the ethnic in Mexico, where the positive and negative coexist; the general and more abstract concepts as *culture*, ethnic, *original people*; the particular concepts as traditional customs; a system that refers to specific practices as street vendors, domestic help, as well as negative qualifications such as ignorant, dirty, humble. This positive-negative dualism about the ethnic is, according to Rouquette (2009), a component of ideology: "They generally appear as opposites; for instance, the good and the bad, the fair and the unfair, theory and practice, the ideal and reality, the superfluous and the necessary, etc. Ideologies, as we well know when we understand them, were constructed on inherited opposites, that theorize more or less based on the circumstances". The preceding, besides the general and specific components that define both the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* (see Figure 1).

On the other hand, if we look closely, we can identify that these trends were already present from the first stories about the Conquest and the New Spain: the positive valuation on pre-Hispanic cultures *versus* the negative valuation on the ethnic groups to be catechized, they are qualifications inherited in time, the heritage of the dominant groups according to Juárez-Romero (2006a).

The nature of the surveyed groups shall be noted; we assume that undergraduate students possess a higher level of information, with better critical elements and capable of representing the world from a well-informed, critical and logical thinking. However, the results show that facing objects such as *Indian* and *Indigenous*, an ideological position emerges (Rateau et al., 2013). These results force us to think about the weight that ideology holds on the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* in Mexican culture, as well as the urgent need to give a more positive value to the indigenous past and the importance of knowing this past. They

are also an invitation to think of the *Indian* and the *Indigenous* as elements of a thought system, that account for an ideology inherited from the memories of the groups.

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