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**Impact of the Truth Commission on the social representations of
history in Brazil**

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Abstract

This thesis aimed to investigate the social representations of the dictatorship (1964-1985) in Brazil during the process of Truth and Reconciliation Commission – TRC – report release and the political crisis (2014-2018) as well as the TRC impact and appraisals. It is mainly based on the social representations theory, collective memory and studies about TRCs impact. Three studies were conducted. The first, aimed to investigate the social representations about the TRC in Brazil from the spontaneous discourse about the TRC final report in December 2014. Comments (N=322) were collected in the three major newspapers websites in Brazil: "Folha de São Paulo", "O Globo" and "O Estado de São Paulo" during the 48 hours after the news publication. They were transcribed into a textual corpus which was submitted to a lexical analyze on the software Alceste. Results showed three classes emerging, all of them critical against the TRC or the government: Violence perpetrated by leftist militants; Critics against the government and; State agent as victims. A radicalized discourse that justifies the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship as well as revisionist theories that negates the existence of a dictatorship could be observed. The classes seemed to represent the public of each newspaper. The second study aimed to analyze Brazilian TRC appraisals and its relation with social variables such as age and political positioning as well as with the social representations of the dictatorial past comparing three periods: pre, during and post the political crisis that ended up with Dilma Rousseff's impeachment. The sample consisted of 728 volunteer participants. Results showed that knowledge, social sharing about the TRC and



the dictatorship, as well as the TRC positive appraisals increased during the political crisis. Moreover, most of the TRC positive appraisals were associated with left-wing political positioning and victimization. The associations between TRC appraisals and political positioning also increased during the political crisis. The third study aimed to investigate the structure of social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil comparing with a similar previous study (Sá, Oliveira, Castro, Vetere, & Carvalho, 2009). A 238 general sample answered questions about their knowledge, attitudes and emotions regarding the dictatorship. Moreover, a word association task was conducted with the inductor stimulus “military regime”. A prototypical analysis was conducted in IRAMUEQ software. Results showed that, though social representations of dictatorship are still critical, some elements that represent it positively are standing out, even in the central core. These positive representations seem to be anchored in political positioning and to be related to absence of information about the dictatorship in school. Results are discussed considering the political context of crisis, the social representations, collective memory and media theories comparing with previous studies about TRCs impact in other countries.

Keywords: social representations, social representations of history, collective memory, social representations of the past, political conflict



Theoretical background

To study the way people represent the past it is important to consider the aspects that interfere in people's memory. Memory can be affected by both, individual bias in coding and recover information and collective influence. Social representations theory can help to understand these processes because it investigates the interplay between individual and social processes.

In order to understand better these processes, firstly it will be discussed the psychology of memory, the individual processes which affects its accuracy and the remembering processes in an individual approach. Then, the collective memory paradigm is presented stressing the role of social processes in remembering, firstly considering their influence in individual remembering then analyzing the way societies construct a shared past and disseminates history knowledge. Finally, the integration between social representations theory and the collective memory paradigm is discussed. The studies in social representations of the past or social representations of history will be then presented and discussed. Finally, it will be presented the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions – TRC – objectives as well as the studies about their impact and the relation between their appraisal and the social representations of the past.



Psychology of Memory

Definition of memory

Memory is one of the biological skills which can generate much admiration in people. The elephant has been assigned with the most prodigious memory amongst all other animals in the animal kingdom. People say that even if you hurt a little elephant, it can remember your face decades later. Although many of us consider it as an exceptional case, we are sure that people can also have a lot of exact and very long-term memories. Memory be defined as “the capacity to acquire, store and recover different kinds of knowledge and skills”. It “endues human beings and animals with the necessary knowledge to guide their adaptive behavior independent of the situation’s complexity” (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010). There are two main traditions in memory studies, one focused in the individual processes of coding and recalling and the other focused on the environmental aspects that can influence these processes.

The main traditions in the study of memory: Hermann Ebbinghaus and Frederic Bartlett

The main traditions in memory studies are the study-test paradigm which has its most important contributions from Hermann Ebbinghaus and Frederic Bartlett’s studies about the influence of the culture on memory and on the transmissions of stories. Both traditions had great importance in the first half of the 20th century. They presented important discoveries about the remembering process according to different situations.



Studies based on the study-test paradigm include three stages: 1. the study time - during which the participants study a list of units (syllables, words, numbers, etc.) or learn a skill; 2. a retention interval - that can vary on duration, and; 3. the test time - when the evaluation of how much information was retained or how well the skill was learnt by the participants occurs (Ebbinghaus, 1885).

Ebbinghaus' studies are classical for the use of nonsense syllables. This technique was designed to eliminate the cultural influence on participants' responses. His studies did not focus in analyzing neither how the memory structure could be nor its underlying processes. They aimed to verify the relations between some independent variables and the responses rate. The main results led to the discovering of the forgetting curve on the learning process. This curve shows how the forgetting is relatively fast just after the learning phase and then it decelerates (Ebbinghaus, 1885).

Opposing the studies based on the study/test paradigm, dominant in the first half of the 20th century, Frederic Bartlett defended that it was possible and important to study memory through the cultural influences present in their processes. In his studies, Bartlett used two methods: the repeated reproduction (the same person reads a story and then he or she is asked to remember it in successive occasions) and the serial reproduction (the story is told from one person to another, and then to another one, in a chain. In the end, the story told by the last person is compared with the original story).



Through his researches Bartlett could conclude that: people omit details that make no sense to them according to their expectations; words and names are changed by others more familiar as well as the order of the happenings. Therefore, people distort the content of the stories to make it more compatible with their cultural expectations. To remember, people first remember their attitude related to the story, their expectations and general knowledge related to what should or could have happened. Thus, the remembering process is a reconstruction based on the previous attitudes and their justifications (Bartlett, 1932).

The oral transmission of stories

Perception is not a perfect process. Subjects cannot register everything they see or listen and, then, reproduce truly the content perceived. Also, subjects do not maintain their reports inside the lines drawn by the few fragments well registered. They report much more than this without differentiating between the sensory images set up by the object and the interpretation made by them. Thus, they fill up the gaps of the perception with the aid of all that they can remember from past experiences in similar situations. Of course, what was already remembered was also object of the same process being influenced by the subjects' temperament, interests and attitudes (Bartlett, 1932).

The stimulus first arouses a certain attitude that is characterized by a predominant kind of feelings and a background of images associated with these



feelings. Thus, attitudes may influence recall, tend to reproduce stereotypes, distorting and oversimplifying what was perceived. With lapse of time it is common that subjects invent or import material from other settings and the affective attitudes' influence increase. To summarize, "subjects are recalling not the present material directly, but a judgment which they made about this material when they saw it originally" (Bartlett, 1932).

Human beings' cognitive reactions are characterized by an effort after meaning. We have the necessity to get the maximum possible meaning into the material presented to us. We try to connect the meaning of every material given to us with something else. The more ambiguous is the material given, the greater will be the effort after meaning. This effort is made mainly through rationalization process. The general function of rationalization is to render acceptable and understandable the coming material. The rationalization can act either omitting or explaining the ambiguous material, as a whole or in particular details. Some rationalizations act to find a label to the material. This labeling depends upon the subjects' bias. Acting on the details, the rationalization can transform those materials which are relatively unfamiliar to a more familiar character. This process often exhibits similar results as long as the subjects belong to similar social groups (Bartlett, 1932).

The distortion and maintenance of story material details depend upon its characteristics. In general, the changes on pleasant material are in the direction of elaboration and development. On the other hand, distortions are



most likely to occur on displeasing material. With frequent reproductions the form and details of the material remembered become stereotyped and thereafter suffer little change (Bartlett, 1932).

To find out how the stories are modified when they are passed from one person to another Bartlett used the serial reproduction method. It consisted of a reading by a subject of a story not related to his culture. Then, after 15 or 30 minutes, the subject was asked to repeat the story as reliable as possible, with all details that he could remember. Then, the story told by this first subject was told to another, in the way he told and this one was asked, after the proper time, to repeat the story, which was told to a third subject etc. The process went on with dozens of subjects. With this method, Bartlett could find that as the story passed on the chain, it became more coherent and shorter by a series of omissions, by rationalization and by transformation of minor details. The exaggeration commonly occurred and the saving clauses were omitted. These processes are not conscious. Nevertheless, in all cases investigated the final result after less than 10 reproductions would hardly ever be connected with the original story (Bartlett, 1932).

The results were influenced by the cultural contexts, the groups participants belonged. The groups are organized by a realm of tendencies that help it to hold together. These tendencies give the group a bias in dealing with external circumstances, which constructs persistent features of group culture. The tendencies and features settle the way individuals perceive the world and



the way they relate what they perceive in the present to their past life. They provide a setting of interest and emotion which are related to the development of specific images and they provide a framework of institutions and customs for constructive memory (Bartlett, 1932).

Groups' culture and tendencies are formed by a process called conventionalization. It refers to the selective conservation by a group of alien material, like techniques, customs or institutions and it can be defined as "a process by which cultural materials coming into a group from outside are gradually worked into a pattern of a relatively stable kind distinctive of that group" (Bartlett, 1932).

The cultural material introduced by an external group has to change to adapt to the receiving group. There are four main processes through which these changes can occur: assimilation to existent cultural forms; simplification or elimination of elements; retention of irrelevant details and social constructiveness. The transference of cultural features only occurs if there is already a background where these features can suit. The conventionalization processes combined generate a new cultural feature based upon what was brought by the external group and the background pre-existent in the receiving group. Every well-established group has not only the structure built by this process but a prospect, which means specific direction which to the group tend to develop. When any cultural feature comes from an external group, it has to



be conventionalized in the direction which the group is developing (Bartlett, 1932).

We can say that the matter of recall is more a question of interest while the manner of recall is a question of temperament of the individual or the group. The temperament is influenced by the social climate, for example, in times of social tension some tendencies, which are not present in normal times, are brought out. If a group has no directed organized tendencies, but only a group of equally dominant interests, recall is more likely to be in a rote recapitulatory way while if the tendencies are strong, the recall is more likely to appear directly. Finally, if the social tendencies are subjected to any form of social control, like a dictatorship, so the recall is more likely to acquire a constructive and inventive character and is more likely to be accompanied by excitement and emotion (Bartlett, 1932).

Rumors transmission

The bias in the oral transmission of stories added to an ambiguous social climate lead to the creation and spread of rumors. A rumor, is “a proposition to create, that passes from one person to another, usually orally, without ways of proof to demonstrate it” (Allport & Postman, 1947).

Rumors have two basic conditions to arise: it has to be important and ambiguous. The quantity of rumor varies exponentially as these two factors vary, unless the social context is authoritarian and the rumor can be punished



severely. Different repressed feelings can originate rumors. The hate and hostility have the strongest effects and the fear, desire and curiosity have weaker effects. In the hate rumors, information and arguments are not sufficient to undo it. As the rumors spread, it tends to become more concise, because it is easier to embrace and tell. A short and precise sentence has more probability to be reproduced faithfully. When the rumor becomes like this, it can be called a slogan or motto (Allport & Postman, 1947).

The more possibilities to get informed could reduce the rumor subsection. Nevertheless, the fact that people can know about the events faster enlarges the horizon of interests and, by consequence, enlarges the areas of ambiguity (Allport & Postman, 1947).

Rumors also serve to explain cognitive bias. There is an intellectual and emotional pressure to extract meaning from the ambient, to find the plausible reasons for the confused situations. In this process, a person sees the world according to his frame of mind and projection mechanism acts. The limited vocabulary that results in using clichés to express the disordered and incomplete images existing in the memory also has an important role in this process (Allport & Postman, 1947).

As Bartlett has demonstrated, even the first report given directly from the stimuli font cannot be considered reliable (Bartlett, 1932). Rumors, by getting more and more far from the direct witness is even more fallacious. There are three psychological witness steps that repeat in every rumor

transmission: perceive, remember and report. Perception is influenced by the salient experiences of the past. Remembering depends on perception and on the words used to fix a situation on the mind. Finally, the report, moreover being influenced by the others steps, depends on the social situation where such report happens and on the conversation purposes. The original perception tend to remains inside some limits. On the other hand, social memory does not have these limit points. So, it is highly conventionalized, that is, it reflects what is common for the group that shares it (Allport & Postman, 1947).

Rumors are related to social identity. They only spread through people with similar mentality. Each rumor has its own public, comprised by a community of shared interests. Thus, in a heterogeneous society the rumors spread are restricted by the social groups that have a common worldview and objectives. The suggestibility to a rumor means that a person has a proposition to believe apart from the proof. Furthermore, rumors often aim, justify or explain a social tension towards some social group, though relying on stereotypes and prejudice. People suggestible are those whose mental life is poorly structured or plagued by stereotypes and rigid complexes. To these people, most happenings are mysterious and science is an unknown land. The rumors that are in line with their worldview are greedily absorbed by their mindset full of specious explanations and prejudices. Hostility rumors only spread among people who are prejudiced to hate the victim. So, rumors do not form new attitudes, but confirm those that already exist (Allport & Postman, 1947).



The structure of memory: sensory, short-term and long-term memories

The studies cited, although explained how memory can be influenced by cultural contexts did not intend to explain the way memory is organized, the structure of memory, nor the processes that take place in this structure. Since the 1970's many studies have been done to investigate these aspects.

The idea that memory works from multiple systems exists since the classical studies of William James, in the end of the 19th century. James argued that memory can be divided in primary and secondary, what it is now known as short-term and long-term memory. Nevertheless, it was since Atkinson and Shiffrin's studies in 1968 that researches aimed to describe completely and in detail all the structures and processes that compose the skill we call memory (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010).

The model proposed by Atkinson and Shiffrin, called structural approach, distinguishes two main dimensions: the structure of memory and the control processes. The structure can be described as composed by three memory stores: sensory records, the short-term memory and the long-term memory. Through this structure, people can use different control processes to control the information flow. The main control processes are: selective attention, review, tracking, search and codification. This model proposed an information processing order. The information first comes to the sensory stores where it is registered in the corresponding sensorial dimension. Then, through an exploration of the coming information and a search for related information



in the long-term memory, it is transferred to the short-term memory. The information that was not selected is lost by a decay process in a few seconds. Once in the short-term memory, information can receive enough attention to be recognized and categorized. Nevertheless, short-term memory is limited. It is a working memory by which people can control the information through rehearsal and can maintain it available for dozen of seconds. The more time information is maintained the more likely it will be transferred to the long-term memory. Once retained there, information can be considered permanent though sometimes the recall is not succeeded. From this point, people can recall information and work consciously with it (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).

On the other hand, the functional approach of memory proposed by Craik and Lockhart argued that memory should be considered as a product from the processes occurring when the information is submitted. The attention and perception processes in the time of codification determine which content will be stored in the long-term memory opposing the perspective that sustained that the simple repetition is enough to a good storage work. This approach stressed two kinds of processing: maintenance rehearsal (basic) and elaborative rehearsal (resulting each time in a deeper level of analysis) (Craik & Lockhart, 1972).

The functional approach is based on the studies of Arthur Melton that defended the existence of three phases on the memory functioning: codification, storage and recall. The codification is the processing of coming



information aiming preparing it to later storage. It includes two processes: acquisition (inputs registers of sensorial memories and submission of this information to different analysis) and consolidation (creation of representation or memory cues becoming stronger). The second phase is the storage. It is characterized by the maintenance through time of a permanent register of the memory cues. Finally, the third phase is the recall. It is the process that allows to the recovering of the storage information (Melton, 1963).

Types of memory: semantic, episodic, procedural and auto-biographical

Further researchers have found that the description of memory as composed by three stores is not sufficient to explain all cases of memory lost. For example, there are people who suffer cerebral damage and have their skill to remember past events completely damaged, but they can conserve their general knowledge about the world. Such cases led authors like Endel Tulving and Daniel Schacter to study deeply the memory systems classification. They could identify three other kinds of memory: semantic (related to the general knowledge); episodic (related to personal events) and procedural (acquired skills). These systems are not opposed to the three-store approach. We can use these different systems independently (Tulving & Schacter, 1987).

Some authors like Martin Conway and Katherine Nelson argued that we should consider one more category as a memory system: the auto-biographical memory. This system could store emotionally charged memories related to self



conscious. The difference between the autobiographical and episodic memories is that the later are specific, while the auto-biographical memories are built in a narrative way throughout one's whole life. Inside the auto-biographic system, there is a difference between the auto-biographical memories and events. Auto-biographical memories can be described as a re-experimentation of the original episode, while auto-biographical events are related to the knowledge of events without a clear image of the specific scene of when it happened. Studies about memory dissociation support this division, and it also support the idea that auto-biographical memory is composed by two components: episodic and semantic (Conway, 2005; Nelson, 1993).

Types of memory: explicit and implicit

Although memory can be considered as a unique system (Craik & Lockhart, 1972), a basic distinction can be done between explicit memory (a task execution requires a conscious recall of previous experiences) and implicit memory (execution is better without a consciously recall) (Graf & Schacter, 1985). The explicit memory, which is also called declarative, comprises two subsystems: episodic memory (related to events) and semantic memory (for general knowledge). On the other hand, implicit memory, also called non-declarative, can be divided in: procedural (motor and perceptive skills), priming, implicit learning, classical conditioning and non-associative learning (Squire & Zola, 1996).



Forgetting, trauma and false memories

Forgetting can be considered from three points of view: decay, interference or failures in the recall process (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010). From the decay perspective, there is a difference between the short and long-term forgetting. The first seems to occur as a simple consequence of the time passing by the decaying of memory traces (Peterson & Peterson, 1959). Related to the long-term forgetting, Ebbinghaus' studies showed that forgetting occurs in different speeds through the time, being faster just after the learning and getting slower after a day (Ebbinghaus, 1885) though the information used constantly can delay or prevent the decaying process (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010).

Some authors argued that interference can act in the forgetting process. The interference can be described as proactive (the old information disturbs the learning and retention of the new information), and retroactive (the new information disturbs the recalling of an old one) (Jonides et al., 2008). The interference can also happen as a consequence of an overload of the retrieval cues at the recall moment (Watkins & Watkins, 1975), though the restoration of the original context can work as a strong retrieval cue (Smith, 1988).

Finally, the failure in the recall process can occur by many reasons as repression, inhibition, etc. (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010). In the case of repression, something that happens can be so shocking that the mind puts it in an inaccessible place for a long time or forever (Freud, 1915). The traumatic memories can resurge after a long time, but in many cases they can be false,



though be very real and vivid. In these cases, it seems that post-event information is incorporated into the factual memory and changes it. So, memory can be suggested (Loftus, 1993). People who suffered traumatic experiences can experience hypermnesia (painful remembering that cannot be suppressed) or amnesia (partial or total forgetting) (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010). Emotions can have three kinds of influence on remembering: in the quantity of events recalled; in the subjective liveliness of the events recalled, and; in the recall accuracy (Kensinger & Schacter, 2008). The empirical evidence suggests that people remember better the emotional events both negative and positive (Sharot & Phelps, 2004) though their effect seems to be related more with the event central elements than the secondary (Christianson & Loftus, 1990). Furthermore, the emotional memories are malleable by the passage of time (Vangiezen, Arensman, Spinhoven, & Wolters, 2005) and can be influenced by wrong post-event information (Loftus, 1993).

Collective memory

The influence of others on memory has also been studied by many researchers in a more sociological approach. This field of study was originally called collective memory and Maurice Halbwachs is usually pointed out as the pioneer (Assmann, 2008; Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012; Schuman, Schwartz, & D'Arcy, 2005; Villas Bôas, 2015), considering collective memory as the “reconstruction of the past made by members of a group from their interests



and present social frameworks. This memory, keeps the identity, the nature and the value of a group” (Halbwachs, 1950).

Collective representations and social frameworks

Halbwachs’ theory was influenced by Émile Durkheim’s ideas about social frameworks. Investigating the elementary forms of religion, Durkheim observed that different social organization lead to the construction of different kinds of myths and religions which in turn lead to different mental organizations. Thus, the social life gives individuals the frameworks in which they organize their mental life. These frameworks are called collective representations. It explains the way the world works and the role of the individual in it. The collective representations represent the accumulated knowledge, resulted from cooperation between individuals throughout generations in a society. The social frameworks provide to individuals the reference points related to which all things are categorized. For instance, the categorization of time in days, weeks, months and years reflects the periodicity of the public rituals, parties and ceremonies. Once an idea, a representation of the world was constructed by a society and assimilated by its members, it serves to interpret the facts even if there is no link between them (Durkheim, 1912).

The rituals have an important role on the emergence and maintenance of collective representations. It emerges when the group is gathered. They aim to evoke certain mental states once reached. These mental states are not



possible to be reached by an individual alone. Once individuals are gathered, a kind of energy emerges from their approximation. This energy leads quickly to exaltation because the consciousnesses are more open to external impressions when gathered and echo them. The gathering leads to an experimentation of social feelings and these feelings lead to a construction of the collective representations. When alone, individuals' temperament and daily concerns would return to their minds. Thus, societies need the rituals to remain. Rituals maintain the sharing beliefs and thus they help to keep society cohesion. As long as shared beliefs are based on social feelings and traditions they are impermeable to the experience (Durkheim, 1912).

Characteristics of collective memory by Halbwachs

Collective memory does not conserve anything that is not alive on people's memories. Groups do not forget, but they perish and are replaced by others with different memories. However, even when the groups that lived the event are still alive, the past is interpreted through the actual context framework. So, past changes all the time and it is reconstructed throughout the consensus established throughout time by people who have lived it and appropriated by whom not (Halbwachs, 1950).

Collective memory contains individual memories, but does not confound with them. Collective memory is related to the events occurred in the group context, while individual memories regards to very personal contexts. Therefore, the interpersonal contacts and other witnesses are important for the



collective memory construction. This contact establishes the social frameworks in which people remember. Furthermore, the frameworks constructed by the group that have lived the event also made reference to the contact between generations that allows young people to construct an image and have opinions about a past that they had not lived. When generations change, the need to tell the history of the past generation increases. Thus, there would be an interruption between people who read or listen to the history (people who actually are alive) and who had lived the history (people that are on the past) (Halbwachs, 1950).

Collective memory does not confound itself with history either. The later is related to a compilation of events that has more importance to collective memory. But, this compilation has a limited space. Halbwachs made an analogy between history and a cemetery. He said that history seems like a cemetery because the space is limited and every time it is necessary to find a place for new tombs. Therefore, history only registers abrupt time-changes and their repercussions while forgets large periods of relative stability. Differently of history, societies can retain two kinds of memories, one about the winners and rulers, and the others about the losers. The loser's memories are not forgotten but they stay as minority memories, waiting an opportunity to be rescued and become visible, maybe becoming part of the official history (Halbwachs, 1950).



Collective memory and alternative concepts

Throughout the last decades, many concepts have arisen as alternatives or complements to collective memory. Some examples are: social memory; memory in society; memory of a society; historical memory; cultural memory; social representations of past; social representations of history; etc. Many authors have their own way to categorize these similar concepts. Some authors consider social memory as the registers and traces of the past that are virtually available to anyone in museums, libraries, monuments, cultural manifestations, etc. These registers can also be called “memory in the society” or “cultural memory” (Jedlowski, 2000). For others, social memory is a proper concept to describe all the studies about the social aspects of the memory. This concept may be more adequate because it relates easily with a dynamic perspective of memory, stressing its continuous construction and reconstruction and its disputes for hegemony (Olick, 1999; De Rosa, Bellelli, & Bakhurst, 2008). Others argue that cultural memory, social memory and collective memory could be considered synonymous and cultural memory maybe should be a broader concept chosen to describe "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" (Erl, 2008).

To avoid confusion, in the present work, we have opted to call collective memory the product of a reconstruction of the past events that were lived by the current members of a group. We adopt the term social memory as a broader concept to refer to the studies about the interplay between memory



and society. We consider cultural memory the registers and traces of the past available to consult. We define history as a compilation, in form of narrative, of the events that has more importance to maintain a group identity. Finally, we consider social representations of history as common sense theories about the past.

The influence of the social circumstances on individual memory

The existence of a pure individual memory was contested by Halbwachs. What is usually called individual memory would be, in his opinion, no more than a collection of confusing nonsense images, that we are able to recognize but not to localize them into a coherent narrative. To transform these images into a memory, the reason works to localize them into frameworks that act as reference points to construct a narrative. These frameworks are provided by the social world, which means the groups which individuals belong and where they resort to help them complete the details missing in their memory construction. Furthermore, social positions or identities play a role on this process. The reconstruction of past events is based on the present point of view. It is reconstructed from the present perception, worries and interests which varies according to the identities, positions or roles individuals assume (Halbwachs, 1925).



Cultural memory

Cultural memory should be considered different from collective memory because the latter is not materially in the society but in the consciousnesses of the people. In this sense, cultural memory gets stronger as time passes while collective memory weakens (Esposito, 2008). Every cultural memory has its own public and aims to transmit a message. The public is all people who has access to the memory trace or, even when it can be openly accessed, people who virtually have interest on the subject (Namer, 1987). These traces are present just when a person, moved by his/her own interest, goes to consult it and takes possession of it. In the modern society, the techniques of observing the traces of the past have been producing an enlargement of the cultural memory, though these memories appear now more fragmented and circumstantial (Jedlowski, 2000).

The concept of cultural memory arisen in the 1980's. In this decade, many Holocaust survivors started to fade away and many people started to worry about their legacy, their histories which should be told. Without autobiographical remembering, societies depend on media, such as monuments, places, books, etc. to transmit experience. Cultural memory studies in 1980's relied mainly on the works of Pierre Nora about the sites of memory and Jan and Aleida Assmann about media and memory in ancient societies (Erll, 2008).



Sites of memory express “a collective shared knowledge (...) of the past, on which a group’s sense of unity and individuality is based” (Assmann, 1995). They need an engaged public activity to remain important to a society. They are points of reference not only for those who survived the event commemorated but, mainly for those who born after it. They are places to remember the memories of others. When the groups that maintain the public activity in a site of memory disappear, this site loses its force and may fade away (Winter, 2008). Sites of memory pass through two phases: a creative, when they are constructed or adapted to particular commemorative purposes and an institutionalization phase, which associates particular places and forms of remembrances with specific days (Nora, 1984).

Public commemorations usually take place in sites of memory. It is “an activity defined by the gestures and words of those who come together at sites of memory to recall particular aspects of the past” (Winter, 2008).

Commemoration at sites of memory implies a recall of a significant moment lived by a group or its ancestors which contains a moral message. Sites of memory serve to materialize that message. In the cases there is no consensus about the nature of the event, its causes or the moral message that should be learned from it (for instance Vietnam War in the United States or Algerian War in France), it is more difficult to construct sites of memory and public commemoration rituals. Moreover, public commemorations depend on the existence of some degree of liberty in the societies, being very difficult to rise in dictatorial societies. Public commemorations need to stay linked to the daily



life; otherwise, it will fade away, as well as the sites of memory related to it.

The vanishing of a site of memory does not mean that it is disappeared forever.

It can resurge if the social conditions and the wish of the people enable it

(Winter, 2008). In order to remain active in a society, public commemorations

have to: be relevant to social identity; have provoked an important social

change or threatened the group identity; be emotionally charged; be

commemorated in rituals, institutional and informal communications.

Moreover, commemorations have to serve to the needs and actual objectives.

Collective rituals are especially effective in maintaining collective memories.

They remember the event through a repetitive re-activation of the cognitive

representation. The synchronicity of gestures and music lead to a social sharing

of emotions strengthening fusion identity elements (Páez, Rimé, Basabe,

Włodarczyk, & Zumeta, 2015).

Cultural memory can be considered a compilation of collective memories. It does not belong to any group in particular. The process of storage and then its eventual consulting by people are part of a double relationship between collective memory and history. The storage of objects in museums, the maintenance of monuments and building in the cities, the choice of books to comprise a library, neither of them is made by chance. It is part of a choice, based in a dispute to construct a legitimate history of the group. All these traces tell a history of the group where some aspects, happenings and emotions are stressed and others hidden. In this sense, history would be a discourse that unify and legitimate the conjunct of collective memories of a society.



However, the choices are not definitive. Every time a person consults these objects, the history can be questioned. Thus, history is constantly actualized by the groups that are actually alive. This process is carried out through plenty of negotiations and conflicts between the groups (Namer, 1987).

The disputes for hegemony can be better understood from the concept of culture and its relation with the social identity. Culture is “a set of beliefs, values, practices and traditions inherited that provide a given group a sense of identity” (Langenbacher, 2010; p. 26). Culture is a consequence of collective memory and it is very important for its maintenance and changes. As we have improved our capacity to maintain the registers from the past, we are able to choose which elements should be remembered and which should be forgotten. Such decisions influence and are influenced by social identity and is based on the present objectives of the groups.

There are two levels on which culture and memory intersect: an individual or cognitive level and; a collective, social or media level. The former draws attention to the fact that memory, though it is shaped by collective contexts, it is always individual and it has a biological background. In this sense, culture means the socio-cultural contexts that influence on memory, the schemata acquired from these contexts that we use to recall the past and encode new experience. The second level refers to the shared past constructed by a society and maintained by different media, practices and institutions. It does not mean a cultural memory detached from individuals. It

refers to different manners through which a group can tell a narrative about the past. These materials and practices should be continuously actualized by members of a community in order to conserve itself as cultural memory, it means, in order to not being a dead material with no impact in society (Erll, 2008).

The processes of remembering, forgetting and reconstruction of the past by a society

Collective memory creation and its maintenance are dynamic processes. They involve a continuous talking and thinking about the event in a society (Pennebaker & Basanick, 1998). These processes are related to the emotional impact of the events that lead to more social sharing and repetitive thoughts about events with a great emotional impact. There are two others hypotheses regarding the creation and maintenance of collective memories: generational resources and psychological distance. The generational resources hypothesis assumes the critical age idea. It proposes that the generations that have lived a traumatic social event during their youth only would have the material resources and the political influence to promote commemorations after one or two decades. On the other hand, the psychological distance hypothesis proposes that, in cases of very traumatic events, some time would be necessary until people would be able to face the past event and think about it to build monuments or rituals for commemoration (Pennebaker & Basanick, 1998).



Two sets of factors comprise the memory systems: the synchronic dimension, which contains the dominant collective memories, that can be prescriptive (what should be thought is set before hand) or proscriptive (set the values, attitudes and behaviors not allowed or that are taboos); the second set is the diachronic dimension, which makes reference to the causes and explanations for the events that have generated a particular collective memory, and also the collective memories which follow these events, that is, the history of memory. These historical narratives often influence the present ethical and moral discourses. The memory systems are interpreted in a privileged form by some agents as politicians, journalists, social leaders, artists, teachers and intellectual people in general. Such elite interpret the memories that come from the mass and from others groups better informed, namely specialists in a given subject. The elites produce their own discourses that many times are very different from the popular discourse. Their potential of social change relies on trying to approximate it to the popular discourse (Langenbacher, 2010).

Cultural remembering, as well as cultural forgetting, can be active and passive. Active cultural memory can be considered as a working memory of a society. The elements that comprise it passed for a rigorous process of selection. There are three main areas of active cultural memory: art, history and religion. In history, for instance, the narratives produced by the Nation-States are taught massively to the new generations, moreover being reinforced by monuments, rituals and commemoration dates. This process is very important to the maintenance of a national identity. The passive remembering is



represented by the many kinds of archives maintained somewhat hidden from most of people. The tools of storage have been playing an important role in the relations between active and passive kinds of cultural memory. An introduction of a new technology, such as the writing, the printed book or the internet, can be considered a tragedy for the culture, in the sense that increase dramatically the difference between what is stored and what can be actively remembered by the members of a society (Assmann, 2008).

Assmann's shared memories typology

Considering the relations between memory, time and identity it is possible identify three kinds of memory: individual, in which the time is subjective and it is related to an inner self; communicative, in which social perception of time and identity is formed based on the social roles played and; cultural, in which perceptions of time follow historical and mythical narratives and identity is related to the culture that emerge from these narratives (Assmann, 2008b).

Assmann's typology comprises five kinds of shared memories classified by their grade of generalization and acceptance. The less generalized and accepted are the communicative memories (interpersonal conversations); then there are the generational memories (memories shared by a specific generation); occupying a central place are the collective memories (that exist in a period and run through different generations); then, the cultural memories (hegemonic memories that appear ritualized in a society) and; the most



generalized and accepted are the myths (memories that has no resistance, that serve to maintain the social identity and are difficult to prove) (Assmann, 2008b).

Generations and collective memory

The analysis of the generational issue and its relations with memory started to be discussed in German, by the end of the 19th century. Authors like Wilhelm Dilthey argued that the groups are dependent on the facts and changes that happened when they were most susceptible (Mannheim, 1952; Reulecke, 2008). A generation can be defined as “a group within a society that is characterized by its members having grown up in the same particularly formative historical era” (Reulecke, 2008, p. 119). Different generations interpret history differently and a generation, that was affect in a particular way by an event or a social period can exhibit a resistance towards the official history that is being constructed by a society as a whole (Reulecke, 2008).

In the first half of the 20th century, Karl Mannheim developed these ideas on a generation theory. He distinguished four kinds of issues related to the generations. The most basic one is the “generational location”; it means the exposure to the same historical contexts during the same period of life. Nevertheless, people belonging to a generation will establish a “generational connection” only if the social context allows them to do it. This connection means that these people share a common destiny and they can act together to built it. Sometimes, a generational connection includes two or more groups that



try to make their vision hegemonic. They are “generational units”. The connection element is not the worldview, but the questions discussed in a certain period of history in a certain social context. These questions and the social facts and changes each generation is exposed, especially during the youth, form a “generation consciousness”. The youth experiences are so remarkable because, during this period the models of the world with which the new experiences will be compared are being constructed (Mannheim, 1952).

Generational theories helped the development to the critical age hypothesis which affirms that the events occurred when people are between 12 and 25 years old are more remembered (Schuman, Belli, & Bischooping, 1998). However, some authors believe that is not a general rule, because there are events important and emotionally shocking enough to transcend generations. In general, such events are traumatic and they usually are related to great wars or dictatorships (Concha, Guichard, & Henríquez, 2009; Manzi et al., 2004; Oddone & Lynch, 2008; Schuman, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Vinokur, 2003).

From Collective memory to Social representations of history

Social Representations Theory

Collective memory and similar concepts can be interpreted through the social representations theory. Such as collective memory, social representation is a concept that has its origin linked with Durkheim’s ideas about the collective representations. However, Serge Moscovici, the founder of social



representations theory, defended that collective representation was not a proper concept to analyze modern societies that, unlike traditional societies, are fluid and change continuously (Moscovici, 1961/2012). So, while collective representations represents the static elements which maintain traditional societies cohesive, social representations theory aims to analyze the points of tension on the representational systems which can generate changes in the social organization (Moscovici, 2007). These points of tension are characterized by the appearance of something un-familiar, unknown or meaningless. As the culture cannot bear something meaningless, a representational work takes place to make the un-familiar meaningful. This work allows the appearance of new representations. In this way, every social representation aims to transform something un-familiar or the non-familiarity in something familiar. Thus, social representations can be defined as:

“A system of values, ideas and practices with a double function: first, establish an order that allows people to guide themselves in the material and social world and control it; and, second, allows that communication be possible between the members of a community, giving them a code to name and classify, without ambiguity, the various aspects of their world and their individual and social history” (Moscovici, 2007, p.21).

Social representations theory allows analyzing the action in context and at the time it occurs (Farr, 1996). For example, Moscovici’s (1961/2012) and Denise Jodelet’s (1991) classical studies about the social representations of



psychoanalysis and madness respectively are examples of social representations emergence, transmission, transformation and their relations with the practices. All these features of a social representation are related, but sometimes what is said about a social object is different from the behavior related to it (Jodelet, 1991).

Social representations genesis and communication strategies

Social representations construction and evolution rely on communicative processes (Sammut, Tsirogianni, & Wagoner, 2012). In his seminal work “La psychanalyse, son image et son public” Moscovici distinguished three kinds of communication about a new object: diffusion, propagation and propaganda. Diffusion is related to opinions, propagation to attitudes and propaganda to stereotypes. Diffusion aims to inform and to attract the interest to an object. It allows diversity and challenge consensus. Propagation aims to assimilate the object into a group frame pressing for uniformity. It is more linked to the attitudes and belief systems. Finally, propaganda is more ideological and centralized. It seeks to impose uniformity on both, social representations and behaviors (De Rosa, 2013; Moscovici, 2012). Different groups can adopt different communication patterns depending on their openness to alternative opinions about the object (Sammut, Andreouli, Gaskell, & Valsiner, 2015).

Social representations are elaborated through three kinds of processes: ontogenesis, sociogenesis and microgenesis. Ontogenetic processes regard to



the developing of individuals in relation to existing social representations, how these representations become active for the individual. Sociogenetic processes refer to the way social representations evolve, are transmitted, change and interact with one another in society. Finally, microgenesis refers to the elaborations and reproduction of social representations in an interpersonal level, in social interaction (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990).

Social representations processes: anchoring and objectification

The social representations are structured by two processes that act intra-individually on the transformation of the un-familiar in familiar: anchoring and objectification. The anchoring process tries to reduce the strange ideas to common categories in order to put them in a familiar context. The strange object is compared to one of the existent categories, and, at the same time, it is transformed to fit in it. The category's main strength is the fact that it provides an appropriate model or prototype to represent the class. These prototypes favor existing opinions. Before seeing or listening to someone, we judge him or her. We classify and create an image of this person. Every system of classification presupposes a specific position based on a consensus. On the other hand, the objectification process aims to transform a concept that is abstract in a concrete image. However, not all words can be transformed in images, because there are not enough accessible images or some of the images remembered are taboos (Moscovici, 2007).



Anchoring and objectification are intra-individual characteristics of the social representation. Moscovici stressed that social representations are created not by a single individual but throughout the communication processes. Once created, they acquire other characteristic. They live by themselves. By this time, they pervade every kind of communication serving as tools to understanding and to formation of concepts and shared conventions (Moscovici, 2007).

The relations between individual and society: social representations and social identity

Although the processes of anchoring and objectification act intra-individually, social representations theory has been pointed out as an oppositional force against the merely individualistic theories such as attitude (Gaskell, 2001). As an object, they exist across individuals rather than in an individual (Wagner & Hayes, 2005) and as a theory it could be positioned in all levels of analyze from intrapersonal to ideological (Doise, 2002).

The social representations and practices are beyond the individuals (Wagoner, 2015) being related to social identity, contributing to individuals social positioning and to the negotiation of a shared frame of reference in social interaction (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990). Group belonging usually lead individuals to assimilate the norms, beliefs and the representational system of the group (Duveen, 2008) and social representations helps to guide the social interaction between individuals (Sammut & Howarth, 2014).



The social representations are elaborated and discussed in a context of “battle of ideas” (Moscovici, 1998). The various groups in a society try to impose their ideas, some are successful and some are not (Howarth, 2001). When exposed to new ideas, people interpret them as agreeing or disagreeing with their previous social representations (Moscovici, 1994). This interpretation can influence the disposition to hear the message and to interact with the people or groups who share these ideas (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Science, common-sense and social representations

Social representations theory is based on the idea that the common sense can be considered as a valuable way to understand the reality (Moscovici, 1984). The necessity to reconstruct the common sense increased since mass media accelerated the tendency to the heterogeneity and wavering of the unifying systems: sciences, religions and ideologies. Trying to explain this fact, Moscovici abandoned the distinction made by Durkheim between the profane and sacred ways of thinking and affirms that, in modern societies, there is a more basic distinction between the consensual and reified universes. In the consensual universe, society is considered as a group of equal people where everyone has the right to speak out and the speech from everyone has the same value. There is no hierarchy. The complicity and conventions determines what can be spoken and how it can be spoken. This universe depends on conversation which creates a base of meanings shared by people in a group. Thus, they can share an implicit storage of images and ideas that are considered



well accepted. Everything said only confirms the existent beliefs, support and does not contradict tradition. On the other hand, in the reified universe, such as science, society is considered an unequal system where every person belongs to a class and should play a different role according to his class. The competence acquired determines the degree of participation in this meritocratic system. In this system clashes occur all the time. The clashes are not between people, but existent organizations, each of them with their particular rules and regulation. It is not the direct agreement between the members that establish these rules but a series of previous prescription (Moscovici, 2007).

Sciences are the means through which we can understand the reified universe while social representations are connected with the consensual universe. Social representations explain the objects and happenings in a way that they become accessible to everyone and concur with our immediate interests. In this sense, people prefer common sense explanation. They often make misleading correlations that even the presentation of objective facts is unable to correct. They distort the information that comes in order to accept the facts that confirm their beliefs and ignore the rest (Moscovici, 2007). These differences between distinct modalities of knowledge such as science and social representations does not lead to a inevitable choice between one of them but, they often coexist in the same individual a state name cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 1961/2012).



Status of a social representation: hegemonic, emancipated and polemic

Once created and circulating in society, social representations can acquire one of three statuses: hegemonic, emancipated and polemic.

Hegemonic social representations are shared by all members of a society and support very little variation. Emancipated social representations are common in subgroups in a society that creates their interpretation of the reality. These representations present individual variations but these variations refer to the degree of exposure to the group. Finally, polemical representations are in dispute. They are usually present in intergroup conflicts (Breakwell, 2015).

Different approaches on social representations theory

Many approaches have been developed in the social representations paradigm in order to analyze the different aspects of the social representations such as: structural, socio-dynamic, dialogical, anthropological and modeling.

In the structural approach social representations are organized in a dual system comprised by a core and a periphery. The core determines the general meaning of the social representation. It seeks the stability of the representations and so it is hard to change. On the other hand, the periphery is composed by elements linked to the central core but more malleable and adapt to changing realities. It protects the central system from abrupt changes (Abric, 2001; Flament, 1989).



Socio-dynamic approach is focused on the role of organizing principles for representational processes. They represent common reference points to discussion of social issues and they vary according individual positioning (Doise, Clémence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993).

Dialogical approach focuses on the relations between individual social representations in contact with others representation and processes of social change (Markova, 2000).

Anthropological approach seeks to investigate the social representations within the context in which they occur. Jodelet's (1991) study about the social representations of madness is an example of a research on this approach.

Finally, the modelling approach is based on the integration of various concepts and methods to achieve a more complete picture of the phenomena analyzed (De Rosa, 2014).

Social representations of history

History, as any science, can be object of appropriation and transformation by common sense. The social representations theory can help to understand how this process occurs. So, study the social representations of history means trying to analyze the way people construct their representation about the past, how these representations are associated with many variables and how it is associated to present objectives.



Social representations of history and intergroup conflicts

Conflict rise explanations and justifications

Understand the relations between collective memories, social representations of the past and social identity helps to understand the public uses of the past by different groups in contexts of intractable conflicts. Daniel Bar-Tal has developed a model of collective remembering for these contexts. This model is based on the characteristics of these conflicts: group suffering and the collective challenges for needs satisfaction, the stress coping and the coexistence with the enemy. In these contexts, the social representations of the past are based on “elected traumas” and are often responsible for an emotional orientation on which fear overcomes hope, through a constant feeling of threatening that raises the fear and hate emotion towards the other group. These feelings are reinforced on each ritual that remembers the deaths that the group has suffered while forgetting the suffering of the other group. The narrative originated in this process justifies its own demands while delegitimizing those from the other group (Bar-Tal, 2007).

Social representations of history and Truth and Reconciliation

Commissions: Overcoming a past of collective violence

Along the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic society, there is a necessity to come to terms with the past. Competing representations of the past are publicly discussed and negotiated. If perpetrators or their supports still



hold influential positions in a post-authoritarian society, so the government is pressured towards impunity. On the other side, the victims and their supporters will do not accept this government and, hence, the new democracy is in danger because of the lack of legitimacy (Meyer, 2008).

After active hostilities have ceased or the dictatorship has been replaced by a democracy, there are important steps to historical reconciliation (Páez & Liu, 2011). First, the acceptance of facts about events, including others' suffering, is essential for the construction of shared social representations of history and reconciliation. The acceptance of different meanings about a collective violence allows the two sides to, at least, begin to acknowledge one another. Second, it is important to remember what happened but not maintaining hatred. What is important is to acknowledge the reality of crimes and victims, “to keep it from happening again...” but to forget the emotions of hate and not awakening ancient sufferings in order to justify future crimes. Finally, the creation of an inclusive narrative that describes different meanings, experiences and perspectives of the past in a single story. One example of reconstruction is the current representation of both world wars in the official German and French memory. The social representations of great battles of WWI (like Verdun) were patriotic on both German and French sides as a manifestation of heroism, glory, and the fighting spirit of combatant. At the end of the XX century, battles like Verdun became a symbol of a mutual slaughter, with a similar meaning for combatants on both sides. This representation was enacted symbolically when Mitterrand and Kohl, the French



president and German prime minister, stood hand in hand in front of a French ossuary of dead soldiers (Páez & Liu, 2011).

Another instance of co-construction of shared factual social representations of the past is the Truth, Justice, and Reparation Commissions. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are being diffused as the best practice for coping with the violations committed in authoritarian regimes (Langenohl, 2008). The term Truth and Reconciliation Commission surged in South Africa and was used in many others countries that passed with similar process after authoritarian regimes, especially in Africa and Latin America. There have been more than 50 official truth commission established around the world since the 1970s (Hayner, 2011). These commissions were designed because of the impossibility of coping with the violations relying only on the common justice processes. This impossibility rely specially on the challenge of integrate a divided conflictive society, the victims, perpetrators and supporters of both sides and, at the same time, do justice to victims and indict perpetrators. So, the objective of these commissions is less the persecution of the perpetrators or the compensation of the victims but to establish a cornerstone to a new democratic order. An obstacle to the establishment of a new democratic order can be the memory of a glorious past that occurred along the atrocities and it is common to be accompanied by a denial of the violations, for instance, in Soviet Union the memory of the victory against the Nazis tend to go along with denials of the atrocities committed by the Stalinism (Langenohl, 2008).



Truth Commissions may serve long-term societal goals such as prevention of cycles of revenge and prevention of new crimes of war and collective violence. Commissions and trials are supposed to reinforce the rule of law, including the accountability of holders of government, army, police and armed political factions, and the respect of political rights. They could contribute to strengthening social norms and reduce future human rights violations (Sikkink & Walling, 2007).

As previously stated, a central aspect of these rituals is the construction of shared and inclusive collective memory. This memory of past conflict reinforces intergroup reconciliation as it documents factual atrocities committed by all sides involved, asserting that all groups are to blame and “have dirty hands” (a representation similar to current view of the American civil war). Sharing blame and victimhood prevents selective victimization, in-group idealization and opens a space towards dialogue (Gibson, 2004). These rituals of collective memory construction and reconstruction are perceived to have other positive effects at the individual and the macro-social or national level, fortifying in-group cohesion and reconciliation in long term process (Lillie & Janoff-Bulman, 2007). In the same way, acknowledge of harm-doing by a group can reduce animosity in the other group once in conflict reducing negative feelings such as anger and perceived injustice (Iqbal & Bilali, 2017). However, in societies that have passed through a very polarized conflict, people may prefer silence themselves in order to not revive old tensions (Bartal, 2017).



Partial evidence suggests that truth commissions, which give rise to shared and accepted collective memory of past suffering and of collective guilt and responsibility, have a positive psycho-social impact. This type of collective memory not only fails to reinforce conflicts, as exemplified with those cases when it becomes commonly accepted that “all groups have dirty hands” and suffering was common in both groups, but also decreases current conflicts because: a) it is associated with sadness and with a limited degree of anger directed at a small number of individuals, not large out-groups, b) there are no rituals or events that maintain or revive the traumatic collective experience, c) is based on unambiguously chosen traumas that are not a chosen glory, what makes it easy to mourn the loss, and d) finally, the degree of denial of the history is mild. An example of this type of collective memory is the current representation of the American Civil War (or the previously described Franco–German representation of the World War I). The loss of life during battle was not denied, there was no chosen glory aspect of the event, there was no emphasis on anger or on hatred of enemies, and there were no rituals perpetuating the hate towards the enemy and revitalizing the desire for revenge (Gibson, 2004).

Evidences on the effects of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions on collective memory are mixed. On the positive side, Gibson’s (2004) study in South Africa found that people who were more willing to accept the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ version of the truth, that is, to accept collective memory declaring that all sides are to blame and “have dirty hands”, agreed



more with reconciliation, even if this "truth effect" was stronger for dominant and vicarious perpetrator groups: the correlation between truth acceptance and reconciliation was 0.23 among Africans and 0.53 among Whites. Of course, reality constraints imposed limitations on this "relativistic" reconstruction of the past. In some cases rates of mortality and misdeeds were similar in both groups, in other cases there was a clear victimized and perpetrator group.

Latin-American studies showed more limited effects. These studies will be reviewed in detail in the next chapter. In this chapter we will examine mainly the creation of an inclusive collective memory by Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. By respect to the construction of an inclusive collective memory and psychosocial outcomes, correlations in the five samples found that people that agree Truth and Reconciliation Commissions help to build an inclusive history or a new collective memory, agree more that Truth and Reconciliation Commissions was successful in other goals (truth, justice and prevention) and have an attitude favorable to learn from the past. Globally, a positive evaluation of the South American commissions' ability to build an inclusive collective memory was associated to a general positive evaluation of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, to agree with collective learning from the past, to strong social sharing and emotional activation by respect to this past and finally with a better perception of social and emotional climate (Cárdenas, Zubieta, Páez, Arnosó, & Espinosa, 2016). However it is important to remark that the construction of an inclusive collective memory was not necessarily positive associated with forgiveness and it is important to remind

that, in general, neither victims (either direct or indirect) nor the general population believe that forgiveness can be achieved. Results show the achievement of justice, truth and future-oriented goal of prevention are more relevant for reconciliation. Past-oriented task of creation of an inclusive narrative or integrative collective memory was less relevant than the future oriented of prevention and the punitive function of justice (Cárdenas, Páez, & Rimé, 2013).

Other important aspects related to a better evaluation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are: the knowledge about it, victimization, to share more about it and the past, to feel more sadness and fear about the past but also hope and pride about the commission and to feel a more positive current emotional climate. In three samples a positive view of the construction of a shared and inclusive collective memory was associated to higher need to talk and paradoxically to inhibition of past experience. However agreement with a more inclusive historical narrative in two cases was associated with forgiveness in two nations (Chile and Uruguay), unrelated in another two (Argentina and Peru) and was negatively related in Paraguay (Cárdenas et al., 2016). Better evaluated Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in any case reaffirm that the construction of an inclusive collective memory could be an important aspect of these commissions.



Empirical Review

Many studies have been done in order to investigate the collective memory or the social representations of history. These studies generally consider the role of generations in shaping the collective memory or social representations of history. There are two kinds of studies: collective memory studies - those that aim to analyze more recent events that people may have witnessed or at least meet with someone who have witnessed it and; social representations of history - studies that aim to analyze the social representations about events far in the past.

Empirical Sociological Tradition

Collective memory 20th Century

Howard Schuman and colleagues have done a series of studies which aimed to investigate the beliefs people have about the recent past (the last 50 and 70 years), as well as their relation with the age they were at the moment of the event and others variables.

The first study on this approach was conducted with a sample of American adults. Participants were asked about the events in the last 50 years (1935-1985) they considered as the most important and why they think so. Results showed that World War II and Vietnam War were the most cited events, especially by participants who were adolescents or young adults at the time of the event (critical age effect). Generally, results showed that age,



educational level and gender can be related with different meanings attributed to the events. Some events were cited more by the groups involved such as the riots for civil or women rights (Schuman & Scott, 1989).

A replication of this study was carried out in Britain and in the United States. Participants were asked to cite one or two events or changes in their nation or in the world occurred in the last 60 years (1925/30-1985-90) which they considered important. It is important to mention that the British data was collected after the fall of Berlin wall while the American was collected in 1985. Results showed that World War II was the most cited event by the two samples followed by the events that were occurring at the time of the data collection in Britain (German Reunification and the end of communism) and by Vietnam War in the United States. It was observed some socio-centrism. There were some national events cited only by their nationals, such as Thatcher government and Falkland War by British and civil rights movements and John Kennedy's assassination by Americans. In Britain, mentions to World War II increased as older participants were, while mentions to current events such as the fall of Berlin wall and the end of communism decreased (Scott & Zac, 1993).

In 1990's and 2000's, similar studies were conducted in many countries around the world. In Germany, Netherlands and Japan, World War II was the most cited event, especially by the elders that lived such event as young. They remembered World War II from their personal experiences while younger



participants recalled it in a general way, stressing the positives outcomes.

German reunification was highly recalled by younger participants in Germany and Netherlands while Gulf War was highly recalled by younger Japanese (Ester, Vinken, & Diepstraten, 2002; Schuman, Akiyama, & Knäuper, 1998).

Surprisingly, World War II was not among the most recalled events in Israel.

There was a prominence of events related to the national group, such as the establishment of the nation, assassination of a prime-minister and Holocaust.

The first two presented the critical age effect while Holocaust was recalled equally across generations, probably because it is an event considered as very important for people from all generations. Nevertheless, it was found an effect of have directly or indirectly suffered and recall (Schuman et al., 2003).

Directly or indirectly implication seem have influence in the recall of historical events. Results from a study with general sample in the United States showed that, apart from the critical age effect, participants who lived their youth in the regions with more riots recalled more than who lived elsewhere. Moreover, whites who identified themselves with other minorities such as Latin and Native American also recalled more than the ones who did not (Griffin, 2004).

A cross-cultural study was carried out with general sample from 116 countries. Participants were asked about the three political events that they considered as the most important in the last 100 years (data collection in 2005).

The most cited events were related with World War II, political violence and



revolutions. The three most cited events were World War II, the end of communism and 11/9 attacks. Euro-centrism was partially confirmed, alongside the worldwide recalling of events occurred in North America and Asia. Events that occurred in Latin America, Africa and Oceania cited almost exclusively by their own inhabitants (Ellermann, Glowsky, Kromeier, & Andorfer, 2008).

A slightly different approach was tried out in Russia. Participants were presented to a list of events and figures and participants should indicate if they recognize them and write to what they refer. Answers were judged as adequate by experts. Results may qualify critical age hypothesis. Some figures and events were more recalled among who lived it as a child or early adolescent such as the dog Laika (first animal to be sent to space) and Katya Lycheva (an 11 year-old girl send to United States as sign of peace). However, important political events such as Cuban missiles crisis and Prague spring were more recognized by people who were around the twenties when the event occurred. It was observed a strong relationship between the educational level and the degree of knowledge of the events and figures (Schuman & Corning, 2000).

Social psychology: questionnaires about the past

Social representations of world-history

Studies in Schuman's approach were conduct aiming to analyze collective memory in Halbwachs sense, which means, the memory of events



that were recent enough to have witnesses still alive. Other approach on this topic aims to verify the most recalled events in world-history, which includes both recent and very old events. This tradition is characterized by the conduction of cross-cultural studies. It has been carried out by James Liu, James Pennebaker, Darío Páez and colleagues.

The first study in this perspective was carried out in 12 countries in Europe and Asia. It was asked to participants to cite seven events that they considered as the most important in world history and five figures in the last 1000 years that they considered as having most impact in world history. It was observed that most of the events cited were related to wars. World War II was the most cited event in all samples. Euro-centrism was observed in most of the countries, that means, events that occurred in Europe were most cited than events occurred elsewhere. Moreover, in spite of the question was asking about the most important events of all time, most of the cited events (63%) occurred in the 20th century. Related to the figures, Hitler was the most cited and his evaluation was unanimously negative. Most of the figures cited were politicians and war leaders (Liu, 2005).

To replicate Liu's et al. (2005) study, a research was conduct in 12 countries in Latin America, Europe and Asia. In general, results confirmed Liu and colleagues' findings. World-history was mostly represented from politics and warfare. World War II and Hitler were, again, evaluated, respectively, as the most important event and figure in world-history and the most recent events



were, again, the most recalled (70%). Euro-centrism was mixed with some nationalistic elements and the national figures tended to be more recalled than the national events (Liu et al., 2009).

Recall of World War II was deeply studied in a cross-cultural study carried out in 22 countries around the world. Results showed that recall of World War II was related with greater proportion of death toll in the same war, have been victorious and materialistic values. Have been victorious was also related with a more positive evaluation of the war and this factors were related to a greater willingness to fight in a future war (Páez et al., 2008).

Studies comparing the recall of events in different range of times (1000, 100 and 10 years) were carried out across many countries. A study in 22 countries in Europe and in The Americas (data collection in 1998) showed a high degree of euro-centrism related to the most recalled events. Nevertheless, participants tended to evaluate as very important the national events when asked to. Most of the events cited were related to wars or politics. It was observed also a recency effect (participants recalled more the most recent events). Finally, old events such as French Revolution, Industrial Revolution and Discovery of Americas, even resulting in many deaths, were evaluated from their positive outcomes (Pennebaker, Paez, & Deschamps, 2006).

This study was replicated later in Turkey with undergraduate students (data collection in 2010). Results showed a high degree of socio-centrism. Less than half of the 10 most cited events occurred outside Turkey. As in others



studies, it was verified a prevalence of wars and politics (65% of the events cited). The recency effect was not confirmed. Only 32% of the cited events in the last 1000 years occurred in the past three centuries and only 27% of the events cited in the last 100 years occurred in the second half of the century (Özer & Ergün, 2012).

A different approach was tried out with undergraduate students from Germany and Greece. Participants were asked about the events in world-history which they wanted to remember and to forget, their importance and their evaluation as positive or negative. Results showed that the most cited events were the European political events in the 20th century. Events that participants wanted to remember were related with revolutions, discoveries, civilization, human rights and an effort towards cooperation, while the events they wanted to forget were related with wars, terrorism and natural disasters. It was found a difference between the responses of German and Greek. The most cited events in each country represented issues related with one's country history (Madoglou, Melista, & Liaris-Hochhaus, 2010).

Related with beliefs about world-history, it was carried out a study with undergraduate students in five countries (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Cape Verde) aiming to verify the attributed meaning of history, that is, history as: a result of great people achievements; a cyclical ascension and fall of civilizations; conducted by violence or; a divine intervention. Participants were also asked about their beliefs on some explanations for



World War II, their willingness to fight in a future war and to evaluate the importance of 40 historical events and figures. Beliefs in history as a progress, a result of great people acts or a divine plan were positively associated with willingness to fight in a future war whereas beliefs in nonsense history or conducted by violence were negatively associated with willingness to fight. Willingness to fight was also strongly positively associated with national proud and religiosity. In general, participants did not agree with the idea that World War II was a just and necessary war (Bobowik et al., 2010).

Collective memory studies were also carried out in African countries by Cabecinhas and colleagues. In Cape Verde, undergraduate students were asked to cite five of the most important events and figures in the last 1000 years. They were also asked to associate an emotion with each event or figure and to evaluate their impact. Results showed that the most cited events in world-history were related to wars and conflicts in 20th century, such as World War I and II and 11/9 attacks. Results also showed a high degree of euro-centrism with some socio-centrism. Wars evoked sadness, revolt and frustration while terrorist attacks evoked more fear besides frustration and revolt. Generally, the most cited figures were men, governors and politicians, followed by figures related to humanitarian or religious issues. Hitler was considered the major villain besides Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush and Antonio Salazar (Portuguese dictator during decolonization process). The positive figures cited were Amílcar Cabral (leader for the Cape Verdean national liberation), Nelson Mandela and John Paul II (Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008).



Another study asked undergraduate students in Cape Verde and Mozambique about the five world-history events which they considered as most important in the last 1000 years and to evaluate these events as positive or negative. It was observed a west-centrism being the World Wars the most cited events. However, local events had some salience. The most cited local events were colonization, slavery and Berlin Conference (that defined actual frontiers of African countries). Finally, it was observed the recency effect (Cabecinhas et al., 2011).

Beliefs about the world-history were verified in a study conduct with undergraduate students in five African countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi and Congo). Specifically, it was asked: the starting points in world-history and the events which were important to bring us to the actual state of the world. For participants, world-history should be told from evolution (28%); wars and conflicts (21%); colonization (16%) and religion (10%) and the historical transition to the present should be told through wars and conflicts (31%); colonization (21%) and technology (18%) (Cabecinhas et al., 2011).

A closed-answer cross-cultural study was conduct in 36 countries around the world aiming to verify the evaluation of World War I and World War II, the agreement with some sentences about these wars and the willingness to fight in a future war. Results showed that World War II was generally evaluated as an important negative event. Participants from defeated countries evaluated the World War II more negatively, though in all samples



was observed the recognizing of positive outcomes such as the return of democracy, Union Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc and approximately half of participants evaluated the war as just (58,3%) and necessary (50%). The belief that it was a necessary war that led to technological advances was associated with a lower negative and importance evaluation. A similar outcome was found to World War I. Higher power distance, collective values and low human development were associated with more willingness to fight in a future war. Finally, it was founded that legitimizing representations had an effect in the willingness to fight in a future was even controlling the status of the nation (defeated or victorious) and Human Development Index (Bobowik et al., 2014).

Collective memory of national history

Collective memory of national history has also been investigated in the last years all around the world.

The first study on this approach was conducted in Taiwan. Participants were asked to cite seven events and five figures that they considered as the most important in national history and to evaluate them as positive or negative. The most recalled events were related to the creation of the Nation-State and the establishment of democracy. Representations about the past varied according to the identification with Taiwan or China (Huang, Liu, & Chang, 2004).



In Cape Verde, 121 undergraduate students were asked to cite the five most relevant events and figures in Cape Verdean history. It was observed that events occurred in the 20th century were prominent. The most cited events were related to Cape Verdean independency, democracy conquest and the Cape Verde discovery by the Europeans. The figures most cited was politicians and artists belonging mostly to 20th century history (Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008).

In Italia, a similar study was carried out with undergraduate students and their parents and grand-parents. They were asked to cite the five most important events and figures in Italian history. Events related to wars and politics were the most mentioned either related to Nation-state formation or World War II and Fascism. Artistic figures were the most mentioned alongside the politicians what not occurred in other countries where politicians and military figures were the most recalled. The younger cited more distant events such as the unification, while adults and elders cited more events that occurred during their adolescence and early youth (Nencini, 2011).

Collective memory of national history was also investigated in Latin America. A study was conduct in Peru with 81 upper middle-class participants from two generations: born before 1968 and after 1980. Participants were asked to cite and evaluate the five most important events and figures in Peruvian history. Results showed a prominence of 20th century events (72%) and figures (66%). The evaluation of more distant events and figures was more positive. As well, the evaluation of figures, in general, was more positive than



of events. Positive evaluation of events and figures was associated with collective self-esteem and self-concept (Rottenbacher & Espinosa, 2010).

In Argentina 528 army cadets were asked to cite eight events and eight figures from Argentinean history that they considered relevant. A central core analysis of the social representations revealed that Argentinean history was anchored specially from the independency struggles and the figures related to such events. More recent events such as coups, dictatorship and economic crisis appeared on the peripheries (Bombelli, Fernández, & Sosa, 2013).

Another study in Argentina replicated the question about the most important figures in Argentinean history to undergraduate students. Similar results were found. The central core of the social representation was mostly anchored from the politicians and militaries related with the independency and the more recent figures occupied the social representation peripheries (Fernández, Cejas, & Sosa, 2013).

Collective memory: life course approach

On the topic of collective memory, some studies were carried out in a life course approach. These researches aimed to discover the socio-historical events which had most impact in participants' lives. A series of studies were conducted by a group called CEVI (Changement et événement au cours de la vie) and their colleagues.



In Argentina, 572 participants from a general sample were asked about the events that have most impacted them. Results showed that national events were more recalled than international. It was possible to confirm the critical age hypothesis. For instance, the dictatorship was recalled more among those who were in adolescence or early youth during that time (Oddone & Lynch, 2008).

The same question was asked to a general sample of 623 participants in Chile. It was observed that events related to the dictatorship were the most recalled (25%). National events were more recalled than international, these ones were recalled mostly by the younger generation who recalled more 9/11 attacks. Events that occurred during youth were the most recalled. However, the state coup recalling transcended the generations being strongly recalled by all generations who had lived it (Concha et al., 2009).

In Uruguay, the same question was asked to a general sample of 1575 participants. Results showed that the most recalled events were most likely to have occurred during the youth of the participants. The most recalled events were: dictatorship 1973-1985 (18%); 2002 economic crisis (18%); the first government “Frente Amplio” 2005-2009 (15%) and 9/11 attacks (13%). Dictatorship was most recalled among women and low-education participants (Paredes & Oberti, 2015).

In Sweden, 750 participants from a general sample asked the same question. Results showed that the most recalled events were the dramatic ones such as wars, assassinations, revolutions, terrorist attacks and natural disasters.



Some events confirm the critical age hypothesis such as Kennedy assassination, Iranian Revolution and Iran-Iraq War. However, there are others which seem to transcend generations such as the communism collapse and 9/11 attacks (Broomé, Carlson, Holmberg, & Schewe, 2011).

In China, the same question was asked to 580 participants from a general sample. The most recalled events were related with sports/culture (41%), reforms (35%) and natural disasters (29%). The great citation of sports and culture could be explained by the organization of Olympics and World Expo in the country around the data collection time. Political events such as Tiananmen Square repression and 9/11 attacks were more recalled among those who were young when these events occurred. Recalling of Tiananmen Square riots is interesting once this is no part of the official history (Constantin, 2013).

Closed-answer studies: world-history events and figures evaluation and importance attribution

Following Liu's et al. (2009) approach, many studies have been done aiming to analyze the evaluation and importance attribution of the most important events and figures around the world. These studies have used some lists of 40 events and figures with little variation according to the country and they have asked to participants to evaluate as positive or negative and the importance of each of the events and figures in a 7-point Likert scale.



From a list of 40 of the most important events and figures, a cross-cultural closed-answer study was carried out in seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde). Participants were asked to evaluate as positive or negative and the importance of each historical event or figure. Results showed a high degree of euro-centrism. Western events and figures were evaluated more positively and as more important than that ones from other places though these results were qualified by some socio-centrism. Centrality of wars on collective memory was not confirmed. Industrial revolution was evaluated as more important than many wars. Old events in general were better evaluated than recent ones. For instance, Iraq War was evaluated more negatively than World War II (Techio et al., 2010).

From a list of 40 important events, a cross-cultural closed-answer study was carried out in 30 countries around the world asking participants to evaluate as positive and negative and the importance of the event. It was not found universality in the events evaluation. There were three factors: historical calamities; historical progress and historical resistance to the oppression. Non-Western societies evaluated the historical calamities less negatively than Western (Liu et al., 2012).

A cross-cultural closed-answer study was conduct with undergraduate students in 37 countries in Americas, Europe, Asia and Oceania. Participants were asked to evaluate the importance and as positive or negative 40 historical



figures. Results showed that the most positively evaluated figures were scientists, humanitarian and religious people while the most negatively evaluated were dictators, terrorists and mass assassins. The positive figures were more consensual than the negative. A cluster analysis found four groups of countries regarding the evaluation of figures: Traditional Christian; Western; Muslim and; Asian. It was found also four representational types regarding the figures: historical indifferent (evaluated almost all figures near the medium point); religious idealist (evaluated better scientists, humanitarian and religious people and worse communist dictators); secular idealist (moderate evaluations in general) and political realist (communist dictatorships evaluated more positively and Karl Marx evaluated very positively) (Hanke et al., 2015).

Beliefs about historical figures

Historical figures have been used to inspire ideals societies want to remember or forget. Schuman and colleagues have done a series of studies about the representations people have about important figures in the United States. For instance, about Christopher Columbus, 1511 participants from a general population were asked to explain what Columbus had done and if American should admire him. It was observed that the majority of the sample (85%) presented a simple and traditional representation (“He discovered America”) though there were also minority representations as both heroic (6%) and villain (4%). Educational level showed a relation with the remembrance that the natives inhabited the land first (Schuman et al., 2005). In another



study, it was investigated the beliefs associated with Abraham Lincoln by Americans. Results showed that Lincoln was represented mostly as a great emancipator, though there are historical evidences that point out the opposite (Schwartz & Schuman, 2005).

It is possible that the results of the studies about these figures were related to how the questions were asked. Aiming to verify this hypothesis, the representations about Lincoln were verified from two different kinds of questions set to an American sample. It was asked to a group if there is a lesson that can be learned from Lincoln's life while to another group it was asked if there was something that Lincoln done or said that could serve as a lesson. The first kind of question generated more essentialist responses that stressed his honesty than the second one (Schuman, Corning, & Schwartz, 2012).

The relation between the evaluation of a historical figure and an event was investigated. Before and during the Gulf War, American participants were asked if Saddam Hussein could be compared with Hitler and if he should has been stopped as well as if the Gulf War could be compared with the Vietnam War and it would result in an extensive conflict without clear outcomes. Results showed that as long as the conflict raised the preference for the analogy Hussein/Hitler increased. There was a highly relationship between the preference for Hussein/Hitler analogy and the support to military action. Low educational level was related with a higher support to military action once the war started (Schuman & Rieger, 1992).



Social movements approach

Social movements approach analyzes the collective memory as a process of competition in which groups gain status and power while they try to institutionalize their version of the past. Groups, according to this perspective, appropriate of the objective facts to create memories which support their objectives in the present. Though all groups rewrite history according to their perspective, only few are succeeded in make it widely shared and legitimated. According to Political Process Model, groups are succeeded when they attain political opportunities or mobilize financial and human resources in an effective communication of the reality, it means, a communication that is aligned with public expectations, that reproduce the current discourses or the latent feelings of a society (Kubal, 2008).

The significance of historical events changes from one generation to the next according to a changing in the societal problems and needs (Schwartz, 1982, 1996). When the historical event is controversial, commemorations can be ambivalent, trying to accommodate opposite versions of the past (Wagner-Pacifici & Schwartz, 1991). Sometimes, a lack of commemoration can occur due the division regarding to a period on the past (Schwartz, 1982).

In spite of some representation being shared and legitimated, commemoration dates serve as opportunities to confront official history according to present groups' interest or reinforce the existent version. For instance, during the 400th and 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in



America, it was observed four movements: patriotic, religious, ethnic and anti-colonial. The figure of Columbus has a central role for many groups in the United States such as the Afro-American, Hispanics, Catholics, Protestants, and Native American. For instance, Columbus was not remembered by his religion before the 19th century when a great number of catholic immigrants came to the United States. The 400th anniversary in 1892 was celebrated as an opportunity to teach children about the obligations of being an American citizen. Columbus was represented as a symbol of progress: geographic, economic and of civilization. In 1992, during the 500th anniversary, Columbus' representations were confronted to include issues about genocide, environment destruction and slavery (Kubal, 2008). Although today most representations about Columbus are simplistic "He discovered America", minority versions have been spread, especially through text-books (Schuman et al., 2005).

Collective memory and social representations of history about a dictatorial past

Although studies on collective memory and social representations of history have shown that violent events are the most recalled, dictatorial past has some features that we have to bear in mind in order to analyze the social representations people construct about it. They are usually a result of a very radicalized and polarized conflict and the group belonging, ideologies or political positioning associated with the regime or its opposition may influence the collective memory and social representations of history even many years



after the end of the dictatorship. We have also to consider that the level of victimization and so emotional reactions may influence in remembering the past. On the other hand, younger generations who have learned about the past in school may have a more descriptive and non-emotional representation about the past.

A study carried out with dictatorship victims and victims' relatives in Argentina, as well as with a general sample aimed to verify the social representations towards victimization. Results showed that most of the representations were cognitive, it means more descriptive than emotional. Victims stressed more the importance of political identity to the victimization than relatives or the general sample. Most of participants considered equally victims both who died and who survived (Arnosó & Pérez-Sales, 2013).

A study was conducted aiming to verify the knowledge children between 9 and 12 years-old have about the 1973 State Coup in Chile. Results showed that 40% of the children presented moderated or high knowledge about the State Coup. The causes attributed to the State Coup were internal problems such as economic problems. Militaries were not mentioned as active agents but people (Haye, Manzi, González, & Carvacho, 2013).

Regarding the perceptions about the social climate in the transition to democracy, a study was conducted in Chile with general sample. Participants were asked about the changes in the daily life, how they dealt with the different versions about the past and the importance of the dictatorial past memories on



their daily life. Results showed two axes: a conflict between the authoritarian period memories and the democratic present and; actual political differences and possibilities to intervene in the public arena. The past was represented as a very polarized battlefield. Though the existence of different versions about the past was recognized, participants avoided to fight for the appropriation of memory in order to not return the political antagonism. Participants agreed with the idea that occurred human rights violations. Nevertheless, some considered that it was a institutional terror while others considered it as individual mistakes (Reyes, Muñoz, & Vázquez, 2013).

In Brazil, a study was conduct with a general sample aiming to verify the social representations of the dictatorship. A free-association was made with the inductor stimulus “military regime”. Generally, adults showed a critical representation with few differences between rightists and leftists, while young though also represented the dictatorship critically (especially leftists), presented broader words such as “Army” or even wrong words such as “War” (especially rightists). Elders presented an ambivalent representation about the dictatorship, with elements that evaluated this period as positive (especially rightists) and negative. In the three groups it was possible to verify a minority representation of the dictatorship as a good period. Low educational level was associated to unknowing or positive representation of the dictatorship (Sá et al., 2009).



Truth Commissions: knowledge, evaluation and emotions associated to the past

Considering Truth Commissions are official institutions that aim to help societies to construct an integrative narrative about the violent past, it is very important to investigate their impact and appraisals in order to analyze the social representations existing about this past.

A study was conducted in five Latin-American countries (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Peru) that were ruled by dictatorships during the second half of the 20th century. This study aimed to investigate the relation between participants and the dictatorial past as well as the knowledge, evaluation and emotions associated to the Truth Commissions carried out after the dictatorships. Results showed that most participants (84%) agreed with the idea that it is necessary learn from the past mistakes, though right-wing participants usually disagreed with that idea. The need to talk about the past, social sharing, Truth Commission knowledge and perceived efficacy as well as the negative emotional impact, were higher among who were victims and leftists. Results varied between countries. Need to talk about the past was higher than the social sharing (36% and 13%). Most of participants affirmed to know Truth Commissions' work (58%) though fewer participants (46%) considered them as effective. Similar results were found to the beliefs that it helped: victims' families to get information (52%), to achieve justice (45%), to prevent new violations (44%) and to create a shared history (43%). Half of



participants perceived the official apologies as sincere but fewer considered it effective (25%) or that victims would forgive perpetrators (23%). Participants who affirmed to know Truth Commissions' work perceived it as more effective and showed a higher negative emotional impact. Emotional climate was generally perceived as negative. Higher perception on the sincerity of apologies and on Truth Commission efficacy was associated with a better perception on the emotional climate (Arnosó et al., 2015). Similar results were found through a multiple regression for data from general sample in Argentina, Chile and Peru. Approval of Truth Commission was related to the fulfillment of their functions, such as help to achieve the truth, to create an integrative history and to prevent new violations, as well as with a positive appraisal of official apologies (Cárdenas et al., 2016).

In Chile, perceptions about the national Truth Commission alongside related variables were investigated in a general sample. Participants agreed with the idea that it is important to learn from the past, especially the young. About half of participants affirmed to know Truth Commission's work (the young less than the older). Though participants considered that Truth Commission helped to create an integrative history, they perceived it as not very effective; helping neither the families to overcome what happened nor judge the perpetrators or prevent new violations. Truth Commission's work elicited especially pain and anger. Participants did not believe that victims would forgive perpetrators. They also did not believe neither that the official apologies were sincere nor in the apologies efficacy. Social climate was



evaluated as negative as well as institutional trust was low (especially among the young) (Arnosó, Cárdenas, & Páez, 2012).



**Study 1: the past is present: Social Representations about the Truth
Commission on news comments in Brazil**

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the social representations about the Truth Commission in Brazil from the spontaneous discourse about the Truth Commission final report in December 2014. Comments (N=322) were collected in the three major newspapers websites in Brazil: "Folha de São Paulo", "O Globo" and "O Estado de São Paulo" during the 48 hours after the news publication. They were transcribed into a textual corpus which was submitted to a lexical analyze on the software Alceste. Results showed three classes emerging, all of them critical against the Truth Commission and/or the government: Violence perpetrated by leftist militants; Critics against the government and; State agent as victims. A radicalized discourse that justifies the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship as well as revisionist theories that negates the existence of a dictatorship could be observed. The classes seemed to represent the public of each newspaper. Results are discussed considering the political context of crisis during the time of the research and the social representations, collective memory and media theories.

Keywords: social representations, truth commissions, media, social representations of history, collective memory



Introduction

Many countries, such as Brazil, have been under dictatorial regimes. Brazilian dictatorship ruled from 1964 to 1985. A Truth Commission was carried out in order to reveal the truth about the violations perpetrated during this period. According to the Truth Commission report published in December 2014, the dictatorship was directly responsible for 434 murders and disappearances, besides 1843 torture cases, moreover the political rights restriction (Brasil, 2014). However, comments on news about this subject revealed that some mistrust on these facts is present in part of the population. This paper aims to analyze these comments structure through the social representations theory approach.

Post-truth age and social representations theory

Although have its origin in the 1960's, social representations seems to be an excellent theoretical approach to analyze what have been called "post-truth". Elected as the word of the year by the dictionary Oxford in 2016, it refers to the circumstances in which the presentation of objective facts are less influent to shape public opinion than appealing for emotions or personal beliefs (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). On the social psychology field, this process is part of a more complex phenomenon that also acts in an individual level: the social representations.



The social representations can be defined as:

"system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history" (Moscovici, 2007, p. 21).

The social representations are constructed through communication, around points of tension on the social environment. When an unknown phenomenon or idea, as the case of the Truth Commission, starts to be diffused, it engender a need for give it some meaning. The representational work which occurs right away ensues through two processes: anchoring and objectification. Through anchoring, the unknown ideas are reduced into pre-existing categories, which put them in a familiar context. These pre-existing categories provide models by which we can understand the social world and the new ideas or phenomena that emerge. The other process that works on the social representations creation, the objectification, aims to transform a concept which is initially abstract into something concrete, an image, something easy to be remembered, manipulated and diffused (Moscovici, 2007). On the social level, different social representations about a phenomenon tend to reach a consensus, though many times the hegemonic representation can coexist with minority



representations (Abric, 1976, 1993, 2001). Once created, social representations become independent of their original sources. It pervades the many kinds of communications and it serves as tools for understanding the social world, as well as for the formation of concepts and shared conventions. Once consolidated, a social representation becomes rigid and it is defended by the people who share it. Even the presentation of objective facts seems to not be enough to reverse a deep-rooted social representation. In order to defend it, people do misleading associations, do not take into account data and distort any information to corroborate their beliefs, ignoring that one which contradict them (Moscovici, 2007). The transformations of consolidated social representations seem to depend on the existence of a consistent minority that challenges it, generating a conflict which is sorted out through the establishment of a new consensus (Del Prette, 2012; Serge Moscovici, 1979).

Social representations of history and the overcoming of a violent past

Social representations theory also aims to analyze how scientific theories are assimilated by the consensus on the social communication. History, as any science, does not evade these transformations. It is often questioned and distorted to fulfill political goals (Langenbacher, 2010). Thereby, the social representations of history are constantly used to justify and legitimate present demands and attitudes (Bobowik et al., 2014; Liu, Sibley, & Huang, 2014) and it is important to analyze the way these social representations are created and transformed.



Brazilian Truth Commission started its work in 2012, 27 years after the end of the dictatorship and presented its final report in December 2014 (Brasil, 2014). The main goal was “Examine and clarify the serious human rights violations [...] aiming to accomplish the right to a memory and to a historical truth and to promote a national reconciliation”. Its work did not aim to prosecute the perpetrators (Brasil, 2014). Truth and Reconciliation Commissions – TRC – are a kind of transitional justice that has been implemented in more than 50 countries (Hayner, 2011). Its main functions are: reveal the truth; contribute to create an integrative history that considers the different narratives about the past; prevent new conflicts to arise and, sometimes, promote justice for the victims (Hayner, 2011). Some factors can contribute to the TRC be perceived as effective such as: sympathy with the victims; high knowledge and social sharing about the TRC; institutional trust and a positive social climate (Arnosó et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2016). Opinions about the TRC can also be related to changes in the social representations of history (Arnosó et al., 2015). Although Truth Commissions aim to create an integrative narrative about the past, many variables can interfere in the elaboration of different social representations of history such as the knowledge about the past by the new generation (Haye et al., 2013), the present political discourse (Reyes et al., 2013) or the social representations about other aspects of the past such as about victimizations (Arnosó & Pérez-Sales, 2013).



Social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil can be different according to age, political positioning and educational level. Although the hegemonic representation is critical to the dictatorship stressing the human rights violations that had taken place, some young can represent this time in a more abstract, and sometimes, mistaken way (for example, they sometimes point out an inexistent war). On the hand, elders showed ambivalent opinions. A representation of the dictatorship as an orderly good time has an important presence in this group alongside a critical representation, though it is also present as a minority representation among young. Right-wing positioning and low education also seem to be related to a less critical or positive view about the dictatorial past (Sá et al., 2009).

News comments and public opinion

The cited researches aimed to ask people about TRC and the dictatorial past. None of them has investigated the spontaneous discourse produced by people about these subjects. In the present day, media seems to be the space where power is decided (Castells, 2009). Comments in news websites represent an opportunity to analyze the opinions about social topic, especially if they are polemic. However, these comments can proceed from few users extremely actives (Albrecht, 2006), most of them men (Mitchelstein, 2011; Nagar, 2011). Though comments cannot be considered as representatives of the general population opinions, they can represent the opinions hold by large segments of the society. Moreover, comments can influence readers more than the news



itself (Henrich & Holmes, 2013).. On this regard, people committed to a topic tend to think that public opinion is on their side when they mostly read comments congruent with their point of view (Lee, 2012; Lee & Jang, 2010). Additionally, anonymity and exposition to radicalized comments can increase radicalization (Anderson, Brossard, Scheufele, Xenos, & Ladwig, 2014; Santana, 2014). According to the spiral of silence theory, people tend to emit more their opinion when they think that the public opinion is in their side, and they tend to emit less when they think the opposite (Liu & Fahmy, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Crimes can be perceived as less serious when the comments say that (Sikorski, 2016). Finally, the use of social media (Boulianne, 2015) and the disposition to give opinions on-line seems to be related to more participations in political activities outside the virtual environment (Boulianne, 2015; Liu & Fahmy, 2011).

Considering the importance of the social representations of the past to the maintenance of peace and democratic rule and considering that news comments can generate political engagement, it seems to be important to analyze how the TRC report news were commented at the time of its publication.

Method

A documental research was conducted from the collection of comments made by internet users about the news noticing the release of Brazilian TRC report. The collection was made in two major newspapers websites (*Folha de*



São Paulo” and “*O Globo*”) and another major newspaper’s *Facebook* page (“*O Estado de São Paulo*”). These three newspapers are the most read newspapers with national coverage in Brazil representing almost a million daily readers in 2014 (Associação Nacional de Jornais, 2014). Anonymous comments were possible on the two newspapers websites. In *Facebook* it is quite difficult, though it is not impossible, to comment anonymously because it would require creating a new account on the website.

The comments during the 48 hours after the news publication were collected. Generally speaking, the news on the three newspapers described the release of the TRC report, the ceremony that gives this report to the president. President Dilma Rousseff, who received the report commoved, was a victim of the dictatorship herself. She was tortured by government agents. News mentioned the results of TRC work remembering its goals and cited president’s discourse remembering victims and the importance of reveal the truth in order to not repeat the violations. She also said to reject any kind of revenge.

The news elicited 322 comments on the three newspapers (*Folha de São Paulo*, N=82; *O Globo*, N=66; *O Estado de São Paulo*, N=174) during the 48 hours period. Repeated comments, comments that only tagged another people as well as comments not related to the subject were eliminated.

Comments were transcribed into a textual *corpus* which was submitted to a lexical analyze on the software Alceste (Reinert, 1998). This software conducts a statistical lexical analysis which seeks to identify repetitive

language patterns, looking for the organization of the discourse (Moscovici and Kalampalikis, 2005) allowing the analysis of its context (Moscovici, 1994). First, the text is decomposed into groups of words or phrases called elementary contextual units. The clusters obtained on this software through a Descendent Hierarchical Analysis allow visualize some social representations or imaginetic fields about the topic (Veloz, Nascimento-Schulze, & Camargo, 1999).

Results

Once the *corpus* was submitted to the standard treatment on Alceste, 456 Elementary Context Units (ECUs) emerged. ECUs are “separated portions of text within the corpus that need to be analyzed separately in order to make substantive sense” (Hohl, Tsirogianni, & Gerber, 2012). From the ECUs obtained, 77% was retained by the software to analyze, corresponding to 9799 words, from which 2823 were different forms. Alceste analyzes considered the words with frequency bigger than the mean of occurrences by word ($M=3.47$) and χ^2 above 3.84 (d.f.=1, $p \geq 0.05$).

Descendent Hierarchical Analysis structured corpus in three classes (Figure 1). In the first step, corpus was split in two subcorpora, the group comprised by classes 1 and 3 on the left side as opposed to the class 2 on the right side. In the second step, the second subcorpus was divided in two, dividing classes 1 and 3.

Analyzing the thematic contexts showed on Figure 1, we can infer that the conjunct of classes revealed by Descendent Hierarchical Analysis feature internet users shared knowledge about the TRC, showing that each class holds particularities which comprise the social representations about this subject. The classes' features are, next, described and discussed.

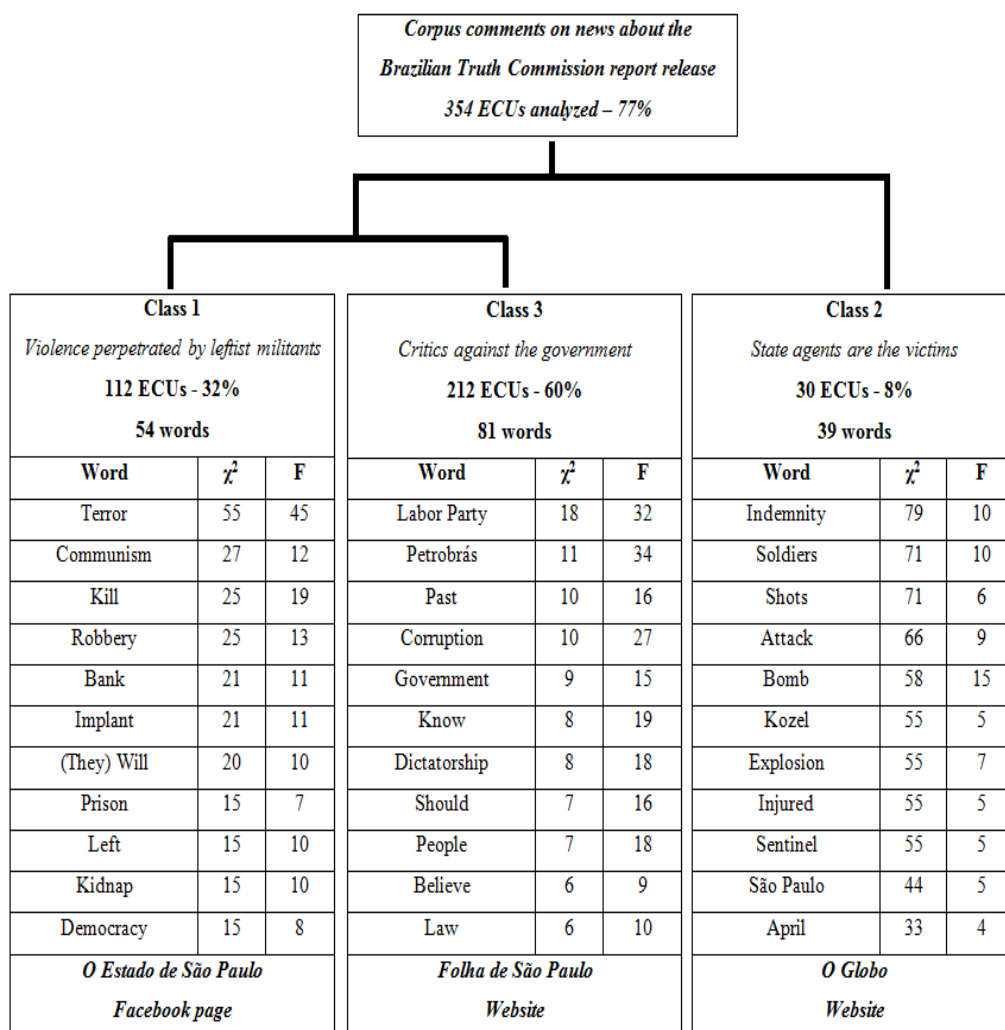


Fig 1. Classes emerged from the Descendent Hierarchical Analysis on the comments on news about the Brazilian Truth and Reconciliation Commission report release



The class 1, named *Violence perpetrated by leftist militants* was generated from 112 ECUs, corresponding to 32% of total ECUs. It covered word radicals such as terror ($\chi^2=55$), communism ($\chi^2=27$), kill ($\chi^2=25$), robbery ($\chi^2=25$), bank ($\chi^2=21$), implant ($\chi^2=21$), (they) will ($\chi^2=20$), prison ($\chi^2=15$), left ($\chi^2=15$), kidnap ($\chi^2=15$) and democracy ($\chi^2=15$). This classes represented more the comments from *Facebook* users on “*O Estado de São Paulo*” page. Two extreme active users represented a disproportional weight on this class. Examples of this class discourses are:

(...) (They) were subversive of the public order, terrorists who practiced robberies against banks, houses, shipping companies and quarters, they kidnapped and tortured ambassadors, they killed many people and also they sentenced many fellows.

(...) When will they point the crimes of terrorism and kidnapping made by the commies?

(...) Dilma was a terrorist, bank robber, kidnapper of authorities and maybe murderer in the trials that terrorists of VAR-Palmares made in their apparatus, the terrorists, inebriated by the communism.

In this class, TRC is perceived as linked to the leftist organizations that existed during the dictatorship, so that being partial. Although the news were about the TRC report publication, whose the goal was the investigation of the



human rights violations committed by the military government, this class presents supposed crimes committed by leftist organizations.

These organizations are evaluated as terrorists and users claim that their crimes should have also been investigated. It was observed that the kidnapping of the American ambassador Charles Elbrick had an expressive impact in the discourse against the leftist organizations, as well as murders attributed to these organizations by the users. President Dilma Rousseff was also related to these organizations and crimes, though she denies these crimes (Folha de São Paulo, 2009) and she was convicted only by subversion, suggesting that she has no right, or lacks moral virtue to conduce investigation about this period.

(...) Did they remember a certain murderer, bank robber who exploded bombs around and today continues to implant terror in Brazilian? Shame on, Brazil!

(...) They submitted innocents to tortures and murderers in the apparatus such as the ones of Dilma's VAR-Palmares.

(...) False, disguised, this Dilma is a bastard, communist, corrupt, arrogant and incompetent, her trajectory was about weapons, urban guerrilla, bank robbery, kidnapping authorities and punishments in VAR-Palmares organization' apparatus.



Related to class 1, class 3 “*Criticism against government*” comprised 212 ECUs (60% of total ECUs). The word radicals that represent this class were: PT (Labor Party – Party of the President Rouseff) ($\chi^2 = 18$), Petrobrás (State-owned oil company – Object of corruption scandal) ($\chi^2 = 11$), past ($\chi^2 = 10$), corruption ($\chi^2 = 10$), government ($\chi^2 = 9$), know ($\chi^2 = 8$), dictatorship ($\chi^2 = 8$), should ($\chi^2 = 7$), people ($\chi^2 = 7$), believe ($\chi^2 = 6$), law ($\chi^2 = 6$), politics ($\chi^2 = 6$), Petrobrás Scandal ($\chi^2 = 6$). This class represents more the comments in “*Folha de São Paulo*” website. Comments in this class were focused on the actual problems, mainly the corruption scandal which came out during this year. Some comments only expressed their dissatisfaction about the government meanwhile others expressed their suspects that the TRC would be an attempt to divert attention from the corruption scandals though it was implemented in 2012 and the publication date was defined beforehand. Thus, the focus in this class is the present, sometimes comparing with Rouseff and leftist organizations past, which comprise its link with Class 1. Examples:

(...) The only thing people want to know is the truth about Celso Daniel’s (a PT politician murdered) death, Lula’s family patrimony, and especially about the Petrobrás scandal, this robbery that was promoted by the criminal organization Labor Party during its 12 years of government.

(...) I want to know about the Truth Commission of Petrobrás Scandal and about the dirty money that elect this woman.



(...) Funny, every time Dilma commoved in her speech is on Globo (Television Broadcast), why do they not show people asking her to get out?

(...) Reporting the many cases of corruption and misappropriation of public money by the guerrillas who fought against the military revolution and, as that saying, I was fortunate and I did not know. Get out Dilma, get out Labor Party.

The last class, which was named “*State agents are the victims*” comprised 30 UCEs (8%) and represented more the comments of “*O Globo*” website. The content included the word radicals: indemnity ($\chi^2=79$), soldiers ($\chi^2=71$), shots ($\chi^2=71$), attack ($\chi^2=66$), bomb ($\chi^2=58$), Kozel (state agent dead in an attack organized by leftist organizations, supposedly with the participation of President Rousseff) ($\chi^2=55$), explosion ($\chi^2=55$), injured ($\chi^2=55$), sentinel ($\chi^2=55$), São Paulo ($\chi^2=44$), April ($\chi^2=33$).

Examples of this class comments are:

(...) This cry is hoax, crocodile tears, or is she crying by Kozel, dead on an attack with her participation.

(...) The president cried, but she was indemnified even being part of the terrorist band, and soldier Mário Kozel Filho soldier, a youngster, only 18 years-old, who have no right to indemnity by their son, exploded in pieces.



(...) Terrorists were indemnified for explode civilians and militaries, the truth commission, by omission, ratified indemnity for the terrorists. Crying will not bring back a son, I am sure that soldier Kozel's mother still cries blood tears.

(...) Crocodile tears, you do not delude me, trickster.

As in the other classes, the main motif is the critics to TRC. However, as in the other classes, the critics are more focused on president's role during the dictatorship as a member of a leftist organization than in TRC's work. If in class 1 the focus was in the violence committed by leftist organizations, in class 3 is more clear the defense of state agents. They are described as victims of attacks perpetrated by these organizations. Soldier Mario Kozel is frequently remembered as one of these victims and president Rouseff is associated to this attack, though she denies and she was never accused of it, even by the dictatorial government. Thus, their tears are seen as false, because she is apologizing as a chief of state by the crimes committed by the state against citizens but, in the evaluation of these users, she should apology by the crimes committed by leftist organizations as well. Another sensible question was the indemnity received by President Rouseff. Users' comments defend that family of state agents dead in attacks organized by leftist organizations should also receive indemnities.



Discussion

The first aspect that immediately stands out is the criticism towards TRC presented in the three classes. Comments were, in general, extremely negative about TRC and differed only about the aspect criticized. Some of the critics indirectly justify the human rights violations committed by the dictatorship. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that a third of Brazilian does not totally support democracy and a fifth support the use of torture by state agents (Datafolha, 2014). Related to this aspect, ideological identification seems to play an important role on the social representations about the TRC and the past. The negative appraisals about President Rousseff, Labor Party and leftists in general seem to anchor the negative social representations about TRC work and its report. These negative appraisals seem to be radicalized since the corruption scandals that came out in 2014. This social representations seems to objectify Rousseff and the leftist militants as bandits or terrorists, Labor party as corrupt and, because so, torture against them or their supporters may be justified according to some users. The negative social representation about the leftists seems to be anchoring a positive social representation about the dictatorship. The positive view about the dictatorship, that was minority in 2005 (Sá et al., 2009) seems to be increasing in acceptance.

Some explanations for the difference in the social representations about the dictatorship between 2005 and 2014 can be drawn. Firstly, internet users



may comprise a different population than the general one. In the scope of the present research, it is very difficult to establish if the opinions shared represents what the general population thinks. Although internet using is growing in Brazil, in 2014 only 55% of households had permanent access to internet (IBGE, 2015). Moreover, access to internet was more common in richer households (90%) than in the poorer (29%) (IBGE, 2015). If we consider that Labor Party was more popular between the poor (G1, 2014) it can help to explain the results found. However, even if the comments investigated do not represent the general population opinion; they may represent the opinions of those who have more participation in political activities offline (Boulianne, 2015; Liu & Fahmy, 2011).

Another possible explanation for the results may be that the public of the analyzed newspapers is more right-wing positioned than the general populations. Indeed, at least for “*Folha de São Paulo*”, the readers were more right-wing positioning (only 22% had voted for Dilma Rousseff) and they perceived the newspaper also as right-wing positioned (Folha de São Paulo, 2015). Moreover, people who are motivated to comment may be those who disagree with the news and may be moved by strong emotions. Indeed, the analyze of news comments seems to be biased by the existence of extremely active users (Albrecht, 2006) whose majority are men (Mitchelstein, 2011; Nagar, 2011). Furthermore, the first comments may have influenced both, those who agree to express their opinion (Lee, 2012; Lee & Jang, 2010) even increasing the radicalization of the discourse (Anderson, Brossard, Scheufele,



Xenos, & Ladwig, 2014; Santana, 2014) and those who disagree to silence (Liu & Fahmy, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Indeed, the three classes found referred to comments on each of the three newspapers analyzed.

Finally, results found can be due a change in the social representations about the dictatorship since 2005. The social representations of history are especially sensitive to present social demands (Bobowik et al., 2014; Liu, Sibley, & Huang, 2014). Moreover, the generational change is going on 50 years after the coup that implemented the dictatorship in Brazil. Therefore, those who lived this event as adults are giving place to the new generation who are learning about the past from elders' narrative or from the history books. The generational change is the time when the different collective memories should converge to a consensual social representation about the past, when collective memory becomes history (Halbwachs, 1950). However, the political scenery in Brazil in 2014 was radicalized and one of the main figures on it (President Dilma Rousseff) was a very important figure in the dictatorship also. Thus, the past is made present and the actual negative opinions and beliefs about President Dilma Rousseff and the leftism seem to be anchoring the social representations about the past. Political positioning partially anchored social representation about the dictatorship in 2005 (Sá et. al, 2009), however, in 2014 it seems that radicalization about the present political situation is radicalizing the social representations about the dictatorship. History usually provides a coherent and legitimated narrative that is taught in schools for the next generations (Namer, 1987). What should be taught is object of tensions



and discussions and TRC, which has as one of its objectives to create an integrative narrative that include all sides of the conflict (Brasil , 2014) seems to have failed on this objective.

Furthermore, the long time passed between the end of the dictatorship and the TRC implementation may have influenced in the way people represent TRC compared with other countries such as Argentina and Chile. In these countries, the TRC was part of the same movement that put an end on the dictatorship (Hayner, 2011), and thus, they were implemented in a context of social support, the opposite that occurred in Brazil, which can be dangerous to the new born democracy (Meyer, 2008). TRC in Brazil published its report during a context of high rejection towards both, President Rousseff and leftism in general and more radicalization on the political positions. In this context, putting the dictatorial past in agenda during this period seems to have had a counter-productive effect. People seemed to not recognize the truth about the past from the TRC work doubting about the results found by its investigation. In this context, people seemed to be questioning even the consensual aspects about the dictatorship such as that it was a negative period, with many violations committed by the government (Sá et al., 2009). Furthermore, some comments questioned even if there was a dictatorship.

Conclusions

Considering that social representations has the function of orientation in the political and social world and position the individual in this world



(Moscovici, 2007), the opinions about TRC, the president, her party and leftists in general are related to the political climate on this time. These opinions may be influenced by the political radicalism right after the elections. Thus, the critics to the TRC report seem to reflect President's low popularity more than its content. Another interesting fact observed was that, even if the TRC report has more than 3000 pages (Brasil, 2014), people were giving opinions about it seconds after its publication. As observed, the opinions expressed did not reflect the content of the report but pre-existent social representations about TRC, the government which implemented it, the president and the dictatorship. This phenomenon is according the cognitive bias of ignore or distort the information that goes against their beliefs (Moscovici, 2007). Indeed, in the three classes, the words "Truth Commission" or "report" were not present.

Thereby, it seems that TRC did not accomplish its objectives: though its report reveals many violations committed by the dictatorship, these findings seems to not be recognized as truth, and, thus, TRC seem to not have helped to construct an integrative history, rather, it seems that it boosted revisionism on the consensual elements of the social representations about the past. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that TRC has helped to prevent new conflicts to arise.

Finally, we have to take into account the limits of the present research. Firstly, results probably do not represent the social representation of the general population. As explicated in discussion, internet users probably comprise a different population than a general one. Thus, it would be very



interesting to investigate the social representations about the past in a general sample, also aiming to compare it with the previous research in order to verify changes in it. Moreover, the comments were collected in a radicalized context, so, it would be important to investigate the Truth Commission evaluation as well as the social representations about the past in a more quiet political time to better evaluate their effect in a long-term perspective.

Study 2: Political crisis, Truth Commission appraisal and Social Representations of history: a comparison between pre, during and post political crisis in Brazil

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze Brazilian Truth and Reconciliation Commission – TRC – appraisal and its relation with social variables such as age and political positioning as well as with the social representations of the dictatorial past comparing three periods: pre, during and post the political crisis that ended up with Dilma Rousseff's impeachment. The sample consisted of 728 volunteer participants. Results showed that knowledge, social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship, TRC positive appraisals increased during the political crisis. Moreover, most of TRC positive appraisals were associated with left-wing political positioning and victimization. The associations between TRC appraisals and political positioning also increased during the political crisis. Results are discussed comparing with previous studies about TRCs impact in other countries.

Keywords: social representations, truth commissions, social representations of history, politics, political crisis



Introduction

The dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985) was one of many in Latin America in this period as consequence of Cold War ideological tensions, as well as the result of strong political conflicts between left-wing socialists or communists and right-wing conservative and religious. During this period, thousands of citizens were persecuted because of their political beliefs. In Brazil, more than 1800 were tortured and 434 were killed or disappeared (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014). The end of the dictatorial rule in Brazil was characterized by a slow opening that resulted in the approval of an Amnesty law in 1979 for both, government agents and oppositional armed groups. Implementation of Amnesty law complicated the investigation of the violations occurred in the years right after the return of the democracy. Only 27 years after the end of the dictatorship, in 2012, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission – TRC – could be implemented seeking to find the truth about the violations perpetrated by the dictatorial regime.

Social representations theory

The social representations theory is an important approach to analyze changes in social objects perception. The social representations can be defined as:

"system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in



their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history" (Moscovici, 2007, p. 21).

Social representations are constructed through communication, around conflicts on the world. When an unknown phenomenon or idea, as the case of the Truth Commission, starts to be diffused, it engender a need for give it some meaning. The representational work which occurs right away ensues through two processes: anchoring and objectification. Through anchoring, the unknown ideas are reduced into pre-existing categories, which put them in a familiar context. These pre-existing categories provide models by which we can understand the social world and the new ideas or phenomena that emerge. The other process that works on the social representations creation, the objectification, aims to transform a concept which is initially abstract into something concrete, an image, something easy to be remembered, manipulated and diffused (Moscovici, 2007). On the social level, different social representations about a phenomenon tend to reach a consensus, though many times the hegemonic representation can coexist with minority representations (Abric, 1976, 1993, 2001). Once created, social representations become independent of their original sources. It pervades the many kinds of communications and it serves as tools for understanding the social world, as well as for the formation of concepts and shared conventions. Once



consolidated, a social representation becomes rigid and it is defended by the people who share it. Even the presentation of objective facts seems to not be enough to reverse a deep-rooted social representation. In order to defend it, people do misleading associations, do not take into account data and distort any information to corroborate their beliefs, ignoring that one which contradict them (Moscovici, 2007). The transformations of consolidated social representations seem to depend on the existence of a consistent minority that challenges it, generating a conflict which is sorted out through the establishment of a new consensus (Del Prette, 2012; Serge Moscovici, 1979).

Social representations of history and Truth and Reconciliation

Commissions: Overcoming a past of collective violence

Along the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic society, there is a necessity to come to terms with the past. Competing representations of the past are publicly discussed and negotiated. If perpetrators or their supports still hold influential positions in a post-authoritarian society, so the government is pressured towards impunity. On the other side, the victims and their supporters will do not accept this government and, hence, the new democracy is in danger because of the lack of legitimacy (Meyer, 2008).

After active hostilities have ceased or the dictatorship has been replaced by a democracy, there are important steps to historical reconciliation (Páez & Liu, 2016). First, the acceptance of facts about events, including others' suffering, is essential for the construction of shared social representations of



the past and reconciliation. The acceptance of different meanings about a collective violence allows the two sides to, at least, begin to acknowledge one another. Second, it is important to remember what happened but not maintaining hatred. What is important is to acknowledge the reality of crimes and victims, “to keep it from happening again...” but to forget the emotions of hate and not awakening ancient sufferings in order to justify future crimes. Finally, the creation of an inclusive narrative that describes different meanings, experiences and perspectives of the past in a single story (Páez & Liu, 2016).

Another instance of co-construction of shared factual social representations of past are the Truth, Justice, and Reparation Commissions. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are being diffused as the best practice for coping with the violations committed in authoritarian regimes (Langenohl, 2008). The term Truth and Reconciliation Commission surged in South Africa and was used in many others countries that passed with similar process after authoritarian regimes, especially in Africa and Latin America. There have been more than fifty official truth commission established around the world since the 1970s (Hayner, 2011). These commissions were designed because of the impossibility of coping with the violations relying only on the common justice processes. This impossibility rely specially on the challenge of integrate a divided conflictive society, the victims, perpetrators and supporters of both sides and, at the same time, do justice to victims and indict perpetrators. So, the objective of these commissions is less the persecution of the perpetrators or the compensation of the victims but to establish a cornerstone to a new democratic



order. Common functions of TRCs are: a) making efforts to discover the truth about the period of collective violence, b) recognizing and validating victims' suffering, c) compensating those affected both materially and symbolically, d) contributing to the creation of an inclusive collective memory oriented to the future, e) avoiding new acts of violence, and f) seeking justice (Gibson, 2004). These functions may contribute to the avoidance of revenge cycles and further war crimes, at the same time as preventing collective violence from arising again (Sikkink & Walling, 2007). The aim of TRCs is to overcome the negative impact of past collective violence, promoting intergroup empathy, trust and forgiveness, and reinforcing instrumental and socio-emotional reconciliation (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Cehajic, 2008; Nadler, Malloy & Fisher, 2008).

Truth Commissions may serve long-term societal goals such as prevention of cycles of revenge and prevention of new crimes of war and collective violence. Commissions and trials are supposed to reinforce the rule of law, including the accountability of holders of government, army, police and armed political factions, and the respect of political rights. They could contribute to strengthening social norms and reduce future human rights violations (Sikkink & Walling, 2007).

As previously stated, a central aspect of these rituals is the construction of shared and inclusive collective memory. This memory of past conflict reinforces intergroup reconciliation as it documents factual atrocities

committed by all sides involved, asserting that all groups are to blame and “have dirty hands” (a representation similar to current view of the American civil war). Sharing blame and victimhood prevents selective victimization, in-group idealization and opens a space towards dialogue (Gibson, 2004). These rituals of collective memory construction and reconstruction are perceived to have other positive effects at the individual and the macro-social or national level, fortifying in-group cohesion and reconciliation in long term process (Lille & Janoff-Bulman, 2007).

Partial evidence suggests that truth commissions, which give rise to shared and accepted collective memory of past suffering and of collective guilt and responsibility, have a positive psycho-social impact. This type of collective memory do not only fails to reinforce conflicts, as exemplified with those cases when it becomes commonly accepted that “all groups have dirty hands” and suffering was common in both groups, but also decreases current conflicts because: a) it is associated with sadness and with a limited degree of anger directed at a small number of individuals, not large out-groups, b) there are no rituals or events that maintain or revive the traumatic collective experience, c) is based on unambiguously chosen traumas that are not a chosen glory, what makes it easy to mourn the loss, and d) finally, the degree of denial of the history is mild. An example of this type of collective memory is the current representation of the American Civil War (or the previously described Franco–German representation of the World War I). The loss of life during battle was not denied, there was no chosen glory aspect of the event, there was no



emphasis on anger or on hatred of enemies, and there were no rituals perpetuating the hate towards the enemy and revitalizing the desire for revenge (Gibson, 2004).

Evidences on the effects of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions on collective memory are mixed. On the positive side, Gibson's (2004) study in South Africa found that people who were more willing to accept the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's version of the truth, that is, to accept collective memory declaring that all sides are to blame and "have dirty hands", agreed more with reconciliation, even if this "truth effect" was stronger for dominant and vicarious perpetrator groups. In the same way, Rwanda's Gacaca has had positive inter-group effects, such as more positive out-group stereotypes and a less homogeneous (Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot, & Yzerbyt, 2007; Rimé, Kanyangara, Yzerbyt, & Paez, 2011). An obstacle to the establishment of a new democratic order can be the memory of a glorious past that occurred along the atrocities and it is common to be accompanied by a denial of the violations, for instance, in Soviet Union the memory of the victory against the Nazis tend to go along with denials of the atrocities committed by the Stalinism (Langenohl, 2008).

In South America, a study in three countries (Argentina, Chile and Peru) found, through a multiple regression, the perception of the functions effectiveness is associated to a good overall evaluation of the TRCs. However, differences could be found in each country on this regard. For instance, in



Chile, institutional trust and left-wing political positioning and in Argentina, a negative social climate were associated with a better evaluation of the TRC (Cárdenas, Zubieta, Páez, Arnosó, & Espinosa, 2016). Another study including five countries (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) showed that left-wing political positioning and victimization was positively associated with TRCs appraisals. TRC knowledge was higher in left-wing than in right-wing participants. Accordingly, leftists affirmed have talked more about TRC, considered it more effective and agree more with the idea of remembering the violent past. Social climate was generally perceived as negative throughout the countries (Arnosó et al., 2015). In Brazil, even if the social representations about the dictatorial past were, in general, critical, minority discourses that consider this time as a good time of order and discipline could be found. A positive view about the dictatorship was more common in right-wing participants and those without a political positioning, among elders than adults or younger and among participants with low educational level (Sá et al., 2009).

Considering Brazilian case particularities (TRC implementation long after the end of the dictatorship, political crisis and president's impeachment right after TRC report has been published) we aimed to analyze the associations between age, political positioning, social representations of the past and TRC appraisal in three times: pre, during and post impeachment. We expected:



H1: Increasing in TRC knowledge and social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship during the crisis because the closeness to the report publication time.

H2: Increasing in the associations of TRC appraisals and social sharing with political positioning during the crisis due the radicalization.

H3: More negative TRC evaluation during the crisis due the deterioration of the political climate leading to a lesser acceptance of TRC arguments.

H4: Positive associations of TRC positive appraisal, emotional reactions and social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship with left-wing positioning.

H5: Positive associations of TRC positive appraisal, emotional reactions and social sharing about TRC with age.

H6: Positive association of TRC appraisal, emotional reactions and social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship with victimization.

Method

Sample



The sample consisted of 728 volunteer participants (59.5% women), with an age range of 18 to 85 years ($M = 29.8$, $SD = 12.8$). Data were collected in the urban areas of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Florianopolis and Joao Pessoa between May 2014 and March 2017 in three waves: 2014 with university students (when the crisis was starting); 2015 with a general sample (peak of the crisis) and 2017 with general sample (after the impeachment). Regarding the level of victimization, 8.2% affirmed to be direct victim; 15.6% indirect victim and 76.2% no affected by the dictatorship. There were more leftists (55.1%) than centrists (30.5%) and right-wing (14.4%).

Procedure

Interviewers were volunteer university students trained in the application of the scale. To be included, participants had to sign an “informed consent” letter that explained the study objectives and guaranteed response anonymity and confidentiality.

The questionnaire comprised four sets of variables. Preliminary questions enquired about respondents’ socio-demographic variables (age, gender, city of residence) and about their level of exposure to past collective violence. A second set of questions examined participants’ knowledge of and attitudes toward the Truth Commission, dealing specifically with respondent’s (1) level of information about the activities carried out, (2) overall attitude with respect to these activities, (3) appraisal of the commission’s outcomes, (4) appraisal of the formal apologies, (5) belief in social forgiveness, and (6)



personal disposition toward social remembering. A third set of scales assessed, by means of two different tools, respondents' perception of the country's socio-emotional climate. A fourth set more directly addressed participants' personal experience in relation to re-examination of the past and the activities of the commissions by assessing the emotions they feel in this regard, their propensity to express themselves and talk about them, and the extent to which they refrain from talking. Below we describe all of these instruments in more detailed fashion.

Preliminary questions

Socio-demographic information. Respondents answered questions about their age, gender, city of residence and occupation.

Exposure to past violence. This section examined the impact of past collective violence on participants. It included questions aimed at differentiating between "direct victims", "indirect victims" and persons "unaffected" by political violence. These categories were derived from respondents' answers to the following two questions: "Do you consider yourself a victim of the violence perpetrated by the state or its agents between 1964 and 1985?" (Yes/No) and "Are there any victims of state violence or its agents between 1964 and 1985 among your family members or close friends?" (Yes/No). Participants who responded affirmatively to the first question or to both questions were categorized as direct victims, those who responded affirmatively only to the second question were considered as indirect victims,



and those who responded negatively to both questions were considered as “unaffected”. An additional question enquired about the form of violence, with the following items to be ticked: torture; execution or disappearance of a direct family member; political imprisonment; exile; job dismissal for political reasons; violent assault at home. Participants could tick as many items as they needed to fit their experience.

Information and attitudes about the National Truth Commissions

Level of information. Participants were asked whether they knew about the commission’s work: “Do you know about the activities of the TRC?” (Yes/No). Right after, all participants were invited to read a short summary of facts about the collective violence and the commission’s activities.

Overall attitude. This scale was adapted from Gibson (2004) and intended to assess respondents’ global attitude to and appraisal of the commission’s activity through the following item: “Would you say that you: Strongly approve of what the TRC has done / Somewhat approve / Somewhat disapprove / Strongly disapprove”.

Appraisal of the Commission’s outcomes. Respondents were next asked to evaluate three of the major aims of the commissions, via the following items: “The TRC is often said to have several important jobs. Would you say that it has done an excellent job/pretty good job/pretty bad job/poor job, with regard to: (1) “Letting families know what happened to their loved ones” (i.e.,



aim of providing truth about victims), (2) “Helping to create an inclusive history integrating the 'two nations' or opposing groups in a common narrative” (aim of creating a comprehensive history) and (3) “Ensuring that human rights abuses will not occur again in the country (aim of guaranteeing no repeat of the violence). We analyzed these items individually.

Belief in social forgiveness. A question was drawn up to assess social forgiveness (Kadiangandu, Gauché, Vinsonneau, & Mullet, 2007): “With respect to the period of past national collective violence, do you consider that people who were affected by past violence can forgive those who inflicted this violence on them?” Response options ranged from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Completely”.

Perceived socio-emotional climate

Positive-Negative Emotional Climate (PNEC). Respondents’ perception of the socio-emotional climate of their country was measured using two different instruments. First, four items taken from the Positive-Negative Emotional Climate scale (Páez et al., 1997) were used to evaluate the positive (“I think that in general people trust their institutions” and “People show solidarity and help one another; they feel solidarity in general”) and negative emotional climate (“I think that in general people feel anger, hostility” and “I think that people feel sadness, apathy”). A Likert-type response scale was used, with anchors 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “A great deal”.



Climate Dimension Scale (CD24). Eight items from the *Climate Dimension Scale* (De Rivera & Páez, 2007) were also used to assess the perception of emotional climate. Respondents were asked how far they agreed with the following statements: (1) “People in the country feel secure that there is enough food, water, medicine, and shelter for themselves and their families, and that they will continue to have these goods”; (2) ”People feel unsafe due to a level of violence that prevents them living peacefully“; (3) “People feel that the various political groups in this country trust each other and will work together for the progress of the country”; (4) “People from different political, ethnic and religious groups trust each other in this country”; (5) “People are afraid of organizing peaceful public protest meetings”; (6) “People are afraid of saying what they really think because it could be dangerous”; (7) “People have hope, because things in this country are improving”; (8) “Lack of hope in this country is such that many people want to leave”. A Likert-type response scale was used, ranging from 1 = “Totally disagree” to 7 = “Totally agree” (7).

From the two scales cited (PNEC and CD24) we created two variables: one for positive climate items ($\alpha = .68$) and other to the negative ones ($\alpha = .69$).

Emotions and social sharing

Emotions associated with past violence and TRC activities. Participants rated their emotional reactions when thinking about the past events and the commissions’ activities: “To what extent do you feel the following emotions about the collective violence period and the TRC?” They were then given a list



including three positive emotions (Hope, Happiness and Pride) and four negative emotions (Sadness, Guilt, Anger, Fear and Shame). Response scales anchored as 1= “not at all” and 7= “a great deal” were used. Reliabilities were satisfactory for both positive ($\alpha = .82$) and negative emotions ($\alpha = .84$).

Social sharing of emotions associated with past violence and TRC activities. Six questions adapted from studies on the social sharing of emotions (Rimé, 2005) enquired about the extent to which respondents talk about past events and the commissions' activities. The first five questions were: “Have you ever spoken with people around you” (1) “about TRC since the publication of its report?”; (2) “about past violence since the publication of the TRC report?; (3) “about the TRC report in the last month?”; and , “Have you felt the need to speak about past violence?” The response scales ranged from 1= “not at all” to 4= “a great deal”. Reliability was satisfactory. We analyzed these items individually.

Political self-categorization. This measure asked about political preference, from right to left. The scale consisted of seven alternatives, from extreme left (1) to extreme right (7). Respondents were asked: ‘In political matters people frequently speak of left and right. Where you would place your ideas on the following scale?’



Statistical model

Descriptive statistics, comparisons of means, Pearson and partial correlations between the groups were conducted.

Results

Descriptive results

TRC was known by 62.6% of the total sample. TRC knowledge grew from 65.2% in the 2014 to 89.0% in 2015 and then dropped to 40.1% in 2017. A means comparison was carried out on TRC knowledge. Omnibus ANOVA was significant, $F(2,709)=69.77, p=.0001$. However the nonlinear contrast was higher, $F(1,709)=42.71, p=.0001$) that the linear one, $F(1,709)=96.825, p=.0001$. These results show that knowledge about TRC increased from 2014 to 2015 and decreases in 2017.

Similar results were found for the others variables (see Table 1 for means). Omnibus ANOVA was significant with nonlinear contrast higher than the linear one for TRC approval [$F(2,658)= 23.88, p= .0001$; linear: $F(1,658) = .01, p= .915$; nonlinear: $F(1,658)= 47.76, p=.0001$], social sharing about TRC [$F(1,693)= 29.67, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1,693)= .11, p=.740$; nonlinear: $F(1,693)= 59.22, p=.0001$], social sharing about dictatorship [$F(2, 700)= 41.73, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1, 700)= 2.62, p=.106$; nonlinear: $F(1, 700)= 80.84, p=.0001$], need for sharing about dictatorship [$F(2,698)= 22.06, p=.0001$;

linear: $F(1,698)= .15, p=.702$; nonlinear: $F(1,698)= 43.97, p=.0001$], function of truth [$F(2, 684)= 53.93, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1, 684)= 1.06, p=.303$; nonlinear: $F(1, 684)= 106.79, p=.0001$], history [$F(2, 677)= 78.94, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1, 677)= .04, p=.840$; nonlinear: $F(1, 677)= 157.83, p=.0001$] and prevention [$F(2, 685)= 19.00, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1, 685)= 4.68, p=.031$; nonlinear: $F(1, 685)= 33.33, p=.0001$], preference for memory [$F(2, 702)= 34.07, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1, 702)= 6.20, p=.013$; nonlinear: $F(1, 702)= 61.94, p=.0001$] and negative emotions elicited by TRC [$F(2, 606)= 27.44, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1, 606)= .15, p=.702$; nonlinear: $F(1, 606)= 54.74, p=.0001$].

<i>TRC and social variables</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
TRC approval	3.14 (.58)	3.59 (.75)	3.15 (.89)	3.28 (.78)
Social sharing TRC	1.46 (.66)	2.05 (1.16)	1.49 (.77)	1.64 (.91)
Social sharing dictatorship	1.75 (.82)	2.48 (1.02)	1.88 (.80)	2.00 (.93)
Need sharing dictatorship	2.11 (.94)	2.69 (1.12)	2.15 (.98)	2.29 (1.04)
Truth	2.72 (.75)	3.43 (.80)	2.65 (.97)	2.90 (.91)
History	2.36 (.79)	3.27 (.91)	2.36 (.87)	2.62 (.95)
Prevention	2.53 (.80)	2.96 (1.05)	2.35 (.85)	2.57 (.95)
Memory	3.49 (.69)	3.87 (.39)	3.34 (.88)	3.54 (.73)
Forgetting	1.54 (.84)	1.25 (.97)	1.77 (.98)	1.54 (.87)
Forgiveness	3.72 (1.82)	3.13 (1.64)	3.46 (1.82)	3.46 (1.78)
Positive emotions TRC	2.14 (1.35)	1.75 (1.30)	2.51 (1.77)	2.13 (1.51)
Negative emotions TRC	2.92 (1.30)	3.90 (1.36)	2.97 (1.71)	3.24 (1.53)
Positive social climate	2.72 (.72)	2.25 (.74)	2.62 (.93)	2.55 (.83)
Negative social climate	3.98 (.88)	4.05 (.92)	4.75 (1.02)	4.26 (1.00)

Table I

TRC appraisal and social variable means and standard deviations for the years 2014, 2015 and 2017

Some variables showed an opposite profile decreasing from 2014 to 2015 and then increase in 2017 such as forgetting [$F(2, 700)= 21.20, p=.0001$; linear: $F(1,700)= 9.53, p=.002$; nonlinear: $F(1, 700)= 32.86, p=.0001$],

forgiveness [$F(2, 710) = 6.08, p = .002$; linear: $F(1, 710) = 2.54, p = .111$;
nonlinear: $F(1, 710) = 9.63, p = .002$], positive emotions elicited [$F(2, 606) =$
 $12.72, p = .0001$; linear: $F(1, 606) = 5.56, p = .019$; nonlinear: $F(1, 606) = 19.87,$
 $p = .0001$] by TRC and positive social climate [$F(2, 660) = 20.16, p = .0001$;
linear: $F(1, 660) = 2.26, p = .133$; nonlinear: $F(1, 660) = 16.15, p = .0001$].

Negative social climate was the only variable that continued increasing
from 2014 to 2015 and then to 2017 [$F(2, 661) = 46.06, p = .0001$; linear: $F(1,$
 $661) = 75.97, p = .0001$; nonlinear: $F(1, 661) = 16.15, p = .0001$].

Political crisis in 2015 could have radicalized opinions but the high
means for TRC appraisals could have been due the 2015 sample had a more
leftist sample. To analyze this idea, we conducted univariate general lineal
models with political positioning as covariate and each of TRC and social
variables as dependents. Results showed little change in the TRC approval
marginal estimated mean controlling the political positioning ($M^{2014} = 3.14, SE =$
 $.038$; $M^{2015} = 3.59, SE = .050$, $M^{2017} = 3.23, SE = .056$).

Then, correlation analyses were conducted to investigate the
associations between TRC variables, social variables and political positioning
(see table 2). Results showed that political positioning was associated with
most of TRC and social variables in the three groups. TRC approval, social
sharing about TRC and the dictatorship, need for sharing about dictatorship and
negative feelings elicited by TRC were strongly associated with left-wing
positioning in all groups, as well as, preference for forgetting with right-wing

positioning. Correlations with political positioning increased for most variables in 2015 and then decreased in 2017 to similar levels to 2014.

<i>TRC and social variables</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	\bar{r}
TRC approval	-.37***	-.37***	-.21***	-.35***
Social sharing TRC	-.11	-.31***	-.27***	-.32***
Social sharing dictatorship	-.23***	-.46***	-.18***	-.37***
Need for sharing dictatorship	-.24***	-.49***	-.25***	-.39***
Truth	-.10	-.34***	-.22***	-.29***
History	-.16**	-.31***	-.10**	-.30***
Prevention	-.03	-.20**	-.03	-.13***
Memory	-.19**	.01	-.10	-.17***
Forgetting	.28***	.35***	.23***	.30***
Forgiveness	.21***	.12*	.23***	.21***
Positive emotions TRC	-.03	.22***	.07	.13***
Negative emotions TRC	-.23***	-.41***	-.24***	.35***
Positive social climate	-.08	-.10	.18**	.08*
Negative social climate	-.05	.32***	.03	.11**

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table II

Pearson correlations coefficients for TRC appraisals, social variables and political positioning for the years 2014, 2015 and 2017

In order to analyze the impact of age on TRC appraisals we conducted a correlation analysis between TRC and social variables and age (see table 3). It is important to consider that due the first group is comprised by university students it could be difficult to find associations for this group (roughly 10% was 35 years-old or more). Results showed an overall positive association between age and social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship, believe that TRC helped to create an integrative history and prevent new conflicts, preference for remembering and have felt both, positive and negative emotions about the TRC. Moreover, age was negatively associated with perceive a positive social climate and believe in forgiveness. Correlations of most

variables with age increased in 2015 and then decreased in 2017 to similar levels to the 2014 as occurred with political positioning. Results showed an increase, for the second group, in the negative association between age and TRC appraisals as well as social sharing about the dictatorship, the need for sharing about the dictatorship, negative emotional reaction to TRC and in the positive association with preference for forgetting. However, some variables such as preference for forgetting and positive social climate maintained the same level of associations between 2015 and 2017.

<i>TRC and social variables</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>R</i>
TRC approval	.05	-.32 ^{***}	-.10	-.02
Social sharing TRC	.10	.02	-.16 ^{**}	.10 ^{**}
Social sharing dictatorship	.08	-.11	.04	.13 ^{***}
Need for sharing dictatorship	.13 [*]	-.22 ^{***}	-.06	.04
Truth	-.05	-.13 [*]	-.13 [*]	.06
History	-.05	-.15 [*]	-.03	.11 ^{**}
Prevention	-.01	-.08	.10	.07 [*]
Memory	-.03	.02	.01	.10 ^{**}
Forgetting	-.07	.24 ^{***}	.20 ^{***}	.05
Forgiveness	-.08	-.02	-.07	-.11 ^{**}
Positive emotions TRC	.06	.28 ^{***}	.14 [*]	.08 [*]
Negative emotions TRC	.17 ^{**}	-.26 ^{***}	.00	.08 [*]
Positive social climate	-.16 ^{**}	-.02	.02	-.14 ^{***}
Negative social climate	-.07	-.02	-.02	-.03

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table III

Pearson correlations coefficients for TRC appraisals, social variables and age for the years 2014, 2015 and 2017

Then, we conducted a correlation analysis between TRC and social variables and victimization (see table 4). Results showed that TRC positive appraisal was associated victimization only in the third group as well as preference for remembering. Correlations with victimization increased in 2015

and then decreased in 2017 to similar levels to the 2014 for negative social climate, social sharing about both TRC and the dictatorship as well as for need for sharing about the dictatorship.

<i>TRC and social variables</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	\bar{r}
TRC approval	-.07	-.05	.13*	-.05
Social sharing TRC	-.16**	-.25***	-.10	-.25***
Social sharing dictatorship	-.15*	-.30***	-.09	-.26***
Need for sharing dictatorship	-.18**	-.30***	-.05	-.24***
Truth	.01	-.13*	.14*	-.09*
History	-.06	-.09	.09	-.14***
Prevention	.04	-.02	-.03	-.07*
Memory	-.02	.04	.14*	-.01
Forgetting	.10	.10	-.04	.09**
Forgiveness	-.08	-.02	.10	.03
Positive emotions TRC	-.12*	-.05	-.03	-.01
Negative emotions TRC	-.14*	-.14*	-.02	-.16***
Positive social climate	.01	-.07	-.11	.01
Negative social climate	-.01	.19**	-.09	.12**

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table IV

Pearson correlations coefficients TRC appraisals, social variables and victimization for the years 2014, 2015 and 2017

In order to verify whether the differences found were due the political climate or political positioning we conducted a partial correlation analysis between TRC and social variables and political positioning controlling by age and victimization for the three groups (see table 5). Results showed an overall increase in the associations in 2015 and a decrease in 2017. Therefore, though political positioning seems to be associated with the overall correlation direction for most variables a radicalized political climate seems to increase these associations.

<i>TRC and social variables</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>\bar{r}</i>
TRC approval	-.34 ^{***}	-.41 ^{***}	-.21 ^{**}	-.38 ^{***}
Social sharing TRC	-.06	-.27 ^{***}	-.32 ^{***}	-.27 ^{***}
Social sharing dictatorship	-.18 [*]	-.41 ^{***}	-.29 ^{***}	-.36 ^{***}
Need for sharing dictatorship	-.20 ^{**}	-.46 ^{***}	-.39 ^{***}	-.40 ^{***}
Truth	-.10	-.37 ^{***}	-.18 [*]	-.31 ^{***}
History	-.21 ^{**}	-.33 ^{***}	-.06	-.31 ^{***}
Prevention	-.03	-.18 ^{**}	.00	-.14 ^{**}
Memory	-.22 ^{**}	-.04	-.10	-.18 ^{***}
Forgetting	.27 ^{***}	.33 ^{***}	.18 [*]	.29 ^{***}
Forgiveness	.23 ^{**}	.16 [*]	.24 ^{**}	.23 ^{***}
Positive emotions TRC	.03	.25 ^{***}	.06	.17 ^{***}
Negative emotions TRC	-.19 [*]	-.41 ^{***}	-.32 ^{***}	-.36 ^{***}
Positive social climate	-.11	-.12	.20 ^{**}	.05
Negative social climate	-.06	.31	.00	.09

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table V

Partial correlations for TRC appraisals, social variables and political positioning controlling by age and victimization for the years 2014, 2015 and 2017

Discussion

Brazilian TRC was known by roughly half by two of the three samples. Similar level of knowledge for the local TRC was found in Ecuador (Reyes, Grondona, & Rodríguez, 2015), Paraguay, Peru and Chile (Arnosó et al., 2015). Confirming H1, the second sample presented higher level of knowledge and social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship, probably because the data recollection was right after the TRC final report publication in December 2014. Therefore, TRC final report publication seemed to have an impact in public discussions. When an unknown phenomenon, such as TRC emerges a effort to represent it occurs and people start to talk about it (Moscovici, 1961/2012).



TRC was positively evaluated by the three samples. This evaluation is similar to the evaluations of others TRC in South America (Cárdenas et al., 2016). Contrary H2, TRC positive evaluation was higher in 2015 than in 2014 and 2017 even controlling political positioning. The same pattern was observed for the TRC functions effectiveness perception. Participants may have expected that TRC would accomplish its objectives and then, two years later, they were disappointed. A similar trend was found in Rwanda for example (Rimé et al., 2011).

H3 was confirmed. Leftists presented a more positive view of TRC, more emotional reactions and social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship than rightists. These results are similar to found in previous studies (Arnosó et al., 2015). Therefore, it seems that the political positioning is anchoring the social representations about the TRC.

Confirming H4, the associations of TRC appraisals and social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship with political positioning were higher during the political crisis in 2015. Thus, the radicalized political climate could have lead participants to response more accordingly to their political positioning. Indeed, radicalization process suppose a stronger adherence to previous political positions (Snow & Cross, 2011).

H5 was partially confirmed. Contrary to H5, TRC evaluation did not differ between elders and younger. This result may be due the long time between the end of the dictatorship and the TRC implementation and the

subsequently data recollecting (27 years). Confirming H5, social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship and the emotional reactions to TRC showed a positive association with age. Emotional reactions associations with age and social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship were higher during the political crisis. Results seems to show that the present political climate have more potential to arouse emotions in people who have lived the events than in people whom not.

H6 was not confirmed. Victimization was negatively associated with social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship, TRC functions efficacy perception but not with TRC overall positive appraisals. Previous studies have showed that victims evaluate better Truth Commissions work and their effectiveness than no-victims. When TRC report was published in 2014, a political crisis started in Brazil increasing the rejection to leftism (Datafolha, 2017). In this context, victims (who were mostly leftists) may felt that their suffering was not properly recognized by the general population and TRC failed in its objectives.

Conclusions

Results partially confirmed the hypotheses. Accordingly H1, knowledge and social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship increased during the political crisis, but, contrary H2, TRC positive appraisals also increased during this period. H3 and H4 were confirmed. Leftists presented a more positive view of TRC, more emotional reactions and social sharing about TRC and the



dictatorship than rightists and the associations of TRC appraisals and social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship with political positioning were higher during the political crisis in 2015. Finally, H5 and H6 were partially confirmed. Contrary to H5, TRC evaluation did not differ between elders and younger, but confirming H5, social sharing about the TRC and the dictatorship and the emotional reactions to TRC showed a positive association with age. Contrary H6, victimization was negatively associated with social sharing about TRC and the dictatorship, TRC functions efficacy perception, but contrary H6 it did not showed an association with TRC overall positive appraisals.

The study presented some limitations. The first sample was composed only by university students, so some results, mainly TRC evaluation mean could be affected by that. The study did not intend to directly analyze the social representations about the dictatorship. Therefore, a future study investigating it, how it changed since Sá and colleagues (2009) study, after the TRC would be interesting to complement the analysis of the TRC impact.



Study 3: Social Representations of the dictatorial past in Brazil

Abstract

The present work aims to investigate the structure of social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil comparing with a similar previous study (Sá et al., 2009). A 238 general sample answered questions about their knowledge, attitudes and emotions regarding the dictatorship. Moreover, a word association task was conducted with the inductor “military regime” and a prototypical analysis was conducted in IRAMUEQ software. Results showed that, though social representations of dictatorship are still critical, some elements that represent it positively are standing out, even in the central core. These positive representations seem to be anchored in political positioning and to be related to absence of information about the dictatorship in school. Results are discussed based on social representations and collective memory theories.

Keywords: social representations, central core theory, word association, social representations of history, Iramuteq



Introduction

Brazil was through a dictatorial regime during 21 years (1964-1985). Brazilian dictatorship was a local consequence of Cold War ideological conflict between left-wing socialists or communists and right-wing conservative and religious. In 2012, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission – TRC – was implemented to investigate the human rights violations during the regime. It was considered responsible for 434 assassinations or disappearances and approximately 1800 cases of torture moreover many other human rights violations (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014).

History text-books (Bezerra, 2017) and social representations researches (Sá et al., 2009) indicates that the negative representation of the dictatorship is majority. However, revisionist books representing the dictatorship in a more positively have become popular in Brazil (Calil, 2014). Accordingly, analyzes of comments in news about the Truth Commissions seems to show that people represent the leftist organizations which fought against the dictatorship equally bad or even worse than the regime (see first study on this dissertation). Therefore, the investigation about the transformation about the social representations of the dictatorship seems to be paramount in order to try to maintain the support to democracy in Brazil, especially after the political crisis that resulted in President Dilma Rousseff (ex-leftist militant) impeachment in 2016.



Social representations theory

The social representations theory is an important approach to analyze changes in social objects perception. The social representations can be defined as:

"system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history" (Moscovici, 2007, p. 21).

The social representations are constructed through communication. They emerge when an unknown object, phenomenon or idea starts to be communicated. The un-familiarity with this new object requests an effort to give it some meaning. Therefore, the unknown idea is reduced to a known category in order to be understood in a process called anchoring. Other process, called objectification, acts to transform the general abstract concept in a more concrete image, easily remembered and diffused. Once created, the social representations serve as tools to understand and participate in the social world. Once consolidated, they are rigid and are firmly defended by those who bear it, including negating objective information that goes against it (Moscovici, 2007).



A society can handle many different social representations about an object. Sometimes these social representations reach a consensus resulting in a hegemonic social representation. Other times, different social representations peacefully co-exist, being emancipated representations. Finally, there are those, usually minority, which are in conflict with other more established representations being considered polemical (Abric, 1976, 1994; Breakwell, 2015). The transformation of a hegemonic social representation seems to depend on the existence of a consistent minority that defies the established consensus, creating a conflict and discussing the ideas once undoubted (Del Prette, 2012; Moscovici, 1979).

Social representations theory is especially useful to analyze how scientific theories are assimilated by general population. History, as any science, is unable to avoid revisionist thoughts that question and distort the established knowledge about the past. These distortions are usually linked to present political goals (Langencacher, 2010, Bobowik et al., 2014; Liu, Sibley, & Huang, 2014) and it is important to analyze the way these social representations are created and transformed.

Sciences are the means through which we can understand the reified universe while social representations are connected with the consensual universe. Social representations explain the objects and happenings in a way that they become accessible to everyone and concur with our immediate interests. In this sense, people prefer -common sense explanation. They often



make misleading correlations that even the presentations objective facts are unable to correct distorting the information that comes in order to accept the facts that confirm their beliefs and ignore the rest (Moscovici, 2007). These differences between distinct modalities of knowledge such as science and social representations does not lead to a inevitable choice between one of them but, they often coexist in the same individual a state name cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 1961/2012).

Structural approach on social representations

One useful approach to investigate the social representations is the structural approach based on the central core theory (Abric, 1976, 1994). In the structural approach social representations are organized in a dual system comprised by a core and a periphery. The core determines the general meaning of the social representation. It seeks the stability of the representations and so it is hard to change. On the other hand, the periphery is composed by elements linked to the central core but more malleable and adapt to changing realities. It protects the central system from abrupt changes (Flament, 1989; Abric, 2001).

Sometimes, changes in context can trigger a transformation on the social representation that can be peripheral or central. The peripheral transformation are featured by the emergence of new elements on the peripheral system but the maintenance of the elements on the central one and on the overall meaning of the representation. The changes in elements on the

central system usually indicate a transformation on the general meaning of the social representation (Moliner & Abric, 2015).

Collective memory paradigm

The study of the social representations of history can be considered as part of what is called collective memory studies. This paradigm started with Maurice Halbwachs ideas about how the memory is constructed in the groups by interpersonal communications. Collective memory refers to the memories constructed by the members of a group based on the testimonial of others, from their interests and also from the present social frameworks they hold. It remains while the members of a group who have lived an event or a historical period are alive. Therefore, groups do not forget; instead, they perish and are replaced by others, younger ones, who have different memories because they grew up in a different time. this way, history refers to the far past, the past that have no witness alive (Halbwachs, 1925, 1950).

Even when the members of a group who have lived an event or period are still alive, the past is interpreted through the present framework. Accordingly, the past changes continuously and it is reconstructed through the consensus established throughout time by people who have lived it meanwhile it is appropriated by whom not. The frameworks constructed by the people who have lived an event allow younger people to construct an image and have opinions about a past which they did not live. Collective memory does not confound itself with history, which is related to a compilation of the events that



has more importance to maintain a group identity. An event goes down in history only when most members who have lived it are gone. This is what makes history different from collective memory. Collective memory refers to a specific group from the same generation telling its stories, whereas history tells narratives about societies (Halbwachs, 1950). Thereby, we call collective memory the product of a reconstruction of the past events that were lived by the current members of a group. We define history as a compilation, in form of narrative, of the events that has more importance to maintain a group identity. Finally, we consider social representations of history as common sense theories about the past.

Generational theories: critical age hypothesis

Therefore, collective memory is intimately linked to the generational concept. A generation can be defined as “a group within a society that is characterized by its members having grown up in the same particularly formative historical era” (Reulecke, 2008). In the first half of the 20th century, Karl Mannheim developed these ideas on a generational theory. This theory assumes that the exposure to the same historical contexts during the same period of life leads to sharing a common destiny. This fact can lead to the construction of a shared worldview or to antagonisms towards important questions related to the common future that is being constructed. These questions, and the social facts and changes each generation is exposed to, have its peak of importance during the youth. It occurs because, during this period,



the models of the world, with which the new experiences will be compared are being constructed (Mannheim, 1952).

Generational theories have helped the development of the collective memory critical age hypothesis which affirms that the events occurred when people are between 12 and 25 years old are more recalled (Schuman & Scott, 1989). Different studies confirm this hypothesis: people tend to recall the events which occurred during their adolescence or early youth (Ester et al., 2002; Griffin, 2004; Schuman, Akiyama, et al., 1998; Schuman, Belli, et al., 1998; Schuman & Corning, 2000; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Scott & Zac, 1993). Nevertheless, this it is not a general rule. There are events that are important and emotionally shocking enough to transcend generations. In general, such events are traumatic and they usually are related to great wars or dictatorships (Concha et al., 2009; Manzi et al., 2004; Oddone & Lynch, 2008; Schuman et al., 2003).

Collective memory and social representations of history studies

An important field of research about collective memory, inspired on Schuman and collaborators' approach, has been investigating the most recalled events and figures occurred in the last 100 years throughout many societies. Studies showed that people usually cite events related with the World Wars, political violence and revolutions. Moreover, events occurred in Western societies were more recalled (Ellermann et al., 2008; Pennebaker et al., 2006; Schuman, Akiyama, et al., 1998; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Scott & Zac, 1993).



People involved in social movements such as civil rights and women movements are more likely to recall this events (Griffin, 2004; Schuman & Scott, 1989). Accordingly, people recalled more events from their national context than other national contexts (Ester et al., 2002; Schuman, Akiyama, et al., 1998; Scott & Zac, 1993). Finally, a higher level of education is strongly related with a higher degree of knowledge of events and figures (Schuman & Corning, 2000).

The studies on social representations of history include both recent and very old events, asking participants about the most important events in the last 1000 years. This period of time was chosen in order to avoid religious events and myths of origin. This tradition is characterized by the start-up of cross-cultural studies and it has been carried out by James Liu, James Pennebaker, Darío Páez and colleagues.

Many studies have showed that wars were vastly recalled being World War II the most recalled one. Accordingly, politicians and war leaders are the most recalled figures. Hitler was the most recalled one, being unanimously evaluated as very negative. In most countries it was observed an euro-centric representation of history mixed with some national events. Moreover, the recent events and figures (last century) are disproportionally more recalled and they are more negatively evaluated than ancient events (Cabecinhas et al., 2011; Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008; Liu et al., 2009; Liu, 2005; Pennebaker, Paez, & Deschamps, 2006). National histories were also told through politics

and warfare. The creation of the Nation-state or the independency is usually cited as a starting point and the establishment of the democracy or its interruption by a dictatorial regime as an important event on a nation's history (Bombelli et al., 2013; Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008; Fernández et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2004; Nencini, 2011).

Closed-answer studies may qualify the above mentioned findings. For instance, when a list of events and figures was presented to participants, centrality of wars was not confirmed. Positive events as industrial revolutions were evaluated as more important than many wars. However, some results from open-ended studies do were confirmed. Western events were evaluated as the most important and recent events were evaluated more negatively than the old ones (Techio et al., 2010). The evaluation of an event was related to its consequences. Death toll and being victorious in World War II were related with a higher evaluation of its importance and a more positive evaluation of the war, as well as a higher willingness to fight in a future war (Paez et al., 2006).

An analyze of the social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil before the TRC implementation showed that the central core of these representations evaluate negatively the dictatorship but there were a minority representation that considered the regime period as a good time of order and security specially between older and less educated people (Sá et al, 2009). This paper aims to replicate Sá et al (2009) study in order to verify if the social representations of the dictatorial past have changed after TRC implementation.



Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 238 volunteer participants (60.6% women), with an age range of 18 to 85 years ($M = 29.5$, $SD = 12.64$). Data were collected in the urban areas of Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Florianopolis and Joao Pessoa between October 2016 and March 2017 with a general sample. Regarding the level of victimization, 5.0% affirmed to be direct victim; 12.4% indirect victim and 82.6% no affected by the dictatorship. There were more leftists (53.6%) than centrists (31.8%) and right-wing (14.6%).

Procedure

Interviewers were volunteer university students trained in the application of the scale. To be included, participants had to sign an “informed consent” letter that explained the study objectives and guaranteed response anonymity and confidentiality. The questionnaire comprised three sets of variables. Preliminary questions enquired about respondents’ socio-demographic variables (age, gender, city of residence), their political positioning and about their level of exposure to past collective violence. A second set of questions asked participants about their knowledge regarding the dictatorship: if they have ever heard about it as well as where they have heard it; if they consider that there were positive aspects in the regime and; a Likert-type scale about their feelings about the dictatorship ranging from 1=nothing at

all to 7=very much composed by two sub-scales, one for positive feelings ($\alpha = .83$) and the other for negative feelings ($\alpha = .83$). Then, a word association task was conducted. Participants were asked to write down three words that come to their minds when they think about “military regime”. Finally, participants were asked, in a Likert-type scale if violence as necessary to achieve changes in society (1=totally disagree to 4=totally agree) and they were asked if whether or not they would be in favor of a military regime return.

Frequencies tables about the socio-demographic questions, the knowledge about the dictatorship, the evaluation of the Truth Commission and the opinion about the regime return were produced.

Data from the word association task were analyzed through a prototypical analysis conducted in IRAMUTEQ. This analysis allows investigating the central core of the social representations about the object analyzed and their peripheral elements and minority contrasting social representation (Abric, 1994; Vergès, 1992) by visualizing them in four quadrants. The first quadrant (left-upper) represents the central core of the social representations. It comprises the evocations that presented high frequencies and firstly evocated. The second quadrant (right-upper) represents the first periphery, which comprises the evocations with high frequencies but that were evocated lastly. It comprises themes that can be part of the central core in a short-term. The third quadrant (right-down) represents the second periphery, which comprises the less important evocations which presented low



frequencies and which were lastly evocated. They belong more strongly to the peripheral system and they are further from the central core than the others. Finally, the contrast zone (left-down) comprises the evocations with low frequencies but evocated firstly. It means that these themes, though been minority in the general sample, they are very important for those who evocated them. It can indicate a subgroup with a representation opposed to the general consensus (Abric, 1994) and who have the potential to change the social representations about the object if they achieve to increase the number of supporters (Del Prette, 2012; Serge Moscovici, 2011).

In order to prepare data to analyze, firstly, the *corpus* was constructed on Open Office considering the order of each evocation in order to analyze it through the matrix analysis method as recommended to this kind of data (Camargo & Justo, 2013). Similar words such as “*United States*” or “*USA*” were patronized and words or expressions evocated only one time were excluded from the analysis.

Results

Descriptive results

Most of the participants affirmed to have heard about the dictatorship in Brazil (83.3%). The main sources of information were university (54.4%) and family/friends (50.4%). Media (42.0%) and school (30.4%) were less cited. Although 80.8% affirmed to approve Truth Commission’s work data seems to

show that a radicalized minority who support the regime is present due that 11.4% affirmed to be in favor of the regime return.

Correlations

Table 1 shows the Pearson correlations coefficients for socio-demographic variables and political positioning with knowledge about the dictatorship, the sources of information and attitudes and emotions towards the dictatorship and violence. Results showed a negative association between age and information about the dictatorship in the school and in the university. Age was positively associated with feel positive emotions towards the dictatorship. Being woman was positively associated to knowledge about the dictatorship and had this information in the school and the university. Being man was associated with belief in violence to achieve changes in society, to consider that there were positive aspects of the dictatorial period and to feel positive emotions towards the dictatorship. Education was positively associated to knowledge about the dictatorship and to have had this information by all sources. Education was also negatively associated with belief in violence to achieve changes in society, to be in favor of the regime return and to feel positive emotions towards the dictatorship and positively associated with feel negative emotions towards dictatorship. Economic situation was positively associated with knowledge about the dictatorship and have had this information by all sources. Economic situation was also negatively associated with be in favor of the regime return and feel positive emotional towards the dictatorship

and positively associated with feel negative emotions towards the dictatorship.

Finally, left-wing positioning was positively associated with had information about the dictatorship in the school and in the university. Right-wing positioning was positively associated with consider that there were positive aspects in the dictatorial period and to feel positive emotions towards the dictatorship and negatively associated with feel negative emotions towards the dictatorship.

<i>Information and attitudes towards the dictatorship</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Political Positioning</i>
Information dictatorship	.06	.15**	.30***	.20***	-.05
School	-.28***	.14*	.30***	.22***	-.14*
University	-.13*	.11*	.52***	.38***	-.23***
Family and friends	.02	.06	.27***	.27***	-.08
Media	-.02	.09	.29***	.22***	-.09
Violent changes	-.02	-.28***	-.15*	-.02	-.07
Positive dictatorship	-.10	-.15*	-.02	-.03	.34***
Return of dictatorship	.07	-.07	-.28***	-.16**	.00

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table I

Pearson correlations coefficients for socio-demographic variables, political positioning and knowledge about the dictatorship with the source of information and attitudes towards the dictatorship

Partial correlations were carried out in order to deepen the analysis of the associations between the social variables and the attitudes and feelings towards the dictatorship (Table 2). Results showed that controlling for sex and economic situation left-wing positioning was positively associated with



knowledge about the dictatorship and all sources of information as well as with feeling negative emotions towards the dictatorship. On the other hand, right-wing positioning was positively associated with feeling positive emotions towards the dictatorship and consider that that were positive aspects in the dictatorial period. Being in favor of the regime return presented no relation with political positioning. Regarding education, results show a positive association with had information about the dictatorship in the media and, of course, in the university and a negative association with feel positive emotions about the dictatorship, believe in violence as a mean to achieve changes in society and with being in favor of the regime return.

<i>Control Variables</i>	<i>Attitudes and feelings towards the dictatorship</i>	<i>Political Positioning</i>	<i>Education</i>
	Information about the dictatorship	-.16*	.12
	School	-.23**	.05
	University	-.28***	.32***
	Family and friends	-.15*	.07
	Media	-.14*	.20**
Income & Sex	Negative emotions	-.27***	.10
	Positive emotions	.22**	-.38***
	Violence to achieve changes	-.06	-.29***
	Positive aspects dictatorship	.41***	-.07
	Return of military government	.07	-.37***

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table II

Partial Correlations between attitudes and feelings towards the dictatorship and political positioning and education controlling by income and sex

Then, partial correlation analyses were conducted for knowledge about the dictatorship, the source of information and attitudes and feelings towards the dictatorship controlling for education level (Table 3). Results showed that neither knowledge about the dictatorship nor any of the sources of information were associated with a positive view about the regime. All sources of information were positively associated with negative feelings about the dictatorship and negatively associated with positive feelings. The support to return of regime was negatively associated with information in school. We conducted then a partial correlation between these two variables controlling by

age. Results showed that information in school remains negatively associated with support to regime return even if age is controlled [$r(170) = -.16$; $p < .017$].

<i>Control variable</i>	<i>Attitudes towards dictatorship</i>	<i>Information dictatorship</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Family friends</i>	<i>Media</i>
	Positive dictatorship	-.02	-.08	-.12	-.03	-.04
<i>Education</i>	Positive feelings	-.23***	-.39***	-.19**	-.13*	-.22**
	Negative feelings	.08	.14*	.20*	.17*	.16*
	Return dictatorship	.01	-.22**	.00	-.01	-.11

$p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed

Table III

Partial correlations coefficients for information about the dictatorship with attitudes and feelings towards the dictatorship

Prototypical analysis

A prototypical analysis was carried out in order to investigate the structure of the social representations about the dictatorship. Table 4 shows the results obtained from the prototypical analysis regarding the inductor stimulus “military regime”.

The central core of the social representation is mostly comprised by negative terms regarding the regime. The most evocated terms were: “torture”, “violence”, “censorship” and “dictatorship”. Other negative terms evocated were: “oppression”, “authoritarianism”, “coup” and “sadness”. However, the positive term “order” was found in the central core as well as the neutral term

“police” indicates that two opposing kinds of representations may be disputing the hegemony.

		<i>Central Core</i>		<i>First Periphery</i>			
		<i>Low rank ≤ 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>High Rank > 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<i>High frequency</i> <i>> 8.48</i>		Torture	75	1.5	Repression	21	2.0
		Violence	50	1.9	Death	21	2.2
		Censorship	49	1.9	Injustice	15	2.3
		Dictatorship	43	1.4	Fear	14	2.3
		Oppression	21	1.3	Prison	14	2.2
		Order	21	1.8	Pain	12	2.2
		Authoritarianism	20	1.9			
		Coup	11	1.6			
		Police	19	1.9			
		Sadness	9	1.9			
		<i>Contrast Zone</i>		<i>Second Periphery</i>			
		<i>Low rank ≤ 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>High Rank > 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<i>Low frequency</i> <i>< 8.48</i>		War	8	1.6	Intolerance	6	2.0
		Rigidity	7	1.9	Suffering	6	2.5
		Shame	5	1.6	Respect	6	2.3
		Aggression	4	1.8	Persecution	6	2.2
		Authority	4	1.8	Exile	6	2.5
		Government	3	1.7	Power	5	2.2
		Totalitarianism	3	1.0	Corruption	5	2.6
		Manipulation	2	1.5	Absence of liberty	5	2.6
		Education	2	1.0	Weapons	4	2.0
		Good	2	1.0	Control	4	3.0
		Rights Violations	2	1.5	Inequality	4	2.5
		Brazil	2	1.0	Liberty	3	2.0
		Massacre	2	1.5	Politics	3	3.0
		Policing	2	1.0	Peace	3	2.7

Table IV

Quadrants for the prototypical analysis regarding the inductor stimulus

“military regime”

The first periphery is comprised only by negative terms regarding the military regime such as “repression”, “death”, “injustice” and “fear”. The second periphery presented many terms which though were mostly critical to



the regime with the presence of terms such as “intolerance”, “suffering”, “persecution” and “exile”, it presented also many neutral or positive terms. The positive terms most cited in this quadrant were: “respect”, “liberty”, “peace” and “discipline”. The neutral found terms were: “power”, “politics” and “militaries”.

Finally, the contrast zone presented a mix of positive, negative, neutral or misleading terms. The negative terms cited in this quadrant were: “shame”, “aggression”, “totalitarianism”, “manipulation”, “rights violations” and “massacre”. On the other hand, the positive terms cited were: “authority”, “education”, “good” and “policing”. The neutral or misleading terms were: “war” (a war never occurred), “rigidity” (it can be interpreted both as negative or positive term), “government” and “Brazil”.

Discussion

Results showed that information about the dictatorship was not associated with a positive view of it. Social representations about the dictatorship seem to be anchored in social variables and political positioning. However, different social variables have different effects on the social representations and attitudes about the dictatorship. While political positioning seems to anchor a more positive or negative representation about the regime as well as the feelings towards it, less income and especially less education seems to be related to a desire to the return of the regime. Less educated participants also presented support to the idea that sometimes violence is necessary to



achieve changes in society. Indeed, most of poor and less educated people hold more conservative positions than the richer and educated ones, though they usually vote for the leftist candidates, probably by economic reasons (Datafolha, 2013).

Surprisingly, age presented no relation with information about the dictatorship. This result can be explained by the fact that few participants really lived in the dictatorship while adolescents or adults, especially during the peak of repression before the Amnesty Law in 1979 (5% were 18 years-old in 1979) but some of the participants were young enough to receive formal education during this period (15% were 12 years-old in 1985 when the dictatorship ended). History teaching during the dictatorship surely depicted the regime positively and did not describe it as a dictatorship (Bezerra, 2017).

Results showed that although men affirmed to have more information about the dictatorship, they represent it in a positive way. They also presented support for the idea that sometimes violence is necessary to changes. These results are coherent with general surveys that show that men hold more conservative positions than women in Brazil (Datafolha, 2013).

Neither, the overall information about the dictatorship nor the source of information was associated with a positive representation about it. However, overall information, as well as all sources of information, was positively associated with negative feelings towards the dictatorship and negatively associated with positive feelings. Results seem to show that the emotional



reaction towards the dictatorship represents a different dimension from the overall evaluation of it. Emotional dimension cannot be separated from the social representations analysis and it can represent a kind of cognitive polyphasia (Aikins, 2012; Moscovici, 1961/2012).

Results presented an overall similarity with those found by Sá et al. (2009). The general social representation about the dictatorship is still critical. However, it seems that a revisionist perspective that represents the dictatorship as a positive period of order, discipline, respect and even liberty has been gaining space in the general representations. The term “order” present in Brazilian national flag was part of the central core indicating that a nationalistic representation about the past may be rising in Brazil. Brazilian was in political crisis during the data collection. This condition may have affected data but the times of crisis are generally when social representations are transformed (Moscovici, 1961/2012) being a great opportunity to study this process. The terms “respect”, “discipline” and “rule” presented in the second periphery such as the terms “authority” and “good” in the contrasting zone may showing that the minority positive representation, that in Sá et al. (2009) was presented only by the elders is rising among younger people. Accordingly, 11.4% of the sample affirmed to be in favor of the regime return. This result is accordingly to general surveys about the support to democracy (Corporación Latinbarómetro, 2016). This result may confirm the lost of trust in the democracy. After 32 years, participants may be deluded by the results obtained by the democratic governments that followed the end of the dictatorship.



During these years, two presidents (Fernando Collor and Dilma Rousseff) were removed by impeachment and many an economic crises affected the country, the last one, since 2014 had not ended when data were collected.

Conclusions

Social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil seem to be still critical. However, it seems to be in transformation to a representation about the regime as positive in some aspects such as ordering, respect and discipline. This representation, which during the 2000's seemed to be characteristic of nostalgic nationalistic right-wing elders is now more generalized, being anchored especially in political positioning and in absence of information in school, but also in lower income and masculinity. Further research would be interesting in order to follow the evolution of the social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil relating it with general social representations of history and present political context.



General Conclusions

The three studies presented seem to evidence the importance of a multi-methodological approach on studying social representations. The results observed in each study presented a different face of the phenomenon that helps to understand the overall picture.

The first study, regarding the comments in news about the Truth Commission final report release seemed to picture a very tragic image about the social representations of the dictatorship and the state of democracy in Brazil. Almost all comments were very critical with the government, the Truth Commission and most of them presenting positive representations about the dictatorship. The relation between social representations and communication is well documented since Moscovici's seminal study (Moscovici, 1961/2012). We are now facing new possibilities to express ourselves; different from the one's analyzed by Moscovici. Therefore, it is paramount to the social representations theory evolution to analyze these news tools of communications such as social media, online forums, etc. Big data researches seem to be one useful possibility to doing so though also present some challenges (Qiu, Chan, & Chan, 2017).

The second study, regarding the impact of the Brazilian Truth Commission and its appraisals and social sharing presented a more positive view about the social representations of the past. However, results showed that these appraisals changed when the political climate radicalized. Notably,

participants seemed to anchor more their positions on political identity during the political crisis. This kind of result is very interesting on social representations theory because it is this kind of tensions that engender creation or transformation of social representations (Moscovici 1961/2012). Thus, the investigation of the relations between social representations and political identity seems to still be a fruitful theme of study, especially in contexts of changes or crisis.

Finally, the third study, aiming to investigate the structure of the social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil comparing to a similar study carried out 12 years earlier (Sá et al., 2009) allowed to analyze changes in the social representations of the dictatorship. Results confirmed that the social representations are still critical, being very different from those found in the first study. However, it was observed a little sign of transformation on the central core and on the peripheral elements. Therefore, it seems that those active and radicalized users from the first study are acting as an active minority (Moscovici, 1979) being able to promote, at least so far, small changes on the structure of the social representations about the dictatorship.

Democracies have to be aware in times when there are people who want to re-write history. Narratives about group's history justify many kinds of political action (Bar-Tal & Hammack, 2012; Langenbacher, 2010; Liu & Hilton, 2005). If social representations of history justifying authoritarian regimes becomes accepted, democracies would be in severe danger.



Therefore, the studies about the evolution of social representations and its relations with collective memory and political attitudes and actions are paramount.



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Appendices

Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Caro(a) senhor(a):

Por meio do presente termo, gostaríamos de obter sua autorização para incluí-lo como participante na pesquisa que a Universidad del País Vasco – UPV – Espanha – está realizando em associação com a Universidade Federal da Paraíba – UFPB – nas cidades de João Pessoa, Salvador, Belo Horizonte e São Paulo. Esta pesquisa intitula-se: **“Avaliação da Comissão Nacional da Verdade por brasileiros e representações sociais do regime militar”**. Esta pesquisa é parte de um projeto de caráter internacional e está sendo conduzida no Brasil por Anderson Mathias, Rosiane Albuquerque e a Profa. Dr. Elza Techio respectivamente doutorando na Universidad del País Vasco, mestranda na Universidade Federal da Paraíba e professora do departamento de Psicologia da Universidade Federal da Bahia, sob a orientação do Prof. Dr. Darío Páez (UPV).

O objetivo geral desta pesquisa é investigar o processo de reconstrução da memória coletiva de brasileiros acerca do regime militar no processo de divulgação dos resultados obtidos pela Comissão Nacional da Verdade. Os objetivos específicos são: verificar o conhecimento, as percepções de eficácia e a avaliação acerca do trabalho realizado pela Comissão Nacional da Verdade; identificar a preferência pela investigação das violações ocorridas durante o regime militar ou pelas políticas de esquecimento; verificar a crença na possibilidade de que as vítimas perdoem aqueles que lhes vitimizaram e a percepção de que as desculpas emitidas foram sinceras; analisar as percepções acerca do clima social atual e de confiança institucional; verificar o compartilhamento social dos resultados divulgados pela Comissão Nacional da Verdade e acerca do período de violência política e se há inibição de se falar sobre certos aspectos do período; investigar o impacto emocional ocasionado pela divulgação dos resultados obtidos pela Comissão Nacional da Verdade; analisar a centralidade do regime militar na memória coletiva; examinar os conteúdos das representações sociais acerca do regime militar; investigar os processos de atribuição de responsabilidade da população acerca das violações ocorridas durante o regime militar; investigar as emoções associadas ao regime militar; compreender as relações entre as dimensões apresentadas, tanto entre si, quanto com variáveis sócio-demográficas.

O único risco associado à participação nesta pesquisa é a reativação de traumas em pessoas que tenham sofrido violência no período do regime militar. Se este é o seu caso, saiba que o senhor(a), assim como qualquer participante, poderá deixar de responder em



qualquer momento este questionário se assim desejar, sem que por isso receba sanção de nenhum tipo. Por outro lado, se deseja falar sobre o ocorrido de forma mais aprofundada, não hesite em informar aos responsáveis por esta pesquisa para que possamos dar-lhe uma atenção individualizada.

Quanto aos benefícios, considera-se que o participante possa refletir sobre questões sociais importantes sobre o passado e presente do país e, caso não conheça o trabalho da CNV, se sentir instigado a conhecer mais tanto sobre a CNV em si, como sobre o período do regime militar.

Neste termo, pedimos ao senhor(a) seu consentimento para participar nesta investigação assim como para usar com fins científicos os resultados obtidos. As pessoas que aceitem terão que preencher um questionário, no qual constam diversas perguntas referidas a questões sociais. A colaboração nesta pesquisa não demorará mais que 30 minutos. Sua participação será **ANÔNIMA**. Dessa forma, seu nome não aparecerá de nenhum modo nos questionários, nem nas publicações que esta pesquisa produzirá. Com as análises realizadas, se escreverão relatórios de pesquisa e artigos científicos que serão publicados em revistas especializadas.

Garantimos ao senhor(a) a **ABSOLUTA CONFIDENCIALIDADE** da informação.

Por último, se o senhor(a) aceitar participar, por favor, assine este termo de consentimento e devolva à pessoa que lhe solicitou esta autorização. Se o senhor(a) tem qualquer dúvida ou pergunta não hesite em realizá-la no momento da assinatura ou envie um e-mail para anderson.mathias@yahoo.com.br que prontamente será respondido.

Autorizo ser participante da pesquisa acima descrita.

Anderson Mathias Dias Santos
Pesquisador Responsável

Assinatura do (a) participante

Os resultados dessa pesquisa devem ser publicados em 2018. Caso queira ser informado dos resultados dessa publicação, informe seu e-mail (ou outra forma de contato) abaixo:



Dados sociodemográficos

Cidade onde mora: _____ Sexo: Masculino Feminino Idade: _____

Escolaridade: Ensino Fundamental Ensino Médio Superior Incompleto Superior Completo

Classe social: A (renda familiar acima de 20 salários mínimos)
 B (renda familiar de 10 a 20 salários mínimos)
 C (renda familiar de 4 a 10 salários mínimos)
 D (renda familiar de 2 a 4 salários mínimos)
 E (renda familiar até 2 salários mínimos)

Em assuntos políticos as pessoas falam frequentemente de esquerda e direita. Onde se situariam suas ideias na seguinte escala, independentemente de você se interessar ou não pela política?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extrema esquerda Extrema-
Direita

Em que votou nas últimas eleições presidenciais: 1º turno: _____
2º turno: _____

Quão importante é a religião na sua vida?:
 Nada importante Pouco importante Bastante importante Muito importante

Qual é sua religião? (em caso de ter alguma): _____

Se lhe dessem apenas uma alternativa para se descrever, diga qual dos seguintes termos usaria:
 Branco Pardo Indígena Amarelo (Asiático) Negro

Com que frequência você assiste à televisão?
 Muito pouca Pouca Média Muita Muííssima

Com que frequência você lê jornal (em papel ou pela internet)?
 Muito pouca Pouca Média Muita Muííssima

Caso leia, qual o jornal de sua preferência? _____

Com que frequência você lê revistas?
 Muito pouca Pouca Média Muita Muííssima

Caso leia, qual a revista de sua preferência? _____

Abaixo segue uma série de afirmações acerca do que deveria ser nossa sociedade. Indique seu grau de acordo ou desacordo com cada uma delas:

Nosso país necessita de um líder poderoso para erradicar as tendências imorais predominantes na sociedade atual.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
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Nosso país necessita de pensadores livres que tenham a coragem de se levantar contra o tradicionalismo, mesmo se isto venha a incomodar muitas pessoas.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
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Guiar-se pelos valores tradicionais ainda é a maneira mais adequada de viver.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

As leis de Deus sobre o aborto, a pornografia e o matrimônio deveriam ser estritamente seguidas antes que seja demasiado tarde. As violações destas leis devem ser castigadas.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

A sociedade necessita mostrar abertura para com as pessoas que pensam de forma diferente.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Seria melhor que os jornais fossem censurados, para que as pessoas não possam ter acesso à informação destrutiva, perturbadora ou repugnante.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Há muita gente radical e imoral tentando arruinar as coisas. A sociedade deveria detê-los.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Os fatos mostram que devemos atuar mais duramente contra o crime e a imoralidade sexual com o fim de manter a lei e a ordem.

Discordo Totalmente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo Totalmente 7
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Às vezes é necessário usar a violência para alcançar a mudança na sociedade

Discordo Totalmente 1	Discordo 2	Concordo 3	Concordo Totalmente 4
--------------------------	---------------	---------------	--------------------------

Quão justificado é, com o objetivo de protestar e fazer reclamações, que se apliquem castigos físicos às autoridades corruptas?

Muito injustificado 1	Injustificado 2	Justificado 3	Muito justificado 4
--------------------------	--------------------	------------------	------------------------

Quão justificado é que se castigue fisicamente aos delinquentes que são pegos roubando?

Muito injustificado 1	Injustificado 2	Justificado 3	Muito justificado 4
--------------------------	--------------------	------------------	------------------------

A igualdade entre os grupos de pessoas deveria ser nosso ideal						
Discordo Totalmente 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Concordo Totalmente 7

Os grupos superiores devem dominar os grupos inferiores						
Discordo Totalmente 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Concordo Totalmente 7

Seria desejável que todos os grupos fossem iguais						
Discordo Totalmente 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Concordo Totalmente 7

Por favor, responda as seguintes perguntas sobre o Regime Militar (1964-1985):

Você já teve alguma informação sobre o período do governo militar de 1964 a 1985?
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM <input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

Em caso de ter respondido SIM, onde conseguiu essa informação?	Sim		Não	
	Na escola			
Na universidade				
Relatos de familiares e amigos				
Na mídia				

Escreva as três primeiras palavras que lhe vêm à mente quando se fala em "Regime Militar":

1. _____ ; 2. _____ ; 3. _____

	Quando pensa no Regime Militar você sente:						
	Nada			Muito			
Tristeza, dor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Culpa, arrependimento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ira, irritação, incômodo, perturbação	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Medo, ansiedade, estresse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vergonha, humilhação, desonra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esperança, otimismo, ânimo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Alegria, prazer, felicidade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Orgulho, confiança, segurança em si mesmo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Você acha que houve aspectos positivos do período do regime militar?

SIM NÃO

Você considera que na época do regime militar houve violações de Direitos Humanos?

SIM NÃO

Algum caso de violação dos Direitos Humanos foi justificado?

SIM NÃO

Você se considera uma vítima de violência, entre os anos de 1964 e 1985, por parte do governo ou de seus agentes (polícia, forças armadas ou órgãos de segurança)?

SIM NÃO

Em caso de ter respondido SIM, em qual dos aspectos que seguem?

Exoneração Prisão Tortura ou maus-tratos Exílio Desaparecido ou executado

Outros: _____

Há vítimas de violência, entre os anos de 1964 e 1985, por parte do governo ou seus agentes (polícia, forças armadas ou órgãos de segurança) entre seus familiares ou amigos próximos?

SIM NÃO

Em caso de ter respondido SIM, em qual dos aspectos que seguem?

Exoneração Prisão Tortura ou maus-tratos Exílio Desaparecido ou executado

Outros: _____

Você tem falado acerca da época de violência (1964-1985)?

Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4
-----------	------------	------------	-----------------

Você tem sentido a necessidade de falar sobre os acontecimentos que ocorreram durante o período de violência (1964-1985)?

Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4
-----------	------------	------------	-----------------

Existe algum aspecto da violência (1964-1985) do qual não queira falar jamais?

Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4
-----------	------------	------------	-----------------

Você acredita que as pessoas afetadas pela violência podem perdoar aos que lhes causaram dano (individual ou grupal)?

De nenhuma forma 1	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente 7
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A seguir, apresentamos uma lista de eventos e personagens da história do Brasil. Gostaríamos que avaliasse, mesmo que tenha poucas informações, o quanto cada um deles é importante para se entender a história de nosso país e que dissesse o quanto você considera este evento/personagem negativo ou positivo:

Eventos e Personagens	Nada Importante					Nunca ouvi falar	Totalment e Negativo					Totalment e Positivo				
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Comício da Central do Brasil/Comício das Reformas	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Marcha da Família com Deus pela Liberdade	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
João Goulart (Jango)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
AI-1 (Golpe/Revolução de 1964) – Regime Militar	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Passeata dos 100 mil no Rio de Janeiro (Protesto contra o regime militar em 1968)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
AI-5 (1969) – Restrição de atividades políticas	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
DOPS/DOI-CODI	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Delegado Sérgio Fleury	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Sequestro do embaixador dos Estados Unidos Charles Elbrick (1969)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Carlos Lamarca	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Carlos Marighella	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Guerrilha do Araguaia	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Dom Hélder Câmara	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Vladimir Herzog	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Dilma Rousseff	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Lei de Anistia	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Atentado a bomba no Rio Centro (1981)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Movimento Diretas Já	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					
Luís Inácio "Lula" da Silva	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5					



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Ulysses Guimarães	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Para continuar, gostaríamos de saber sobre sua participação na Comissão Nacional da Verdade e sua opinião sobre as principais atividades, ações e conclusões.

Você tem conhecimento sobre o trabalho da Comissão Nacional da Verdade (CNV) iniciada em 2012 e concluída em 2014?

SIM NÃO

Quanta informação você diria que possui sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade?

Pouquíssima	Pouca	Moderada	Muita	Muitíssima
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Deu testemunho na Comissão Nacional da Verdade ou em alguma outra comissão de verdade?

SIM NÃO

Assistiu, pessoalmente ou por algum meio de comunicação, às audiências e reuniões públicas da Comissão Nacional da Verdade?

SIM NÃO

(Faça um círculo em frente a cada frase, no número correspondente à opção que lhe pareça que melhor representa sua opinião)	Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
Viu as audiências da Comissão Nacional da Verdade na televisão/internet ou visto as informações nas notícias	1	2	3	4
Escutou as audiências ou informações no rádio que se referem à Comissão Nacional da Verdade	1	2	3	4
Leu sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade nos jornais, nas revistas ou em livros	1	2	3	4
Leu os relatórios da Comissão Nacional da Verdade (ou parte destes)	1	2	3	4
Participou de rituais religiosos ou comemorações das vítimas (missas, funerais, velórios ou outras atividades religiosas)	1	2	3	4
Participou de atividades simbólicas de recordação das vítimas (concentrações, marchas, mobilizações não religiosas)	1	2	3	4
Participou de atividades de organizações dos Direitos Humanos	1	2	3	4
Participou nas atividades de organizações de familiares de pessoas afetadas	1	2	3	4
Falou sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade com outras pessoas	1	2	3	4



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A seguir, apresentamos um resumo sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade. Por favor, leia e responda as perguntas a seguir:

A Comissão Nacional da Verdade foi criada no ano de 2011 e instituída em 16 de maio de 2012. A CNV tem por finalidade apurar graves violações de Direitos Humanos ocorridas durante os governos militares entre 18 de setembro de 1964 e 5 de outubro de 1988 (com ênfase no período entre 1964 e 1985). Seu mandato inicial foi até 2013, mas recebeu uma prorrogação até dezembro de 2014, momento em que entregou seu relatório final. O relatório final lista os responsáveis pela repressão política e estabelece que os atos de violência produzidos pelo governo militar no Brasil deixaram um total de 434 mortos ou desaparecidos, entre outras práticas reconhecidas de violações de Direitos Humanos. Assim como a relação dos locais onde ocorriam as práticas de tortura, interrogatórios forçados, prisões ilegais e desaparecimentos de pessoas.

Fonte: Comissão Nacional da Verdade.

A respeito do que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade tem feito, você diria que:			
Desaprova Fortemente 1	Desaprova 2	Aprova 3	Aprova Fortemente 4

Você tem falado mais sobre a época do regime militar (1964-1985) depois da criação da Comissão Nacional da Verdade?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você diria que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade está ajudando as famílias das vítimas a saber o que ocorreu aos seus entes queridos?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você acredita que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade está ajudando a criar, na sociedade brasileira, uma história que incorpora de forma harmoniosa os relatos dos diversos grupos envolvidos nas lutas do Regime Militar (1964-1985)?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você acredita que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade está ajudando a garantir que as violações dos Direitos Humanos não voltarão a acontecer no país?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Quando pensa nos resultados dos relatórios da Comissão Nacional da Verdade você sente:							
	Nada						Muito
Tristeza, dor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Culpa, arrependimento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ira, irritação, incômodo, perturbação	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Medo, ansiedade, estresse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vergonha, humilhação, desonra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esperança, otimismo, ânimo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Alegria, prazer, felicidade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Orgulho, confiança, segurança em si mesmo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor, leia o seguinte e responda as perguntas a seguir:

Durante a cerimônia de entrega do relatório final da Comissão Nacional da Verdade, a presidente Dilma Rousseff se emocionou e chorou ao fazer referência aos brasileiros que perderam parentes e amigos no combate à ditadura. A presidente expressou, em seu discurso, que o relatório final ajuda o Brasil a “se reconciliar consigo mesmo” após as duas décadas de regime militar. “Estou certa de que os trabalhos produzidos pela comissão resultam do esforço pela procura da verdade, respeito da verdade histórica e estímulo da reconciliação do país consigo mesmo, por meio da verdade e do conhecimento”. A presidente disse ainda que ter acesso à verdade não significa “revanchismo”. “A verdade faz com que agora tudo possa ser dito, explicado e sabido. A verdade significa a oportunidade de fazer o encontro de nós mesmos com nossa história e do povo com a sua história”, disse. “Mereciam a verdade aqueles que continuam sofrendo como se morressem de novo, e sempre, a cada dia”.

Fonte: <http://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2014/12/dilma-chora-ao-receber-relatorio-final-da-comissao-da-verdade.html>

Você crê que as declarações da presidente Dilma Rousseff foram sinceras?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você acredita que estas declarações serviram para ajudar a sociedade a compreender o sofrimento dos grupos afetados?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você acredita que estas declarações serviram para melhorar a relação e promover a confiança entre os diferentes grupos em conflito?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Pode-se contar a história do Brasil de muitas maneiras diferentes. Interessa-nos sua opinião sobre as seguintes declarações sobre o passado do Brasil. Por favor, indique em que medida você considera as seguintes declarações verdadeiras:

Quando se trata do passado do país, devemos aprender com os erros cometidos a fim de evitar cometer os mesmos erros novamente			
Totalmente falsa 1	Provavelmente é falsa 2	Provavelmente é verdadeira 3	Totalmente verdadeira 4

É melhor que não se abram velhas feridas falando do que aconteceu no passado			
Totalmente falsa 1	Provavelmente é falsa 2	Provavelmente é verdadeira 3	Totalmente verdadeira 4

Em que medida você acredita que as seguintes situações são verdadeiras hoje em dia no Brasil? Por favor, assinale com um círculo a resposta que melhor corresponder:

A maioria das pessoas sente confiança de que há e haverá suficiente comida, água, medicamentos e habitações para eles e suas famílias, tanto no presente como no futuro?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

As pessoas se sentem inseguras devido ao grau de violência existente que não permite que as pessoas vivam em paz?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

As pessoas sentem que os diferentes grupos políticos têm suficiente confiança entre eles para trabalhar conjuntamente em favor do bem-estar do país?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

As pessoas sentem medo de reunir-se publicamente para falar, organizar-se ou para protestar pacificamente?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

As pessoas sentem esperança pois as coisas no Brasil estão melhorando?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

Os diversos grupos políticos, étnicos e religiosos do Brasil sentem confiança entre si?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

As pessoas têm medo de dizer o que realmente pensam pois "falar em voz alta" é perigoso?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

A desesperança neste país é tanta que muita gente quer ir embora?						
Não 1	Muito pouco 2	Pouco 3	Mais ou menos 4	Suficiente 5	Muito 6	Completamente 7

O ambiente ou clima social do país é de:	Nada						
	Muito Pouco	Pouco	Mais ou menos	Suficiente	Muito	Completamente	
Solidariedade, ajuda mútua	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Confiança nas instituições	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Raiva, hostilidade, agressividade entre as pessoas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tristeza, passividade, baixo estado de ânimo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Para continuar, apresentamos-lhe uma série de instituições. Diga-nos, por favor, seu grau de confiança em cada uma delas.

	Nenhuma confiança	Pouca confiança	Moderada confiança	Muita confiança
Polícia Militar	1	2	3	4
Partidos políticos em geral	1	2	3	4
Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT)	1	2	3	4
Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB)	1	2	3	4
Governos regionais (Estado)	1	2	3	4
Governos locais (Município)	1	2	3	4
Poder Executivo (Presidente, Ministros)	1	2	3	4
Poder Legislativo (Congresso da República)	1	2	3	4
Poder Judiciário (Juizes)	1	2	3	4
Forças Armadas	1	2	3	4
Igreja	1	2	3	4
Organizações Não governamentais (ONGs)	1	2	3	4
Grêmios, Movimentos Estudantis e Sindicatos	1	2	3	4
Organizações de Base (Movimentos Sociais) e Associações de Moradores	1	2	3	4

Você concorda que as atividades seguintes são úteis para melhorar a situação do Brasil? Marque um (X) na opinião que considerar apropriada.

	SIM	NÃO
Prevenção da violência coletiva		
A defesa dos direitos humanos		
Reparação às vítimas do Regime Militar		
Mudanças institucionais		
Fim da impunidade (punições), julgamentos		
Diminuição das desigualdades		
Aumento das oportunidades sociais		
Educação em Direitos Humanos		
Cerimônias em memória de todas as vítimas do Regime Militar		
Difusão de informação sobre o que se passou		

Por favor, dê-nos sua opinião sobre alguns assuntos que são frequentemente tema de debate no Brasil:		
	A Favor	Contra
Direitos Humanos		
Pena de morte		
Redução da maioria penal		
Volta do Regime Militar		
Legalização do Aborto		
Casamento entre pessoas do mesmo sexo		
Legalização da maconha		

As estatísticas sobre a corrupção no Brasil mostram que, entre janeiro de 2013 e julho de 2014, haviam sido julgados 30911 casos de corrupção de um total de 86418 que esperavam julgamento nos Tribunais de Justiça estaduais. O índice de condenação nos processos julgados foi de 31% (Fonte: Relatório do Conselho Nacional de Justiça - CNJ). Alguns dos casos mais conhecidos dos últimos anos foram:

- **Mensalão (2005)**: esquema de pagamento de propina a parlamentares para que votassem a favor de projetos do governo Lula.

- **Máfia das Sanguessugas (2006)**: Fraude em emendas ao orçamento que envolveu congressistas e assessores, acusados de receberem propina de empresa que vendia ambulâncias superfaturadas para prefeituras.

- **Mensalão do DEM (2010)**: Pagamento de propina de empresários a integrantes do governo e políticos e desvio de dinheiro de órgãos públicos.

- **Operação Lava-Jato – Petrobrás (2014)**: A operação investiga as maiores empreiteiras do país, suspeitas de pagar propinas para fechar contratos com a Petrobrás.

Como se sente perante estes fatos?							
	Nada						Muito
Indignado(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Envergonhado(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conformado(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Indiferente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Confiante	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esperançado(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Tendo em conta o que leu e a sua experiência diária, em sua opinião...							
	Discordo						Concordo
... devíamos confiar mais nos nossos dirigentes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... as nossas leis contra a corrupção são eficazes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



... nosso poder judiciário é eficaz.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... dada a maneira como as coisas se passam, o "crime compensa".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... as pessoas não alcançam o que merecem por vias legais.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... o Brasil é um país em que vale a pena lutar por valores de justiça social.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... acredito que o Brasil é um país que vai ultrapassar as suas dificuldades.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... o Brasil é um país onde as pessoas podem sentir-se seguras.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... no Brasil "vale tudo".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... os brasileiros estão empenhados em lutar por um país melhor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Agora, gostaríamos que pensasse em si enquanto cidadão (cidadã) brasileiro(a), e que respondesse às seguintes questões:

Tendo em conta o que leu e a sua experiência diária, em sua opinião...							
	Discordo						Concordo
Estou empenhado(a) em contribuir positivamente para a sociedade brasileira.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tenho orgulho em ser brasileiro.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sinto-me envolvido(a) com a sociedade brasileira.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Acho que sou parecido(a) com os outros brasileiros.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ser brasileiro(a) é importante para mim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gosto da cultura brasileira.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Considero que existe muita coisa boa no Brasil.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Considerando sua situação atual em relação à violência, indique seu grau de concordância ou discordância acerca das afirmações a seguir...							
	Discordo						Concordo
Existe um risco alto de ser vítima da violência.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A violência afeta seriamente a vida dos cidadãos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tenho medo de que algum membro da minha família seja vítima da violência.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Me mantenho informado dos acontecimentos violentos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



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A violência do crime organizado me causa pânico.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Já considerei mudar de residência por causa da violência.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Me incomoda saber de atos violentos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Diante da violência tomo precauções quando saio de casa.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Me sinto frustrado pelo crimes violentos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Evito sair tarde da noite por meio da violência.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Me sinto temeroso da violência que se vive no país.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Converso com meus vizinhos sobre o tema da violência.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Muito obrigado(a) pela sua participação!