

# Mexico 2018: Politics, Elections, and Youth

[*English version*]

México 2018: política, elecciones y juventud

México 2018: Política; Eleições; Participação; Juventude

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Anna-María Fernández-Poncela\*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3080-212X>

México

## Abstract

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**Objective:** a general look at youth and politics in Mexico, speeches, information, and figures, and specifically around the elections (2018).

**Methodology:** diverse information and data from a survey in Mexico City are reviewed. **Results:** there is a certain distance between youth and formal politics according to studies for the country conducted in recent times, as well as an adult discourse that makes these youth responsible for their electoral attitude. In 2018 the youth vote was for Morena and studied expressions present

a more participatory and interested youth than previously thought. **Conclusions:** the findings of this work show a youth with an interest in politics similar to other age groups, with greater knowledge, and with a political culture and public opinion similar to citizenship as a whole.

**Keywords:** Politics; Elections; Participation; Youth; Mexico.

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\* Research professor at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Xochimilco unit, Mexico City, PhD in Anthropology, [fpam1721@correo.xoc.uam](mailto:fpam1721@correo.xoc.uam). This research does not have any conflict of interests and it was not funded.

## Resumen

**Objetivo:** realizar una mirada general hacia las juventudes y la política en México, sus discursos, información y cifras, y todo en torno a las elecciones de 2018. **Metodología:** se realiza una revisión de fuentes y documentos de diversa índole; desde informes de gobierno y de organismos civiles, hasta encuestas publicadas. También se hace una revisión de prensa pormenorizada, la cual muestra en general el panorama de la participación política juvenil del país y en el momento de las elecciones del 1º de julio de 2018 de manera particular. Para el tema de la cultura política y participación electoral en concreto en el año 2018, se revisa la información de una encuesta preelectoral y de cultura política realizada por un grupo de profesores de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, unidad Xochimilco (UAM/X) al sur de la Ciudad de México (CDMX) con la colaboración de un grupo de alumnos/as en el mes de junio del año 2018 en la CDMX. **Resultado:** se observa cierto distanciamiento entre juventudes y política formal según estudios para el país en los últimos tiempos, así como un discurso adulto que los responsabiliza de su actitud electoral. En 2018 su voto fue para Morena y las expresiones estudiadas presentan una juventud más participativa e interesada de lo que se pensaba. **Conclusión:** los hallazgos de este trabajo muestran a una juventud con interés hacia la política, similar a otros grupos de edad, con conocimiento mayor, con una cultura política y opinión pública parecida a la ciudadanía en su conjunto.

**Palabras clave:** Política; Elecciones; Participación; Juventud; México.

## Resumo

**Objetivo:** dê uma olhada geral na juventude e na política no México, discursos, informações e números, e especificamente nas eleições (2018). **Metodologia:** para isso, diversas informações e dados de uma pesquisa na Cidade do México são revisados. **Resultado:** nos últimos tempos, observa-se uma certa distância entre a juventude e a política formal, bem como um discurso adulto que os responsabiliza por sua atitude eleitoral. Em 2018, o voto foi para Morena e as expressões estudadas apresentam uma juventude mais participativa e interessada do que se pensava anteriormente. **Conclusões:** os achados deste trabalho mostram um jovem com interesse pela política semelhante ao de outras faixas etárias, com maior conhecimento, e com cultura política e opinião pública semelhantes à cidadania como um todo.

**Palavras-chave:** Política; Eleições; Participação; Juventude; México.

## Introduction

The issue of youth and formal politics has recently been studied and debated within the framework of democracy in Western countries, and especially, the distancing from formal and institutional politics that has taken place recently to the detriment of the quality of education, democracy and youth civic inclusion is being reiterated. (Morán and Benedicto, 2002; Giraldo, 2010).

Here a very general approach is made for the country, and specifically, for Mexico City, which is done, as far as possible, especially contextualized as a youth age group within a total population. Hence, the study is descriptive in nature, with some reflections on current reality according to experts' views and speeches, through the voices and visions of the protagonists, providing information and figures, and trying to show an open panorama on the studies in the matter. The study is also an invitation to reflect further on the meaning of disaffection and abstentionism, in addition to considering politics as a relationship, and the contextualization of the political culture of a group within the entire population of the country.

What is the panorama of the relationship between youth and politics in Mexico? What role do young people have in politics and elections? What responsibilities are attributed to them? What index of interest and socio-political participation do they possess? What are their characteristics in terms of political opinion and their political culture? For whom do those who do it vote? And specifically, for whom did they vote in the last elections? These last two questions focused on Mexico City, through the survey review.

Although data and information are prioritized in order to present a broad documentary panorama of the subject, it is no less true that the review of aspects is inspired by current theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between youth and politics. Just as, in works of recent years for the Mexican case, in 2003 the author did not wonder why politics were not interested in youth, but rather why youth should be interested in politics? Given its electoral use, not its conception as a political subject, but rather as an object of policies.

There is also the most current review on the subject coordinated by Silvia Gómez Tagle (2012), who reflects on a survey of youth political culture, without forgetting to mention all the studies of government institutions in this regard. As regards theory, two current perspectives will be present: the modernist and the postmodernist regarding the consideration of youth participation. Briefly, they will be presented following the work of Ignacio Zuasnabar and Inés Fynn (2017). The first highlights the disenchantment, distancing from the youth, and

the loss of trust in political actors and institutions; which is due to the political actors' lack of interest in youth problems and concerns. This leads to what is considered, from this approach, a rupture of the traditional forms of political participation. The second, argues that there is no apathy and that participation, rather than decreasing, has changed. Today there are other modalities of political participation, requiring a redefinition of what is thought and practiced as politics, and a transition from a state-centric to a sociocentric conception.

These pages present official information, from experts and media, such as figures from surveys with questions, in a certain way, typical of this type of public opinion exercise and from the indicated source. However, it is important to recognize that we are currently at a pivotal point of approaches and opinions where everyone can contribute.

The study is based on general data on youth in Mexico – making the point with statistical figures on politics and elections. Subsequently, the article focuses on the youth vote and the discourses around it, in the heat of the 2018 elections. The following point is an approach to the interest in politics and opinion about voting, as well as party identification and pre-electoral preferences in Mexico City through diverse information, and, especially, a survey on the subject. To conclude, a segment of what has been said, and above all, an invitation to reflect on the youth and politics debate in light of the results of the city survey and the last election in the country, highlighting the importance of contextualization for youth studies.

## **Methodology**

There are two ways of accessing information for the present work. First, a review of sources and documents of various types is carried out, from government and civil organization reports to published surveys. A detailed press review is also conducted, which shows, in general, the panorama of youth political participation in the country and at the time of the July 1, 2018 elections in particular.

Secondly, and for the topic of political culture and electoral participation, specifically for the year 2018, information from a pre-electoral and political culture survey conducted by a group of professors from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Xochimilco unit (UAM/X) south of Mexico City

(CDMX) with the collaboration of a group of students in June 2018 in the CDMX is reviewed. Translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) The characteristics of the “Encuesta sobre la Cultura política 2018” are: the sample size consists of 800 cases, contains a margin of error of +/- 3.5, and has a confidence level of 95%.

Ten questionnaires per section were applied in electoral districts, in every 10 households, in different neighborhoods and delegations of Mexico City. The variables and socio-demographic factors were: gender – 48.8% male and 51.3% female; age – 29.3% between 18 and 29 years old, 32.8% between 30 and 44, 38% aged 45 and over; level of schooling – 5.1% no education, 10.5% primary school education, 22.4% secondary school education, 36% high school diploma, 26% university degree; occupation: – 17.4% housewives, 13.3% students, 5.1% retired, 7.3% unemployed, 43.8% workers, and 13.3% self-employed; sector – 22.8% public sector, 34.1% private sector; 43% self-employed.

## Results

### Youth, Numbers, Politics and Elections

To begin to frame the topic, figures on youth in the country are presented<sup>1</sup>. According to the 2015 Intercensal Survey of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Información (INEGI) (2018) there are 30.6 million young people, that is 25.7% of the total population, 49.1% men and 50.9% women. These are subdivided into age groups: 30.1% from 25 to 29 years old, 34.8% from 20 to 24 years old and 35.1% from 15 to 19 years old.

In terms of the schooling of the oldest group – 7.1%; of the second oldest – 25.5%; and of the third youngest, – 62.4%. With respect to the labor market, the National Occupation and Employment Survey indicates that the unemployment rate of the Economically Active Population (EAP) of the older youth group is 4.6%, the intermediate group, 6.7% and the younger group, 6.4%. Of those employed 59.5% work in the informal sector (INEGI, 2018).

Regarding the specific issue of politics, first, various data on youth participation in some spaces of the public sphere in general and institutional politics

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1. In general, there will be more talk about youth or young people, since it is about reviewing and analyzing the relationship with the politics of a particular age group, between 18 and 29 years old, although of course there is diversity among the youth and perhaps in other ways talking about youth would be more convenient.

in particular are presented, then some characteristics of their political culture, and finally their role in the elections. All of this is of a general nature, as some points will be studied in greater depth with specific studies at a later date.

Ollin's National Index of Youth Participation (INPJ) (2015-2016) reports that in Civil Society Organizations (8,686 in total) almost half of the participants are youth; however, in formal structures they are three out of 10, and in decision making one out of 10. In government agencies (counting 213 institutions) of more than half a million participants, 100 are composed of young people, and in the structures of civil servants, as well as among decision-makers, there is one young person for every 10 participants. The private sector employs more than 50 million people, including more than 15 million young people, three out of 10 of whom are young people in the formal structures of this sector, and one out of 10 in decision-making. For their part, in the political parties of eight million militants (counting five parties) there are more than one million young people in their ranks, two out of 10 people involved are young people and zero out of 10 in decision making (Ollin, 2016). The panorama regarding the participation of young people in the public sphere is clear in terms of their reduced or non-existent presence in positions that imply power or decision-making.

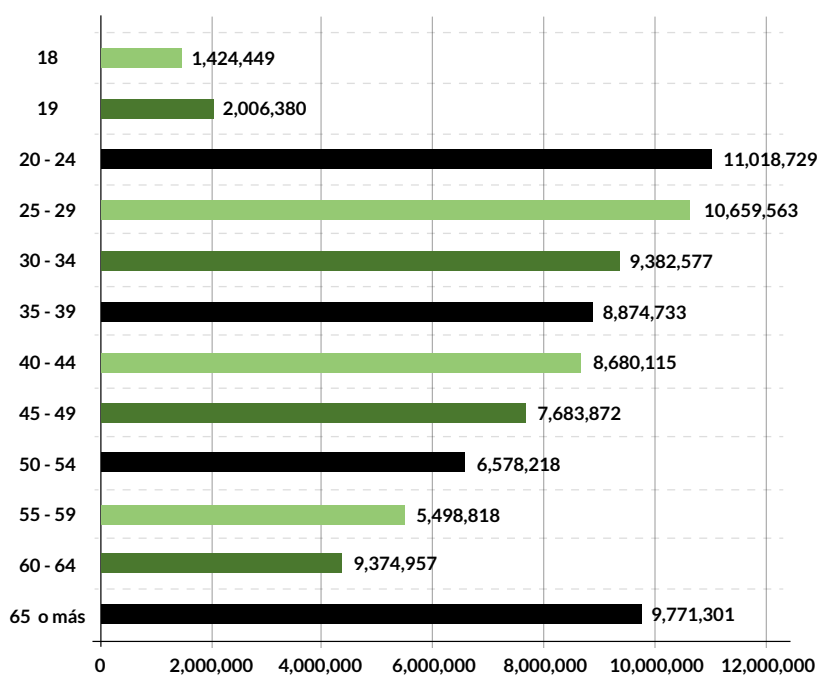
According to the latest National Survey of Youth Values (ENVJ) of the Mexican Institute of Youth (IMJUVE) in 2012, and among other issues, the family (91.1%) is pointed out as the most important institution in their lives, 79% considers that hitting a woman is not justified, 44% strongly agree or agree on the right to marriage of a homosexual couple, their use of internet connection is daily or several times a week for 72%, 62.5% are in social networks, 61.7% are informed by television. Regarding the specific issue of the public sphere, 34.5% consider that the economic situation of the country is worse than the previous year (2011), 32.5% consider that the political situation of the country is worrying. Regarding laws, 8.6% (on a scale of zero to 10) said they respect laws. In terms of values between freedom and security, 38.9% consider freedom to be better, while 34.1% say it is security (Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, IJ/UNAM, 2012). Thus, observing diverse social attitudes while expressing social values that could be defined as traditional is possible.

According to the same source now focusing on institutional policy, 46% said they had little interest, 43.2% said none at all and 9.5% said they had a lot of interest. As to the reasons for the top two positions, dishonest politicians, among other factors, were singled out. The data also show that there is no participation in organizations, associations, groups or movements (92.6%), and those that do participate are in urban tribes, in the YoSoy 132 movement (2012) or in a party. The democracy rating is 6.9 (IJ/UNAM, 2012), indicating that disinterest reigns. There exist critical appraisal of political actors, and social

and political participation is scarce. This seems to be a trend in several countries as some studies point out (IKNOWPOLITICS, 2017).

Finally, to conclude this general data section, figures around the 2018 elections are shown in which 85,953,712 million Mexicans had the right to vote, according to the nominal list. Among them were 25 million 18- to 25-year-olds (25,109,121) which equates to 29.2% potential voters, almost 22 million 20- to 29-year-olds (21,678,692) and almost 3.5 million 18- and 19-year-olds (3,430,878) according to the National Electoral Institute (INE, 2018, p.1) (Figure 1). The historical electoral weight has been and is considerable, hence the concern from certain governmental instances and political positions, regarding the youth's disinterested and abstentionist attitude. Campaigns for the vote and even certain discourse, as will be seen, point out, encourage or criticize them, and hold them responsible from the political adult, academic and media point of view, for their low interest and political participation, and in particular the elections.

Figure 1. Nominal List Statistics



Note. Adapted Nominal Statistics Electoral List and Registry, INE, 2018.

According to the experience of past elections, half of the young people do not vote, hence the calls and speeches from different sources, especially during the political campaign and from electoral authorities, opinion leaders, political analysts and civil society organizations, and of course, from the candidates inviting them to vote. Although they are the most informed, interconnected and politically critical generation, their lack of voting is enormous. As a result, specific campaigns emerged such as *#Me gusta que votes* (I like that you vote), which invited an informed and responsible vote against youth abstentionism, which was as a consequence, according to what it had claimed, out of anger, lack of trust and the corruption deployed in the country. Although it is insisted, according to certain positions, that the low electoral participation does not correspond to lack of interest, but to other reasons of a very different nature. In any case, the following section delves deeper into the positions made public regarding the elections and the youth vote, the general reflections and the direct invitations to vote for this age group.

### **Elections, Speeches, Campaigns and Young Voters**

To begin with:

This Thursday the electoral counselor, *Ciro Murayama*, published a breakdown of the electoral roll in which he assures that the young population, between 18 and 39 years old, and women, are the population groups that will define the results of the next electoral contest to be held on July 1, when Mexico will elect its next president (INE, 2018).

Like the previous quote, there were numerous voices around the elections that repeatedly and forcefully pointed out that the youth was going to decide the vote in a tone that denoted certain undertaking of responsibilities of the age group considered young, which includes 18 to 29 years old. Political speeches, journalistic articles, and academic analysis, qualified them as “fundamental actors” and even pointed out that “the future of democracy” was at stake and in their hands. This was justified, as of the 86 million Mexicans entitled to vote, 25 million or 29%, fall within the cited age bracket according to data from the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE) (2018), and as previously noted.

Several were the statements in that sense: “young people between 18 and 37 years old who will vote for the first time in a federal election will define the outcome of the 2018 presidential elections, assured *Jaime Juárez Jasso*, executive vocal of INE” (De la Luz, 2018).



“The president of INE himself, Lorenzo Córdova confirmed that the suffrage of the millennials will be what defines the July 1 elections as ‘that thing that young people are not interested in this election is a lie’” (De la Luz, May 18, 2018). However, there were also dissenting voices:

Gerson Hernández Mecalco ... pointed out that there is no evidence that says that young people will be the ones to define the election: “In fact, young people are the ones who abstain from voting the most ... The information from the INE spokesperson and Córdova is not proven, I would not dare to say so, I would even criticize Lorenzo Córdova’s statement when he assured that there is going to be more participation of young people” (De la Luz, May 18, 2018).

Despite this, from one point of view or another, the youth appeared to be responsible for the destiny of the election, voting or not voting, converging both positions in the adult opinion which emphasized the youth as protagonists in the election.

Here it is appropriate to pause and show how the youngest, who begin their foray into voting, vote more and then stop voting. According to studies by the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) – now INE – over the last few years, in the different electoral processes, from 2000 to 2015, the greatest abstentionism has been on the part of the youth. Within the age group there are also differences, the range that goes from 20 to 29 years is the most abstentionist, the 18 to 19 years who enter the right to vote for the first time not as much. Therefore, although this last age group votes less than adults and even older people, in fact, it does so more than the next youth segment. As a sample, a study for the last three elections is presented (Table 1) (IFE, 2017).

**Table 1.** Voter Turnout by Age Group

| <b>Age groups</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>2015</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 18-29             | 44%         | 62%         | 45%         |
| 20-29             | 35%         | 53%         | 36%         |
| 30-39             | 40%         | 58%         | 43%         |
| 40-49             | 48%         | 67%         | 51%         |
| 50-59             | 55%         | 72%         | 57%         |
| 60-69             | 58%         | 74%         | 62%         |
| 70-79             | 54%         | 69%         | 60%         |
| 80 y +            | 32%         | 50%         | 41%         |

The issue of participation in virtual networks is something very prominent among young people, both in politics and in other issues; such activity was also pointed out and highlighted in the public debate of those days: “In these elections, it is very important to understand that young people, through techno-politics will have a very important incidence” (Flores, February 18, 2018). Young people will detonate debates in networks:

the ability of these new generations in networks and communication through technologies, young people also inhabit the streets so an activism is expected from them built from their living environment (Flores, February 18, 2018).

On the other hand, youth diversity was also addressed, Sergio Aguayo Quezada said that despite the fact that “the youth vote will have an impact” they are still “a very fragmented segment of the population that responds to very diverse cultural stimuli.” In that sense, he pointed out that we will have votes, activism, but also apathy, abstentionism and “gangs of young hackers who are dedicated to defamation, to the dissemination of false news, and who are mercenaries of politics because they are at the service of whoever hires them” (Flores, February 18, 2018). As noted, there is diversity, hence the importance of not making pejorative remarks that generalize or stigmatize the behavior of this age group. Several statements were made about the millennials, a generation that is more interconnected and considered more critical, politically speaking.

Enrique Toussaint explained that the most apathetic citizen is the one under 29 years old because:

People over [age 29] grew up in a country where the only civic act that people did was going to vote. Now the millennial sees it as a matter of freedom. So millennial abstentionism is going to be lower in these elections (Flores, February 18, 2018).

These types of circumstances mean that 2018 “could be a key moment for the country,” said Rossana Reguillo Cruz. And she, like Toussaint, observes the possibility that “as the poll dates get closer, there are going to be more youth-related issues” (Flores, February 18, 2018). One problem, according to analysts, is that just as youth is not a substantial part of the government’s agenda, neither does it figure exceptionally in the presidential candidates’ projects of the virtual – except, perhaps, in Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s (AMLO) project. The lack of proposals for the benefit of Mexican youth is a reflection, according to Toussaint, of the “obtuse” way politicians “understand young people.” “Political parties still think that young people are not that important in electoral terms

because they are very abstentionist. They make their calculations and prefer to secure the over-40 vote. That's a mistake" (Flores, February 18, 2018).

The media generally echoed adult opinion (*El Universal*, April 11, 2018a), and some youth voices were also collected on the topic. For example, several newspaper reports that picked up on youth anger toward politics on the eve of the elections pointed to lack of job opportunities, poorly paid jobs, lack of representation of their needs and interests, fear of taking to the streets, discouragement and distrust of politicians, distrust of their speeches and their candidates' promises, corruption, etc. (*El Universal*, May 31st, 2018b). Like this one, in several cases, expressions of young people were transcribed that denoted disenchantment and criticism of politics. But there were young people, who from a political party, campaigned for their candidates and for the youth vote.

In view of the above, and as in previous elections, the "megustaquevotes.mx" campaign – created by more than 10 voting promotion and advertising organizations, aimed at promoting youth suffrage in particular, which advocated for basic and responsible information about the elections (how to obtain the voting credential, the days and means of dissemination of the debates), etc. – appeared. This fought against the lack of voting, especially in sectors distrusted by corruption and that tended to turn anger into abstentionism (Itxaro Arteta, 2018).

With the movement *me gusta que votes*, *Ollin Jóvenes en Movimiento* young people were expected to be aware of the importance of their vote and of going to the polls on July 1. "It should not be forgotten that young people are the ones who vote the least, almost half of us do not participate in the electoral processes, due to the disenchantment toward institutions and electoral processes," highlights the association. In a communiqué *Ollin Jóvenes en Movimiento* charges that abstentionism is because the country's young people "are angry with the electoral process and incidents of corruption" (Indigo Staff, March 16, 2018).

In the campaign, among other things, one could read:

Today, one out of every three voters is under 30 years old; this means that in the upcoming elections, where more than 18,311 positions will be elected throughout the country, 25 million young people will be able to decide who will be their representatives and 12.6 million of them will vote for the first time for president of the Republic. Let's remember that the 2012 presidential election was won with 19 million votes; this means that young people will be able to decide who we want as representatives in the coming years (*me gusta que votes*, 2018).

And the main text of the campaign continued:

For these elections, the largest in history, we want to reduce youth abstentionism by 3.6 million votes compared to the previous presidential election. But it is not only about going out and voting, but also about casting a responsible and informed vote; thinking about the information that will circulate in social networks during the next months, and with the Internet as the main source of information, we have created the site *megustaquevotes.mx*, where you can find all the information you need to know before going to vote; this information is non-partisan, unbiased and verified by young experts. The website is part of a strategy that we will be developing over the next few months in different social networks and media, in order to encourage young people to vote in the #Elections2018 (I like you to vote, 2018).

As mentioned, and as in previous electoral campaigns, the youth vote was promoted in a concrete, specific and insistent manner, and also as in other calls, the quantitative weight of the youth electorate was emphasized; sometimes in speeches that denote the latent or patent responsibility of youth in this regard, which leaves the subject open to reflection.

However, as it has already been said and will be said again, non-participation in elections is not equivalent to political disinterest, according to some voices, as politics and participation is much more than elections; however, it is still true to say that there is disinterest and abstentionism among young people toward formal and institutional politics, and in electoral processes in general, as was proven in figures previously presented.

## **Political Culture, Electoral Preferences, Data**

Having exposed general issues about politics and youth, especially information in numbers, and in particular around the 2018 elections and campaign-specifically opinions and speeches, this section focuses on a selection of political culture characteristics related to interest and voting, youth electoral preferences according to data from various sources, and fundamentally a pre-election survey of 2018, presented previously in the methodological section.

To begin with, one of the questions in the survey asked about interest in politics. It is observed that among the general population, regular disinterest predominates (33.30%), as well as among the youth (35.50%), although somewhat more so in the latter, if we take into account the number of years of each group and the percentage of the population surveyed in them. And although there are different percentages among each group, there is not a much greater lack of interest among the youth sector (Table 2).

**Table 2.** How interested are you in politics? 2018

| Level of interest | Age groups         |                    |                | Total  |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------|
|                   | 18-29<br>Years old | 30-44<br>Years old | 45 and<br>over |        |
| Very interested   | 9.80%              | 6.90%              | 7.90%          | 8.10%  |
| Interested        | 23.50%             | 20.20%             | 23.00%         | 22.30% |
| Regular           | 35.50%             | 37.40%             | 28.00%         | 33.30% |
| Little            | 22.70%             | 23.30%             | 26.30%         | 24.30% |
| Nothing           | 7.70%              | 12.20%             | 14.80%         | 11.90% |
| No answer         | 0.90%              | 0.00%              | 0.00%          | 0.30%  |
| Total             | 100%               | 100%               | 100%           | 100%   |

This same question in the last published National Youth Survey (IIJ/UNAM, 2012) contrasts somewhat, since on that occasion, 89.6% said they were little or not at all interested in politics and in this case in 2018 adding both degrees of interest, or rather disinterest, only 30.4% is obtained; which is striking. On the one hand, the first is a national survey and the one analyzed here is from Mexico City; and on the other hand, six years separate one and the other source, from 2012 to 2018, and many things happened in that period. However, if the figures of the 2018 survey on the subject are compared with another survey on Political Culture in 2012 (Ramírez, Carrillo, Fernández, Reyes del Campillo, 2012), the differences point out that disinterest has also decreased, since on that occasion the little and nothing categories added up to 37.5%.

In the 2012 National Survey (IIJ/UNAM, 2012) and as discussed at the beginning of this text, the explanation of the previous opinion was requested, and the resulting answers were: 37.4% because politicians are dishonest, 22.8% not interested, 22.7% do not understand, and 13.6% do not have time. This does portray a disinterested, critical, distant and apathetic spectrum, as some studies highlighted at the time. However, recent city survey information and data seem to point in another direction.

Another question in the survey asked about knowledge directly related to interest and vice versa, and on this point the youth had greater knowledge than the adult population (80.80% compared to 78.60% or 71.40%). Specifically, respondents were asked the names of the candidates for city government in the 2018 elections (Table 3). This means that there is more information and interest that is reflected in the knowledge of the youth.

**Table 3.** Could you tell me what is the name of any of the CDMX candidates for head of government? 2018

| Answer        | Age groups         |                    |             | Total  |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|
|               | 18-29<br>Years old | 30-44<br>Years old | 45 and over |        |
| Right         | 80.80%             | 78.60%             | 71.40%      | 76.50% |
| Wrong         | 8.60%              | 11.50%             | 19.40%      | 13.60% |
| Does not know | 9.80%              | 9.20%              | 8.90%       | 9.30%  |
| No answer     | 0.90%              | 0.80%              | 0.30%       | 0.60%  |
| Total         | 100%               | 100%               | 100%        | 100%   |

Regarding the importance of the vote, curiously, the very important category with 43.60% stands out among young people; and in the case of the important category with 38% is in second place for this age segment (Table 4). If the vote is important in an abstract sense, it could be assumed that perhaps electoral participation derives from it, which would be the concrete act of suffrage.

**Table 4.** Could you tell me how important the vote is to you? 2018

| Answer         | Age groups         |                    |             | Total  |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|
|                | 18-29<br>Years old | 30-44<br>Years old | 45 and over |        |
| Very important | 43.60%             | 47.30%             | 37.50%      | 42.50% |
| Important      | 38.00%             | 32.80%             | 42.80%      | 38.10% |
| Regular        | 12.00%             | 13.00%             | 10.90%      | 11.90% |
| Little         | 5.60%              | 3.80%              | 5.90%       | 5.10%  |
| Nothing        | 0.40%              | 3.10%              | 1.60%       | 1.80%  |
| No answer      | 0.40%              | 0.00%              | 1.30%       | 0.60%  |
| Total          | 100%               | 100%               | 100%        | 100%   |

On the issue of respect for suffrage, it seems that the youth consider that it is not respected, in a higher percentage than the population of other age groups, 68.40% compared to 64.50% and 60.90% (Table 5). Although it is not respected, it could be assumed in this case that, contrary to the previous answer, it would lead to not voting.

**Table 5.** Do you consider that the vote is respected? 2018

| Answer        | Age groups         |                    |             | Total  |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|
|               | 18-29<br>Years old | 30-44<br>Years old | 45 and over |        |
| Yes           | 23.50%             | 29.00%             | 28.00%      | 27.00% |
| No            | 68.40%             | 64.50%             | 60.90%      | 64.30% |
| Does not know | 7.30%              | 5.70%              | 9.20%       | 7.50%  |
| No answer     | 0.90%              | 0.80%              | 2.00%       | 1.30%  |
| Total         | 100%               | 100%               | 100%        | 100%   |

The answers to the four previous questions seem to show a youth with certain interest and high knowledge, who consider the importance of voting, but who do not respect it. What is noteworthy about this survey is the possibility of contextualizing and contrasting these youth's political attitudes with the general population, since sometimes in youth studies with the age range the researchers are working with, generalizations and statements are made that do not take into account the general social framework and citizenship as a whole. The youth is above all part of the population of a country and/or a city, and therefore shares its political culture; despite the differences that, of course, may occur according to generational, social and even individual factors.

The following questions focus on political ideology, party identification and electoral preferences, also in the context of the general population of Mexico City, and outline the political landscape of Mexico City today.

Regarding political-electoral identification and in the context of 2018, the surveyed youth opted for the National Regeneration Movement (Morena), in first place, with 46.6%, and in a higher number than other population segments such as the middle-aged, with 42.40%, and the older segment with 41.50% (Table 6). It should be noted that the response for "none" in the youth age group also had a numerically significant result of 28.20%.

**Table 6.** Which political party do you most identify with? 2018<sup>2</sup>

| Political party  | Age groups      |                 |             | Total  |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------|
|                  | 18-29 years old | 30-44 years old | 45 and over |        |
| PRI              | 4.30%           | 6.90%           | 8.60%       | 6.80%  |
| PAN              | 12.00%          | 14.10%          | 10.50%      | 12.10% |
| PRD              | 4.30%           | 6.90%           | 6.30%       | 5.90%  |
| MORENA           | 46.60%          | 42.40%          | 41.50%      | 43.30% |
| PT               | 0.00%           | 0.40%           | 1.30%       | 0.60%  |
| PVEM             | 0.00%           | 0.40%           | 0.70%       | 0.40%  |
| PANAL            | 0.00%           | 0.40%           | 0.30%       | 0.30%  |
| Citizen Movement | 0.90%           | 0.40%           | 0.30%       | 0.50%  |
| None             | 28.20%          | 22.50%          | 28.30%      | 26.40% |
| No answer        | 3.90%           | 5.70%           | 2.30%       | 3.90%  |
| Total            | 100%            | 100%            | 100%        | 100%   |

The question on electoral preferences also showed AMLO as the preferred candidate among the citizenry with 52.10% of nominations for President of the Republic, and, among the latter, especially among the youth, who indicated this option at 56.40%. All of this also coincides with what has previously been seen on partisan political identification (Table 7) and, of course, coincides with the pre-electoral surveys and exit polls that circulated in those days. It is necessary to add that the sum of cancellation, blank vote and abstentionism seems to be small, although it is a subjective and opinionated question that must also be considered.

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2. PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), PAN (Partido Acción Nacional), PRD (Partido de la Revolución Democrática), MORENA (Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional), PT (Partido del Trabajo), PVEM (Partido Verde Ecologista de México), PANAL (Partido Nueva Alianza).



**Table 7.** If today were election day, for which candidate would you vote for the presidency of the republic? 2018<sup>3</sup>

| Candidate           | Age groups         |                    |             | Total  |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|
|                     | 18-29<br>Years old | 30-44<br>years old | 45 and over |        |
| RAC                 | 16.20%             | 18.30%             | 17.10%      | 17.30% |
| JAMK                | 4.30%              | 8.00%              | 8.20%       | 7.00%  |
| AMLO                | 56.40%             | 47.30%             | 53.00%      | 52.10% |
| JRC                 | 7.70%              | 2.70%              | 2.60%       | 4.10%  |
| Does not know yet   | 4.30%              | 8.00%              | 8.20%       | 7.00%  |
| I will void my vote | 2.10%              | 1.90%              | 2.00%       | 2.00%  |
| I will not vote     | 0.90%              | 4.60%              | 2.30%       | 2.60%  |
| I will vote blank   | 0.90%              | 0.80%              | 0.00%       | 0.50%  |
| No answer           | 4.70%              | 5.70%              | 4.00%       | 4.80%  |
| None                | 2.60%              | 2.70%              | 2.60%       | 2.60%  |
| Total               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%        | 100%   |

As an illustration of voting preferences, a historical study of exit polls is briefly presented that yields the following information: in 2000, 44.4% of young people voted for the National Action Party (PAN); in 2006, their vote was divided between the PAN with 33.6% and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) with 32.4%. In 2012 they voted for the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) with 32.8% and also the PRD with 30.4%. Finally, in 2018 their vote was: 46.7% for the Morena-led coalition, 19.6% for PAN-PRD, and 17.7% toward that of the PRI (Mitofsky, 2018a).<sup>4</sup>

This same polling firm points to the greater vote for AMLO in 2018 on the part of the youth, since young people between 18 and 29 years old considered casting their vote for this candidate by 41.7% – according to a national pre-electoral study in June – while people between 30 and 49 years old did so by 36.3% and those aged 50 or older by 34.2%. On the other hand, those who would vote for

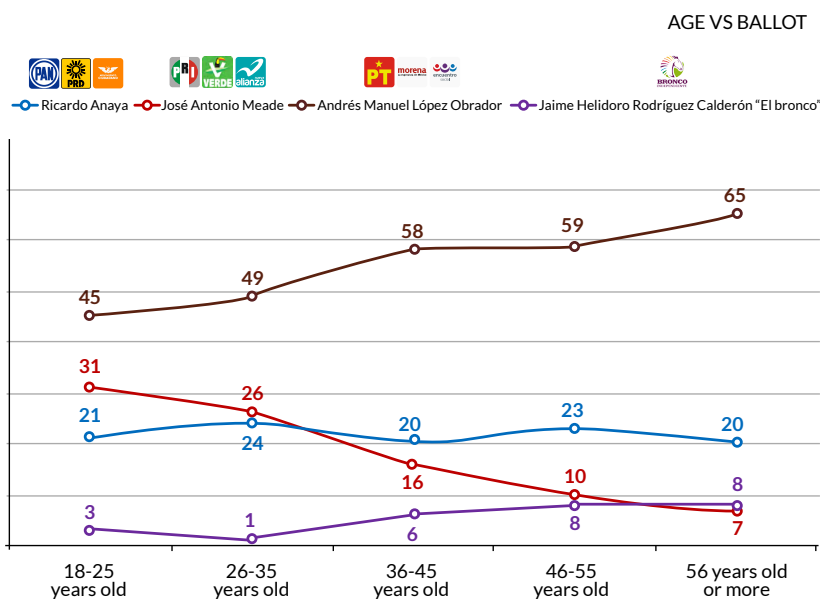
3. RAC (Ricardo Anaya Cortés) of PAN, JAMK (José Antonio Meade Kuribreña) of PRI, AMLO (Andrés Manuel López Obrador) of Morena and JRC (Jaime Ramírez Calderón) as independent presidential candidate.

4. In the traditional political arc and in *grosso modo* to summarize their political ideologies, the PAN is a right-wing party, the PRD is a left-wing party, and the PRI, which led the country for more than 70 years, is considered by some to be a centrist party.

Ricardo Anaya would be those in the middle age group: 20.5% from 18 to 29, 24.4% from 30 to 49 and 13.1% from 50 and over. Those who said they would vote for José Antonio Meade were the oldest: 20.6% from 50 to 29, 19.5% from 30 to 49 and 9.6% from 18 and over. The independent Jaime Rodríguez also had more support from the youth: 5.9% from 18 to 29, 2.9% from 30 to 49, and 0.9% from 50 and over (Mitofsky, 2018b).

Finally, a national exit poll shows that “people between 26 and 35 years old are those who voted for AMLO in the highest proportion, said candidate reached 63% of the votes among that population” (Parametría, 2018), and among young people between 18 and 25 years old, 55% voted for him. It should be noted that people with a higher level of education also voted for this candidate and these are usually younger (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Presidential Vote



Parametry EXIT POLL/1,321 cases/Error (+/-) 2.7%/ July 1, 2018.

**Note.** Figure taken from Parametría (2018, p.1). Presidential vote

Another source reaffirms what has already been pointed out:

The results in the exit polls were overwhelming: the youth vote set a trend in the election of the presidential candidate, since the total of first-time voters (18- to 24-year-olds) and millennials (25- to 35-year-olds) who opted for Andrés Manuel López Obrador would have totaled 47% of the total percentage, while the *baby boomers* and the silent generation would have only granted 22% and 9% respectively (SIMO consulting, 2018).

The same question as the previous one, but now about the candidates for the City Government Presidency, points to Claudia Sheinbaum (CS) with 34.40%, as the one who, apparently, was going to be the most voted according to the survey statements and more so by young people: 37.20%. While Alejandra Barrales (AB), with 21%, was in second position and seemed to be more preferred by older people, with 20.60% and 23.40% respectively in the other two age groups (Table 8). It should be noted, as in the previous question, that the cancellation, blank vote and not going to the polls represent a small percentage of the total. It is also important to point out that the majority of the population and the youth, especially, identify with Morena and say they will vote for AMLO. Curiously, in the vote for Head of Government, both issues are not so strongly reflected.

**Tabla 8.** Could you tell me for which candidate you plan to vote for head of government of Mexico City on July 1, 2018?<sup>5</sup>

| Political party | Age groups      |                 |             | Total  |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------|
|                 | 18-29 years old | 30-44 years old | 45 and over |        |
| ABM             | 18.40%          | 20.60%          | 23.40%      | 21.00% |
| CSP             | 37.20%          | 32.80%          | 33.60%      | 34.40% |
| LOE             | 0.90%           | 1.50%           | 0.30%       | 0.90%  |
| MRC             | 2.10%           | 2.30%           | 3.00%       | 2.50%  |
| MBT             | 2.60%           | 1.20%           | 1.60%       | 1.80%  |
| MAP             | 2.10%           | 7.30%           | 5.30%       | 5.00%  |
| PCC             | 0.40%           | 0.00%           | 0.30%       | 0.30%  |

5. ABM (Alejandra Barrales Magdaleno) for the CDMX al Frente; CSP (Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo) for MORENA; LOE (Lorena Osorio Elizondo) independent candidate; MRC (Marcos Rascón Córdova) for the Partido Humanista; MBT (Mariana Boy Tamborrell) for PVEM; MAP (Mikel Arriola Peñalosa) of PRI; PCC (Purificación Carpineyro Calderón) of PANAL.

| Political party     | Age groups      |                 |             | Total  |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------|
|                     | 18-29 years old | 30-44 years old | 45 and over |        |
| Does not know yet   | 21.40%          | 16.80%          | 20.40%      | 19.50% |
| I will void my vote | 4.30%           | 3.10%           | 1.60%       | 2.90%  |
| I will not vote     | 1.30%           | 3.40%           | 2.30%       | 2.40%  |
| I will vote blank   | 1.30%           | 0.80%           | 0.30%       | 0.80%  |
| No answer           | 5.60%           | 5.70%           | 4.00%       | 5.00%  |
| None                | 2.60%           | 4.60%           | 4.00%       | 3.80%  |
| Total               | 100%            | 100%            | 100%        | 100%   |

Another study by Mitofsky (2018b), now focused on Mexico City, points out regarding the 2018 elections that youth voted for Claudia Sheinbaum, although other age groups also did so (Table 9).

**Table 9.** Vote For Head of Government

|                    |      |      |      |     |      |
|--------------------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| <b>18-29</b>       | 40.2 | 32.8 | 10   | 4.6 | 12.4 |
| <b>30-49</b>       | 41.5 | 27.9 | 13.5 | 5.2 | 11.9 |
| <b>50 and over</b> | 38.1 | 28.7 | 14.6 | 4.6 | 13.6 |

Claudia Sheinbaum was the most voted and, as already pointed out in the previous pre-election poll of the city, was supported somewhat more by the group of young people. All following the party identification and the vote for President of the Republic previously presented, with the percentage differences also shown.

## Conclusions

So far this is the panorama of citizens' opinions, highlighting those of the youth age group, such as interest and knowledge, consideration of the vote and everything related to electoral preferences in 2018. This, together with the social and political participation of youth, their electoral weight, their participation in

terms of suffrage, and the circumstances and controversies of their role in the electoral juncture of 2018 have constituted the descriptive, explanatory and reflective review of the current situation of the relationship between youth and politics in Mexico, particularly in the country's capital.

This is an important topic, especially in the context of the endowment of political institutions and social participation, as well as citizen perceptions and opinions in this regard, especially in an interesting era that, it seems, is on the verge of change, so that in the future it will be necessary to continue to broaden and deepen the subject addressed here, in Mexico and in the world.

It is highlighted, firstly, that in Western democracies, youth apathy and political disaffection are emphasized, according to various approaches, just to contextualize the present work (Morán, Benedicto, 2002; Giraldo, 2010) and (IKNOWPOLITICS, 2017).

On the one hand, modernist theory points out that there has been a deterioration of social capital and a weakening of community and political culture that puts democracy at risk. Due to this erosion, processes of political disaffection take place, people feel that the political system does not represent them, which leads to a certain distancing and loss of confidence in political institutions and actors. Specifically, young people consider that politics is disinterested in them, their concerns and problems, which leads to political disaffection and the decrease or breakdown of traditional forms of political participation (Zuasnabar, Fynn, 2017).

On the other hand, postmodern theory does not see such apathy, disaffection and reduction of youth participation in politics, but rather a change in the forms of participation different from the traditional ones, hence it invites the redefinition of what political participation means and broadens the concept of it to issues of values and attitudes, as well as, new participatory forms (Zuasnabar, Fynn, 2017). Social movements, specific social protest, participation in networks, ecological interests, and various collective demonstrations are part of this conceptualization.

Both perspectives, despite their different approaches, would fully enter into the explanations related to youth abstentionism in Mexico, as well as to the country's traditional political culture where the deep and long-standing distrust toward political actors and institutions stands out, regardless of the age group in question. What has been observed in recent years is the high abstention rate among young people, which is higher than that of other social sectors. It is also clear that there is a reduced presence of young people in areas of power and decision making, as has been proven by the information provided in these pages, without forgetting the scarce interest of young people in politics according to surveys and studies that have also taken place recently.

Secondly, one must remember what has already been mentioned: the responsibility that is placed on the youth in relation to the election because of

their electoral weight, as has already been made clear, by adults, politicians, academics or the media. This has taken place in all electoral processes in recent times; here it occurred around 2018. This controversy and statements seem to be based more on the numerical importance of the youth than on their right to vote or the social and political interest of their participation, and on a certain approach that indoctrinates the positive and the duty to vote as something basic for democracy. Some more balanced voices contextualize the youth vote in the vote of the entire population entitled to it and point out a youth role that has its light and dark elements as that of the citizenship as a whole, far from stigmas and reproaches, and also, far from idealizations.

Third and finally, a review of some characteristics of the political culture and political-electoral participation of youth in the CDMX today is called for. On the one hand, according to the survey data, disinterest in politics was not found to be higher than that of the citizenry as a whole. On the other hand, there is greater political knowledge than other age groups. The vote is more or less important in similar proportion to the rest of the population consulted in the survey. However, a higher percentage of young people believe that the vote is not respected. It is worth remembering and emphasizing that this information and data belong to a survey of Mexico City at the 2018 electoral juncture, and in addition, that the analysis is carried out comparatively with other segments of the population, and not only the youth age group is studied, as it is sometimes done.

Having said and reiterated the above, the results point to characteristics of political culture and public opinion of the youth that do not differ much from the rest of the citizenry, and, when they do, they do not highlight the disinterest, apathy or alienation that is usually attributed to them, that is, they seem to distance themselves from the perspective of political disaffection, as has been repeated, in the case studied.

In terms of party identification, Morena seems to be the one favored by young people; however, and in general terms, a significant number of the population shares this position. Regarding the vote for the presidency, more young people than adults say they will vote for AMLO, and the majority of citizens also pointed in that direction. Something similar can be affirmed for Claudia Sheinbaum, for the position of Head of Government of the city, in a much lower percentage than the previous position.

This has been a review of the panorama in figures and speeches, from official studies, specialists or in the voice of the youth protagonists regarding their relationship with politics and the electoral moment through a survey. The issues reflect a more affected youth citizenship, less distant and apathetic, and more participatory than the political and academic discourse sentenced.

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