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“The creation of a common identity: A comparative study of the  
discourse in the standardized free textbooks in Mexico”

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## **Abstract**

In 1960, the Mexican government, through the Secretary of Public Education (SEP), implemented a policy of standardized textbooks for all. Every school student in the country, be they in public or private education, would receive a textbook for each subject of every grade free of charge. Since then, there have been nine sets of books, called generations. Throughout these generations, there are substantial changes on how they are written and how they portray certain people or events.

This thesis explores those differences in the narrations and images of historic events in Mexico. More specifically, the thesis focuses on the History books used in 4th and 5th grade of elementary school from the generations of 1960, 1993, and 2014. I examine the changes in the representation of Spain, the Catholic Church, the United States, and historical figures important to Mexican history across the generations.

The thesis is based on document analysis, particularly drawing on discourse analysis. I combine elements from Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and Discursive psychology to explore the content of the textbooks from different angles, particularly emphasizing the role of the textbooks in forging a national identity and national cohesion through the exaltation of heroes and common enemies. The textbooks are seen as tools for the Mexican state in the construction of a common identity, to promote collective views and values, to legitimize governments, and to impact the perception of external actors, such as Spain, the Church and United States.

**Keywords:** Mexico, free textbooks, history, nationalism, discourse analysis, *patria*, identity

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## List of acronyms and “non-translatable” words

<b>SEP</b>	Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education)
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>INEE</b>	Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (Institute of Education Evaluation)
<b>CONALITEG</b>	Comisión Nacional de Libros de Texto Gratuitos (National Commission of Free Textbooks)
<b>INEGI</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (National Institute of Statistics and Geography)

***Patria:*** Common way to refer to one's home country, which has similar connotation as Fatherland, that is, the nation of our parents/fathers (From the Latin, Pater, father). As patria has feminine gender, it is usually used in expressions related to one's mother. It can be viewed as a nationalist concept, in so far as it is evocative of emotions related to family ties and links them to national identity and patriotism. It can be compared to motherland and homeland.

***Conquista:*** The Spanish colonization of the Americas under the Crown of Castile.

***Hacienda:*** The term *hacienda* is imprecise, but usually refers to landed estates of significant size that were owned almost exclusively by Spaniards and creoles. Some *haciendas* were plantations, mines, or factories. Many *haciendas* combined these activities.

***Alhóndiga:*** Was formerly an establishment where grain was sold, bought, and even stored, whose purpose was to help the neighbors and mainly the farmers in times of shortage.

***Encomienda:*** The encomienda was a repressive system fixing the Spanish conquistadors' entitlement to labor and tribute from Indian communities. Although the Indians theoretically remained free subjects of the Spanish Crown, in practice they were enslaved to the *encomenderos* (those having encomienda rights).

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# **Part I**

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Mexico has gone through different social contexts, and with it, the education policies have been changing. One example is the aftermath of the Revolution, where the country wanted to “start over”, another one was the implementation of socialist schools with President Cárdenas. One of the most crucial examples, was the implementation of standardized free textbooks with President López Mateos in 1960. Since then, there have been nine “generations” of books, from 1960 to 2014, each representing the views and the values from the social context of the time.

The core of this thesis is to compare three of these generations of free textbooks used in fourth and fifth grade of elementary school, specifically in the subject of History of Mexico, and to analyze and discuss these books regarding nationalism and the construction of the Mexican identity.

#### **1.1 Contextual Background of the free textbooks**

In the beginning of the twentieth century, very few people from the population of Mexico knew how to write or read. There is no registration of the exact numbers but (Mora,1995) refers that in those times only 162,855 were literate, this in a territory of around 15 million people (third census INEGI, 1910 in Mora, 1995).

Back then, the majority of people who went to school, studied in the Escuela Normal de Maestros, (training teacher’s school) to acquire knowledge in areas like science, humanities, physics, and art. Alejos (2013) explains that it was not uncommon that new teachers would travel long journeys by horse to teach communities, until 1911. This was a year after the Revolution, and the year that Mexico transitioned to a more inclusive education system. The government was now officially economically responsible for education and guaranteeing to open schools in the whole country to teach reading, writing and basic mathematics. Emiliano Zapata, and other

leaders of the Mexican Revolution, had as their cause to take the “torch of knowledge” to the whole Mexican territory. 1917 was when the constitution made free and mandatory elementary education a fundamental right for every Mexican, but it was not until 1921 that the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) was created.

In December of 1956, UNESCO approved the “Main Project” regarding the primary education in Ibero-America. This initiative mainly sought to promote the revision of plans and programs, to give all children equal educational opportunities, and adapt education to the needs of the population in the various zones or regions, to improve the training of teachers, and contribute to raising the moral, economic, and social level of the teaching profession. Thus, Latin American countries, which had already gone through processes of institutionalization of their educational systems, faced their first reformist challenges in the middle of the last century. (Hernández Rodríguez, 2015a)

In Mexico, at the end of 1958, Adolfo López Mateos assumed the Presidency and since his inauguration day, he made public education a top priority of his government. Jaime Torres Bodet was appointed head of the Ministry of Public Education and headed the national commission in charge of formulating the National Plan for the Development and Improvement of Primary Education, known as “the Eleven Year Plan”, which was approved in 1959. This plan aimed to reach every place in the country but also to reform teaching methods and improve quality. (idem)

In this context, in order to give Mexicans a mandatory and free education, on February 12th of 1959, President Adolfo López Mateos, through the Secretary of Public Education, created by decree the National Commission of Free Textbooks (CONALITEG by its acronym in Spanish), whose objective was to provide books for free to basic education students. For the very first time in the history of Mexico, there would be no differences between the pupils from public and private elementary schools, rural or urban, at least not in the educative material that the State was going to provide. (idem)

The free textbooks were controversial for their compulsory character. López Mateos was openly and actively opposed to communism. He prohibited public demonstrations of support of Cuba, and he personally asked former president Cárdenas not to travel to Cuba (Hernández Rodríguez, 2015b) and now, ironically, every schoolchild in the country would be given the books free of



charge. All Mexican primary school students: federal, provincial, public, or private would literally read from the same text, created, and distributed by the state. The promoters of these books were aware that this would constitute a vehicle for educated and indoctrinated adults (Gilbert, 1997).

It was mandatory for teachers to use the textbooks in class and no other texts outside of the official catalogue specified by SEP. If they did, there would be sanctions of prison, monetary fines, or the risk of losing their teaching credentials (Alejos, 2013). Naturally, when this happened, people started to raise their voice and denounced through the press, describing this as unconstitutional, authoritarian, and contrary to the educational and cultural purposes of the Mexican State. In addition, this also meant establishing an editorial monopoly. Alejos (2013) continues explaining how these criticisms, in an anti-communist environment fueled by the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, were reoriented to denounce that. Through this new decree, the State extended its intervention way too far in the educational and social affairs of the country.

Alejos (2013) emphasizes that it is important to note that, at that time, the book publishing sector in Mexico was a monopoly in the hands of foreigners, so this act was going to have a serious impact on their economy. The participation of Spaniards in the book market in Mexico was not a new thing. Since the early twenties, peninsular publishers were encouraged to export their books to American countries to “spanishize the Spanish-American republics” therefore, the Commission of the free textbooks summoned writers and pedagogues to “participate in the writing of textbooks, free and instructive workbooks corresponding to the six grades of primary education”. These calls, despite their public nature, were only opened to Mexicans by birth. Foreign and naturalized Mexican authors were banned (Conaliteg, 1959 in Alejos, 2013).

Despite great controversy and protests from different sectors of society (lawyers, the Church, parents, book authors), who considered the free textbook as anti-pedagogical, unlawful, and undemocratic, the standardized free textbooks have been used ever since. There have been nine generations, and there is a new one on the way. According to INEGI (2020), Mexican teachers read two and a half books a year, and these textbooks are included in that number; thus, the CONALITEG books, especially History and Civics, serve as a great tool for the government, since most teachers lack an alternative perspective from the official version. The “official history” is taught from generation to generation without questioning,

Singuenza Orozco (2005) acknowledges that the establishment of these books had advantages such as the provision of books for all children, which for those who could not acquire any – the vast majority in Mexico- meant the possession of a cultural symbol, an object that was part of the path to "progress." On the other hand, for those who had the means to buy books, the existence of even a single free book meant the complete and total interference of the government in education, a clear characteristic of a “communist” state.

De la Vega (2010) emphasizes that in all States it is necessary to build interpretations of the past to make a history and legitimize the political power. He describes how in Mexico this was institutionalized with the implementation of free textbooks. This way History becomes definite and official. There is no space for interpretation, “this is how it all happened”.

## **1.2 The school system**

Education in Mexico is overseen and regulated by the Secretaría de Educación Pública or SEP (Public Education Secretariat). All education standards are set by this government Ministry at all levels. Accreditation of private schools is accomplished by a mandatory approval and registration with this institution. In order to be able to understand the impact of the books, it is relevant to know who is in charge of creating the school content, how the school system works in Mexico, and to how many children these books are reaching.

From 1921 to 1924, José Vasconcelos, the first Secretary of Education, developed the Nationalist Education project where SEP was created under the Presidency of Adolfo de la Huerta, with the purpose of being responsible for the national educational policies at a federal level.

In 1934, the first amendment to the Mexican Constitution was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation, establishing that education should avoid privileges of religion, and that one religion or its members may not be given preference in education over another. Religious instruction was prohibited in public schools; however, religious associations were free to maintain private schools, which receive no public funds.

In 1957, the right for education is established on the Constitution; and primary education becomes free of charge in official schools approved by SEP. Proof of Mexican citizenship is required to attend public schools for free.

By 1993, the Federal Government continues with the task of determining the study plans and programs for elementary, lower secondary, and teacher education for the entire country. Additional constitutional amendments made it a legal obligation for parents to send their children to elementary and lower secondary schools. While the Federal Government, through SEP, continues to oversee the general implementation of education, the states are given complete responsibility for administering basic education, including indigenous and special education and teacher education. Preschool education is not mandatory but is available to children between the ages of three to five. It is not necessary to attend kindergarten to enroll in elementary school. However, preschool education is highly recommended (SEP,2020)

In 2000 there were 29,700,000 students enrolled in all levels of education. Of these, 23,612,000 were enrolled in basic education grades. According to estimates from the SEP, school enrolment for children aged 6 to 14 years stands at about 92.08 percent.

Nowadays, the Mexican educational system consists of three levels: primary, secondary, and higher education. Basic education, pre-school, primary and secondary, accounts for approximately 81 percent of the total number of students receiving school services. Federal, state, and local governments provide 93 percent of basic education, while private schools provide about 7 percent (SEP,2020)

Mandatory school age is 6 to 14 years, which covers primary and lower secondary school. Elementary school is from grades one through six; lower secondary education is taught in three levels, from first to third grade. Elementary school enrolment increased for children in the compulsory ages from 86 percent in 1990 to 92 percent in 2000. Primary school children spend between four and four and a half hours in class instruction every day. Students in secondary school spend at least seven hours per day in school. (ídem)

In general, in the compulsory school grades, boys and girls are almost equally represented: males, 92 percent; females, 91 percent. However, this balance is upset in the upper grades. Even though the gap is closing, males tend to be represented in greater numbers than females, particularly in higher education.

The official language of instruction is Spanish. However, increasing attention is being paid to Indigenous education. Mexico recognizes 62 indigenous ethnic groups that speak more than 80 languages. These groups are found in 24 of the 31 Mexican states. More than 1 million indigenous children receive bilingual instruction at the preschool and elementary school levels; this education is offered in 72 dialects from 49 parent languages. Currently, the SEP textbooks are offered in 64 indigenous languages. (Gobierno de México, 2019)

### **1.3 Delimitations**

In this thesis I will focus on three of the nine existing generations. 1960, 1993 and 2014; in each of these years there was an education reform pushed by the President in turn:

The first reform, in 1960 was, as previously explained, due to the high illiteracy rates that existed in the country and the problems for children to complete primary education, President López Mateos, seeking to resolve this situation, invited Torres Bodet to serve as Secretary of Public Education in his government. Jaime Torres Bodet was the former Director-General of UNESCO so that helped get the international support and praise. He then formulated the Eleven-year plan which sought to end the educational lag and dropout. (Torres Septien, 1985). This generation had to be included being the pioneer of this project.

In 1993, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari aimed to modernize the educational system with a view of quality and equity with the Educational Modernization Program. Salinas also made secondary education compulsory. This one is the generation I studied while being in school and is the generation that has been more controversial. Carlos Monsivais, a Mexican essayist, and historian, said that the government and groups of power believe that what is in the textbooks is in the hearts and minds of the next generation, and if that is the case, both the timing and circumstances of this generation is very peculiar. These books were not the product of an anonymous bureaucracy. SEP, traditionally responsible for the production of textbooks were excluded from the process (Camacho Sandoval, 2001) and both President Salinas and Secretary Zedillo (later President as well) were intimately involved since the beginning. They both personally recruited two main authors, Héctor Aguilar Camín and Enrique Florescano, the first one was a friend of the president (interview Gilbert, 1997). The books can reasonably be assumed to represent the thinking of government at the highest levels. (Gilbert, 1997)

In 2013, President Enrique Peña Nieto pushed for an educational reform. It was based mainly on quality of the teachers and aimed to create an evaluation institute. This reform turned into a series of protests by the union of teachers in fear of losing their jobs for not passing the evaluations. Although this reform did lead to a new generation of books, they are almost identical to the previous generation of 2006. Supposedly it was reprinted due to some printing and grammatical errors only. Being from opposed political parties, I decided to use the latter ones since they are the “better version” and the one that the current students are studying.

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part is constituted by the Introduction and the Analytical Framework. The second part are the findings and the analysis of the textbooks; and the third part is the summary and concluding remarks.

### **Part I**

#### **1. Introduction**

An overview of the historical context of the CONALITEG books. When and why, they were created and their impact on the Mexican society. An overview of the school system and introduction of what is the thesis about and its delimitations.

#### **2. Analytical Framework**

Discussion on the literature review, and the theoretical framework used on the thesis. An explanation of the concepts of Nationalism and National Identity used through the thesis. Also, I present the methods used to analyze my thesis, which were document analysis and discourse analysis, the latter one through Critical Discourse Analysis and Discursive Psychology and their relation to the construction of National Identity in Discourse.

### **Part II: Findings and Analysis**

#### **Relationship to Spain**

A comparison and analysis of the three generations in relation to Spain, specifically the chapters of *Conquista* and Independence, and a discussion on the context of the two countries during the periods where the three generations were published.

### **Relationship to the Church**

A comparison and analysis of the three generations in the portrayal of the Catholic Church along different chapters, and a discussion on the context of the importance of religion in the country in the different periods.

### **Relationship to the United States**

A comparison and analysis of the three generations on how is portrayed United States and a discussion on how the different versions can be explained by the context of the time.

### **Heroes and Villains**

A comparison and analysis of four important historical figures of Mexico and how they are portrayed in the different generations. An emphasis and special observation of adjectives and depictions on the narrative.

## **Part II**

### **Summary and Concluding Remarks**

A summary of the findings in a more digested way so is easier to identify the main differences through the generations and making sense of why they are written in such way

### **Looking ahead**

A forecast of where the country is heading with the new generation of textbooks on the way

## **Chapter II**

### **Analytical Framework**

The aim of this thesis, as mentioned before, is to compare and analyze the changing discourse along three generations of the free textbooks used in fourth and fifth grade education in Mexico; and make sense on how these changes impact the sense of nationalism and the construction of the Mexican identity.

There has been some previous research about this topic. To mention an example is the book “Against the official history” (Crespo, 2009) where the author tries to deconstruct the myths contained in the textbooks. Especially the so-called heroes. Even though my role is not to debunk myths, but rather analyze the language used in the books to describe these heroes. Reading his work helped me read the textbooks with an analytical eye.

Martín Moreno is another Mexican author that does something similar in his book called “Deceived Mexico”. However, he looks through only the generations of 1960 and 1993. I also chose those two generations. The generation from 1960 for being the first generation, and a breakthrough in the education in Mexico; the 1993 generation for their controversial character; and unlike the author I also included the generation from 2014; for being the last generation so far, the more modern version and because they came at the same time than the education reform.

Another author that I draw on is Singuena Orozo. He wrote an article titled “The idea of nationality on the Mexican Free textbooks” (2005) in his text he analyzes only from 1960 to 1972; nonetheless, he goes deeply on the reasoning behind President López Mateos on creating these books and analyzes fragments and images from the textbooks. Not only History, but also the books of Spanish and Geography and identifies nationalistic traits. I go back to his ideas on the analysis and discussion and other sections of the thesis.

Other authors used in this thesis are mentioned in this chapter, where I discuss the theoretical framework for my analysis. This chapter revolves around the concepts of nationalism and national identity. This serves as a theoretical background for understanding the relationship between the textbooks and the construction of identity in Mexico.

The method chosen to carry out a discursive analysis depends directly on the goals, aims and data of the research project (van Dijk, 2013 cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2016). Since I am focusing on the CONALITEG standardized textbooks, and those are my main data, it is natural to use Document Analysis. However, it is not enough to just read what is written in them but to go deep into detail on the meaning behind the way it is written. Therefore, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) and Fairclough's (1995) method for Discursive Psychology and Critical analysis of media discourse is pertinent for this study.

## **2.1 Nationalism and National Identity**

The concepts of nation, nationalism and national identity have been studied and tried to be explained by many authors. For the sake of this thesis, and to understand what I mean when I use these ideas, I will draw mainly on the work of Benedict Anderson, Colom, and Smith. These authors do not contradict the other but rather build on and supplement each other's ideas.

Anderson (2016) defines a nation as “an imagined political community, imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” Like any group larger than a small village, a nation is “imagined” because most citizens will never meet one another face-to-face, and yet see themselves as being part of a “political community”, like a family with shared origins, mutual interests, and “a deep, horizontal comradeship.”

Anderson (2016) also argues that one of nationalism's most important effects is to create meaning where it is lacking. Nationalism is powerful as an emotional and political concept but is closer to kinship or religion rather than an ideology as fascism or liberalism. Anderson provided ways of thinking that he believed were central to a sense of “nation-ness”—imagining, restoring, remembering, dreaming. In so doing, he provided those seeking to tell new histories a way into making nationalism into a useful political tool.

Anderson reflects on how the nation creatively constructs a narrative of its identity, suppressing certain historical facts while assimilating figures and events that pre-date the national consciousness. Similarly, Smith (1991) argues that “shared historical memories” may also take the form of myth. Indeed, for many pre-modern peoples the line between myth and history was often blurred or even non-existent but these widely believed dramatic tales of the past can serve the present and future purposes. Colom (2011) agrees by stating that truth and lies are, then, epistemological categories that slide over the national condition. The falsehoods and



mystifications are introduced into the political process of its narrative elaboration, that is, in the ideological dynamics of nationalism.

Colom cites Eric Hobsbawm when he recognizes that “historians are to nationalism what poppy growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: they provide the raw material needed for the market”. Nations without a past are a contradiction in terms. What constitutes a nation is the past, what justifies a nation over others is the past, and historians are the people who produce this past.

The construction of the past is open to different narrative possibilities - there is no past forever closed. The options in one direction or the other are invariably interested and are subject to the social tensions of the moment (Colom, 2011). The historical narrative has been one of the main resources mobilized in the process of construction of national identities, and the ultimate goal of this historical memory is national cohesion. Any statement about the past is actually a claim about the present. Nations are a historical plot, a socially effective and systematically tested narrative whose consensus, forgetfulness and remembrance run in step with the political intelligence of the moment. It is not so much a matter of proving its existence as of moving towards its realization and durability. Hence the study of history has less to do with an interest in the past than with future ambitions (Colom, 2011).

Since the beginning of the 19th century, shortly after its independence, Mexico has been considered in the collective imagination of its population as a nation-state. This meant that, as a sovereign state, Mexico had (at least according to the legislation) exclusive jurisdiction over its territory and the population that permanently lived there. As a nation, and according to the definition established above, Mexico should have a “community” of people who, in a real or imaginary way, shared the idea of having a past, history, language, culture and even a “common destiny” (Brownlie, 1990).

When referring to national identity, Anderson talks about imagined communities, but Smith (1991) refers to them as ethnic communities or *ethnie*, to use the French term. He believes that an ethnic group can be distinguished by six main attributes:

1. A collective proper name
2. A myth of common ancestry
3. Shared historical memories
4. One or more differentiating elements of common culture
5. An association with a specific “homeland”
6. A sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population

Smith claims that whenever these elements are present, we are clearly in the presence of a community of historical culture with a sense of common identity. It is important to differentiate this such community from a race in the sense of a social group that is held to possess unique hereditary biological traits that allegedly determine the mental attributes of the groups. Smith sees an ethnic group like a huge family.

After the independence of the country (1821), Mexico lacked these six attributes that constituted a community. With the "disappearance" of New Spain, the elites faced the task of "inventing" a "new nation." For this process, although they had a fragilely unified territory, they did not have a population that would converge in a shared feeling about a common history, culture, or destiny. Or in Anderson's words, the nation in Mexico had to be "imagined" to be able to exist.

Anderson (2016) argues that states, such as Mexico, are the product of "colonial nationalism." These postcolonial nations exhibit a complex nationalism deriving from their colonial origins, retaining the language of the colonial power as their official language. They combined popular nationalist sentiment with the ideological machinery of official nationalism that they inherited from imperial rule. Leaders in these states adapted a range of nationalist institutions, republican ideals, systems of government and education, elections, celebrations, and the manipulation of mass media for ideological purposes.

Anderson believes that the combination of capitalism, printing, and the language led to the birth of national consciousness. He expands in the idea of print-capitalism, which created mass readerships, distilled the multiplicity of spoken dialects into a smaller number of print-languages, and generated administrative languages that gradually replaced Latin. The effect of these changes was to unify language communities and foster a sense of simultaneity among their members and, because they were now written down, changed much less than oral languages through the ages. This can be exemplified with the Spanish colonization process. The spread of a homogenous language, Spanish was not only seen in the colonies as merely a convenient tool for understanding the natives, but Spanish was considered a language closer to God. Even nowadays, we say "hablar en cristiano" [to speak Christian] when referring to Spanish. Thus, language was a great tool in the nationalization process.

Colom (2011) emphasizes on the importance of homogenizing and merging into a single reference. He believes that nationalism postulates a type of cultural identity between rulers and ruled that is not possible without the homogeneity fostered by the instruments of modern political sovereignty. This point is crucial for understanding the importance of the homogeneity of

school textbooks in Mexico. Homogeneity creates cohesion, and this was understood by the *criollos* in New Spain when they were having difficulties creating a sense of nationalism with very different casts and ethnic groups. The *criollos* started the independence movement, but they could not have done it alone. That's why the creole élites began a process of nation-formation in the absence of a distinctive *ethnie*, with the question of "who are we?"

Smith's third attribute of ethnic communities -shared historical memories- was a crucial point for the *criollos'* quest to build a nation. Colom (2011) points out that, as is evident, individuals cannot have memory other than what they have personally experienced. Therefore, history is learned, not remembered, and occupies a preferential place in the cultural dynamics of nationalisms. Colom defines national identities as historical states of mind or, a narratively configured historical imagination. But he claims that words are never innocent. Nationalist doctrines resort to the story to give themselves historical depth and ethical density, to make sense of the past and to charge with reasons for the present.

Colom explains that the nationalist discourse tends to recreate the collective past as a trajectory sown with noble causes, tragic sacrifice, and cruel necessity. For this, it uses cultural devices such as literary stories, historical narratives, commemorative rituals, visual representations, etc. He considers that in order to begin the process of nation-formation, it is necessary to emphasize elements as identity, purity, regeneration, the "enemy", historical roots, self-emancipation, sovereignty and collective participation: these are some of the topics that are repeated incessantly in the literature of nationalism; and these precisely are the main elements that characterize SEP's textbooks analyzed in this thesis.

Colom argues that the historical accounts of the origins, the future and the future of the nation constitute the most visible dimension of the nation building process. In it, the question of collective identity must be resolved from the beginning, and the ones whom the narrative is directed at, must feel that they are members of a community. The remembrance of the founding moments, the pacts, documents, and sacrifices that forged sovereignty occupies a privileged place in such stories.

## 2.2 Methodology

The study was conducted through analyzing written data. The material used for the analysis, as mentioned before, was the textbooks of History and Civics used in 4th grade of elementary school, and a couple of chapters of 5th grade in the 2014 generation because there are certain topics that are not covered in 4th grade. The generations I analyzed were 1960, 1993 and 2014. As Fairclough (1995) mentions, critical analysis of media discourse must be a semiotic analysis, which means that it is not only an analysis of texts, but also of visual images and signs; so, I include several images to assist the reader understanding the impact these pictures can go through a 12-year-old kid studying at school.

### 2.2.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention.

The analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents. Document analysis yields data, excerpts, quotations, or entire passages, that are then organized into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003 in Bowen, 2009)

Specific use of documents: documents provide a means of tracking change and development. Where various drafts of a particular document are accessible, the researcher can compare them to identify the changes. Even subtle changes in a draft can reflect substantive developments in a project. (Bowen, 2009)

Document analysis involves reading, a thorough examination and interpretation of the content. As Yin (1994) suggests, content analysis is the process of organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research. In this case, I categorized my chapters by the relationship between Mexico and Spain, with the Catholic church and also with the United States. Separately, I also made a chapter analyzing of different historical figures and differentiating them by their portrayal as “heroes” or “villains.

The researcher should consider the original purpose of the document—the reason it was produced—and the target audience. Information about the author of the document and the original sources of information could also be helpful in the assessment of a document. (Yin, 1994) Therefore, apart from using document analysis as my methods, I complement it with discourse analysis to have a complete picture of the reasoning behind the textbooks.

### **2.2.2 Discourse Analysis**

In this thesis, I will use Discursive Theory. Discursive analysis falls under the umbrella of social constructivism. Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips discuss three approaches for Discourse Analysis in their book *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (2002). I will mainly focus on two of these approaches: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Discursive Psychology.

I will briefly talk about these two different approaches and combine elements from both analytical perspectives in order to explore from different angles and provide a deeper understanding of my study.

Before I analyze and compare the changing discourse of the three generations, first is important to define what is “discourse”. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) define discourse as a specific way to talk about and understand the world, they explain how language is structured in different patterns which our expressions follow when we act in different social spheres. Having said that, discourse analysis is the analysis of these patterns; and there are many different strategies to do so.

Vivian Burr (1995) claims that social constructivism is based on four general assumptions, which many discourse theories also rely on. The first general assumption is that there is no objective truth about the world. Our knowledge is not a reflection of the world as we see it but is gained through the way we categorize it.

Secondly, human beings are historical and cultural creatures without fixed internal essence. Our knowledge is influenced by the historical and cultural context and is thus specific and contingent. It could be different in another context and is changeable over time. The social world (knowledge, identities, social relations etc.) is also anti-essentialist: It is not given in advance but constructed by social action and discursive action.

The third assumption is that in the social processes, where the social world is constructed by social and discursive interaction, there are struggles over truth and false and if possible common

knowledge and identities are created. And lastly the different social constructions of knowledge lead to different kinds of social actions, which have consequences for social life.

Burr's assumptions go in hand with Foucault's concept of truth. He shows through his work that truth is a discursive construction and different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and what is false. Foucault's conception of truth is linked to his concept of power and knowledge. He says that it is not possible to gain access to universal truth since it is impossible to talk from a position outside discourse; there is no escape from representation, therefore 'truth' can be understood as a system of procedures for the production, regulation, and diffusion of statements.

### **2.2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis**

To explain what Critical Discourse Analysis is, I used mainly the concepts of Fairclough (1992), for him, discourse contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and meaning. Therefore, discourse has three functions: an identity function, a 'relational' function, and an "ideology" function. He suggests that the analysis should focus, then, on the linguistic features of the text (such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, etc.) , processes relating to the production and consumption of the text, and the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs. Fairclough (1995) emphasizes that "ideology" is "meaning in the service of power". In other words, he sees ideology as a mean to construct, produce and reproduce the relations of domination.

Analysis of the discursive practice focuses on how the text is produced and how it is consumed, in this case is highly relevant because of the role that the free textbooks play in Mexico. There really is "no escape" from them due to their mandatory nature. which I will go deeper further on this paper. Fairclough (1992) proposes a number of tools for text analysis including the question of who sets the conversational agenda, ethos -how identities are constructed through language, metaphors, wording, grammar, intonation, hedges, and what is written as the "truth".

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) criticize this approach based on the unclarity of how the consequences for empirical research are affected by the distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive. How can one demonstrate empirically that something is in a dialectical relationship with something else? In this paper one can wonder the same as in do the free textbooks

create a sense of identity and nationalism in Mexicans or is it that the books are just a mere reflection of a nationalist society?

#### **2.2.4 Discursive Psychology**

Critical discourse analysis has roots in linguistics, whereas discursive psychology stems from social psychology. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) discuss how traditionally, the field of social psychology has been dominated by the cognitivist paradigm which explains social psychological phenomena in terms of cognitive processes – thinking, perception and reasoning.

In cognitivist approaches to language, written and spoken language are seen as a reflection of an external world or a product of underlying mental representations of this world (Edwards and Potter, 1992). In contrast to cognitivism, discursive psychology treats written and spoken language as constructions of the world oriented towards social action.

As previously mentioned, all social constructionist approaches share the premise that language is a dynamic form of social practice which shapes the social world including identities, social relations and understandings of the world. In discursive psychology, it is argued that our ways of understanding and categorizing the world are not universal, but historically and socially specific and consequently contingent (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). This implies that character is not pre-determined or pre-given, and that people do not have inner “essences” – a set of genuine, authentic and immutable characteristics.

Jørgensen and Phillips continue expressing how within discursive psychology, social identity theory is regarded as the most fruitful of the cognitivist approaches. It differs from other cognitivist approaches in emphasizing that conflict between groups has roots in particular social and historical contexts. One’s sense of self becomes based on shared ideas regarding the group. One of the central ideas is that, when people become members of a group, they begin to identify with that group and view social reality from its perspective. In this sense, I will have to attempt to separate myself from the analysis, since I am part of such group. The process of distancing is important as one of the aims of discourse analysis is to identify naturalized, taken-for-granted assumptions in the empirical material and this can be difficult if I share those assumptions.

It is worth mentioning that while I will be analyzing the texts and using discourse theory does not mean that my aim is to discover the purpose of the discourse, or “unmask” the real intentions behind the discourse. As Jørgensen and Phillips say (2002) the starting point is that reality can

never be reached outside the discourses and so it is the discourse itself that must become the object of analysis. I completely agree when they say that the main exercise is not to sort out which of the statements in the research material are right and which are wrong. On the contrary, I must work with the texts, exploring patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality. Discourse is not something that the researcher finds in reality, rather, it is constructed analytically with a point of departure in the research questions, or the aim of the research.

According to discursive psychology, discourses do not describe an external world “out there” as schemata and stereotypes do according to cognitivist approaches. Rather, discourses create a world that looks real or true for the speaker (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Just as Foucault’s genealogical approach, the aim is not finding out if the text is a true or false reflection of the world, but to analyze the ideological effects that these texts have. One example is that children develop their sense of self by internalizing their positioning in categories within different narratives and discourses. Children learn by listening to accounts of the world (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996).

I believe that the best way to analyze the ideological effects of the texts is by comparison. Comparing different books with different discourse about the same topic can gain great insight. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) mention that the simplest way of building an impression of the nature of a text is to compare it with other texts. They continue saying that the strategy of comparison is based theoretically on the structuralist point that a statement always gains its meaning through being different from something else which has been said or could have been said. In this case, I will analyze the “same story” written in different years and in different historical contexts to find differences and similarities and try to relate it to society.

I agree with Fairclough that a combination of discourse analysis with other theories might give a more in-depth analysis of why the social world has been constituted the way it is, nonetheless, I have not chosen a pure critical discourse approach, and I will be focusing mainly on the textbooks and the context of the country when they were written, and as mentioned before, will be hard to demonstrate a complete correlation. As Choppin (2001) said, school texts can be studied from different perspectives, since they are both a consumer product that supports school knowledge and a bearer of ideologies and culture. Another limitation, also mentioned above, is that my way of interpreting the texts can be shadowed by my background, since I myself grew up studying these textbooks.



Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) mention the unmasking of taken-for-granted, naturalized knowledge is often an explicitly formulated aim of social constructionist research. It is important to delimit how much is general knowledge and how much context must be given to the reader in order for them to understand and not be completely overwhelmed with a flow of information.

What is reality and what is discourse? According to Jørgensen and Phillips, in a caricature of social constructionism, reality is what we say it is. If we say it is different, then it is different. For the sake of this paper, I am going to assume that whatever is written is the reality, because at the end, it doesn't matter if it's true or not, but what matters are the effects on society of these different "realities".

### **2.2.5 Research Ethics and my role on the Research**

Research ethics is applied ethics in the scientific field. There is a set of ethical norms and guidelines that the researcher must consider while doing a research project. Following these norms constitutes a good and reliable scientific project. I have based my ethical concerns following the guidelines imposed by the Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics (NESH) for Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology.

NESH's guidelines state as a main rule that researchers are responsible for informing research participants (NESH 2016: B.7), and if sensitive personal information is used, that they obtain consent (NESH 2016: B.8). In this case, because I did not interview people for this thesis, I did not have to consider obtaining consent from informants or protecting their confidentiality.

"Data analysis must be ethical. It must not mis-represent findings of the phenomenon itself, and such misrepresentation can happen in many ways. Researchers must be self-aware and reflexive during the data analysis" (Cohen, Lawrence, & Morrison, 2007). It can be difficult for researchers to completely free themselves from perspectives and biases. In my case, is relevant to inform the reader that I, myself am Mexican and I grew up studying these analyzed textbooks; to the best of my abilities, I remained objective in my analysis; nonetheless I could have an unconscious bias.

Another possible bias is that the analyzed texts are in the Spanish language. (Hermans, 2009 in Alwanza, 2014) states that translation unequivocally involves translator's subjectivity. Within the same line of thought, Bakhtin (1986) in Alwanza (2014) points out that the translator's

ideology and position are inevitably found in the target text that he/she has produced. In this case, because I translated the texts, I could have given a different connotation according to my understanding of the context. With the aim of sticking to transparency, I included the original quotes in Spanish in the footnotes of every translated direct quote.

## **Part II**

### **Findings and Analysis**

In this part, I will go through the History textbooks from the generations of 1960, 1993 and 2014 using a combination of analytical tools of document and discourse analysis. Since I have not chosen a pure critical discourse approach, it will help me get a more in- depth, and “whole picture” analysis. Part II is divided by four sections. In the first section I will focus on the relationship between Mexico and Spain, by analyzing the chapters of the Conquista and the Colonial era and the fight for independence. I will mainly focus on the Conquista and the Colonial era with the aim of not being repetitive since I will go through the independence era again in the section “Heroes and Villains” of the thesis.

In the second section I will analyze the text to find out how the Church is portrayed in the different generations. There, I will analyze the take on the Church through different chapters of the textbooks since it is not contained in one single chapter since the Catholic Church has been present all through the history of Mexico. The third section focuses on the relationship between Mexico and United States. Lastly, the last section is called “Heroes and villains” and in it, I will analyze the portrayal of four historic figures; “our heroes”: Miguel Hidalgo and Benito Juárez, and “our villains”: Antonio López de Santa Anna y Porfirio Díaz.

Each section is divided into five parts, one part for each generation, a brief introduction, and another at the end that includes a chart with an overview of fragments and examples that had been already mentioned. However, the chart will help make more visible the differences in the discourse through the generations. Another thing I consider important to note is that sometimes I will mark some words in italics, this is not how it is written on the textbook, but I chose to do it to emphasize some words, and to queue the reader where to pay more attention to understand what tone they are trying to portray in that specific sentence and to be easier to refer to those words in my later analysis.

Before going through the sections, I will give an introduction on how the books begin and end to start giving the reader a grasp of the style of each book. After that, I will go through the

sections by each generation, analyzing the discourse of fragments of the textbook, adding the charts, and giving some historical context to attempt to make sense of those differences.

The generation of 1960 utilizes a hyperbolic style of writing. It emphasizes certain words using a bold font to evoke strong feelings and creating strong impressions. The book from 1960 that was analyzed in this thesis is History and Civics.

All the textbooks from this generation begin with a message from the President López Mateos where he refers to the article 89 from the Federal Constitution that declares that education should be mandatory and free as a way to justify his decision for implementing the textbooks. The introduction lists several reasons of why textbooks should be free as well, for example, the text mentions that if books continue to be part of a commercial activity, it will be difficult for many to acquire them due to the high prices. The message from the President emphasizes that by being the books obligatory by law, it will accentuate the pupil's feelings of duty towards the *patria*.

López Mateos addresses his decree by stating that teachers should strictly stick to the methodology from the textbooks, and in case there was a need to complement with private texts, they may do so, as long as they have a "patriotic design". It doesn't specify what does patriotic design mean or what does it entail.

Lastly, the introductory message ends by stating that The National Commission of Free Textbooks (CONALITEG) will be formed by a president, a general secretary and six members, capable of ensuring that the books entrusted to them will prepare the pupils for practical life, to foster in them human solidarity, and, above all, to instill in them a love for their *Patria*. It will also be formed by a body of twelve pedagogical collaborators and five representatives of the public opinion to avoid suspicion from the people.

The book proceeds, right before the first chapter begins, with a welcome message that says: "This book is intended to help you know your country, because by knowing it, you will understand why you love it and how and why you should be willing to serve it". The textbook is welcoming students by bluntly telling them that they will serve their *patria*; there really is not much of an option there.

The History textbook from the generation of 1993 starts with a presentation of the book and the topics that are included. In the beginning it is stated that the purpose of the book is to "present information about our past, and to awake in children a love for history and love for the country;

and to create a sense of common identity among all Mexicans”. The book also encourages suggestions and criticism of the textbooks from parents and teachers in order to improve the material and hopes for this to be a permanent and systematic activity.

The book explains how history should be learned, which, according to the book, is by remembering what happened, but also interpreting and reflecting about the causes and consequences of the events, so the textbook invites the pupils to interpret history and to question every event. How did it happen? Why did it happen? It points out that the characters in our history did good and bad deeds and it invites pupils to compare it with other books.

In another hand, the generation of 2014, has a different tone from its counterparts. It especially contrasts in the style of writing from the 1960 generation. While the generation from 1960 has a more formal way of writing, almost poetic, the generation of 2014 strikes as a more informal, joyful, and even childish way of writing. One would think that it is aimed towards younger kids. The prologue in this textbook does not emphasize the content of the book, but rather refers to it more as an “adventure” and motivates the pupil, to whom it refers as an “explorer” to investigate and discuss the learned content with their parents.

At the end of the book of the generation of 1960 can be found a section where it states that the book is property of the Mexican Republic and that the book will be given to the pupil with the condition that they will take care of it. There are blank spaces for the student to fill with their name, school, and state. In the generation of 1993, it only states that the book had been elaborated by CONALITEG, the National Commission; and the last generation, 2014, ends with a survey asking the student their opinion about the book, suggestions to improve it, and asking if they regularly check other sources of information. It comes already with the government address where to send it and a space designated for putting a post stamp.

## **1. Relationship to Spain: Conquista, Colonialism, and Independence**

In this section, I will focus on the relationship of Mexico, then called New Spain, and Spain by analyzing the chapters of the Conquista and the Colonial era and the fight for independence. I will mainly focus on the Conquista and the Colonial era with the aim of not being repetitive

since I will go through the independence era again in the chapter “Heroes and Villains” of the thesis.

**1960**

### **1.1 Conquista and Colonial era**

The first chapter of the history and civics book is the “Discovery of America”, and the “*Conquista*” of the new world. The textbook starts by saying the *conquistadores* arrived at Mexico by chance when they went on an expedition from Cuba looking for slaves. The books says that Hernán Cortés realized the new territory was much better than Cuba and “he took two decisions: firstly, he decided not to explore, but to conquer the new land; and, secondly, to not share with anyone the glory or the fruits of such conquest”<sup>1</sup>. With this opening line, the pupil starts getting an idea of who is Cortés. He is portrayed as greedy and presented as one of the “bad guys”. The text continues by saying that Cortés then ordered his ships to be unusable to stop the soldiers that wished to return to Cuba either due to loyalty or fear. “His plans of *conquista* were successful thanks to several factors, such as the superiority of their weapons, the *avarice* [emphasis added] of his men, the translation services offered by La Malinche, and the rivalry between different indigenous groups that lived in the country at that moment”.

The text explains that Cortés took Moctezuma (the tlatoani/ leader of the Aztec empire), who is described as a *brave* [emphasis added] warrior, as his prisoner. This was a surprise for the indigenous warriors, but Moctezuma believed that Cortés and his soldiers were divine beings, and part of Aztec prophecies.

The chapter explains that the Aztec people was then led by Cuauhtémoc, who *heroically* [emphasis added] resisted the attacks of Cortes’ army for 90 days. He told La Malinche (an indigenous woman who was interpreter, advisor, and intermediary for Hernán Cortés): “Malinche, in defense of my city and my vassals, I already did everything to which I was obliged. I cannot do this anymore; and well, I come prisoner and by force before your person, take this knife that you have in your belt and kill me”.

This is how the first chapter ends; chapter that has established already clearly who these “characters” are. On one hand, there is the greedy Cortés that wanted all the richness for himself and

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<sup>1</sup> “tomó dos determinaciones: primero, no solo explorar esas tierras, sino conquistarlas; y, Segundo, no compartir con nadie la gloria ni los frutos de la conquista” (pág 13)

stopped his people to leave the territory: and on the other hand, there is Moctezuma and Cuauhtémoc, the brave warriors who heroically resisted and finally had an honorable death after defending their people. The character archetypes are very well defined: the Spaniards are the Villain, and the Aztecs the Hero.

The second chapter named “The Viceregal era” starts on page 17 of the textbook. The chapter begins by saying that this era, also called the colonial era, lasted for three centuries, from 1521, the fall of Tenochtitlán, to 1821, the consummation of independence. The chapter continues by talking in first person: “I will help you to understand the past of your *patria*; I will tell you about the men, women, and children who honored her and gave her glory, fighting to make her great and serving her with enthusiasm, honesty and love”.<sup>2</sup> The book uses first person to address the student directly, to make it more personal, more intimate. The usage of the word *patria* as a female, almost as if it were a person, in a country where mothers are almost as saints, gives a more powerful connotation. The paragraph says that men, women, and children fought to make the *patria* great, to imply that nothing is an impediment, not sex nor age, to start loving her and honoring her.

The chapter carries on with the events after the destruction of the *beautiful* [emphasis added] Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire. The book describes Cortés as a “great destroyer” in war, and how he ordered that the defeated indians had to do all the construction of the new temples and other monuments. The chapter also says “the *conquistadores* expected to obtain a big plunder, however, when they distributed it, nobody was satisfied”<sup>3</sup>. Because of this, Cortés ordered his men to look after the treasures that were believed to have been thrown into the lake of Texcoco by orders of Cuauhtémoc. After finding nothing, Cortés decided to torment Cuauhtémoc until he revealed the secret of the treasures. “The Mexican leaders resisted heroically. Cuauhtémoc demonstrated to have an indomitable courage that since then, exalts the virtues of the Mexican people”.<sup>4</sup> The text infers that Mexicans are courageous people of virtues, just like the hero Cuauhtémoc, while the *conquistadores* were only looking to satisfy their ambition of power and wealth.

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<sup>2</sup> “Yo te ayudaré a comprender ese pasado de tu patria; te hablaré de los hombres, las mujeres y los niños que la honraron y le dieron gloria, luchando por engrandecerla y sirviéndola con entusiasmo, honradez y amor” (pág.18)

<sup>3</sup> “los conquistadores esperaban obtener, como fruto de su empresa, un botín muy grande; pero cuando se hizo el reparto, nadie quedó satisfecho” (pág. 18)

<sup>4</sup> “Los jefes mexicanos resistieron heroicamente; Cuauhtémoc demostró tener un valor indomable que desde entonces enaltece las virtudes del pueblo mexicano” (pág.19)

In page 21, the text describes how Cortés sentenced Cuauhtémoc to hang, and since that crime, “que fue una verdadera derrota moral para Cortés, dejó en éste huellas que no desaparecerán jamás “which was a true moral defeat for Cortés, his actions left traces on him that were never to disappear. From there on, Cortés never had peace within himself, and everything he did after that as a *conquistador*, explorer and governor was only translated to failure”<sup>5</sup>. Here, is the ending of the villain of the story, where he gets what he deserves in some kind of karmic ending that is punished for his terrible actions. He acted wrong, therefore everything he did after was a failure in all aspects of his life.

## 1.2 The war for Independence

The chapter “The war for independence” in page 45 begins with the internal causes of discontent. [The Spaniards abused their privileges to such a degree that during the viceroyalty several nonconformist groups revolted]<sup>6</sup>. The textbook also mentions how from different parts of the country protests and uprisings erupted. People, especially indigenous and blacks, were in such discontent that started having a rebellion spirit, but they were *cruelly* [emphasis added] repressed by the Spaniards.

Other causes that encouraged the *criollos* in their ideas of independence were the independence from the English colonies, the French Revolution, the invasion of Spain by the French and the crowning of José Bonaparte.

The chapter explains in detail the conspiracy to start the fight for independence and focus on the “great heroes” that fought in different battles. I will go more into detail on how they describe these events and these characters such as Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende and the “Pípila” in the chapter of “Heroes and Villains”. The study of the Independence of Mexico is accompanied by a series of reflections on the example of heroes, their virtues, and the result of their sacrifice. The appreciation of the land as the abode of the *patria*, and as the place where Mexicans should apply the values for which heroes sacrificed their lives.

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<sup>5</sup> . De allí en adelante. Cortés nunca tuvo paz dentro de sí mismo, y la mayor parte de lo que en lo sucesivo emprendió como conquistador, como explorador o como gobernante se tradujo en fracasos” (pág. 21)

<sup>6</sup> “Los españoles abusaron de tal grado de sus privilegios, que durante el virreinato varios grupos inconformes se sublevaron” (pág. 45)



In page 58, there is a section titled “what you must remember from this chapter” where one of the bullet points is “the resolutions that you must carry out in memory of your heroes are: to love your country, the law and justice, and to always fulfill your duty”.<sup>7</sup> Then it continues explaining what the resolutions of a Mexican child are: “The children of Mexico must know and remember their heroes, because they gave their lives to bequeath to all Mexicans’ **free patria**. You, who are part of Mexico, are obliged to appreciate the sacrifice of those great men, to whose heroism you owe the freedoms, rights, and security that you enjoy today. Their conduct is the model that must drive you to fulfill your duty, which, for now, consists of studying and working at school and at home, to serve your country and give yourself, confident that you deserve them, to your games and joys”.<sup>8</sup>

It continues: “You must love Mexico's air, its sun, its rivers, its mountains, its land. Love and take care of that land which, besides being **generous**, is yours. The patriotic heroes obtained it for you at the price of their blood, and it will always be **sweet and maternal** if you cultivate it with your effort, and if, like the heroes who gave it to you, you keep alive in you the love **for the patria, for the law and for justice**”.<sup>9</sup>

Singuena Orozco (2005) points out how one of the elements that explains nationalism is the landscape as part of the identity. This discourse in the book is linked to the content of the History and Civics, and Geography textbooks. Since the construction of the landscape is complemented by maps and images as fundamental references in the representation of the nation aimed at children. In the same chapter, it can be read: “We are privileged people, we enjoy a mild climate without the extreme rigors that men from other latitudes suffer. The *patria* protects us. We enjoy the incomparable gift of freedom, of a government which organizes activities for all, that dictates laws to regulate the rights and obligations of each individual, and that provides us with a thousand services for the common good: schools, parks, gardens, hospitals for the sick,

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<sup>7</sup> “los propósitos que debes realizar en recuerdo de tus héroes: amar a la Patria, a la ley y a la justicia, y cumplir siempre con tu deber” (pág. 58)

<sup>8</sup> “los niños de México deben conocer y recordar a sus héroes, porque éstos dieron su vida para legar a todos los mexicanos una **patria libre**. Tú que formas parte de México, *estás obligado* a estimar el sacrificio de esos grandes hombres, a cuyo heroísmo debes las libertades, los derechos y la seguridad de que hoy gozas. Su conducta es el modelo que ha de impulsarte a cumplir con tu deber, el cual, por ahora, consiste en estudiar y trabajar, en la escuela y en tu casa, para servir así a tu patria y entregarte, seguro de que los mereces, a tus juegos y regocijos” (pág. 58)

<sup>9</sup> : “Ama el aire de México, su sol, sus ríos, sus montañas, su tierra. Ama y cuida esa tierra que, además de **generosa**, es tuya. Los héroes patrios la obtuvieron para ti al precio de su sangre, y ella será siempre **dulce y maternal** si con tu esfuerzo la cultivas, y si, como los héroes que te la dieron, mantienes vivo en ti el amor por la **patria, por la ley y por la justicia**”

etc.”<sup>10</sup>The free textbooks emerged as a full and strenuous attempt to build national unity "from its roots." In Jaime Torres Bodet's educational project, these books became the cornerstone for the task of consolidating the national and the formation of the Mexican. They meant a great economic, academic, and cultural effort, and a battle between public opinion (Singuena Orozco, 2005).

**1993**

### **1.3 Conquista and Colonial era**

In contrast to the generation from 1960, the 1993 generation does not begin with the Conquista. First, it goes through the Mesoamerican cultures and the different ancient indigenous peoples of the country and gives a picture of how Mexico was before the Spaniards arrived. This book also goes deeper on the “discovery” of America and on Columbus’ journey.

The Conquista chapter, in page 52, explains how the expeditions were financed by their own captains and soldiers, who saw them “as a business as well as an adventure”. “They all wanted to become rich”. This sentence is written as a fact; however, it does not use qualificative adjectives such as “greedy” or “ambitious” as the previous generation.

Another difference is that in this generation, Hernán Cortés is not properly introduced. The first time the book mentions him is when it says that in February 1519, “Cortés departed from Cuba with 11 ships and almost 700 soldiers”, but doesn’t explain who this person is and assumes Cortés is general knowledge.

The text says that Cortés realized that the Mexicas were as powerful as they were hated. Armed with this knowledge, Cortés made indigenous *allies*. The Mesoamericans had a long history of fighting among themselves, and Cortés took advantage of these rivalries. This generation is already decreasing the level of responsibility or guilt from Cortés, since there was already a rivalry from the other indigenous groups, he just seized the opportunity. On a side note, to

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<sup>10</sup> “Somos seres privilegiados, gozamos de un clima suave sin los rigores extremos que hacen padecer a los hombres de otras latitudes. La Patria nos protege. Gozamos del don incomparable de la libertad, de un gobierno que organiza las actividades de todos, que dicta leyes para regular los derechos y las obligaciones de cada uno, que nos proporciona mil servicios para beneficio común: escuelas, parques, jardines, hospitales para los enfermos, etc” (idem)

clarify and avoid confusion for the reader, in this generation they are referred to as Mexicas, and not Aztecs like in the other generation: but they are the same people.

In page 56 can be read that Cortés took Moctezuma and other nobles as prisoners to leave the Mexicas without their leaders. “Moctezuma died days later. It is not known if the Spaniards killed him or if his own people stoned him to death when he went to the rooftops to try to calm them”. This generation portrays a more restrained description of the Spaniards. They do not appear to be as ruthless. The text leaves Moctezuma’s death open. It could have been that the Spaniards killed him, but it could also have been his own people.

The chapter narrates how one night, the Spaniards tried to escape quietly, but were caught by the Mexicas and many were killed. This was known to them as “the sad night”. “It is said that Hernán Cortés cried at the foot of a tree” (p.57). The book does not state this as a fact, but rather washes its hands by just vaguely saying “it is said” but said by whom? Here, Cortés appears more human and sensible. It makes the reader even feel bad for him.

This generation decides to omit the whole episode with Cuauhtémoc, but it does explain how the Spaniards expanded eventually throughout the whole country. It mentions that the north was the hardest to subject, “because the semi-nomadic tribes did not have cities, were great warriors and refuses to change their way of life”. “The chichimecas attacked the Spaniards by surprise, in rocky terrain where they could not pursue them on horseback. They were naked and painted and surprised them by firing a hail of arrows. To pacify them, the Spaniards finally had to offer them horses, cattle, clothes and convince them to live in cities”<sup>11</sup> The text continues: The religious Spaniards learned their language to understand them better. They founded schools to educate them in Christianity, music, Latin, and painting. The chichimecas, the indigenous group from the north of the country, who are not referred to in capital letter, as opposed to the Mexicas, are portrayed as a savage tribe who are naked and shooting arrows that the Spaniards had to tame and civilize by educating them in religion and arts. Once more, the Spaniards have a different tone from the generation from 1960. Here, they are depicted as people who arrived at a new land as an adventure and with the mission of educating the people.

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<sup>11</sup> “Los chichimecas atacaban a los españoles por sorpresa, en terreno pedregoso donde no pudieran perseguirlos a caballo. Iban desnudos y pintarrajeados y lanzaban una lluvia de flechas. Para pacificarlos, los españoles finalmente tuvieron que ofrecerles caballos, reses, ropa y convencerlos de vivir en ciudades” (pág.58)

## **1.4 The Independence**

The generation of 1993 starts the chapter on a different tone compared to the 1960 generation. While the last generation mentions “the constant abuses by the Spaniards”. This generation begins the chapter by saying that on the night of September 15<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the beginning of the independence movement. “Wherever the place, if there are Mexicans, that night will turn into a party. It is a time for people to have fun and eat Mexican food. It is time to remember the heroes who made Mexico an independent and sovereign nation”. The chapter continues talking about the Enlighten Era where leading thinkers were in favor of freedom and equal rights for all men before the law. “They wanted to end with the privileges from the nobility and the Church”. The text continues: “As you know, New Spain had some economic growth, based on mining, which almost exclusively benefited the Spaniards. At the same time, the Bourbon reforms meant strong repressions, and inequality between the rich and the poor grew. In addition, there were intense droughts. All this caused social unrest to grow”. The text does mention inequality, but it is written more as an external cause, just as the droughts, avoiding putting too much weight on the responsibility to the Spaniards. The chapter also mentions the Napoleonic wars; it says how the criollos were divided between two groups, the ones that wanted to continue obeying the new king and the ones who wanted a rebellion, the latter, led by Hidalgo and Allende conspired against the crown. Hidalgo made the church bell rang to gather the people at midnight where he reminded them of the everyday *injustices* (emphasis added) and invited them to fight against the *bad* (emphasis added) government. The last sentence does acknowledge the injustice and bad government, but is presented as a disagreement between two groups, and one just happened to win, but not necessarily as a just cause that was needed to liberate the Mexican people from oppression.

**2014**

## **1.5 Conquista and Colonial era**

Just as the generation of 1993, the book does not start right away with the arrival of the Spaniards, but rather explores the first population of America, agriculture, rupestrian paintings, Mesoamerican societies and the indigenous presence in this day and age.

There is a significant difference in how they portray the same events in the generation of 2014. First off, it is interesting to learn that the chapter is not called “discovery” of America anymore but “The encounter of America and Europe”. Spaniards are no longer called “conquistadores”,

but now they are” explorers”. Just as the last generation, it says that the expeditions were financed by captains and soldiers who saw them as business and as an adventure, but this textbook omits the following part of “they all wanted to become rich”.

Opposite of the 1960 generation, where the first glimpse of Cortés is as a greedy conqueror, this generation only describes Hernán Cortés as “a Spanish military man who directed an expedition to the Mesoamerican territory”. When describing Moctezuma, it also lacks the adjective of “brave” and only acknowledges him as a leader of the Mexicas.

The 1960 generation claims that the Spaniards succeeded thanks to the superiority of their weapons, their avarice, etc. According to this generation, similarly to the generation of 1993, “the alliances between Spaniards and indigenous were crucial for the fall of Tenochtitlan”.

” In order to prevent a possible attack and to ensure his life, as well as his army, Cortés took as prisoners Moctezuma, and other important governor”. The textbook makes it look like it was only as a prevention matter, and he had no choice but to do it.

In the last generation (1993), the cause of Moctezuma's death is left open. He was either killed by the Spaniards, or the Mexicas. In this generation, it is asserted that that Moctezuma was killed by his own people. “They were so angry that they didn’t want to listen to him, and they mortally wounded him”.

The chapter emphasizes the impact of smallpox, how almost everyone got infected, and the ones that did not, fled in fear of getting ill. The book mentions how Cuauhtémoc became the new leader but, as in the 1993 generation, chooses to omit the “heroic” resistance of the tortures mentioned in the 1960 generation.

The following part of the chapter describes the miscegenation, or mix of races, and the evangelization of New Spain in a very positive manner. It mentions how boys were taught how to write, arithmetic, and singing. While girls were taught how to be good Christian mothers and wives. It tries to describe it as a mix, and not only an imposition of the Spaniards. Mentioning for example” día de Muertos” or day of the death, which we still celebrate, and how many indigenous words were adopted from Náhuatl; such as chocolate, tomato, chile, etc.

This chapter tries to present a positive outcome as a fusion of different cultures where it expresses that a new society was formed with aspects of all races such as indigenous, European, Asian, and African. Even if the latter were brought as slaves. That last statement is mentioned only casually where it rapidly changes the subject to say that the “mestizaje” or miscegenation, introduced new economic activities such as agriculture, and influenced our cuisine by mixing ingredients from Europe and America, and that way creating new flavors. This is written to represent a utopian fantasy where people from different backgrounds could coexist harmoniously.

### **1.6 The way to Independence**

This generation starts by mentioning different detonators for the independence fight. It lists, for example the difficult social and economic situation, the Bourbon reforms and the Enlightening era which promoted freedom, equality, and the desire to end the nobility. This is similar to the last generation, nevertheless, there is another section where it addresses the nationalism on criollos. “Many Spaniards concentrated power and wealth; However, the *criollos*, dissatisfied with not having access to high positions in the government and the church, began to dispute control of the viceroyalty, arguing that they had a better knowledge of new Spain. This was a manifestation of the *criollo* nationalism that had emerged over three centuries as a result of the integration of ideas, experiences and that highlighted the appreciation of the people and the land, the pride in artistic manifestations and the indigenous past. The Spanish crown objected to accepting that New Spain was ruled by criollos. Spain applied some of the Bourbon reforms, including more taxes, which privileged even more the Spaniards. This caused discontent, especially by the criollos (who would be the main drivers of the movement). It continues saying in the same chapter, “with time, criollos (children of Spanish, born in America) started to grow a feeling of belonging, they identified with their land, the culture, food, music and art. They started feeling proud and with that started thinking about liberation.” They did not want political freedom they wanted the same rights as peninsular Spanish, they reproduced the same mechanisms of exploitation towards indigenous. The chapter continues explaining how after the French revolution, the monarchy in France was replaced, and Bonaparte attacked other European kingdoms of Europe, including Spain, where he named his brother, José Bonaparte. “All these events influenced that a section of the novohispanic population proposed the separation from Spain”.

### **1.7 Discussion**

Any book for children has social, political, ideological, and even psychological implications through topics, language, information, and omissions. But why are there so many differences in the way the different generations are written? Are they trying to give a different message? Maybe it is worth taking a look at the historical context. What was happening in Mexico at the time? How were the relations between Mexico and Spain?

In 1960, the CONALITEG textbooks ended the monopoly in the schoolbooks by Spaniard authors. Now, only born Mexicans could participate in the writing and editing process of the new books. In addition, at that time, the government of Mexico had ceased diplomatic relations with the dictatorship of Franco after receiving refugees in the country (Crespo,2009). By contrast, in 1993 the relationship between President Zedillo from Mexico and Aznar from Spain, was mainly of reconciliation. Both governments worked in a bilateral agenda that consisted in counterterrorism measures, the increase of Spanish investment in Mexico, and the Global Agreement Mexico-EU, where Spain was key in supporting Mexico. It was such a good understanding that the Spanish president made a public recognition to the Mexican president at the tenth Ibero-American Summit: “I want to end with a special, personal and Spanish gratitude to President Zedillo, to whom we will always owe eternal gratitude. Ernesto Zedillo has been a loyal friend who has taken relations between Mexico and Spain to a level we had never enjoyed before” (Huerta, 2018).

In 2014 Mexican President Peña Nieto traveled to Spain to sign a renewed strategic partnership that strengthened relationships in educational matters where universities of both countries were linked. Spain validated more than 5,000 university titles to Mexicans that year and Spain ranked as the second investor in Mexico, after the United States (Hernández, 2019).

The next chart compiles some examples previously mentioned in this chapter to make it easier for the reader to spot the differences on the discourse from the different generations considering the historical context on the relationship of both countries.

	<b>Hernán Cortés</b>	<b>Spaniards</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>1960</b>	“He decided not to explore, but to conquer and not share with anyone the glory or the fruits of the conquest”	“His plans of <i>conquista</i> were successful thanks to several factors; such as the superiority of their weapons, the avarice of his men...”	Spain is represented mostly by one man: Cortés who is described as greedy, and his men led by avarice.

<p><b>1993</b></p>	<p>*Not properly introduced. “Cortés realized that the Mexicas were as powerful as they were hated. Armed with this knowledge, Cortés made indigenous allies”.</p> <p>*“It is said that Hernán Cortés cried at the foot of a tree”</p>	<p>“Moctezuma died days later. It is not known if the Spaniards killed him or if his own people stoned him”</p>	<p>This generation mentions that the Mexicas were hated. Minimizing the actions of the Spaniards. Questions if Moctezuma was killed by the Spaniards or by his own people.</p> <p>Portrays a smart Cortés who made allies, instead of just being driven by avarice. Also, a softer and more human Cortés who cried in a tree for his men.</p>
<p><b>2014</b></p>	<p>“Spanish military man who directed an expedition to the Mesoamerican territory”</p>	<p>*Spaniards are no longer called “conquistadores”, but “explorers”</p> <p>*Moctezuma was killed by his own people. “They were so angry that they didn’t want to listen to him”</p> <p>*The alliances between Spaniards and indigenous were crucial for the fall of Tenochtitlan</p>	<p>They are not conquistadores anymore with the purpose of looting and destroying but were just exploring the territory.</p> <p>The fall of Tenochtitlan was not to put blame solely on the Spaniards but equally with other indigenous groups.</p> <p>There is no question anymore. Moctezuma was killed and betrayed by his own people.</p>

Figure 1. Conquista and Colonial era

	<b>Independence</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<p><b>1960</b></p>	<p>“Constant abuses from the Spaniards Discontent led to rebellion that was cruelly repressed.</p> <p>Ends with “Purposes of the Mexican child: the children of Mexico must know and remember their heroes, because they gave their lives to bequeath to all Mexicans a free homeland. You who are part of Mexico, are obliged to appreciate the sacrifice of those great men, to whose heroism you owe the</p>	<p>Again the Spaniards are portrayed as cruel and abusers.</p> <p>This generation has a patriotic message indicating the student about their patriotic duty; that they should honor and remember the heroes from the independence and serve the country in different ways.</p>



	<p>freedoms, rights and security that you enjoy today. Their conduct is the model that must drive you to fulfill your duty, which, for now, consists of studying and working at school and at home, to serve your country and give yourself, sure that you deserve them, to your games and joys.</p>	
<b>1993</b>	<p>*It begins saying that on the night of September 15 we celebrate the beginning of the independence movement. Wherever the place, if there are Mexicans, that night is a party. It's a time for people to have fun and eat Mexican food.</p> <p>* The book mentions the Enlighten Era and the Napoleonic wars; it says how the criollos were divided between two groups, the ones that wanted to continue obeying the new king and the ones who wanted a rebellion.</p>	<p>This generation has a more festive and optimistic view. Doesn't focus on the war but more as a celebration of being Mexican.</p> <p>As opposed to the last generation, doesn't mention abuses from Spain, but depicts it more as they were two sides and the rebels happened to win but wouldn't make a big difference either way.</p>
<b>2014</b>	<p>*There were different detonators for the independence fight: difficult economic situation, the Bourbon reforms and the Enlightening era which promoted freedom, equality and the desire to end royalty.</p> <p>*All these events influenced that a section of the Novo Hispanic population proposed the separation from Spain"</p>	<p>Lists different external detonators. Nothing to do with the problems in the country but more as a trend that would happen eventually.</p> <p>"Proposed the separation of Spain" suggesting that it was a calmed request, rather than a fight against the actions from Spain.</p>

Figure 2 Independence

## 2. Relationship to the Church

### The role of religion and nation

The role of the Catholic Church has always been, and continues to be, a controversial topic; and their role in the textbooks where all the Mexican children learn their history, is not going to be the exception. For example, Rosas (2015) explains that before the standardization of textbooks, in the 1930s, that there was a huge distribution of books by the Cárdenas administration who was openly anti-Church. He points out how a fourth-grade student would read the description of the clergy as “driven by insatiable ambitions to become owners of vast land worked by Indians for the benefit of the clergy itself.” In the other hand, other texts more conservative and pro-church would talk about how “Obregon once took the archbishop of Durango prisoner, where he tortured him with multiple abuses and stole his ring that he wore on his right hand. Later in battle, Obregon lost the same arm which had profaned the ring”, implying that he lost it because of said profanity.

The standardization and free text program put an end to this divisive tradition of contradictory official histories, which in theory would take a less passionate view of the Church’s role, and history in general. In this section, I will analyze the text to find out how the Church is portrayed in the different generations. Here, I will analyze the take on the Church through different chapters of the textbooks since it is not contained in one single chapter since the Catholic Church has been present all through the history of Mexico.

Sometimes I will use some words in italics, this is not how it is written on the textbook, but I chose to do so in order to emphasize some words, and to queue the reader where to pay more attention to understand what tone they are trying to portray in that specific sentence.

## **2.1: 1960**

In the generation of 1960, there is included a subchapter named “The Catholic church during the viceregal era”. It can be found on page 38 and the chapter lists the different religious orders that settled in Mexico. Firstly, the book talks about the Franciscans and how they founded carpenter workshops and mentions Fray Toribio de Benavente, who “Se distinguió por su caridad y gran amor hacia los naturales” [He was distinguished by his charity and *great love* (emphasis added) for the natives]. The first impression the textbook is giving about the Church is that is benevolent and loving.

In the same page, the text then refers to the Dominicans and mentions Fray Bartolomé de las Casas who has been introduced previously in the chapter (p.30) narrating how he made several trips to Spain in order to advocate for laws to protect the indians, and how it was his idea to bring from Africa, blacks to *help* (emphasis added) with the work at the mines and agriculture. “Por su gran amor a los aborígenes, a fray Bartolomé se le llamó Padre de los Indios” [Because of his *great love* (emphasis added) for the aborigines, Fray Bartolomé was called the Father of the Indians]. The pattern of positive emphasis on the church continues. “Great love” has been used twice to describe two different frays, Fray Toribio de Benavente and Fray Bartolomé.

It continues in the same page by commenting on how the Agustines and Jesuits were dedicated mainly to educating the indian youth of the wealthy classes of the cities of the north and northwest. “The missionaries studied the aboriginal languages in order to speak with the Indians and teach them Christian doctrine, the Spanish language, and various crafts and arts. The natives almost always found in the missionaries *loving protection* [emphasis added] against the Spanish and Criollos, and that was how the religious conquered the respect and affection of the Indians. Their *patience and indefatigable perseverance* [emphasis added] helped them in this.”<sup>12</sup> The adjectives I highlighted on italics keep showing only positive impressions about the church. It would be hard for a child to have an unbiased opinion at this point.

“Many temples, convents and hospitals were divided thanks to the impulse of the missionaries, who dedicated the built works to their patrons. Some humble, others of great beauty, are true *marvels* (emphasis added) for the delicate work of their facades, their interiors and of their altars.”<sup>13</sup>

The chapter continues enlisting some *notable* missionaries, for example, Fray Bernardino de Sahagín “who perfectly learned the Nahuatl language”, in order to communicate with them and gather data with which he wrote the General History of the Things of New Spain, “a very *beautiful* [emphasis added] book and a valuable document for learning about the culture of the Aztecs”.

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<sup>12</sup> “Los misioneros estudiaron las lenguas aborígenes para poder hablar con los indios y enseñarles la doctrina cristiana, la lengua castellana y diversos oficios y artes. Los indígenas, casi siempre encontraron en los misioneros amorosa protección contra los encomenderos españoles y criollos, y fue así como los religiosos conquistaron el respeto y el cariño de los indios. Los ayudó en esto su paciencia y su constancia infatigable.” (pág. 38)

<sup>13</sup> “Muchos templos, conventos y hospitales se edificaron gracias al impulso de los misioneros, que dedicaban a sus patronos las obras construidas. Algunos humildes, otros de gran belleza, son verdaderas maravillas por el delicado trabajo de sus fachadas, de sus interiores y de sus altares” (pág. 39)

Fray Sebastián de Aparicio is also mentioned in the book, he introduced in Mexico the use of ox carts, “which greatly helped the economic development of the viceroyalty”. The chapter continues with Don Vasco de Quiroga, bishop of Michoacán, who became “the true father of the natives of that region”; he built churches, schools, hospitals. He gave impetus to the crafts and the arts. Due to his advice, in each town a specific trade was adopted such as blacksmithing, furniture, musical instruments, among others. “These *wise* (emphasis added) dispositions formed notable artwork and craftsmen whose works we can still admire nowadays”.<sup>14</sup> The book has already asserted that these decisions and orders were “wise”. There is no room for discerning or forming an opinion. The analysis has already been done so “you”, as a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reader, don’t have to.

The chapter refers as well to Fray Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of Mexico, “a determined protector of the Indians”, who defended them from abuse, and established several hospitals. The book narrates how he also introduced in the New Spain the first printing press, which helped to spread culture and education, and introduced a large number of beasts as well of burden, especially donkeys, “which greatly relieved the work of the Indians”. The friars served and protected the Indians; the church improved the life of the natives in every single aspect so far. In education, infrastructure, and economy.

The chapter suddenly changes course and begins discussing culture, mentioning writers, poets, playwrights, and even mathematicians from the era. This shift from a topic to another subtly links art and progress with the church. The book also names Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a Mexican woman poet whose work has been greatly praised. This is the only part of the book where it suggests the student to consult external sources to find out and learn more about Sor Juana. It does not do the same with other more controversial issues such as the Inquisition or the Cristera war.

There is a subchapter in page 43 called “The power of the Catholic Church” in it, explains how the church exercised great spiritual, political, and economic power over families, society, and the rulers. They developed their influence in the temples, where gathered all the believers, and in the schools, where their doctrines were taught, as well as to “spread the culture among the Indians, and train them in the industries and arts”. The church also was in charge of teaching

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<sup>14</sup> “Estas acertadas disposiciones formaron notables artifices y artesanos cuyas obras todavía podemos admirar”. (pág. 40)

Spanish. Besides that, the friars administered the hospices and the hospitals; they owned innumerable estates, and they came to amass great wealth, all of which increased their power.

“The authority and the economic, spiritual and political power of the Catholic Church was so imposing that their opinion was heard in the most difficult moments of public or private life. Some viceroys fought that dominance”<sup>15</sup>. The book states that the Church’s opinion was heard and considered; but considering the power they had at the time controlling all aspects of society is hard to imagine what would be the consequences of not following the Church’s opinions.

The chapter ends by instructing the reader to remember the different religious orders and missionaries that developed an *important and generous labor* (emphasis added). There is a big distinction on how this generation refers to Spaniards and the Church. The constant in the books is that the Church is seen as a benevolent and philanthropist institution that defended the indians from abuses and were patient and left Mexicans a beautiful legacy full of traditions. While the Spaniards have a completely different representation, as seen on the previous chapter.

Later on, the book does not mention the Church so much in the following chapters, it just refers how the clergy gave protection to the people from the abuses of the dictator Porfirio Díaz (page 149). In the chapter of “The reform laws” in page 108 the book explains the laws that President Benito Juárez issued. Juárez was the President that separated the state from the Church. Considering the take that the book had had on the Church so far, I was expecting for the text to give more importance to this event, or use more adjectives, however, the chapter just states that the new laws established the freedom of cults and suppressed the monastic orders. The text does minimize the Cristero war and simplifies it by describing it only as a “serious political-religious conflict between public power and the Catholic clergy” but fails to mention that approximately 250,000 people were killed during the war when President Calles enforced the anti-clerical laws of the Constitution of 1917 (Gil,2019).

## **2.2: 1993**

In this generation there is no chapter specified only for the Church. In page 60, under the theme of “Viceregal Mexico” starts the lesson 7 named “The economy”. In this chapter, the text begins explaining the *encomiendas*. The *encomiendas* were the “Spanish right to exploit indigenous

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<sup>15</sup> “Tan imponentes eran la autoridad y el poder económico, espiritual y político de la iglesia católica que la opinión de ella se escuchaba en los momentos más difíciles de la vida pública o privada. Algunos virreyes combatieron aquel predominio” (pág. 44)

people that lived in certain areas. In return, the *encomendero* was to teach the indigenous the Christian doctrine, European farming techniques, and other skills”. There is an information box in the middle of the page where the text mentions Bartolomé de las casas. The textbox remarks how, many times, the Spanish priests protected the indians from the abuses of the *encomenderos*.

In page 68 starts the subchapter “los bienes de la iglesia” [the assets of the Church]. The subchapter starts “The church accumulated great wealth, with which it served constructions, charity, education and art works. To carry out these works, the Church had farms, convents, houses, temples, schools, hospitals, asylums, and orphanages. It was the most important source of loans during the viceroyalty”.<sup>16</sup>In the side of the page, there is a small textbox that says, “Let's do the math: if a farmer had a profit of 120 turkeys, for example, how many did he have to give to the church as a tithe?”. The chapter portrays the Church as fair, yes it was a wealthy institution that took money from the indigenous people, but it was not an abuse, it was a fair tax that benefitted everybody.

Chapter 8 “Politics and society” in page 69 has a subchapter named “the Church” which discusses the role in society. “It’s duty was to Christianize the natives and to attend the spiritual needs of the Spaniards”<sup>17</sup>. The paragraph continues saying “*as you know* (emphasis added), the church dealt with education and social assistance. It had schools, hospitals, nursing homes and orphanages”.<sup>18</sup>“As you know” can be referred that it was mentioned before, but it also hints as if the statement was obvious. This generation does not add adjectives as it does in the previous analyzed generation. It doesn’t say it was a “generous labor”, it just states that the Church owned schools and hospitals. It gives a more factual view of the role of the Church.

In page 72, a textbox in the left can be found citing Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, a Spanish chronicler. The text is called “Demons” and it goes:

“And the Spaniards in some parts are called demons. And that name is good for them, because people who put aside their consciences and the fear of divine and human justice have passed to those lands and have done things not of men but of dragons.

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<sup>16</sup> “a la iglesia se le pagaba el diezmo, la décima parte de lo que cada quien ganaba o producía. La iglesia acumuló grandes riquezas, con las que atendía obras de construcción, beneficencia, educación y arte. Para llevar a cabo esos trabajos tenía haciendas, conventos, casas, templos, escuelas, hospitales, asilos y orfanatorios. Fue la fuente de préstamos más importante durante el virreinato”. (pág. 68)

<sup>17</sup> “Su deber era cristianizar a los nativos y atender las necesidades espirituales de los españoles.” (pág. 69)

<sup>18</sup> “Como sabes, la iglesia se ocupaba de la educación y de la asistencia social. Tenía colegios, hospitales, asilos y orfanatorios.” (pág. 69)

Well, without having any human respect, they have caused many Indians who were able to convert and save themselves, dying in various ways. And such who died thus could have been useful if they lived, for the service of Your Majesty and the benefit and utility of Christians. And then no part of this land would have been totally depopulated.

That for this reason it is almost deserted of people. And those who have been the cause of this damage call the depopulated pacified. More than peaceful, I call it destroyed”<sup>19</sup>

Right after this text there is another box with an image and a caption saying “For the Spaniards, the indigenous religion and their codices were things of the devil. This image shows the evangelization work of the religious”. The image portrays several devils trying to take the people, and a friar in front protecting them.

Demons are the representation of evil. So, whether they were the demons representing the “heresy ”of the indigenous religions, or the Spaniard demons, the Church was there to protect the indigenous people from all evil.

In the next page there is another textbox with the instructions “explain why the following statement is false”, it makes different asseverations about life in New Spain but one of them says “The activities of the religious Spaniards put an end to indigenous culture and customs”. Here, the book is not inviting the student to analyze the impact of the religious Spaniards, the book is already telling the student that the Spaniards did not end their culture and traditions, and if the reader came with that conclusion, that conclusion is false.

The Holy Inquisition is discussed in a textbox in the side of page 74. The text explains how the court of the Holy Office of the Inquisition was created in Spain by the Catholic Monarchs, to

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<sup>19</sup> “Y a los españoles en algunas partes los llaman demonios. Y bien les está ese nombre, porque han pasado a aquellas tierras personas que hicieron a un lado sus conciencias y el temor de la justicia divina y humana, y han hecho cosas no de hombres sino de dragones.

Pues sin tener respeto alguno humano, han sido causa de que muchos indios que se pudieron convertir y salvarse, muriesen por diversas formas. Y los tales que así murieron podían haber sido útiles si vivieran, para el servicio de de Vuestra Majestad y provecho y utilidad de los cristianos.

Y entonces no se habría despoblado totalmente ninguna parte de esta tierra. Que por esta causa está casi desierta de gente. Y los que han sido causa de este daño llaman pacificado a lo despoblado. Yo, más que pacífico, lo llamo destruido”.

persecute those who strayed from the Catholic faith. Either because they had another religion, such as Jews, Muslims, and Protestants, or because they were Catholics who deviated from the practices and ideas that the Church held. “The punishments imposed by the Inquisition ranged from forcing inmates to publicly denounce what they had previously affirmed, to burning them alive in green wood. During the almost 300 years in which the Inquisition exercised its *sinister* (emphasis added) vigilance over the actions of New Spain, at least forty-three people were executed, not all at the stake”.<sup>20</sup> Here, is the first time that this generation uses a “negative” adjective such as “sinister” to describe the actions of the Church. The text mentions that people were executed, but not to worry, because they were not all executed at the stake, as if that made it not as terrible.

The next time the Church is mentioned is in the next chapter “The inheritance of the viceroyalty”. Inside it is found a subtitle called “Religion and culture”. Here is mentioned the architecture, the science and literature and how the Spanish priests, and later the New Hispanic priests as well were opposed to the indigenous religions and spread the Catholicism. “Today, the majority of Mexicans are Catholic, and this religion is part of our viceregal heritage” (page 78). This suggesting that the fact that the majority of Mexicans are Catholic is a good outcome, since it is mentioned along with literature and arts.

Chapter 14 “The Reform laws” covers the era where the new Constitution was written. In page 122 is found a textbox explaining specifically the law of freedom of cult, promulgated by President Benito Juárez, and it remarks the first 3 articles.

Article 1: “The law protects the exercise of Catholic worship and of others established in the country, such as the expression and effect of religious freedom. The independence between the State on the one hand, and religious beliefs and practices on the other, is and will be perfect and inviolable”.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> . “Los castigos impuestos por la Inquisición iban desde obligar a los presos a denunciar públicamente lo que habían afirmado anteriormente, hasta quemarlos vivos en leña verde. Durante los casi 300 años en que la Inquisición ejerció su siniestra vigilancia sobre las acciones de la Nueva España, al menos cuarenta y tres personas fueron ejecutadas, no todas en la hoguera”

<sup>21</sup> “Las leyes protegen el ejercicio del culto católico y de los demás que se establezcan en el país, como la expresión y efecto de la libertad religiosa. La independencia entre el Estado, por una parte, y las creencias y prácticas religiosas por otra, es y será perfecta e inviolable”. (pág. 122)



Article 2: “A church or religious society is made up of men who have *voluntarily* wanted to be part of it”<sup>22</sup>. Benito Juárez was forced to join the seminar, which he abhorred and ultimately left.

Article 3:” “Each one of the societies is free to fix, by itself or through its priests, the beliefs and practices of the cult that it professes, as long as there is no offense or crime prohibited by law”.<sup>23</sup>

Contrasting the last generation, this book goes deeper and actually states what the Reform laws consist of, especially about the separation of Church and State.

The last time the Church comes up in the book is in the chapter 19 “The reconstruction of the country” where it mentions the Cristera war, except that, just like the last generation that diminishes the importance of the conflict, it doesn’t call it war but is a subchapter in page 163 named “the Cristera rebellion”. Here the text describes how The Catholic Church had rejected some articles since the Constitution of 1917 was promulgated. For example, how the churches were not recognized as legal personality; external worship, such as processions, was prohibited; Priests lacked political rights, and foreigners were not allowed to officiate.

President Calles insisted that the Constitution had to be obeyed. In response, the church suspended activities in the temples. “Many Catholics took up arms. The army tried to stop them, and the conflict grew. It lasted three years, until June 1929, when the government and the church reached an agreement”. This generation explains further what the conflict was about, but just as the last book, it does not talk about the number of deaths, and it implies it was somehow peaceful since it was solved when the church and government came to an agreement, which also fails to give more detail about what the agreement was about.

### **2.3: 2014**

The generation 2014 calls its chapters “blocks” but in order to give continuity and avoid confusion. I will continue to call them chapters. Having said that, in Chapter 3 there is a subchapter in page 96 called “Expansion and colonization of new territories”. The subchapter expresses that after the Conquista, there were several expeditions through Mesoamerica with the

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<sup>22</sup> “Una iglesia o sociedad religiosa se forma de los hombres que voluntariamente hayan querido ser parte de ella”.

<sup>23</sup> “Cada una de las sociedades tiene libertad de arreglar por si o por sus sacerdotes, las creencias y prácticas del culto que profesa, con tal que no se incida en falta alguna o delito de los prohibidos por las leyes

objectives of searching for gold and silver and evangelization. In here, there are some key words in the side of the page and the definition of them. The words are “evangelization”, “friar” and “missions”; the latter are described as “establishments located in areas that were explored and dominated. The missionaries lived there, who were in charge of evangelizing the indigenous people of the place and cultivating the lands to satisfy the needs of the prisons”.<sup>24</sup> The definition of “missions” sounds suspiciously similar to the *encomiendas* mentioned in the previous generations.

In the next page (97), in the subchapter “Mestizaje e intercambio cultural” [miscegenation and cultural exchange] describes how the Spanish crown sent groups of friars to convert the natives to the Catholic religion. These religious groups established in each settling a convent with its respective church and promoted the cult of a certain saint in each town; “This helped to generate a new identity and to highlight the central role given to the church”.

The text remarks how the friars were also in charge of the education of the children of the indigenous families of the upper strata, teaching the boys religion, writing, arithmetic and singing, while they instructed the girls in the tasks considered necessary to be good wives and Christian mothers.

The next time the Church appears in the textbook is not until Chapter 4 “The formation of a new society: the viceroyalty of the New Spain” in the subchapter in page 136 “The novohispanic Church” is narrated how the Church had great importance during the viceroyalty, as the Spanish monarchs enjoyed a privilege that was called the Royal Patronage. This consisted of a permission granted by the Pope to control all the administrative affairs of the Catholic Church in Spain’s empire, so the kings appointed all the ecclesiastical authorities, including the bishops, who, in addition to attending to religious matters, they used to be high officials of the Crown, they even came to exercise the position of viceroys. In this way, the New Hispanic church was greatly influenced by the political interests of the crown. It is interesting to see how in this generation it is explained how the Church and the rest of the Spanish authorities are so intertwined and are the same people while in the last generations the made a great distinction between the two. The abusive Spaniards in one hand, and the benign and patient religious people in the other.

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<sup>24</sup> establecimientos ubicados en las zonas que se exploraban y dominaban. Allí habitaban los misioneros, quienes se encargaban de evangelizar a los indígenas del lugar y a cultivar las tierras para satisfacer las necesidades de los presidios”

The text does continue by telling how the church played an important role in the educational and cultural spheres, creating schools, seminaries, and universities. "With the contributions of the believers and the work of the religious orders, a large number of hospitals and orphanages were established that cared for all kinds of sick people and assisted orphans".

"The novohispanic society was deeply religious and trusted in miracles. Therefore, it was common for churches to venerate *saints who had appeared* (emphasis added) in their towns or communities"<sup>25</sup>. The lack of clarification in this sentence is worrisome, when they don't say that saints who "supposedly" had appeared, or that they "believed" appeared but to say in a history book that saints "had appeared" in a town can be dangerous for kids to read.

The text also mentions that the most popular cult that had devotees from all social groups was that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who became a symbol of New Spain identity.

It continues explaining that in 1571 the Tribunal of the Holy Office, also called the Holy Inquisition, was established in New Spain, whose function was to judge and punish those who departed from the Catholic faith. "The trials carried out by the Inquisition in New Spain, in general, dealt with activities considered as witchcraft; for example, some women used dolls or drawings of devils to prepare a spell and make someone love them, get money or hurt an enemy". "However, these cases were not punished *so harshly* (emphasis added) because the judges thought they were naive and uneducated. Although some religious crimes were punishable by death, the use of certain plants, spells or enchantments was not considered so serious"<sup>26</sup>. The text omits to say what did it mean to not be punished "so harshly" or which crimes were serious enough to be punishable by death. This suggests that perhaps the Holy Inquisition was not very strict or "harsh".

At the bottom of the page, a textbox can be found with the title of "an interesting fact": "In New Spain, the Inquisition considered certain practices as prohibited. Among them, the Chuchumbé dance, which was criticized because it included "gestures, wiggles and shaking contrary to honesty.." These dances were generally presented between Africans and mulattoes"<sup>27</sup>. By saying

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<sup>25</sup> "La sociedad novohispana era profundamente religiosa y confiaba en los milagros. Por tanto, era común que en las iglesias se veneraran santos que habían aparecido en sus pueblos o sus comunidades". (pág. 136)

<sup>26</sup> "Sin embargo, estos casos no eran castigados con tanta dureza porque los jueces pensaban que eran personas ingenuas e incultas. Aunque algunos delitos religiosos se llegaban a castigar con pena de muerte, el uso de ciertas plantas, hechizos o encantamientos no se consideraba tan grave" (pág. 137)

<sup>27</sup> "En Nueva España, la Inquisición consideraba ciertas prácticas como prohibidas. Entre ellas, el baile Chuchumbé, el cual criticado debido a que incluía [ademanos, meneos y zarandeos contrarios a la honestidad..]. Estos bailes se presentaban generalmente entre los africanos y mulatos". (pág. 137)

that these “heretic” dances were mainly done by Africans, it is making a distinction, it is separating Mexicans. Yes, the Holy Inquisition was punishing people but not us, mainly Africans.

The same textbox continues saying:”It was also forbidden to wear dresses with colors considered devilish, such as yellow, black and red; likewise, the use of cross-shaped ribbons on shoes was punished”.<sup>28</sup>

This book does not mention the Church again, but in this generation not all the topics are covered in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, so reading the history book of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, in the Chapter 4 there is a subchapter in page 121 called as in the last generation “the Cristera rebellion” however, this generation expands more in the topic. It narrates how the 1917 Constitution limited the influence of the Church and the intervention of its members in public affairs. “In 1926, President Calles issued a law prohibiting external worship (processions and offerings) and officiating at foreign priests (some of whom were expelled); it limited the number of priests and closed Catholic schools. In response, the authorities of the Catholic Church suspended religious activities in all its precincts and its parishioners made numerous protests against the government's action, even aggressive attacks”.

“The conflict grew and became an armed rebellion, known as the Cristero War. In mid-1929 an agreement ended the bloody clash. The Catholic Church agreed not to participate in the political life of the country and recognized the authority of the federal government. In return, the government promised to release the occupied temples and allow the resumption of worship”.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.4 Discussion

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<sup>28</sup> “también estaba prohibido usar vestidos con colores considerados como diabescos, como el amarillo, negro y rojo; de igual forma, se castigaba el uso de listones con forma de cruces en los zapatos”

<sup>29</sup> “El conflicto creció y se convirtió en una rebelión armada, conocida como guerra Cristera. A mediados de 1929, un acuerdo puso fin a este sangriento enfrentamiento. La Iglesia Católica acordó no participar en la vida política del país y reconoció la autoridad del gobierno federal. A su vez, éste se comprometió a devolver los templos ocupados y permitir la reanudación de los cultos” (pág. 121)

The three generations share many similitudes. But they do have linguistic differences and some more biases than others. Perhaps a bit of context on the time of when they were written can explain those distinctions.

During the 1960 generation, during the controversy of the new standardized free books, there was a lot of debate, and the Church was not going to stay behind. It was such their intervention that the Bishop of Tehuantepec indicated his concerns when he accused the government of directing education towards socialism, in a clearly totalitarian effort. “Neither human dignity, nor teachers, nor the sacred authority of parents, nor the divine right they received from the Church of Christ to educate their children, can tolerate this solution [...] So that the intervention of parents is effective, it is very important that they associate in responsible organizations, in order to achieve their own training to help and monitor schools [...]” (Torres-Septién, 2011).

Torres-Septién (2011) believes that the fear of the Church of losing that faculty of being in charge of the children’s education, and not the State is palpable. The Church had always imposed an official truth based on the precepts and moral values they believe and was scared of losing that.

During the 1993 generation, Salinas presided over an era of improving Church-State relations where he reopened diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Carlos Salinas was the first Mexican president to receive a Pope, in this case John Paul II, in his capacity as head of the Vatican City State. The books from his era have such a dispassionate attitude towards the Church that would have astounded earlier authors. There is not even a chapter designated to talk solely about the Church. The conflicts of the Reform era are so bloodless that make the Three years’ war seem inexplicable, when is never mentioned the religious intolerance during the preceding period (Vázquez, 1975).

This generation emphasizes the economic role the Church had in the New Spain society. It talks about the *encomiendas*, the assets of the Church, taxes, and the benefits for society of collecting such taxes, for example orphanages, schools, and hospitals. This makes sense when taking an overview of Salina’s government. He was an economist and it showed on his way of governing Mexico. During his term, Salinas started an ambitious program of modernization that consisted, among other aspects, to stimulate exportations, the support of Central American economies, privatization of banks, and the beginning of negotiation of the NAFTA agreement with USA and Canada.

On the 2014 generation, that is almost identical, with a few grammatical and design differences, of its predecessor the generation of 2011, books that were made during the ruling of the right conservative wing party PAN. This can be perceived subtly in some sentences for example when it mentions that saints “had appeared” in towns. In this generation it is explained how the Church and the rest of the Spanish authorities are so intertwined, unlike the last generations, that made a great distinction between the two. The abusive Spaniards in one hand, and the benign and patient religious people in the other. Even though the three generations are soft and benevolent towards the Church, is not the same to praise the institution of the Church than to “legitimize” religious miracles in a history book.

The Church, as mentioned before, has, and has always had an enormous role on the Mexican society. It has always been a very useful tool for power. Even for convincing the people to take up on arms and start the independence, had to go through religion. Miguel Hidalgo, the insurgent starting the movement of independence was a priest, and how he convinced the people was using a pennant with the virgin of Guadalupe. The virgin of Guadalupe is virgin Mary but with dark skin color and indigenous features that “made an appearance” to Juan Diego, a local indigenous man and commanded to build a church for her. This story was invented in order for indians to relate to the Catholic Church and feel represented, the story was rapidly adopted, and the virgin of Guadalupe became an icon of our Mexican identity.

Hereinafter, I add a chart with some examples of positive and negative aspects of the Church analyzed from the different generations.

	<b>Positive view</b>	<b>Negative view</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>1960</b>	<p>*Fray Toribio de Benavente: “He was distinguished by his charity and great love for the natives”</p> <p>* The natives almost always found in the missionaries loving protection against the Spanish and Creole, and that was how the religious conquered the respect and affection of the Indians. Their patience and indefatigable perseverance helped them in this.</p>	There are no statements with a negative connotation of the church in the whole book.	There is a big distinction on how this generation refers to Spaniards and the Church. The Church is seen as a benevolent and philanthropist institution that defended the indians from abuses and were patient and left us a beautiful legacy full of traditions.

	<p>* The church exercised great spiritual, political and economic power over families, society and the rulers. They developed their influence in the temples, where gathered all the believers, and in the schools, where their doctrines were taught, as well as to “spread the culture among the Indians, and train them in the industries and arts”. The church also was in charge of teaching Spanish. Besides that, the friars administered the hospices and the hospitals;</p>		
1993	<p>“The church accumulated great wealth, with which it served constructions, charity, education and art works. To carry out these works, the Church had farms, convents, houses, temples, schools, hospitals, asylums and orphanages. It was the most important source of loans during the viceroyalty</p>	<p>The punishments imposed by the Inquisition ranged from forcing inmates to publicly denounce what they had previously affirmed, to burning them alive in green wood. During the almost 300 years in which the Inquisition exercised its <i>sinister</i> vigilance over the actions of New Spain.</p>	<p>This generation is the least harsh towards the Catholic church. Yes, it acknowledges that it had accumulated great wealth, but it used it for the common good.</p> <p>It mentions the punishments from the “sinister” inquisition vigilance.</p>
2014	<p>The friars were in charge of the education of the children of the indigenous families of the upper strata, teaching the boys religion, writing, arithmetic and singing, while they instructed the girls in the tasks considered necessary to be good wives and Christian mothers.</p>	<p>Also mentions inquisition but argues that some cases were not punished <i>so harshly</i> because the judges thought they were naive and uneducated.</p> <p>*Royal Patronage: a permission granted by the Pope to control all the administrative affairs of the Catholic Church in Spain’s empire, so the kings appointed all the</p>	<p>what did it mean to not be punished “so harshly” or which crimes were serious enough to be punishable by death. This suggests that perhaps the Holy Inquisition was not very strict or “harsh”.</p> <p>*The church was greatly influenced by the political interests of the crown. It is</p>

		<p>ecclesiastical authorities, including the bishops, who, in addition to attending to religious matters, they used to be high officials of the Crown, they even came to exercise the position of viceroys</p>	<p>interesting to see how in this generation it is explained how the Church and the rest of the Spanish authorities are so intertwined and are the same people while in the last generations the made a great distinction between the two. The abusive Spaniards in one hand, and the benign and patient religious people in the other.</p>
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Figure 3 Relationship to the Church

### 3. Relationship to the United States

“Poor Mexico, So far from God, so close to the United States”. This phrase that is usually attributed to the ex-President Porfirio Díaz is great to exemplify the complicated relationship between Mexico and its powerful northern neighbor. It is inexorable that, being neighbors, and with such a deep and hurtful past between the nations there are still reminiscences of mistrust. We are told over and over that in order to not make the same mistakes, we must know our history. But what is our history? What if the same story told *slightly* different can have a completely different outcome and can improve or worsen the future relations of the nations?

In this chapter, as in I did with Spain and the Church, I will analyze the textbooks from the three different generations and identify the similarities and differences of how it is written and what story are the books trying to tell the readers.

#### 3.1 1960

The fifth chapter of the book is called “Las luchas entre México y otros países” [The fights between Mexico and other countries]. Most of the chapter narrates the battle against United States; only a small paragraph mentions the “Cake war” with France. This sends a message of the level of importance the book gives to the issue.



The chapter starts with Mexico's most hurtful loss with the subtitle named "The separation of Tejas". The chapter starts like this: "**Tejas** belonged to the Mexican Republic and was part of the State of Coahuila. Very sparsely populated at the time, the government authorized it to be colonized by foreigners, mostly North Americans. This was a *mistake* (emphasis added)".<sup>30</sup> It is important to notice that "Tejas" is still spelled with a j, the way it is pronounced in Spanish, and the way it was written when it belonged to Mexico. It reminds me to Spain, that until very recently, the Real Academia Española, the institution that regulates the Spanish language, refused to accept the name of México with an "x" and still addressed it as "Méjico", in a way, as refusing to accept what is lost. The text expresses bluntly that the action taken by the Mexican government was a mistake, adding a judgement value to the action.

"The settlers, people of origin, speech, traditions and customs different from ours, and without contact with the other population of the country, not only felt detached from Mexico, but also gave way to the *supposedly* (emphasis added) dislike of abandonment-*thus they called*- (emphasis added) in which the authorities of Coahuila had them".<sup>31</sup> In this paragraph, the textbook sounds skeptical of the reasons of the settlers of Texas by using words such as "supposedly", and "thus they called".

The text continues saying that when the centralist constitution of Mexico was promulgated, *propaganda* (emphasis added) was made against the new laws that the condition of Texans was going to worsen. The book states that in 1836, Texas resolved to separate from Mexico and declared itself an independent Republic. It continues by mentioning that upon learning what was happening, President Santa Anna decided to confront the rebels with his troops but was taken prisoner.

"Even with Santa Anna being imprisoned, the war could have continued, and certainly with good success. But to regain his freedom, Santa Anna made an *infamous* (emphasis added) pact with Houston, chief of the Texans: he ordered his second, General Filisola, to evacuate with the

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<sup>30</sup> "Tejas pertenecía a la República Mexicana y formaba parte del Estado de Coahuila. Muy escasamente poblada entonces, el gobierno autorizó que la colonizaran extranjeros, norteamericanos en su mayoría. Esto fue un desacierto" (pág. 91)

<sup>31</sup> "Los colonos, gente de procedencia, habla, tradiciones y costumbres diferentes de las nuestras, y sin contacto con la demás población del país, no sólo se sentían desligados de México, sino que dieron curso al supuesto desagrado por el abandono-así lo llamaban- en que los tenían las autoridades de Coahuila" (Pag. 91)

bulk of the Mexican troops the insurgent territory - order that Filisola *wrongly* (emphasis added) obeyed -, and Santa Anna recognized the independence of Texas in exchange for its freedom”.<sup>32</sup>The textbook is making an assumption saying that the war would have been successful, and the fate of Mexico would have been different if it wasn't for Santa Anna. It refers to the pact as “infamous”, again, adding a value judgement, and states that what General Filisola was “wrong” for obeying the orders from his superior. The text portrays General Santa Anna as a traitor, that gave away more than half of the territory of Mexico so he could get liberated.

In the next subchapter named “The war of 1847 with United States “, the textbook lists the unfavorable conditions that Mexico lived during the first years of its independent. The government lacked money, there were no great political leaders, lack of military organization and weapons, and the worst of all: “There was no peace or union among Mexicans, divided by internal struggles, that were almost always born out of personal ambition and passion”.

The chapter narrates how in 1845 the Republic of Texas completed its annexation to the United States. In other words, if Mexico wanted to recover that territory, the fight would not be with the Texans but with the United States. In addition, the matter complicated even more due to differences regarding the Texas limits. The text affirms that when joining the United States, Texas established that its territorial limits extended to the Rio Bravo (or Rio Grande, how is named in United States). On the other hand, Mexico affirmed, “according to incontrovertible documents” that the limits of Texas had never crossed the River Nueces, located many kilometers to the north. The book fails to explain which are those “incontrovertible documents”.

“Mexico was right in what it stated, and thus, the Mexican army advanced to the River Nueces. Then the United States declared war, confident of its capacity for an armed invasion and with the argument that we had violated its soil”.<sup>33</sup>The textbook does not explain which are those “incontrovertible” documents, but it does affirm that Mexico was right. The text almost always

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<sup>32</sup> “Preso Santa Anna, la guerra hubiese podido seguir adelante, y, de seguro, con buen éxito. Pero para recobrar su libertad, Santa Anna hizo un infame pacto con Houston, jefe de los texanos: ordenó a su segundo, el general Filisola, que evacuase con el grueso de las tropas mexicanas el territorio insurrecto- orden que Filisola obedeció indebidamente-, y Santa Anna reconoció la independencia de Tejas a cambio de su libertad”. (pág. 92)

<sup>33</sup> “México tenía razón en lo que afirmaba; y así, el ejército mexicano avanzó hasta el río Nueces. Entonces Estados Unidos declaró la guerra, seguros de su capacidad para una invasión armada y con el argumento de que habíamos violado su suelo”. (pág. 95)

talks in first person using “we” pronoun. This way it can feel more personal when reading the text, and the reader can feel the injustice firsthand.

The next section is called “The North American invasion”. The book uses the word “invasion” and not refers to it as a war. United states could claim that Mexico “invaded” their territory first but using the word invasion implies that it was unfair, that Mexico is the victim.

“Although our army did not obtain military triumphs, it showed great *heroism* (emphasis added) during the battles, thanks to which our defenders have been immortalized in history and deserve *our* (emphasis added) recognition and respect. The soldiers who fought for Mexico set a great example of love for the country. *You must admire* (emphasis added) them and be proud of your heroes”.<sup>34</sup>The text exalts the fighters in the “invasion”, describing them as heroes, stating how one must feel about them, and ordering the reader to admire them and feel proud of “your heroes”. Once again, utilizing pronouns like “you” to make it more personal.

The next section of the chapter enumerates several battles, advising the pupil to remember these battles. Some of them are the following:

- The Angostura battle: “There, the Mexican army showed a physical resistance that is *barely believable* (emphasis added), and immense *courage* (emphasis added); but, partly due to Santa Anna's *ineptitude* (emphasis added), and partly due to adversity, the army was prevented from obtaining a complete and effective victory”.<sup>35</sup>Definitely, Santa Anna is not one of the favorite characters in Mexican history. His “ineptitude” hindered the “unbelievably” power and courage of the Mexican army.
- The Cerro Gordo battle: This battle was lost because Santa Anna, “not listening to his engineers”, did not fortified the key point, which according to him “not even rabbits could climb”. Once again, a stubborn Santa Anna who won't listen to the expert's opinions cost Mexico another battle.

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<sup>34</sup> “Aunque nuestro ejército no obtuvo triunfos militares, demostró durante las batallas un gran heroísmo, gracias al cual nuestros defensores se han immortalizado en la Historia y merecen nuestro reconocimiento y nuestro respeto. Los soldados que lucharon por México dieron un gran ejemplo de amor a la patria. Debes admirarlos y sentirte orgulloso de tus héroes”. (pág. 95)

<sup>35</sup> : “Allí el ejército mexicano demostró una resistencia física apenas creíble, en inmenso valor; pero, en parte la impericia de Santa Anna, y, en parte la adversidad, le impidieron obtener una victoria completa y efectiva”. (pág. 96)

- The Churubusco battle: “In which General Pedro María Anaya was immortalized, who - tradition tells us - when forced to surrender the square and hear that he was required to say where the ammunition was, said to the invaders: “if we had ammo, you would not be here”.<sup>36</sup>“Tradition tells us” is a good way for the textbook to wash their hands when there is no historical proof. The famous quote of “if we had ammo.” is practically saying that Mexico did not have means to defend themselves, otherwise, the army would have defended the country.
- The Castillo de Chapultepec battle: “This one (Chapultepec castle) *gloriously* (emphasis added) defended by General Bravo, and the cadets of the Military College. Among the *heroic* (emphasis added) cadets who then lost their lives were some very young, almost *children* (emphasis added). “Always remember their names”, which are these: Agustín Melgar, Juan de la Barrera, Juan Escutia, Fernando Montes de Oca, Vicente Suárez, Francisco Márquez”.<sup>37</sup>The text introduces us to new heroes, that being almost “children”, again denoting an unfair battle, lost their lives defending the land. The text emphasizes on remembering their names. I will go into further detail in the Heroes and Villains chapter of who these “heroes” were and the impact that they have had in our history.

The textbook summarizes the negotiations to end the war that led to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, in which Mexico lost Texas, with the limits to the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande). In addition, the text reminds the pupil that Mexico also lost New Mexico, Arizona, and Upper California. A total of two million two hundred and forty thousand square kilometers, an extension of more than half the territory that the country had back then.

The chapter ends with a drawing of men, a woman, and children in the middle of a corn field holding together a Mexican flag. One of the men has a casual attire, another one is wearing a butcher apron and the other one looks like an agriculturist holding his hat. The image is followed by a reflection:

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<sup>36</sup> “En la que se inmortalizó al general Pedro María Anaya, quien- la tradición nos lo cuenta- al verse obligado a entregar la plaza y oír que se le requería para que dijese dónde estaban las municiones, dijo a los invasores: “si tuviéramos parque, no estarían ustedes aquí”. (pág. 96)

<sup>37</sup> Éste gloriosamente defendido por el general Bravo, y, los cadetes del Colegio Militar. Entre los heroicos cadetes que entonces perdieron la vida había unos muy jóvenes, casi niños. Recuerda siempre sus nombres, que son éstos: Agustín Melgar, Juan de la Barrera, Juan Escutia, Fernando Montes de Oca, Vicente Suárez, Francisco Márquez” (pág. 96)

“The defeat that Mexico suffered in 1847 left us an experience that we must never forget: the *union of all Mexicans* (emphasis added) is essential, because with inner peace there is progress, and with progress, the strength capable of being protected from prowling and injustice.

It is essential that every Mexican, man, woman, or child, prepare every day to *serve their country* (emphasis added) and learn to exalt it in peace by putting into work the same commitment as if they would be willing to *defend it in war* (emphasis added) if circumstances so required. We must be hard-working, energetic, aware of our responsibility, and united to give our country greater strength every day.

May the example and *sacrifices of the heroes* (emphasis added) of 1847 help you to achieve your best purposes and make you see the need for you to know well the history of Mexico”.<sup>38</sup>

The conclusion of the chapter ends as a moral tale. It emphasizes the union of all Mexicans and their willingness to serve their country as essential to survive as a nation. It exalts the sacrifice of the heroes and the importance of the values that “you” should acquire to be a good citizen. It is a patriotic narrative using pronouns as “you” and “we” to make it more impactful.

### **3.2: 1993**

Unlike the 1960 generation, this textbook does not have its own chapter explaining the events that lead to the loss of more than half of the Mexican territory; instead, is part of the same chapter where it explains the aftermath of the independence, and the subtitle of the chapter is

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<sup>38</sup> “La derrota que sufrió México en 1847 nos dejó una experiencia que nunca debemos olvidar: es indispensable la unión de todos los mexicanos, pues con la paz interior hay progreso, y con el progreso, la fuerza capaz de ponernos a cubierto de asechanzas e injusticias.

Es indispensable que todo mexicano, hombre, mujer o niño, se prepare cada día para servir a su país y que aprenda a engrandecerlo en la paz poniendo en el trabajo la misma decisión con que estaría dispuesto a defenderlo en la guerra si las circunstancias así lo requiriesen. Debemos ser laboriosos, enérgicos, conscientes de nuestra responsabilidad, y unirnos para dar cada día mayores fuerzas a nuestra patria. Que el ejemplo y sacrificios de los héroes de 1847 te ayuden a realizar tus mejores propósitos y te hagan ver la necesidad de que conozcas bien la historia de México’. (pág. 98)

shared with the conflict with France. The name of the subtitle is “The separation of Texas and the cake war”. This sole action leads to downplay the importance of the historical event.

“Since the times of the viceroyalty of New Spain, some North Americans obtained permission to settle in Texas, which was part of the New Spain. After independence, American settlers continued to arrive, and eventually outnumbered Mexicans. They had their own customs, they spoke English, and they did not want to live subject to Mexican laws. In 1835, they declared themselves independent”<sup>39</sup>. Interesting how it mentions that Texas was a part of the New Spain, but not part of Mexico. The text does not go into detail on explaining the reasons of why Americans were not content with the arrangement of being part of Mexico. It just states very naturally that Texas became independent, as if that was the logical next step. It is important to note as well that Texas is now spelled with an “x” and not a “j” as in the last generation.

The text continues by narrating how Santa Anna went to subdue them but while he was resting by the Jacinto River, he was surprised and captured. To regain his freedom, he made a pact with the Texans: he ordered the army to withdraw and recognized the independence of Texas. The text doesn't add value to this action, as the generation of 1960 did by stating it was “wrong”.

The text barely allows the reader to digest the information that the President of Mexico just agreed to lose territory in exchange for his freedom when the subchapter suddenly changes the topic on the next paragraph and begins explaining the conflict with France.

There is a subchapter called “The war with the United States”. This is difference from last generation where it was an invasion from the United States, now is a war with the United States. “In 1845 the Texans decided to join the United States. Texas' border was the Nueces River, but Texans said that its border reached further south, to the Bravo River. Mexico protested but the Americans occupied the territory between the two rivers” (page 116). In this case, the text does not mention explicitly that Mexico was right, but they do imply it with the asseveration “The border was the Nueces river”.

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<sup>39</sup> “Desde tiempos del virreinato, algunos norteamericanos obtuvieron permiso para instalarse en Texas, que era parte de la nueva España. Después de la independencia, continuaron llegando colonos estadounidenses, y, con el tiempo, llegaron a ser más que los mexicanos. Tenían sus propias costumbres, hablaban inglés, y no querían vivir sujetos a las leyes mexicanas. En 1835 se declararon independientes” (pág. 114).

The chapter continues when The United States declared war on Mexico. California and New Mexico were immediately invaded. The Mexicans did not have enough weapons or money. The textbook claims that in the battle of Chapultepec “No hubo victorias en esta guerra, pero sí heroísmo y sacrificio”. (pág. 116) [There were no victories in this war but there were heroism and sacrifice].

On the top side of page 117 there is a box with a text that says “In the battle of Chapultepec, among many other soldiers, six cadets who were studying at the Military College lost their lives. We venerate the memory of that defense in the figure of these child heroes: Juan de la Barrera, Juan Escutia, Francisco Márquez, Agustín Melgar, Fernando Montes de Oca y Vicente Suárez”. On that page there is also a picture of two of these “child heroes” and a picture of the Chapultepec forest.

The text ends by saying that the occupation lasted nine months. The consequences were disastrous. Mexico had to sign the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, by which it lost New Mexico, Upper California, Texas and part of Tamaulipas. Mexico received 15 million pesos for it. Mexico’s territory was reduced to just under half, but the war made Mexicans feel, like never before, the need to be united!.<sup>40</sup>The chapter ends with this optimistic quote, somehow implying that the loss brought something good for the Mexican people after all. Since it taught Mexicans the need to be united. The text also remarks that Mexico received monetary compensation, showing that way that the territory was not completely stolen, but it was a “bought”.

### **3.3: 2014**

Just as the previous generation, this textbook does not have its own chapter explaining the events that lead to the loss of more than half of the Mexican territory; instead, is part of the same chapter where it explains the aftermath of the independence.

Actually, the first time United States is mentioned, is to point out that United States was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Mexico. The textbook applauds this action noting the importance due to them being neighbors and having a prosperous economy. The

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<sup>40</sup> “Su territorio se redujo a poco menos de la mitad, pero la guerra hizo que los mexicanos sintieran como nunca antes la necesidad de estar unidos” (pág. 116)

textbook mentions as well how USA was interested in doing commerce with Mexico, but “*some Americans* (emphasis added) had ambitions to acquire a portion of the national territory and had their eyes on the province of Texas”. It was only “some Americans”, the reader should not generalize that all Americans are bad.

The text explains, as both past generations, how Texas had a few inhabitants, and the Mexican government allowed some settlers from the United States to settle there on the condition that they respected the laws of the country and were Catholic. By the year of 1834, thirty thousand inhabitants were foreigners and only three thousand Mexicans lived in Texas. “The differences between the two groups were very marked. The foreign settlers did not speak Spanish, they were not Catholic and had slaves, which was against the laws of Mexico”.

The text continues by saying that on various occasions, the United States proposed to Mexico to buy Texas, but the government rejected that proposal because it considered that selling part of the national territory was a betrayal of the country.

The description of the last paragraphs depicts a scenery where Texas was “already lost”. It was not really part of Mexico because the inhabitants in Texas did not share the same values and the only reason Mexico would not sell the territory was because of morals but not practicality.

In the subchapter “The separation of Texas” is explained how at the end of 1835, the congress decided to turn the country into a centralist republic. The textbook remarks how this action caused discontent and the Texas settlers argued that they had sworn to the federal constitution of 1824 and were not required to be part of a country that changed its form of government. While the 1960 generation says how they used the centralization as an excuse and a “supposed” abandonment from the government, this generation demonstrates that the Texans had reasonable arguments for their demands.

President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna tried to subdue the rebels but was defeated and captured. “While he was a prisoner, he signed an agreement in which he accepted the independence of Texas and ordered the withdrawal of Mexican troops” <sup>41</sup>. This generation does not explicitly say that Santa Anna got his freedom in return for accepting the independence of Texas. It

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<sup>41</sup> . “Mientras estaba prisionero firmó un acuerdo en el que aceptaba la independenciam de Texas y ordenó la retirada de las tropas mexicanas” (pág. 28)



also does not judge the action with qualificative adjectives like “wrong” as opposed as the 1960 generation.

The congress refused to accept the agreement between Santa Anna and Texas and considered that Texas was still part of the country. The Mexican government did not have the resources to finance a new military campaign against the separatists. “In 1845 Texas ended up becoming one more state of the United States, which generated a conflict between both countries” (page 28). The text does not mention the dispute between which river was the border where Texas started. In the last generation, it is clearly said that Mexico was right, but in this one is just mentioned a “conflict” between countries.

The last section is “The war with United States” and it says: “Once Texas was *incorporated* (emphasis added) into the United States, this country sought to extend its dominions to the Pacific coast. To achieve this, United States proposed to Mexico the purchase of New Mexico and California, but the Mexican government refused to sell those territories. Given this, the US government planned to get them militarily”. (page.29). The generation of 1960 fails to explain that there was a purchase proposal. In this generation, the textbook implies that the US is going to get the territory “by hook or by crook” but at least Mexico had been warned.

“In the surroundings of Mexico City, in Padierna, Churubusco and Chapultepec, battles were fought in which the Mexican army was defeated. Finally, on September 14, the invading army raised its flag in the national palace and remained in the city until the middle of the following year” (page 30). This generation does not go so deeply into each battle explaining whose fault it was for the loss as in the last generations, it just states that Mexico was defeated.

On the top left side of page 30 there is a little information box that it states: “Among the soldiers who defended the Castle of Chapultepec were students (cadets) from the Military College. Some of these young men died in combat; Their memory has been preserved over time, as we now know them as the Child heroes of Chapultepec”<sup>42</sup>. This generation just indicates that they were students from the Military College. It states that we “know them” as child heroes but it

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<sup>42</sup> “Entre los soldados que defendieron el Castillo de Chapultepec había estudiantes (cadetes) del Colegio Militar. Algunos de estos jóvenes murieron en combate; su recuerdo se ha mantenido al paso del tiempo, pues ahora los conocemos como los Niños Héroes de Chapultepec”

does not say that they were children. In addition, the text does not urge the reader to remember the names of these “child heroes” since it does not even mention them.

The chapter continues by narrating how over several months, some Mexican representatives negotiated the peace terms, in addition to New Mexico and California, the United States also wanted to seize the Baja California peninsula and part of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua and Sonora, but the Mexican negotiators objected. In 1848 the Guadalupe-Hidalgo treaty was signed by which Mexico accepted the loss of New Mexico and California. The United States promised to pay a compensation of 15 million pesos.

This generation is more positive on how the outcome of the war went. It mentions how with negotiations, Mexicans managed to save some of the territory. It depicts Americans as more benevolent and less abusive that not just took all the territory but actually took the time to listen to Mexicans' wishes and negotiated and even paid a monetary compensation.

The chapter ends with a picture of a map with the lost territory and an image with the caption “Entry of the US Army to Mexico City, after defeating the national forces”.<sup>43</sup> Impossible not to notice the use of the word “entry” and not “invasion” as in the 1960 generation.

### **3.4 Discussion**

Encouraging the growth of nationalist sentiment has always been a traditional goal of Mexican authors (Vasquez, 1975). A constant that has been present in most generations, starting with the 1960 has been the suspicion and resentment of the U.S. role in Mexican history. But it is noticeable that the 1993 generation starts softening the image of Americans. The textbook from 1993 portrays a Texas so different and distant from Mexico. The textbook states that Texas was a part of New Spain, as if after the independence, that did not make it part of Mexico.

The 1993 texts were written preluding to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). With national elections approaching in the United States, the fate of the agreement was uncertain. Under these circumstances, critics of 1993 texts accused the Salinas government of rewriting national history with the intention of pandering to U.S. opinion and undermining Mexican nationalism (Gilbert, 1997).

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<sup>43</sup> Entrada del ejército estadounidense a la ciudad de México, después de derrotar a las fuerzas nacionales” (pág. 31)

The generation of 2014, written when Enrique Peña Nieto was President and when there were three Presidential encounters and several bilateral visits from the State Secretary, governors, and visits from Vice President Biden to Mexico (SRE,2018). In that year, the US exports to Mexico soared an increase of a 478% and the imports from Mexico rose from \$39.9 billion to \$294.2 billion, an increase of 637%.

### United States

	Texas	Santa Anna	Negotiations Aftermath	Discussion
1960	“Tejas” is spelled with a j, the way is pronounced in Spanish, and the way it was written when it belonged to Mexico	Due to Santa Anna's <b>ineptitude</b> , and partly due to adversity, the army was prevented from obtaining a complete and effective victory	*Texas established that its territorial limits extended to the Rio Bravo. On the other hand, Mexico affirmed, “according to incontrovertible documents” that the limits of Texas had never crossed the River Nueces, located many kilometers to the north  *it is essential that every Mexican, man, woman or child, prepare every day to serve their country and learn to exalt it in peace by putting into work the same commitment as if they	This generation shows more attachment to Texas and more resentment towards the US.  Depicts a deep injustice where Mexico took advantage of, even with “incontrovertible documents” which never mentions which ones are those.  The conclusion is again a patriotic message, inviting the reader to serve their country by

			would be willing to defend it in war if circumstances so required.	working and creating a stronger Mexico to avoid these situations in the future,
<b>1993</b>	*Texas spelled with an x. Mentions it was part of the New Spain, not part of Mexico * “American settlers outnumbered Mexicans. They had their own customs, they spoke English, and they did not want to live subject to Mexican laws. In 1835 they declared themselves independent”	Santa Anna went to subdue them but while he was resting by the Jacinto River, he was surprised and captured. To regain his freedom, he made a pact with the Texans: he ordered the army to withdraw and recognized the independence of Texas.	In 1845 the Texans decided to join the United States. Texas' border was the Nueces River, but Texans said that its border reached further south, to the Bravo River.	By saying that Texas was a part of the New Spain, but not part of Mexico, suggests that it was not a big loss for Mexico, since it never belonged to it. So their independence was the logical next step
<b>2014</b>	“Some Americans had ambitions to acquire a portion of the national territory and had their eyes on the province of Texas”. * By the year of 1834, thirty thousand inhabitants were foreigners and only	While he was a prisoner, he signed an agreement in which he accepted the independence of Texas and ordered the withdrawal of Mexican troops]. This generation does not explicitly say that Santa Anna got his freedom in return for accepting	“Mexican representatives negotiated the peace terms, wanted more states but the Mexican negotiators objected. In 1848 the Guadalupe-Hidalgo treaty was signed by which Mexico accepted the loss of New Mexico and California. The United	Depicts a scenery where Texas was “already lost”. It was not really part of Mexico because the inhabitants in Texas did not share the same values and the only reason Mexico would not sell the territory was

	<p>three thousand Mexicans lived in Texas. The differences between the two groups were very marked. The foreign settlers did not speak Spanish, they were not Catholic and had slaves, which was against the laws of Mexico.</p>	<p>the independence of Texas</p>	<p>States promised to pay a compensation of 15 million pesos”</p>	<p>because of morals but not practicality.</p> <p>*Omits the reason Santa Anna signed the document of the independence</p> <p>* Portrays Americans as more benevolent and less abusive that not just took all the territory but actually took the time to listen to Mexicans' wishes and negotiated and even paid a monetary compensation.</p>
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Figure 4 Relationship to the United States

#### 4. Heroes and villains

In the history of Mexico there are possibly tens of “heroes and villains” that I could mention and analyze their roles in the construction of the Mexican identity. The importance of these

figures crosses the barriers of the books and come and get ingrained in the minds of the Mexicans. And just as the narratives of these people get highly exaggerated or completely understated; there are others that are altogether myths that had been debunked by historians but yet, still appear in the SEP History books.

One of many examples is the myth of the “niños héroes” that would be literally translated as “the children heroes”. During the Mexican-American war, there were six teenage cadets that died defending the Chapultepec castle from the American forces. In the book of the generation of 1960 is stated that Juan Escutia preferred to jump out of the castle and die wrapped in the flag of Mexico rather than see it tainted by the Americans.

But the historian Alejandro Rosas (2018), has another version of the story. He says that by the simple act of staying in the castle, made them heroes, nevertheless, this story has been exalted in order to grow in Mexicans an unmeasurable love for the nation, His version says that Escutia never jumped, but actually fell wounded. Rosas relates this myth with the state visit made by the U.S. President Harry S. Truman in 1947 during the 100-year anniversary of the war between Mexico and United States. Truman made a ceremonial offering for the American fallen soldiers of the war. This was not well received by the Mexican people and to calm them, during the government of President Miguel Alemán, there was the spread of the news that 6 skulls were found by the castle, and they were recognized to be these 6 hero cadets. This story awoke a sense of pride and patriotism.

Another example of these popularized heroes was “the Pípila”. In the generation of 1960, in page 54, narrates when the Spaniards locked themselves in the *alhóndiga* from the insurgents but “a brave and ingenious miner, nicknamed “the Pípila”, tied a slab to his back, and thus protected against enemy bullets, was able to approach the door of the *alhóndiga* and set it on fire. The insurgents then rushed inland, seized the compound and took all those there as prisoners”.

Many of these figures, invented or real, exaggerated or not, were adopted by the government as national heroes to create a sense of nationalism and identity. For example, in the Mexican collective memory, Zapata changed everything. He is an icon of the social fight. Zapata was just a peasant, a simple man from the people who was fighting for the restitution of the land that once belonged to the indigenous people and was taken by the landlords. You could say he was a milestone in the mindset of the people. When he died, it was not only the end of a troublesome man for the government. He became a role model for rebellious peasants, he was a true hero, a

martyr. Suddenly everyone forgot about his past as a thief, criminal, a bandit, and he became a fighter of justice, free of corruption and free of subversion. He was, and still is, a symbol of pride. Even the same government started using him as an example. It did not take long until he was “canonized” by newspapers. Schools and roads were named after him, and several communities and social associations were also using him as a role model. The EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) who is an armed indigenous movement that fights for social justice, and rights of the indigenous among other causes, also quickly took his image as theirs.

Like many of his predecessors, Salinas had publicly celebrated the figure of Zapata, although his rural policies were far from Zapata’s ideals. A few months back before the publication of the new textbooks, the government had reformed Article 27 of the Constitution, an article affecting agricultural land owning of the peasants; the Article 27 was one of the principal achievements of the Revolution. Ironically, Salinas announced this reform, which was the end of the agrarian reform in Mexico, posed in front of a painting of Zapata in battle (Gilbert,1997).

Nowadays, the image of Zapata is still such a symbol of hero and a strong figure ingrained in the Mexican psyche that not too long ago, there was a scandal in Bellas Artes (the palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City) when the painter Fabián Cháirez exposed a painting titled “Revolución” that portrayed Zapata wearing the Mexican flag over his naked body with high heels shaped as pistols, a pink hat, on top of a horse with an erection. The painting caused rage between many people, including family members of Zapata and land workers that violently protested with torches for the painting to be removed from the building. People in social media also showed their discontent for not respecting the Mexican icon, and how it would confuse children to not see him as a brave man anymore but as “gay”. Homophobia and sexism aside, this is a clear example of how “untouchables” Mexican heroes are for society.

Another example of the “holiness” of the heroic figures was in the decade of the 70s. When the comedian, “El loco Valdés” made a joke using puns with the name of Juárez. The joke that aired in television was “¿Quién fue el presidente bombero?” [Which president was a fireman?] and the answer was “Bomberito Juárez” because “Benito” sounds like “bomberito” that means little firefighter. The joke was completely harmless and didn’t offend the president whatsoever. Nevertheless, his show was cancelled, and he had to pay a high fine.

In sum, the examples are many, however, due to lack of time and space, I will only focus on this final chapter in two heroes and two villains. The heroes are Miguel Hidalgo, the “Father of the *patria*” and initiator of the independentist movement, and Benito Juárez, the first indigenous

president and proclaimed, “Meritorious of the Americas”. These two names can be found in street names, statues, movies, and songs. Every year, in the celebration of the independence is not difficult to find kids and adults dressed as Miguel Hidalgo, and repeating the words used by him to initiate the uprising against the government.

In the section of “villains” I analyze two dictators, Antonio López de Santa Anna and Porfirio Díaz. In the year of 2019, Mitofsky, the most credible polling company of the country, conducted a survey asking young Mexicans who were the biggest heroes and villains in the history of Mexico. The three winners of heroes were Benito Juárez, Miguel Hidalgo and Emiliano Zapata, while in the villains there were Santa Anna, Huerta, Hernán Cortés: and right after, Porfirio Díaz. Because I had covered a lot of Cortés already in the first chapter, I decided to omit him in this chapter. Additionally, Porfirio Díaz is the only figure that is perceived both as a hero and as a villain; and after having governed the country for more than 30 years, it is crucial to include him in this thesis.

## **4.1 Our Heroes: Miguel Hidalgo and Benito Juárez**

### **4.1.1 Miguel Hidalgo**

#### **1960**

The first time Miguel Hidalgo is named in the generation from 1960 is in page 50 where there is a big drawing of him, along with Ignacio Allende and Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez. The three are known for being some of the first conspirators for the idea of an independence. In page 52, the book gives an introduction of who was Hidalgo. With the next two paragraphs, the reader can get an idea of the image the text is trying to portray, the one of an intelligent and kind man, who came from poor roots and was a man of the people, by giving his time to the service of God and the indians.

The chapter starts by saying Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla was born on a *hacienda* in Guanajuato, on May 8, 1753. He studied at the Colegio de San Nicolás, “donde se distinguió por su aplicación e inteligencia” [Where he distinguished himself for his *diligence and intelligence* (emphasis added)] and came to occupy the positions of professor and even rector.

The text continues narrating how he was a priest in Dolores, a little town in Guanajuato. “There he created new industries, such as pottery and silkworm farming; He taught the Indians in his parish to read and organized a marching band and theater performances to entertain the people.



By these and other acts, *always filled with kindness, he won the love of the people* (emphasis added)”<sup>44</sup>.

The text follows the story saying that when Hidalgo received the news that the conspiracy for starting the independence had been discovered, he determined to start the war right away, “which he did at the cost of his personal **safety and well-being**”<sup>45</sup>. And even when he had no sufficiently elaborated plan, no weapons, or money; on the morning of September 16, 1810, Hidalgo sent for a catholic mass to gather the people, and right there he announced, explaining the need to fight against the Spanish and the bad government, its purpose to liberate Mexico.

“Encouraged by the desire for freedom, the people joined Hidalgo with no less enthusiasm than faith, and thus formed the first insurgent army”. Despite the lack of arms and little military experience, that handful of men opened for Mexico the path of independence and freedom. Hidalgo adopted as a flag a banner that had the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe painted. This last action helped the people to join the cause. The virgin of Guadalupe was and continues to be a sacred image for the Mexican people.

The chapter states that the insurgents appointed Hidalgo as head of the insurrection, and after several triumphs in battle, Hidalgo published on the 19th of October of 1810, a decree by virtue of which slavery is abolished in the province of Valladolid (today Morelia), a provision that would later extend to the entire country.

The book continues narrating the subsequent battles that lead to the imprisonment of Hidalgo, among other insurgents; “Hidalgo, degraded from his ecclesiastical dignity, was shot”.<sup>46</sup>

The text also mentions: “There was something more terrible: *it was said* (emphasis added) that the heads of the **four executed heroes** were taken to the Granaditas *alhóndiga* and placed in the four corners of the building, as a warning, to those who tried to continue the war”.<sup>47</sup> The book uses “it was said” on several occasions through the book to avoid taking responsibility of the statement. It is an interesting way to put it, especially, since in this generation, they make statements as asseverations of how it happened. For example, “Hidalgo, patriarch of freedom,

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<sup>44</sup> . “Allí creó nuevas industrias, como la alfarería y la cría de gusano de seda; enseñó a leer a los indios de su parroquia y organizó una banda de música y representaciones teatrales para dar distracción al pueblo. Por estos actos, y otros reveladores siempre de bondad, se ganó el amor de sus feligreses” (pág. 52)

<sup>45</sup> “cosa que hizo sacrificando su **seguridad y bienestar personales**” (pág. 52)

<sup>46</sup> . “A Hidalgo, degradado de su dignidad eclesiástica, se le fusiló también” (pág. 57)

<sup>47</sup> “Hubo algo más terrible: las cabezas de los **cuatro héroes ajusticiados** fueron llevadas a la alhóndiga de Granaditas y colocadas en las cuatro esquinas del edificio, para escarmentar, se dijo, a quienes intentasen seguir la guerra” (pág. 57)

had renounced everything to bring good to his people. He left the quiet life to which he was entitled by age, and the profession he exercised, to serve a noble, altruistic, and immense purpose through sacrifices and patriotism. He fought to destroy slavery; he was offended by the submission in which the Indians lived and the inequality of the backward classes, and he put himself at the head of all to redeem them. In short: he wanted the spiritual freedom and economic well-being of Mexico, and he made an effort to remove the obstacles that opposed the progress of his country”<sup>48</sup>. The text does not skimp on compliments towards Hidalgo. It is written that he was the “patriarch of freedom” and he wanted spiritual and economic well-being of Mexico. The book does not use “it is said” here. It is a fact. The text reminds the reader of the huge sacrifice he made and how he “redeemed the indians” almost as a saint. Here, there is no doubt left that he was a “true hero”.

The text follows up by saying in page 57 “Hidalgo was defeated; But his memory lives in all Mexicans, and encourages us to persevere, and ensures, with peace and work, the independence to which he dedicated his sacrifice”.<sup>49</sup> The textbook assigns its reception to its readers. The message is very clear, and univocal. Hidalgo is the hero, nothing else, and he is represented as a very central symbol.

In page 58, the reader can find a section called “what you must remember from the independence war” and summarizes in bullets the chapter. The first point says “Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla was the **Father of our independence**. He loved the people, fought for them and instilled in them ideas of freedom and justice”.<sup>50</sup> This was just a last reminder for the reader of the greatness of the “Father of our independence”. It is noticeable also, besides being highlighted in bold, that the word “Father” is capitalized.

### 1993

The traditional adage of “one picture is worth a thousand words” fits perfectly when we see the cover of the History book of the 1993 generation. That image of Miguel Hidalgo surrounded

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<sup>48</sup> “Hidalgo, patriarca de la libertad, había renunciado a todo por traer el bien a su pueblo. Dejó la vida tranquila a que tenía derecho por su edad, y por la profesión que ejercía, para servir a un propósito noble, altruista, e inmenso por los sacrificios y el patriotismo. Luchó por destruir la esclavitud; le ofendía la sumisión en que vivían los indios y la desigualdad de las clases postergadas, y se puso a la cabeza de todos para remediarlos. En suma: quería la libertad espiritual y bienestar económico de México, y se esforzó por suprimir los obstáculos que se oponían a ese progreso de su patria”. (pág. 57)

<sup>49</sup> “Hidalgo cayó vencido; pero su memoria, vive en todos los mexicanos, nos alienta a perseverar en la obra, indispensable, que asegure, con la paz y el trabajo, la independencia a que dedicó él su sacrificio” (pág. 57)

<sup>50</sup> “Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla fue el **Padre de nuestra independencia**. Amó al pueblo, luchó por él y le inculcó ideas de libertad y justicia.” (pág. 58)

for what it seems to be flames is an impressive image, that after many years, can be impregnated in the minds of Mexicans and functions as a national identity builder.

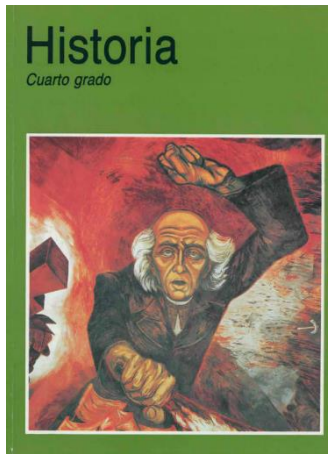


Figure 5 Cover picture of History book with Hidalgo in flames

Chapter 10 “The Independence” begins with another full-page image of Hidalgo carrying the Independence banner. In the subchapter called “El grito de Dolores” [The cry of Dolores] (page 89) the text narrates how Hidalgo and Allende rushed the date of their rebellion. On Sunday, September 16 at dawn, Hidalgo had the church bells ring to bring the people together. He reminded them of the injustices they suffered and encouraged them to fight against “the bad government”. In this generation, the text includes Allende on the decision of rushing the date to start the rebellion, is not just Hidalgo who is in charge of the decision. Hidalgo is not the sole hero anymore.

There are some differences in this book compared to the previously analyzed generation. For example, in 1960, Miguel Hidalgo, who has been hailed as Father of the *Patria*, has almost a complete page of the chapter dedicated to his biography, arguing that “thanks to his actions, always filled with kindness, he earned the love of the people”. On the other hand, in the generation of 1993, there is only a textbox in different color with a couple of paragraphs giving context on who was Hidalgo. In it, it is mentioned where he was born, and that in 1810, he was 57 years old. It also describes him pointing out that “he was cultured, an entrepreneur with advanced ideas, loved in the region. He was concerned that people would live better, and he taught his followers to cultivate the vine, to raise silkworms, build irrigation canals, set up pottery and brick factories, and organized workshops of various kinds. He was a happy person, who organized a music band and sometimes when he put on plays with his friends<sup>51</sup>. This

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<sup>51</sup> “Era culto, emprendedor, de ideas avanzadas, querido en la región. Le preocupada que la gente viviera mejor y enseñó a sus fieles a cultivar la vid, criar gusanos de seda, construir canales de riego, montar fábricas de loza y

generation paints an image of a good-hearted man, who was loved by the community but less idealized than the generation from 1960. Miguel Hidalgo is portrayed as more human that enjoyed music and theatre with his friends, rather than a saint who's mission in life was to save the indians.

In page 94, in the left side of the page there is a textbox called “Against slavery”. In this textbox it refers to the decree against slavery. “During the Viceroyalty, there were slaves throughout America. *Hidalgo ordered* (emphasis added) in Valladolid to release them. In 1810, he promulgated in Guadalajara an official statement abolishing slavery”<sup>52</sup>. The first point in the document said “that all slave owners must release them, within ten days, otherwise death penalty”.<sup>53</sup> The text points out that Hidalgo was the one who ordered the release of the slaved. The text also mentions that slavery was suppressed until 1863 in United States, in a superior way that Mexico was way ahead on human rights than its neighbor from the north.

## 2014

Chapter five “The way to independence” begins with a painting from 1834 “Alegoría a la Independencia” where Miguel Hidalgo is stepping on a Spaniard and crowning a criolla woman (mother Patria) while on the other side is Agustín de Iturbide, the consummator of the independence.



Figure 6 *Alegoría a la Independencia* (1834) found in page 166

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de ladrillos, y talleres de distintas clases. Era una persona alegre, que organizó una banda de música y de vez en cuando ponía obras de teatro con sus amigos” (pág. 89)

<sup>52</sup> “Durante el Virreinato, en toda América había esclavos. Hidalgo ordenó en Valladolid ponerlos en libertad. En 1810, promulgó en Guadalajara un bando aboliendo la esclavitud” (pág. 94)

<sup>53</sup> “Que todos los dueños de esclavos deberán darles libertad, dentro del término de diez días, so pena de muerte”

In page 166 the beginning of the independence is described. It states that in 1810 a conspiracy was organized in the city of Querétaro, but someone reported these secret meetings to the viceregal authorities. The authorities ordered the search and arrest of the conspirators. But before they were arrested, Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez managed to send a warning message to Ignacio Allende and Juan Aldama. They both headed to the town of Dolores to meet with Miguel Hidalgo. “Faced with the critical situation, the conspirators decided to start the armed fight”<sup>54</sup>. In the first generation, the text states that Miguel Hidalgo decided to start early the fight, the generation of 1993 indicates that Hidalgo and Allende rushed the date, while this generation argues that “the conspirators” decided to start the armed fight, without emphasis and without making any of the participants a protagonist. It is more of a collective action rather than the achievement of a single person.

The subchapter “The beginning of the war and the participation of Hidalgo and Allende” begins by arguing that Miguel Hidalgo “influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, he was against slavery and social inequalities, and stated that New Spain should be autonomous”<sup>55</sup>. The last generation mentioned that the abolition of slavery was years earlier than the abolishment in the United States implying that Mexico was more advanced in the arenas of inequality and human rights. This generation suggests that Hidalgo did not come up with the abolishment of slavery but was influenced and inspired by the Enlightenment era. This is seen as a result of a cultural product. Discourses of individuality in previous generations are replaced with discourses of culture and inspiration.

The text narrates how Hidalgo summoned the people to gather very early in the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> of September of 1810 to unite and to support the return of Fernando VII and remove the viceregal authority and how Hidalgo managed to attract laborers, miners, peasants, craftsmen, indigenous people, and mestizos, who armed themselves with slings, sticks, machetes, and farming instruments and formed an improvised insurgent army. “Most lacked military training, although under Allende's leadership there were disciplined troops that initially formed the nucleus of the armed uprising”<sup>56</sup>. The emphasis in the discipline and military knowledge shows that this generation gives as much importance to Allende as Hidalgo.

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<sup>54</sup> “Ante la crítica situación, los conspiradores decidieron empezar la lucha armada” (pág. 166)

<sup>55</sup> “influido por las ideas de la Ilustración estaba en contra de la esclavitud y de las desigualdades sociales, y planteaba que Nueva España debía ser autónoma” (pág. 168)

<sup>56</sup> “La mayoría carecía de instrucción militar, aunque bajo el liderazgo de Allende se contó con tropas disciplinadas que inicialmente formaron el núcleo del levantamiento armado” (pág. 169)

“The Insurgent Army, led by Hidalgo *and Allende* (emphasis added) arrived at the city of Guanajuato, where they demanded that the authorities surrender. But the wealthy Spaniards locked themselves up in the city's *alhóndiga*, called Granaditas, to protect themselves”. This generation acknowledges Allende, and makes emphasis on him, while in the past analyzed generations is inferred that it was almost an act of a single brave man, Hidalgo.

“The insurgents seized the building, killed those who had taken refuge there and looted the city. During those days, several inhabitants of Spanish origin were killed without Hidalgo and Allende being able to prevent it”<sup>57</sup>. The text determines that Hidalgo and Allende were not able to prevent the looting and the killing, as to separate them from the action and remove any responsibility from them. It reminds me to a Disney movie when the villain falls or provokes his own death so the hero or the protagonist will not lose purity before the children's eyes. Hidalgo and Allende were heroes, not murderers, they just couldn't stop the angry mob that they led to the city.

The subchapter ends narrating how Allende and other insurgents were imprisoned and shot. After a month of trial, Hidalgo had the same luck. As a warning, the heads of the leaders Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende, Juan Aldama and Mariano Jiménez were put in cages and exhibit in the four corners of the Granaditas *alhóndiga*. “The war did not end there, since Hidalgo *and Allende* (emphasis added) were succeeded by other insurgent leaders who took up their ideology in favor of freedom”<sup>58</sup>. The text again mentions both Hidalgo and Allende, and unlike the generation from 1960, the text does not use “it is said” but states that the four heads were put in cages in every corner of the *alhóndiga*.

A box on the left titled “An interesting fact” states that Miguel Hidalgo published his decree against slavery and shows the same fragment as the last generation where it states that all slave owners must liberate them within 10 days otherwise will receive the death penalty.

While in the first two generations Hidalgo is portrayed as a kind and intelligent man, and give a space to tell his biography, the generation of 1960 dedicates almost two pages and the 1993 generation gives a whole page with memorable heroic images, this generation mentions nothing about Hidalgo's character as a person and refers only to his actions during the outbreak of the

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<sup>57</sup> “Los insurgentes tomaron el edificio, mataron a los que se habían refugiado allí y saquearon la ciudad durante dos días. Durante esos días varios habitantes de origen español fueron asesinados sin que Hidalgo y Allende pudieran evitarlo”. (pág. 169)

<sup>58</sup> “La guerra no terminó ahí, pues a Hidalgo y Allende los sucedieron otros jefes insurgentes que retomaron su ideología en favor de la libertad” (pág. 170)

independence. Furthermore, this generation steals the thunder of Hidalgo, by including Allende in most big decisions.

#### **4.1.2 Benito Juárez**

##### **1960**

The first time Benito Juárez is mentioned in the generation of 1960 is in page 102 where it says that he was part of a Presidential cabinet with men “of liberal ideas and great intelligence and preparation”. Then in page 106, the textbook narrates that when Comonfort left the presidency, according to the law, the presidency corresponded to Benito Juárez, President of the Supreme Court of Justice; but Zuloaga seized power through force of arms. This sparked the fight: “the struggle was fought between the conservative party, determined to *destroy* (emphasis added) the Constitution of 1857, and to keep Zuloaga in government, and the liberal party, *supporter of legality* (emphasis added), represented by the maintenance of constitutional forms and by the presidential magistracy of Benito Juárez”.<sup>59</sup> The book is starting to construct an image of Juárez on a positive manner. He was a “supporter of legality” as opposed to the ones who wanted to “destroy” the constitution.

The book explains how at the beginning of the war, the conservatives took control of Mexico City and obtained several triumphs, Juárez, due to the constant persecution that was made, went to establish his government in Guanajuato and, later, in Guadalajara where he was about to die. He then left for Veracruz and installed his government. Benito Juárez issued in Veracruz several of the Reform Laws. These laws, enacted between 1859 and 1860 included the separation between the Church and the State, the nationalization of the ecclesiastic properties, the creation of a civil registration of births, deaths, and matrimonial acts; the laws also established a freedom of cult and disappearance of monasteries.

The whole page 110 is dedicated to the origins of Benito Juárez. The text tells Benito was born in a little town in Oaxaca in 1806. His parents were poor and humble indians. He was an orphan since a young age and lived with his uncle, but he left his house when he was 11 years old

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<sup>59</sup> . “La pugna se libraba entre el partido conservador, resuelto a destruir la Constitución de 1857, y a mantener a Zuloaga en el gobierno, y el partido liberal, sostenedor de la legalidad, representada por el mantenimiento de las formas constitucionales y por la magistratura presidencial de Benito Juárez” (pág. 102)

“porque aspiraba a que su vida mejorase” [because he aspired to a better life] and left to the city of Oaxaca. There, he learned how to read and write in Spanish, he studied and became a lawyer.

“A man of great restlessness and noble ideals, entered politics determined to achieve the triumph of liberal principles and the implementation of a regime of **justice, freedom and equality** for all the inhabitants of Mexico”.<sup>60</sup>

The text continues explaining how before ascending to the Presidency of the Republic, Juárez had held several important positions: he was governor of Oaxaca, a minister in Juan Álvarez's cabinet, and president of the Supreme Court of Justice under the Comonfort government. “He was distinguished by his constant firmness of character and his unyielding righteousness. Besides being a great patriot, he was a great statesman”.<sup>61</sup>

“During the War of the Reform, he had kept intact, amid the most hazardous persecutions, the principle of legality, which he represented. In the Reform Laws he had given expression and legal force to his ideals”.<sup>62</sup>

This page constantly exalts and praises Juárez. From his humble origins to his “unyielding righteousness”, it depicts a patriot and determined man to give Mexicans a better nation.

The book follows up with the French intervention, and the empire of Maximiliano of Habsburg, and asserts that Juárez “defended the national sovereignty and saved the republican regime”. Subsequently Chapter 8 begins in page 124. The chapter is named “the restoration of the Republic” and begins by praising Juárez again: “Thanks to the **patriotism and firmness** of Benito Juárez, in the political and military order, through patriotism and the perseverance of the generals ... the **dignity and sovereignty** of Mexico were saved, a national conscience was awakened in the country and the political **unification of the Mexican people** was achieved”.<sup>63</sup>

“Juárez deserved the applause of all **free countries**. In recognition of his high virtues, he was proclaimed **Meritorious of the Americas** by the Congress of Colombia, a title that was

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<sup>60</sup> “Hombre de grandes inquietudes y de nobles ideales, ingresó a la política resuelto a lograr el triunfo de los principios liberales y la implantación de un régimen de **justicia, libertad e igualdad** para todos los habitantes de México” (pág. 110)

<sup>61</sup> “Lo distinguían la constante firmeza de carácter y su inquebrantable rectitud. Además de gran patriota, era un gran estadista” (pág. 110)

<sup>62</sup> “Durante la Guerra de Reforma había mantenido intacto, en medio de las más azarosas persecuciones, el principio de la legalidad, que él representaba. En las Leyes de Reforma había dado expresión y fuerza jurídica a sus ideales” (pág. 110)

<sup>63</sup> “Gracias al **patriotismo** y la **firmeza** de Benito Juárez, en el orden político y en el orden militar, por obra del **patriotismo** y la **perseverancia** de los generales...se salvó la **dignidad** y la **soberanía** de México, despertó en el país conciencia nacional y se logró la **unificación política del pueblo mexicano**.”



recognized by several Latin-American governments. Even in Napoleon III's France he had enthusiastic admirers".<sup>64</sup>

The chapter then proceeds stating fragments of his manifesto, including his most famous quote: "That the people and the government respect the rights of all. Among individuals, as among nations, **the respect for the rights of others is Peace**".<sup>65</sup>

The subchapter "the new government of Juárez" narrates when Juárez stopped being Acting president and became Constitutional President and lists some of the decisions and achievements from his government, one decision was to reduce the army. The book justifies the decision by saying "it was the only way to achieve real savings in public spending". The text also mentions his efforts to pacify the country, where he took legal decisions to strengthen the country, but clarifying that he did this without violating the citizen rights.

The chapter keeps listing his actions as President, for example that he wanted "to maintain complete **freedom of the press and freedom of opinion**"<sup>66</sup>. He also commanded a Penal code to guarantee the comply of the citizen rights, and reestablished diplomatic relations with European countries "with the condition that it be done on the basis of **strict justice, mutual interest and due reciprocity**"<sup>67</sup>. According to the book, he also boosted the country's economy and laid the bases for a public education and declared all education free and laic.

Afterwards, the book comments on the election of 1871, in which none of the candidates had the absolute majority of the votes and explains that back then, the Congress would designate the President if that was the case. The Congress chose Benito Juárez, who had the most votes, but General Porfirio Díaz and others were not happy with this decision and another armed conflict arise. Benito Juárez died in 1872 in consequence of a heart attack.

"Grand until the last moment, the **knight of legality** and the Reform, the defender of **national sovereignty**, the restorer of the **Republic**, did not fall defeated by those who, going outside the

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<sup>64</sup> "Juárez mereció el aplauso de **todos los pueblos libres**. En reconocimiento de su altas virtudes, fue proclamado **Benemérito de las Américas** por el Congreso de Colombia, título que le fue reconocido por varios gobiernos hispanoamericanos. Aun en la Francia de Napoleón III tuvo admiradores entusiastas" (pág. 124)

<sup>65</sup> "Que el pueblo y el gobierno respeten los derechos de todos. Entre los individuos, como entre las naciones, **el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz**"

<sup>66</sup> "mantener la más completa **libertad de prensa y opinión**" (pág. 126)

<sup>67</sup> con la condición de que se hiciera tomando como base la **estricta justicia, el mutuo interés y la debida reciprocidad**" (ídem)

law, aspired to overthrow him. His death surprised him so spirited, so determined and as firm as he had been in all his life”.<sup>68</sup>

The book does not mention a single negative aspect of Juárez and wraps up the chapter with what appears to be an ode for the former President. Once again, the chapter leaves no doubt that Juárez was a great “hero”.

### 1993

Chapter 14 “The Reform laws” starts with a big picture of Benito Juárez from 1860. Later, in page 122, Juárez is mentioned once again when the text shows the first three articles of the law on freedom of worship that he issued. The first article is about the freedom of choosing Catholicism or other religions that had been established in the country, and the second and third are about how the church members must join only voluntarily and manage their own religion, as long as it follows the law.

In page 124, there is another picture of Juárez and a textbox in the side titled “The thought of Juárez” and says as follows:

“The man who lacks what is necessary to feed his family sees the education of his children as a remote good, or as an obstacle to obtaining a livelihood. Instead of sending them to school, he uses them to take care of the house or to rent his weak personal work. If that man had some comforts; If his daily work produced any utility, he would make sure that his children were educated and received solid instruction in any of the branches of human knowledge. The desire to know and to enlighten oneself is innate in the heart of man”.<sup>69</sup>

In the same page, there is another big textbox where Juárez himself narrates how he went to school. In the story he tells how he had the bad luck of not knowing his parents, “indians of the primitive race of the country” and how he lost his grandparents shortly after. Because his uncle was poor, Benito had to work in the field from a young age. Benito tells how in some idle moments his uncle would teach him how to read and told him about the importance of learning

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<sup>68</sup> “Grande hasta el último momento, el **paladín de la legalidad** y de la Reforma, el defensor de la **soberanía nacional**, el restaurador de **la República**, no cayó vencido por quienes, saliéndose de la ley, aspiraban a derrocarlo. La muerte lo sorprendió tan animoso, tan resuelto y tan firme como había sido él en toda su vida” (pág. 126)

<sup>69</sup> “El hombre que carece de lo preciso para alimentar a su familia, ve la instrucción de sus hijos como un bien remoto, o como un obstáculo para conseguir sustento. En vez de destinarlos a la escuela, se sirve de ellos para el cuidado de la casa o para alquilar su débil trabajo personal. Si ese hombre tuviera algunas comodidades; si su trabajo diario le produjera alguna utilidad, el cuidaría de que sus hijos se educasen y recibiesen una instrucción sólida en cualquiera de los ramos del saber humano. El deseo de saber y de ilustrarse es innato en el corazón del hombre” (pág. 124)

Spanish. His uncle also warned him about the great difficulty for poor and indian people to succeed in any career other than the ecclesiastic.

Benito continues narrating how there were no schools in his little town, so the kids of the family that could afford it would take them to the city to work in houses of rich people, where they would teach them how to read and write. So even though he was disgusted by the idea of being separated from his uncle, one night he escaped from home and went to the city of Oaxaca and stayed at a house where his sister worked as a cook. In the city, he met a “pious and very honest man” and “even though he wore the habit and was very dedicated to religious practices” he was very close to the youth. That man, Antonio Salanueva, offered to send Benito to school so he could learn how to read and write in Spanish.

This generation shows how you do not need to write poems or odes and call him “a noble and patriot” man or a “knight of legality” to depict the character of the person. With the first passage, along with the narration of the struggles he lived to get an education, the reader can understand how important free education was for Juárez.

There is another textbox in page 130 along with another picture of him. This time, the text is not narrated in first person, but it also mentions part of his biography. It mentions where and when he was born, and where he studied. It says that when he was 28 years old, he graduated as a lawyer in the Institute of Science and Arts of Oaxaca, he was a council of the town hall, and a congressman, then he became governor of the state of Oaxaca and was named Director of the Institute where he studied. The text mentions as well that he was a Minister of Justice, Acting President and Constitutional. So far, the text differs to a great extent from the last generation. This text looks more like a description of a curriculum vitae rather than an insight of who he was. But, just at the last paragraph, it states “Juárez's adherence to Mexican laws and the principles of the Reform, his serenity, his firmness, make him exemplary”<sup>70</sup>. In the last sentence is the first time they use adjectives to describe him, which contrasts greatly to the last generation in the way that every word is used to praise him.

There is a last big textbox that can be found in page 132 with the title “Respect to the right”. It is a big part of Juárez' manifesto to the nation from 1867 on the occasion of the triumph of the Republic over the French intervention. In the manifesto Juárez congratulates and thanks Mexicans for having fought for their nation and achieved victory. “The good sons of Mexico have

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<sup>70</sup> “El apego de Juárez a las leyes mexicanas y a los principios de la Reforma, su serenidad, su firmeza, lo hacen ejemplar” (pág. 130)

achieved it, fighting alone, without the help of anyone, without resources, without the necessary elements for the war. They have shed their blood with sublime patriotism, facing all sacrifices, rather than consenting to the loss of the Republic and freedom”.<sup>71</sup>

Juárez also addresses Mexicans by telling them “Mexicans: Let us now direct all our efforts to obtain and consolidate the benefits of peace. Under its auspices, it will be effective the protection of the laws and authorities for the rights of all the inhabitants of the Republic”.<sup>72</sup>

The chapter ends with Benito’s famous quote “Between the individuals, as among nations, the respect for the rights of others is peace”.

Even though this generation is written very differently from that of 1960, the patriotism is still there. Perhaps in a more subtle way, where the textbook is not biased using adjectives or implicitly saying who are "the good guys" or the "bad guys" but by showing fragments of passages or old texts and using the necessary tools to exalt that feeling of nationalism.

## **2014**

In this generation, as previously explained, some topics are taught until 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and not 4<sup>th</sup> grade as most analyzed chapters. This is the case when studying the life of Benito Juárez. Having said that, the second chapter of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade history book is called “From the Reform to the Restored Republic” and it presents a big mural by the painter José Clemente Orozco that takes two pages of the book. In it, several images can be appreciated, like a soldier whipping a devilish priest; however, the protagonist of the mural is certainly Benito Juárez with his huge head taking over most of the painting.

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<sup>71</sup> Lo han alcanzado los buenos hijos de México, combatiendo solos, sin auxilio de nadie, sin recursos, sin los elementos necesarios para la guerra. Han derramado su sangre con sublime patriotismo, arrojando todos los sacrificios, antes que consentir en la pérdida de la República y de la libertad” (pág. 132)

<sup>72</sup> Mexicanos: Encaminemos ahora todos nuestros esfuerzos a obtener y a consolidar los beneficios de la paz. Bajo sus auspicios, será eficaz la protección de las leyes y de las autoridades para los derechos de todos los habitantes de la República” (pág. 132)



Figure 7 Mural of Benito Juárez by Orozco (1948) found in page 132

The chapter explains the Reform war, also called the Three-year war, that began in 1858 when Félix Zuloaga rebelled against the liberal government and wanted to write a new constitution. “After the outbreak of the war, President Comonfort was forced to leave the country. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, *he was replaced* (emphasis added) by the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Benito Juárez. The conservatives seized the capital and appointed Félix Zuloaga president. Therefore, the country had two presidents: Félix Zuloaga, on the conservative side, who located his headquarters in Mexico City, and Benito Juárez, on the liberal side who ruled from Veracruz”<sup>73</sup>. In the generation of 1960, the text presents a constantly prosecuted Juárez that had to run away and establish a government in the city of Guanajuato, then in Guadalajara, where was almost killed, and finally established his government in Veracruz; however, this generation portrays a certain kind of agreement between the two sides, almost like they agreed and compromised to both be presidents at the same time.

“The Reform War divided the population into two sides. During the fighting, both armies resorted to forced conscription to swell their ranks. This fight was the most brutal of all the wars that the country experienced during the 19th century. Finally, the Liberals won, and in 1861, Benito Juárez made his triumphal entry into Mexico City to establish his government”<sup>74</sup>. There is no bias in this text. The chapter does not make you root for the liberals as in previous generations, it just states there were two sides and eventually one won.

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<sup>73</sup> “Tras el estallido de la guerra el presidente Comonfort se vio obligado a dejar el país. De acuerdo a lo establecido en la Constitución, lo sustituyó el presidente de la Suprema Corte de Justicia, Benito Juárez. Por su parte, los conservadores se apoderaron de la capital y nombraron presidente a Félix Zuloaga. De esta forma, el país contó con dos presidentes: Félix Zuloaga, por el bando conservador, quien ubicó su sede en la ciudad de México, y Benito Juárez, del lado liberal quien gobernó desde Veracruz” (pág. 56)

<sup>74</sup> “La guerra de Reforma dividió a la población en dos bandos. Durante la lucha, ambos ejércitos recurrieron al reclutamiento forzoso para engrosar sus filas. Esta lucha fue la más brutal de todas las guerras que el país vivió durante el siglo XIX. Finalmente los liberales vencieron, y en 1861, Benito Juárez hizo su entrada triunfal a la ciudad de México para establecer su gobierno”

In page 62 there is a subchapter named “Benito Juárez and the liberals” along with a portrait of Juárez. The subchapter mentions that the liberals that came to power, were almost all civilians, not military. The main objective of the group was to change the way of governing, but they had differences among themselves on how to do it. The text states that Benito Juárez stands out in this group of liberals and proceeds to give context of who he was. “A Zapotec indigenous born in San Pablo de Guelatao, in the mountain range of Oaxaca. He was a deputy and governor of his native state, he held the position of president of the supreme court of justice. Benito Juárez also held the presidency of the country for 14 years”. As well as “his determination to promote liberal reforms and to defend the sovereignty of the nation at all costs made him one of the most important figures in the history of Mexico”. <sup>75</sup>The text does acknowledge that he was an important figure, but never calls him or implies he is a “hero”.

The subchapter ends by concluding that the legacy of the liberals continues to our days, for example, the respect for the sovereignty of other nations is synthesized in the phrase of Benito Juárez "Among individuals, as among nations, the respect for the rights of others is peace".

## **4.2 The villains: Santa Anna and Porfirio Díaz**

### **4.2.1 Santa Anna**

#### **1960**

“Independent Mexico” is the fourth chapter of the history book in this generation. In it, there is a subchapter titled “The government of Santa Anna and Gómez Farías” which begins by explaining how after President Bustamante was forced to leave power, there were new elections in which President Antonio López de Santa Anna and Vice-president Valentín Gómez Farías were elected, but because “Santa Anna, deep down, was an enemy of the liberal ideas” left the government in the hands of Gómez Farías and left to live in his ranch in Veracruz. Later, because the conservatives asked him to, he returned to power.

The sixth chapter “From Santa Anna to the Reform” starts with a subchapter titled “The last dictatorship of Santa Anna” that explains how after the war of 1847, disorganization and

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<sup>75</sup> “Su empeño por impulsar las reformas liberales y por defender a toda costa la soberanía de la nación lo convirtió en una de las figuras más importantes en la historia de México”

internal struggles continued in Mexico, which made it possible for Santa Anna to seize power once again.

“Antonio López de Santa Anna was born in Jalapa, Veracruz in 1790. Turbulent and quarrelsome as a young man, he was characterized by cunning and audacity. He liked cockfighting and gambling; he never had good mores”<sup>76</sup>.

“He was perhaps - as described by the writer Victoriano Salado Álvarez- too tall. His face, not at all attractive, was distinguished by its grim and hardness: his color was dull, his nose was thick and vulgar, his mouth was wide, with a hanging lower lip.”<sup>77</sup>This description is unmistakably of one of a villain, one that can stop kids from sleeping at night.

“Santa Anna had a pasty, thick, imperative voice, like one of someone accustomed to command and be obeyed, although he knew how to tone it down and soften it, in order to attract or impress with it the people around him and the crowd”.<sup>78</sup>This paragraph suggests that he was sneaky and good at manipulating the ones around him.

The chapter continues by mentioning that “Santa Anna's government was a **despotic dictatorship**, because he not only exercised it with unlimited powers, but also interpreted them as he pleased. He made the Congress grant him the title of **Most Serene Highness**; he persecuted all honest soldiers, politicians, and journalists; he levied excessive and irrational taxes, some as absurd as those levied on doors and windows]<sup>79</sup>. The text affirms that without even consulting Congress, Santa Anna signed the Treaty of La Mesilla by which, in exchange for ten million pesos, the United States bought the territory of La Mesilla from Mexico.

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<sup>76</sup> “Antonio López de Santa Anna había nacido en Jalapa, Veracruz en 1790. Turbulento y pendenciero cuando joven, lo caracterizaban la astucia y la audacia. Gustaba de las peleas de gallos y del juego; nunca tuvo buenas costumbres” (pág. 100)

<sup>77</sup> “Era quizá -según lo describe el escritor Victoriano Salado Álvarez- alto en demasía. Su rostro, nada atractivo, se singularizaba por lo torvo y duro: atezado el color, la nariz gruesa y vulgar, la boca ancha, con el labio inferior colgante...” (pág. 100)

<sup>78</sup> “Tenía Santa Anna voz pastosa, gruesa, imperativa, como la de quien está habituado a mandar y ser obedecido, si bien sabía matizarla y suavizarla, y atraer o impresionar con ella a las personas que lo rodeaban y a las multitudes (ídem)

<sup>79</sup> “el gobierno de Santa Anna fue una **dictadura despótica**, porque no sólo la ejerció con facultades sin límite, sino interpretando éstas a su antojo. Hizo que el Congreso le otorgara el título de **Alteza serenísima**; persiguió a todos los militares, políticos y periodistas honrados; cobró impuestos excesivos e irracionales, algunos tan absurdos como los que gravaban las puertas y las ventanas” (pág. 100)

## 1993

“The last government of Santa Anna” is a subchapter in page 119 under the Chapter of “The Reform laws” that narrates how Santa Anna had an intense political activity in the country from 1833 to 1855. The last time he was president was in 1855 when he was brought from exile.

“Santa Anna ruled as a dictator: he suppressed individual rights and liberties and imposed his will. He sold the territory of La Mesilla to the United States, he taxed windows and dogs, he attended dances and cockfights, and he forced everyone to call him His *Serene Highness*. With all this, discontent became the general rule”.<sup>80</sup>

“Santa Anna was vain and fickle; but also, cunning, able to organize armies with almost no money and brave in combat. He was not a good ruler, but he knew how to control the situation and endear himself to the people”<sup>81</sup>. Generally, this generation has not been so descriptive or used many adjectives to refer to people, but here is an exception where it portrays a very negative and detailed image of the ruler.

The text finishes by referring to the Ayutla revolution, where the dictator had to leave Mexico. However, he returned after the death of Juárez (1872) to die in his country in 1876.

## 2014

This generation presents a subchapter titled “The Ayutla Revolution” in it, is mentioned that “in 1853, after having held the presidency 10 times, Antonio López de Santa Anna was convinced by the conservatives to return to power. During his tenure, several of his orders caused discontent in society, for example, he eliminated *some* (emphasis added) individual rights and freedoms, persecuted his opponents, and sanctioned those who criticized him, thereby limiting freedom of expression; He also shut down the Congress, sold the Mesilla territory to the United States, and appropriated the assets and resources of the states. A disposition that caused great disagreement was the decree by which he named himself "Serene Highness" and gave himself unlimited power to govern for as long as he deemed necessary”<sup>82</sup>. Even though the text does

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<sup>80</sup> “Santa Anna gobernó como dictador: suprimió los derechos y libertades individuales, e impuso su voluntad. Vendió a los Estados Unidos el territorio de La Mesilla, cobró impuestos sobre ventanas y perros, se dedicó a asistir a bailes y peleas de gallos, e hizo que lo llamaran *Alteza serenísima*. Con todo eso, el descontento se generalizó” (pág. 119)

<sup>81</sup> “Santa Anna era vanidoso e inconstante; pero también astuto, capaz de organizar ejércitos casi sin dinero y valiente en el combate. No fue un buen gobernante, pero sabía dominar la situación y hacerse querer por la gente”. (pág. 120)

<sup>82</sup> “En 1853, después de haber ocupado 10 veces la presidencia, Antonio López de Santa Anna fue convencido por los conservadores de regresar al poder. Durante su mandato, varias de sus órdenes causaron descontento en la sociedad, por ejemplo, eliminó algunos derechos y libertades individuales, persiguió a sus opositores y



list all the failures of Santa Anna's last tenure, is not as aggressive as the last analyzed generations. For example, it mentions that he only eliminated "some" individual rights. Or it mentions that he sanctioned those who criticized him only, while in the generation from 1960 the text alleges that he prosecuted "all honest" military, politicians, and journalists.

In the right corner of the bottom of the page 51, there is a small textbox called "An interesting fact" that states Santa Anna ordered that taxes should be collected for each window that a house had, arguing that in this way the size of the house could be calculated and the amount of taxes to be paid fixed.

Lastly, in page 53 there is a fragment of the original manuscript of the Ayutla plan of 1854 "That the permanence of Mr. Antonio López de Santa Anna in power is a constant threat to public liberties, since, with the greatest scandal, under his government individual guarantees have been trampled (...) That Mexicans (...) are in imminent danger of being subjugated by the force of absolute power (...) That having to preserve the integrity of the territory of the Republic, he has sold a considerable part of it, sacrificing our brothers of the northern border, who from now on will be foreigners in their own homeland (...)"<sup>83</sup>. Although the text does not explicitly give a posture, it does give enough material for the reader to interpret and conclude on the impact of the figure in the history of Mexico.

## **4.2.2 Porfirio Díaz**

### **1960**

The first government of Porfirio Díaz is described in page 136. The textbook indicates the major events during this period. Díaz inaugurated the Mexican railroad; he avowed the constitutional reform of non-reelection, re-established diplomatic relations with France, improved the national postal service, and the press had unrestricted freedom.

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sancionó a quienes lo criticaban, con lo cual limitó la libertad de expresión; además clausuró el Congreso, vendió el territorio de la Mesilla a Estados Unidos, y se apropió de los bienes y recursos de los estados. Una disposición que provocó gran inconformidad fue el decreto por el cual se autonombró "Alteza Serenísima" y se otorgó poder ilimitado para gobernar durante el tiempo que creyera necesario" (pág. 51)

<sup>83</sup>. "Que la permanencia de D. Antonio López de Santa Anna en el poder es un amago constante para las libertades públicas, puesto que, con el mayor escándalo, bajo su gobierno se han hollado las garantías individuales [...] Que los mexicanos [...] se hallan en peligro inminente a ser subyugados por la fuerza del poder absoluto [...] Que debiendo conservar la integridad del territorio de la República, ha vendido una parte considerable de ella, sacrificando a nuestros hermanos de la frontera Norte, que en adelante serán extranjeros en su propia patria [...]" (pág. 53)

So far, atypically from this generation, the text does not use adjectives and just lists the most important achievements from Porfirio's government, who seems like a good ruler at this point. Nevertheless, in page 147, the chapter "The Porfirian dictatorship: Non-reelection and reelection" begins by stating he assumed power again in December of 1884. The text emphasizes that four years before, Díaz had told the congress "...I will never admit a reelection candidacy, even if it is not forbidden by our political code...".

"But, as president again, he did not sustain those words, nor did he justify the fact that he had previously taken up arms against the reelection of Benito Juárez. On the contrary, in order to remain in the presidency, he had the Constitution reformed three more times, and thus he was president for more than 30 years. He was reelected six consecutive times".

"The reelections of Porfirio Diaz had many consequences contrary to the political and social advancement of Mexico: first, because in order to achieve his reelections, Diaz became a **dictator**, that is, a ruler subject only to his will. Second, because Diaz made his **dictatorship** almost solely for the material development of the country"<sup>84</sup>. The text emphasizes the words "dictator" and "dictatorship" on bold to make it more memorable. The text marks the evolution of Porfirio's first tenure turning into a dictatorship. Here would fit the famous quote coined from the Batman movie *The Dark Knight* (2008) "You either die a hero, or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain".

The chapter states that Porfirio Díaz needed that the people that were to take power positions had to represent the political interests of the Diaz regime and not the people's. Besides, Díaz believed it was indispensable "to impose **peace and order at all costs**; that is, not the peace and order that are based on *respect for the rights of others* (emphasis added), on the application of the law, on the rule of justice, on understanding for the ideas of all, on a humane attitude towards the pain of the needy, but the peace and order that are obtained through procedures contrary to all these sources of true order and true peace"<sup>85</sup>. The emphasis is that Porfirio wanted to "impose" peace and order, which is a good thing but with the negative counterpart of "at all costs". It is also important to notice that it states that it was not a peace "based on the

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<sup>84</sup> "Las reelecciones de Porfirio Díaz tuvieron muchas consecuencias contrarias al adelanto político y social de México: primero, porque para lograr sus reelecciones, Díaz se convirtió en **dictador**, esto es, en gobernante sujeto solo a su voluntad. Segundo porque Diaz dio a su **dictadura** como fin casi único el desarrollo material del país" (pág. 148)

<sup>85</sup> "imponer **la paz y el orden a todo trance**; es decir, no la paz y el orden que se fundan en el respeto al derecho ajeno, en la aplicación de la ley, en el imperio de la justicia, en la comprensión para las ideas de todos, en la actitud humana ante el dolor de los necesitados, sino la paz y el orden que se obtienen con procedimientos contrarios a todas esas fuentes del verdadero orden y la verdadera paz". (pág. 148)

respect for the rights of others” which is written in the same manner as the famous quote of Benito Juárez “the respect for the rights of others is Peace” Every hero needs its counterpart, so here Díaz is portrayed as the other side of the coin from the hero Juárez.

It was also indispensable for Díaz to “count on the collaboration of the **rich social sectors** and with the influx of **foreign capitalists**, all of whom had to be satisfied by handing over the country's economy and allowing them to increase their wealth and expand their businesses, even if this was at the expense of the poor, and, many times, by dispossession of the weak”<sup>86</sup>. The text portrays the rich and the foreigners in a villainy manner where they are only satisfied by taking over all the country's economy smashing the poor and the weak.

The chapter continues: “thus, for *more than a quarter of a century* (emphasis added), the immense majority of Mexicans were prevented from using their will and their just aspirations in the political and social channeling of their country. They could not even do so with their dissent or their protests, because, systematically, the dictatorship kept them silenced or stopped them at the first outbreak. Under the dictator, there was no freedom of the press, or of speech, or of assembly, except that which could not harm him. Dissident intellectuals were persecuted, imprisoned, forced into exile. Those who dared in the countryside, in the mines, in the factories, to fight for their rights, were reduced by being turned into soldiers, deported, or subdued with all the violence of arms. The most disadvantaged were kept quiet and docile under the spiritual **power of the Catholic clergy**”. The choice of words of saying “more than a quarter of a century” instead of the exact number of years is used to present the period as a very long time. It does not have the same impact to say 31 years than to throw the word “century” in there.

A section called “what you must remember” appears reminding the student that under the Díaz dictatorship, political parties and popular suffrage disappeared; the will of the dictator and his political interests prevailed over the will of the nation and the interests of the great majority; peace and order were imposed, violating individual rights, the law, equity, and justice. The book stresses this point repeating the actions of Díaz to impregnate this image in the children's mind.

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<sup>86</sup> contar con la colaboración de los **sectores sociales ricos** y con la afluencia de **capitalistas extranjeros**, a todos los cuales había que tener satisfechos entregándoles la economía del país y dejándoles que aumentaran su riqueza y ensancharan sus negocios, aunque ello fuera a costa de los pobres, y, muchas veces, mediante el despojo de los débiles” (pág. 148)

Later in the text, the main aspects of the “Porfirian dictatorship” are presented. The textbook calls the nearly 30 years of ruling of Díaz “the Porfirian dictatorship”, but it mentions that friends of the General called it “The Porfirian peace” and called him “the peace hero”.

In the economical aspect, the text mentions that during Díaz’ dictatorship, the doors were opened to foreign capital, which very soon took over a large part of the national wealth. It also mentions that the country began to develop some industries, *although* (emphasis added) in many cases with disproportionate benefits for foreign investors.

In the social aspect, the middle class achieved some opportunities; *but* (emphasis added) the great majority of the people lived in precarious and painful conditions. “Foreign land clearing companies and Mexican landowners took much of the peasants' land and imposed excessive working hours in exchange for miserable wages”.

In the cultural aspect, the public peace that prevailed in Mexico during the 30 years of the Porfirian regime favored the development of the arts and literature. *Unfortunately*, the people could hardly enjoy the benefits of culture since the ignorance of the masses was so great that the majority of the population could neither read nor write.

In the material aspect, the text begins by saying “as was to be expected, over the years, under Porfirio Díaz, who was also a good administrator, many important material improvements were made”. It does compliment Porfirio's good administrative qualities, but it also implies that it is expected that over the years, material improvements will automatically happen, and is not necessarily an achievement of him.

In the last paragraphs the constant is that Díaz’ accomplishments are undervalued, the text removes all credit from Díaz. Yes, the economy grew, but it only benefited the higher class, yes there was a lot of culture and arts, but it didn’t make a difference because the people couldn’t appreciate it since they did not know how to read or write, and so on.

The next chapter is the Mexican Revolution and begins by arguing that after enduring the prolonged dictatorship exercised by the regime of General Díaz, the people felt the desire for a more just social order.

In 1910 Porfirio made a statement to an American journalist named Creelman saying that he considered Mexico ready for democracy, that he would gladly see the formation of political parties, and that he was willing to support the candidate elected by the majority of Mexicans.

“A brave man of noble spirit, Francisco I. Madero, was the candidate seen with the greatest sympathy, he toured the country and his enthusiasm and sincerity with which he spoke attracted many supporters”<sup>87</sup> But when the election date approached, he was imprisoned. Thus, the 1910 elections were a mockery of the people. Porfirio Díaz proclaimed himself the winner and continued to occupy the Presidency. After that, the Revolution was unleashed. Eventually, Porfirio Díaz resigned the Presidency and left the country. He fled to Paris with his family where he died in 1915. New elections were held, and “this time the voice of the people was respected” and Francisco I. Madero assumed the presidency.

The book portrays Madero as the antagonist of Díaz. It narrates the story as a fairytale where the charming brave “prince” of noble spirit comes to save the people, but the unjust “king” imprisons him, probably in a tower. The people fight to take him out of power, and he has to flee to a faraway land, where he dies in exile. The noble prince becomes the new “king”, and everyone lived happily ever after.

## 1993

Just by opening the chapter, it is visible that this generation will be kinder to the image of Porfirio Díaz. The chapter is called “El Porfiriato” which contrasts the last generation that referred to the same period as “the Porfirian dictatorship”. The cover of the chapter includes a big painting of a landscape with a railroad, an oil painting with a criolla woman, and the famous Mexican Catrina (the skull used in day of the death) by Guadalupe Posada. There is a textbox in the bottom that says that the three artists marked a new direction for Mexican art. These images represent modernism and progress with the railroad, art with the paintings of course, and identity with the image of the Catrina, which is a huge symbol that has crossed borders.

The chapter begins by claiming that Benito Juárez, and the President after him, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, knew that the country needed a rebuild in agriculture and industry, they needed to build railroads and populate vast tracts of land where no one lived, but their plans could not be realized because they had no money. The text gives this background to legitimize Porfirio’s main goals. If Benito Juárez, the great and adored leader wanted this, it was definitely a good thing.

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<sup>87</sup> “Un hombre valiente y de noble espíritu, Francisco I. Madero, fue el candidato visto con mayores simpatías, recorrió el país. Su entusiasmo y sinceridad con que hablaba le atrajeron muchos partidarios” (pág. 156)

Right after, in page 136, the subchapter titled “the Porfirian peace” begins. Last generation determined that only Porfirio Díaz’ friends called this period that way. This subchapter narrates how Porfirio took up arms to protest when Juárez was reelected, but he failed, afterwards, he did the same when Lerdo de Tejada looked for reelection but this time he succeeded and took power.

“The Mexican people were tired of the riots and the insecurity. In addition, Mexico needed foreign capital, because it had no money, and to attract it, was indispensable that there be tranquility”.<sup>88</sup> Mexico was tired of riots and needed money, it sounds like Porfirio Díaz’ strategy is perfect for the country’s needs.

The book describes that with an “iron fist”, Diaz imposed peace and was *concerned* (emphasis added) with making the government function better "little politics and much administration" was the motto of his time. Diaz managed to maintain order by means of the police and the army. Bandits were persecuted as well as any attempt of opposition. The text shows a Díaz that was strict, but he cared about having a good functioning government. The book also presents bandits and the opposition in the same level.

“With order, work increased, and economic development became possible, since the country had resources and entrepreneurs could make profits”. The text assesses that Porfirio’s strategy was working since the economy was flourishing. “However, as the years went by, discontent grew over the misery in which most of the people lived and because Díaz had been in power for too long every time it was more difficult to maintain order”. The textbook suggests that the people were discontent because it was difficult to maintain the order, not because Díaz had been too long in power allowing them to live in misery.

The next subchapter is called “the Porfirian prosperity” where it tells how during the Díaz administration, several ports were rehabilitated, and 20,000 kilometers of railroads were laid. Railroads facilitated commercial exchange with the United States and in the country. The mail and telegraphs were extended throughout the country. Banks were founded, the government put its finances in order, by collecting taxes regularly and paid the country's debts. This allowed for the progress of agriculture, commerce, mining, and various industries such as the brewing, tobacco, and textile industries to grow extensively.

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<sup>88</sup> “El pueblo mexicano estaba cansado de las revueltas y la inseguridad. Además, México necesitaba capital extranjero, porque no tenía dinero, y para atraerlo era indispensable que hubiera tranquilidad” (pág. 136)

The text continues by saying that Mexico had an economic growth never seen before. “But this development disproportionately favored the few Mexicans and foreigners who had money to invest. Inequality became greater and greater”. The text concludes that the progress and the development favored the rich. Porfirio did not favor them as the previous generation states, it was the progress.

The next subchapter is called “society and culture” in which describes how in the first years of independence, the country was very poorly communicated. Travel was by stagecoach, horseback or on foot, on bad roads plagued by robbers. The text contrasts the previous statement by saying that During the Porfiriato, railroads and telegraphs transformed life. Travel became faster, more comfortable, and safer.

There is a textbox in the side of the page pointing out that in 1852, the stagecoach trip from Mexico City to Veracruz lasted three and a half days. In 1872, by rail the travel time was approximately 16 hours. Today by bus it takes only six hours.

“Public education was greatly expanded; more and more people were able to study a career and a middle class of professionals began to emerge in the cities. Many more people learned to read, and this allowed new newspapers, magazines and books to appear”. This paragraph also differs from the last generation that alleged that most people did not know how to read or write.

The textbook continues praising how peace led to the advancement of science and the arts. Academies, museums, and artistic and scientific societies were founded. Theaters were built, in which Mexican and European companies performed. It also mentions how musicians created compositions with deep popular roots. There were great novelists, poets, chroniclers, and storytellers.

The chapter is full of pictures of people working in factories or in the land, paintings of architecture and the railroad and a map of Mexico showing the places where there were railways, telegraph cables, oil, or agricultural development.

There is a small textbox in the bottom that says “at the end of the Porfiriato period, there was a climate of repression, evidence of this was the way in which journalists who criticized the regime were persecuted”<sup>89</sup>. The text is vague by saying “there was a climate of repression” but

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<sup>89</sup> “a fines del Porfiriato se vivía en un clima de represión, de eso da muestra la manera en la que se persiguió a los periodistas que criticaban el régimen” (pág. 139)

does not affirm “Porfirio Díaz repressed the people”. “Journalists were persecuted” but omits saying persecuted by whom.

The last subchapter is named “The Porfirist dictatorship”. Here, finally the text acknowledges the dictatorship by calling it that. The text in the subchapter says that the governors and local authorities had almost no power in the days of Porfirio Díaz. He made all the decisions. The deputies and senators approved all his initiatives. Public opinion should always be grateful. “No confrontation of ideas or opinions was allowed”<sup>90</sup>. Again, the way is written separates the action from Porfirio. “no confrontation was allowed” instead of “Porfirio Díaz did not allow confrontation”.

“The president was reelected several times. For a long time, this formula worked because the country yearned for peace and prosperity and because the Díaz government achieved an impressive economic boost”. This sentence implies that even though the president was reelected several times, he did give the country what it needed and “yearned”, which was peace and prosperity. The wording of “was reelected” implies that the people voted for him instead of saying that Díaz “reelected himself”. The text also mentions that it was “several times” but avoids specifying how many times.

The text continues “Díaz was approaching 80 years of age and it was natural to think that he would soon have to be replaced” implying that the reason that he should be replaced was related more to his age than to his dictatorial actions. “The dictator did not facilitate the succession”, this is the first time that Díaz is named a dictator in the whole book.

The book reports that in 1908, American journalist James Creelman interviewed him, and Díaz told him that Mexico was ready to have free elections. The news filled many people with optimism, and they began to organize to participate in the 1910 elections. ” Díaz *changed his mind* (emphasis added) and was re-elected again, but it was impossible to stop the desire for change”<sup>91</sup>. While the last generation narrates how Díaz incarcerated Madero and made a mockery of the election; this generation simply states that he changed his mind and “was re-elected ”again.

This generation omits his exile and death but there is a big text with a fragment of the interview that Díaz had with Creelman where Porfirio says “I can leave the presidency of Mexico without

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<sup>90</sup> “No se permitía ninguna confrontación de ideas ni opiniones” (pág. 140)

<sup>91</sup> “Díaz cambió de opinión y se reeligió de nuevo, pero ya era imposible detener el deseo de cambio (pág. 140)



any regrets, but what I cannot do is stop serving this country as long as I live” then he welcomes any opposition party and he promises that when his tenure is over, he will stop governing.

Porfirio then proceeds to list all the accomplishments and progress achieved during his government such as the railroad and post service, but then he states “We began by punishing robbery with the death penalty and hastening the execution of the guilty. We ordered that wherever telegraph wires were cut, and the district chief failed to capture the criminal, he should suffer the punishment; and in the event that the cutting occurred on a plantation, the owner, for failure to take preventive measures, should be hanged on the nearest telegraph pole”<sup>92</sup>. He continues by saying: “we were tough, sometimes, to the point of cruelty; but it was necessary for the life and progress of the nation”

The interview finishes with the words of Creelman: “This is Porfirio Díaz: simple, concise, and full of the dignity of his conscious force”.<sup>93</sup>

It was surprising the ending of the chapter. This generation kept downplaying or justifying Díaz’ dictatorial actions only to end with those shocking words, which are not product of the text but are direct quotes from the General Díaz.

## 2014

The generation of 2014 starts the chapter named “From the Porfiriato to the Mexican Revolution” with a picture of a huge mural and a text box with questions about it. It asks: what is the picture? Who are in the picture and to what social group do they belong to? How do you think the people in the picture are feeling? The picture shows a crowd of peasants trying to snatch away the Mexican flag from a man. In the picture there is also the army and a group of men dressed as the typical Mexican figure with the hat typical of that era.

So far, in all generations, there had not been any pictures of the “villains” just the heroes. The next page (77) is just one image and is a painting of Porfirio Díaz mounted on horseback in full dress uniform saturated with military medals, white gloved hands, polished boots, and his big sword. Díaz is presented, if not as a hero, as a very important figure with a lot of weight and a lot of presence.

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<sup>92</sup> “Empezamos castigando el robo con pena de muerte y apresurando la ejecución de los culpables. Ordenamos que dondequiera que los cables telegráficos fueran cortados y el jefe de distrito no lograra capturar al criminal, él debería sufrir el castigo; y en el caso de que el corte ocurriera en una plantación, el propietario, por no haber tomado medidas preventivas, debería ser colgado en el poste de telégrafo más cercano” (pág. 141)

<sup>93</sup> “Así es Porfirio Díaz: sencillo, conciso y lleno de dignidad de su fuerza consciente” (ídem)



Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915), José Cusachs.

Figure 8 Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915) found in page 77

Continuing with the images, the chapter is full of pictures of people working in factories, pictures of the railroad, of ladies that are clearly high class with long dresses and hats, of Porfirio accompanied with other men in suits and top hats visiting an art gallery. A picture of a scene of the first movie filmed in Mexico that is Díaz mounted in a horse around the castle of Chapultepec. All these pictures portray sophistication and progress; but there are also other pictures with satirical cartoons of the time. One of the cartoons is one of Porfirio sitting in a throne and two “angels” crowning him. Another of the cartoons is titled “an offer to Porfiriopoxtli” (referring to Huitzilopochtli, the main god of the Mexicas) and what seems to be an indigenous sacrificing a man to him.

The goal of the cartoonists, using the resources of the images, is to practice journalism. They try to influence the opinion of the viewers around the subject or character alluded to in a satirical way. So even though portraying Porfirio as a king or a god, they are mocking him and his tyranny, it is setting an image of him of powerful and omnipresent, and that is how the fifth-grade readers are going to perceive him.

There is another interesting image in page 83. There is a lithography and a caption explaining that it represents the victory of the plan of Tuxtepec”. In the image Porfirio Díaz is in the middle holding a flag that says, “Plan de Tuxtepec”. Díaz shows himself triumphant, he is not heading to combat but he is emerging victorious from it. He wears military boots showing confidence

and character leading and encouraging the people that are behind him. Behind him as well, the sun shines celebrating his triumph.



Figure 9 Porfirio Díaz and the plan de Tuxtepec (1876) found in page 83

Lastly, the last image of the chapter is an engraving of the artist Posadas of a man, that seems to be a landlord, whipping some men that are tied to a tree. There is a caption saying that is about the situation of the workers in some of the *haciendas*.

Moving away from the images and reading through the text, the first subchapter is called “The political differences between the liberals and the consolidation of the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz”. It is the first title, and it is already calling Porfirio a dictator. The chapter explains that Díaz protested against Juárez reelection and had followers, but the uprising did not extend and Juárez died months later. And when Lerdo de Tejada sought for reelection, which provoked the disagreement of the Congress, Porfirio Diaz again took up arms and led the Plan de Tuxtepec, in which he again demanded non-reelection. Diaz received broad support from a large part of the population and finally Lerdo was forced to resign and go into exile in the United States.

“Porfirio Díaz was elected president and took office in 1877. The first years of his government were of adjustments and the *search for peace* (emphasis added). He managed to ally himself with more groups and strengthen his power through *conciliation* (emphasis added); for example, he made pacts with regional caciques and put his trusted men in command of the army”<sup>94</sup>. The text claims that Díaz looked for peace and conciliation, but the examples mentioned are that he put his men in command of the army, so it really isn’t very clear who was reconciled and who benefitted from this, besides the army and himself. The paragraph continues by arguing

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<sup>94</sup> “Porfirio Díaz fue elegido presidente y asumió el cargo en 1877. Los primeros años de su gobierno fueron de ajustes y búsqueda de la paz. Consiguió aliarse con más grupos y fortalecer su poder mediante la conciliación; por ejemplo, pactó con los caciques regionales y puso a sus hombres de confianza al mando del ejército” (pág. 83)

that Díaz also tried to unify the liberals and reconcile the government with the Church and the conservatives. So far, Díaz is portrayed as a peaceful man that wants harmony in society.

“During the first presidential period, the reorganization of the country continued, railroads were built, *and* (emphasis added) the National Bank of Mexico was created, *in addition* (emphasis added), the Military College was reopened. *Also* (emphasis added), the Boundary Treaty with Guatemala was signed, the first arms factory was established in the country and diplomatic relations with the United States and Europe were strengthened”<sup>95</sup>. The use of many connecting words like “also” and “in addition” adds an emphasis in contrast to separating just with commas. Making it appear as there were more achievements than there truly were.

The paragraph argues that “In 1884, General Díaz returned to the presidency. The actions he undertook allowed him to strengthen his power and maintain stability. He had the support of politicians, the military, investors, landowners and the middle class, who considered that he should remain in government to maintain order and economic growth”. The textbook calls him General with respect and determines that he had the support of many people, this legitimizes his power, raising the question of was he really such a dictator if people actually wanted him there?

“In the following years, Diaz was reelected five consecutive times. His government became a dictatorship because he eliminated political liberties, censored the press, repressed social protests, prevented free elections, and imposed state governors; in addition, the institutions of justice and the Legislative Branch obeyed his orders. This stage of Mexico's history is known as The Porfiriato”.

The next chapter is called The Porfiriato and the first chapter “Stability, Economic Development and Foreign Investment” where it talks about how the industries of mining, electricity, petroleum, railroad construction, textiles, banking, and communications attracted investments from businessmen from the United States, France, Germany, England, Holland, among others.

“Thanks to investments, trade was reactivated, the growth of the cities was stimulated, employment was generated, and the living conditions of the middle class and professionals improved”. This generation differs from the 1960 one that argues that only the high class benefited from

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<sup>95</sup> “Durante el primer periodo presidencial continuó la reorganización del país, se construyeron vías férreas, y se creó el Banco Nacional de México y, además, se reabrió el Colegio Militar. También se firmó el Tratado de límites con Guatemala, se estableció la primera fábrica de armas en el país y se fortalecieron las relaciones diplomáticas con Estados Unidos y Europa” (pág. 83)

the economic growth. This generation also acknowledges that the benefits of this prosperity did not reach the other sectors of the population, such as peasants, workers, artisans, and indigenous people but it included the middle class.

But just when it starts talking about inequality and how the benefits did not reach the most disadvantaged people, the text changes again to point out that by 1884, the foreign investment was of 100 million pesos; but by the end of the Porfiriato, it had risen 34 times more.

The next subchapter is “Science, Technology and Culture”, and in it, is mentioned again, as in previous generations, all the modernization and progress that came within Díaz’ government. It does mention that the introduction of this progress made the social inequalities in the country more evident, and growth was only for a few. It was in the cities where the enormous contrasts between rich and poor could be clearly observed.

In page 91, the subchapter “The Porfirian society and The Protest Movements: Peasants and Laborers” explains how the government put communal and church lands up for sale, offering them to those who could afford them. Some businessmen and landowners bought large tracts of land. Although this increased agricultural production, it affected other sectors of the population, such as indigenous and peasant communities and small ranchers, who lost their property and were unable to compete with the large landowners.

This generation portrays a clearer image of the repression upon the Mexican people of the time. The text describes how there was discontent in the rural Mexican population and gave rise to peasant uprisings, which were violently repressed. How the majority of the population had to work 12 to 15 hours a day and received a salary that was not enough to cover their basic needs.

“Faced with this situation, the workers organized themselves into unions to defend their rights. They used strikes as a means to demand better working conditions, but these movements were repressed by the Porfirian government”. Just as the last generation, this one also detaches the blame from the dictator to say “the Porfirian government” even though the Porfirian government meant Porfirio Díaz himself.

That last sentence ends the chapter, only to start the new one: “The Mexican Revolution”. The chapter states that in 1908 Díaz gave an interview to James Creelman where he stated that he did not plan to compete in the next presidential elections, because Mexico was ready to govern itself democratically. “But actually, Díaz had no intention of giving up the power”<sup>96</sup>. The

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<sup>96</sup> “Pero en realidad Díaz no tenía la intención de abandonar el poder” (pág. 94)

previous generation claims that Díaz “changed his mind” after such declaration, while this generation claims that he never had the intention of doing so, meaning that he deliberately lied.

The text says that Madero founded the National Anti-Reelectionist Party (the one that later changed name to be PRI), and as a candidate he traveled around the republic making his political ideas known, “highlighting his commitment to turn Mexico into a democratic country, governed by the law and where the different social groups would live in harmony”.

The chapter continues narrating how Madero obtained great support which alarmed Diaz, who ordered him to be imprisoned under the charge of revolting the population and outraging the authorities. Thus, the elections were held while Madero was in prison. “Since the exercise of the free vote was impeded Porfirio Díaz regained the presidency”<sup>97</sup>. Once again, “was impeded” without pointing fingers at anyone.

Finally, Madero managed to escape prison and called on the population to take up arms against the government. Diaz resigned the presidency and left the country. “Madero tried to govern in accordance with the law and respecting democratic liberties”.

### 4.3 Discussion

The following charts, as in the previous chapters, exemplify in a more visual and concise way, some of the differences found on the three generations from each historical figure analyzed here.

#### Heroes

<b>Hi-dalgo</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Allende</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>1960</b>	<p>*He distinguished himself for his diligence and intelligence</p> <p>*Created new industries, such as pottery and silkworm farming; He taught the Indians in his parish to read and organized a marching band and theater performances to entertain the people. By these and other acts, always filled with kindness, he won the love of the people</p>	* Not mentioned	The text does not skimp on compliments towards Hidalgo, who dedicated his life to the people and did not hesitate to sacrifice his safety to fight for the people

<sup>97</sup> “Como se impidió el ejercicio del voto libre, Porfirio Díaz volvió a ganar la presidencia” (pág. 95)

	<p><b>* Father of our independence.</b> He loved the people, fought for them and instilled in them ideas of freedom and justice.</p> <p>*He decided to start the war, which he did at the cost of his personal safety and well-being</p>		
<b>1993</b>	<p>* He was cultured, an entrepreneur with advanced ideas, loved in the region. He was concerned that people would live better, and he taught his followers to cultivate the vine, to raise silkworms, build irrigation canals, set up pottery and brick factories, and organized workshops of various kinds. He was a happy person, who organized a music band and sometimes when he put on plays with his friends</p>	<p>The book includes Allende on the decision of rush the date to start the rebellion, is not just Hidalgo who is in charge of the decision.</p>	<p>This generation paints an image of a good-hearted man, who was loved by the community but less idealized. He is portrayed as more human that enjoyed music and theatre with his friends, rather than a saint</p>
<b>2014</b>	<p>No adjectives to describe him</p>	<p>*” The beginning of the war and the participation of Hidalgo and Allende”</p> <p>*Most lacked military training, although under Allende's leadership there were disciplined troops that initially formed the nucleus of the armed uprising</p> <p>* “The Insurgent Army, led by Hidalgo and Allende.”</p>	<p>Hidalgo is not depicted as a saint and is not the sole protagonist now. He didn't do it alone, but with the help of Allende.</p>

Figure 10 Our heroes: Hidalgo

<b>Juárez</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>1960</b>	<p>*” A man of great restlessness and noble ideals entered politics determined to achieve the triumph of liberal principles and the implementation of a regime of justice, freedom and equality for all the inhabitants of Mexico”.</p>	<p>There is no doubt he was a great hero. Perhaps the most important man that “saved” Mexico and awakened the unification of the country that should be applauded worldwide.</p>

	<p>*” Thanks to the patriotism and firmness of Benito Juárez, in the political and military order, through patriotism and the perseverance, the dignity and sovereignty of Mexico were saved, a national conscience was awakened in the country and the political unification of the Mexican people”</p> <p>*Juárez deserved the applause of all free countries”.</p> <p>*” Grand until the last moment, the knight of legality and the Reform, the defender of national sovereignty, the restorer of the Republic, did not fall defeated by those who, going outside the law, aspired to overthrow him. His death surprised him so spirited, so determined and as firm as he had been in all his life”</p>	
<b>1993</b>	<p>*Describes early childhood and difficulties to access education by being poor and indian.</p> <p>*” Juárez's adherence to Mexican laws and the principles of the Reform, his serenity, his firmness, make him exemplary”</p>	Great example to follow. He was just and followed the law. Easy to identify with him by his poor origins.
<b>2014</b>	<p>“His determination to promote liberal reforms and to defend the sovereignty of the nation at all costs made him one of the most important figures in the history”</p>	Just a determined man. Not a hero, but an important figure, one of others.

Figure 11 Our heroes: Juárez

## Villains

<b>Santa Anna</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>1960</b>	<p>*“Turbulent and quarrelsome as a young man, he was characterized by cunning and audacity. He liked cockfighting and gambling; he never had good mores”</p> <p>* “Too tall. His face, not at all attractive, was distinguished by its grim and hardness: his color was dull, his nose was thick and vulgar, his mouth was wide, with a hanging lower lip”.</p>	<p>* His government was a despotic dictatorship, with unlimited powers, He made the Congress grant him the title of Most Serene Highness; he persecuted all honest soldiers, politicians, and journalists; he levied excessive and irrational taxes</p>	<p>Described like a villain; ugly and scary looking. Despotic and irrational.</p> <p>No redeeming qualities.</p>



	*" Had a pasty, thick, imperative voice, like one of someone accustomed to command and be obeyed, although he knew how to tone it down and soften it, in order to attract or impress with it the people around him and the crowd"		
<b>1993</b>	* Santa Anna was vain and fickle; but also, cunning, able to organize armies with almost no money and brave in combat. He was not a good ruler, but he knew how to control the situation and endear himself to the people	* Santa Anna ruled as a dictator: he suppressed individual rights and liberties and imposed his will. He sold the territory of La Mesilla to the United States, he taxed windows and dogs, he attended dances and cock-fights, and he forced everyone to call him His Serene Highness	He is also described in a bad light, but it does mention that he was brave and a good military. With a certain appeal that could control people.  Dictator abusing his power
<b>2014</b>	*No adjectives to describe him	* Was convinced by the conservatives to return to power.  *Several of his orders caused discontent in society. He eliminated some individual rights.  *It caused great disagreement the decree by which he named himself "Serene Highness" and gave himself unlimited power to govern for as long as he deemed necessary	The word "dictator" is not used.  He was convinced to come to power, meaning that some people wanted him.  Downplaying actions with words like "some" individual rights, but not all of them, or "disagreement" instead of rage.

Figure 12 The villains: Santa Anna

Díaz	Positive view	Negative view	Discussion
<p><b>1960</b></p>	<p>During his <b>first time</b> as a President:  Díaz inaugurated the Mexican railroad; he avowed the constitutional reform of non-reelection, re-established diplomatic relations with France, improved the national postal service, and the press had unrestricted freedom.</p> <p>He told Congress: “I will never admit a reelection candidacy, even if it is not forbidden by our political code” BUT he didn’t follow through</p> <p>*The public peace that prevailed in Mexico during the 30 years of the Porfirian regime favored the development of the arts and literature BUT could not be enjoyed since the ignorance of masses couldn’t read or write.</p> <p>*Mexico began to develop some industries BUT disproportionate benefits for foreign investors.</p> <p>*Middle class achieved some opportunities; BUT the great majority of the people lived in precarious and painful conditions.</p>	<p>*Constantly called Dictator. Chapter called: “The Porfirian Dictatorship” (only friends of him calls the period “The Porfirian Peace”</p> <p>*Impose peace and order <b>at all costs</b>.</p> <p>*” It was essential to count on the rich social sectors and foreign capitalists, all of whom had to be satisfied by handing over the country's economy and allowing them to increase their wealth, even if this was at the expense of the poor, and dispossession of the weak.</p> <p>*Political parties and suffrage disappeared; the will of the dictator and his political interests prevailed over the will of the nation and the interests of the great majority; peace and order were imposed, violating individual rights and the law</p>	<p>This generation mentions the achievements of Porfirio always accompanied with a “but”. He did great things BUT it came with a cost.</p> <p>It is more focused on the dictator traits and avoids as much to give him credit.</p>
<p><b>1993</b></p>	<p>*Chapter called “El Porfiriato. Subchapters: “The Porfirian Peace” “The Porfirian Prosperity”</p> <p>* The Mexican people were tired of the riots and the insecurity and needed foreign capital, because it had no money, and to attract it, was indispensable that there be tranquility</p>	<p>*“Inequality became greater and greater”</p> <p>* “<b>At the end</b> of the Porfiriato period, there was a climate of repression, evidenced was the way in which journalists who criticized the regime were persecuted”</p>	<p>This generation focuses on the prosperity and economic flourish of the era.</p> <p>When talking about the “bad” elements of his presidency, there is a sort of “but”- There was repression but it was necessary for the progress of the nation.</p>

	<p>*“With order, work increased, and economic development became possible, since the country had resources and entrepreneurs could make profits”</p> <p>*” During the Porfiriato, railroads and telegraphs transformed life. Travel became faster, more comfortable and safer”</p> <p>*“Public education was greatly expanded; more people were able to study a career and a middle class of professionals began to emerge in the cities. Many more people learned to read and write”</p> <p>*” Economic growth never seen before”</p> <p>*” The president <b>was reelected</b> several times. For a long time, this formula worked because the country yearned for peace and prosperity and because the Díaz government achieved an impressive economic boost”</p>	<p>*” He made all the decisions. The deputies and senators approved all his initiatives. Public opinion should always be grateful. No confrontation was allowed</p> <p>*Quote of Porfirio: “We were tough, sometimes, to the point of cruelty; but it was necessary for the life and progress of the nation”</p>	
<p><b>2014</b></p>	<p>*A whole page with a painting of him mounted on horseback in uniform saturated with military medals</p> <p>*Pictures and images of people working, the railroad, high class ladies, and art portraying sophistication and modernization</p> <p>*<b>The first years</b> of his government were of adjustments and the search for peace. He managed to ally himself with more groups and strengthen his power through conciliation</p> <p>* During the first presidential period, the reorganization of the country continued, railroads were</p>	<p>*” Díaz was reelected five consecutive times. His government became a dictatorship because he eliminated political liberties, censored the press, repressed social protests, prevented free elections, and imposed state governors; in addition, the institutions of justice and the Legislative Branch obeyed his orders.</p> <p>*Workers used strikes to demand better working conditions, but these movements</p>	<p>There is a more balance view of Díaz in this generation. He is called a dictator and mentions his repressive measures but also acknowledges his achievements, although, these last ones are focused more on his first time as a President.</p>

	<p>built, and the National Bank of Mexico was created</p> <p>* Thanks to investments, trade was reactivated, the growth of the cities was stimulated, employment was generated, and the living conditions of the middle class and professionals improved”.</p>	<p>were repressed by the Porfirian government</p> <p>* “Díaz had no intention of giving up the power”</p>	
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Figure 13 The villains: Díaz

In this chapter, the three generations share the depiction of heroes and villains. The most controversial figure is Porfirio Díaz, that appears in a lighter tone, especially in the generation of 1993. As mentioned previously in the chapter, Díaz is the only person who is perceived both as a hero and as a villain. The generation of 2014 is probably the one that has a better balance between his achievements and his flaws.

While the 1960 generation concede little or nothing to Díaz. Most statements are full of “buts”, for example: “railroads were built, industry was expanded *but* benefits flowed to foreign investors who ‘became owners of a large part of the nation’s wealth’”. “The middle class grew *but* the great majority of the people lived in precarious and painful conditions”; the generation of 1993 also mention political stability and flourishing economy. Nevertheless, the weight of the different elements is what makes the difference. There is an intense focus on economic modernization. It mentions over and over the economic growth, the extension of railroads, mining, manufacturing, etc. Without the counterpart, without the “buts”. This generation states: “Díaz’ good administration attracted foreign investment, which promoted economic growth”.

The generation of 1993 is certainly kinder to Díaz than previous and latter ones that described him as a “dictator” who subordinated everything to the “economic growth of the country”. Gilbert (1997) argues that Porfirio was not so different from the Salinas administration, and it is easy to see some Salinist features reflected. At first glance, Díaz and Salinas days are very familiar: political and economic stability but weak democracy, strikes and free speech is suppressed. Both presidencies emphasized national modernization, foreign investment, and a large-scale commercialization, rather than peasant agriculture. But any comparison between Díaz and Salinas is obviously problematic for the ruling party PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) who were leaders of the revolution to remove Porfirio Díaz from power. Many critics accused

the 1993 text writers of polishing the Porfirian era in order to improve Salinas own image (Gilbert, 1997).

Another difference identified through the three generations is the shift from a more individualistic perspective, where Hidalgo takes all the credit, to more of a collective achievement. The 1960 provides more of an individual agency, that is later replaced by more elaborate historical circumstances, taking the example of the end of slavery, where in the generation 1960 gives all the credit to Hidalgo, and in later generations is portrayed more as a consequence of the cultural context. The addition of Allende as an important figure in the fight for independence. this generation steals the thunder of Hidalgo, by including Allende in most big decisions. I ignore the reason behind this, but it is hardly a coincidence. When these books were written, President Calderón was in office, and during his time there was a ceremony to honor Allende and the flags he used during the armed fight. Also, during Calderón's term Allende's house was restored and opened as a museum and a new hall in honor of him was included in the Independence Museum. Felipe Calderón's presidency can be broadly summarized by his heavily militarized ways, where he sharpened and expanded the armed forces. He was a military man, and it makes sense that he would exultate Allende due to his military and strategist skills when we were in the middle of a war against drugs.

## **Part III**

### **Summary and Concluding Remarks**

The main research goal sought to discuss was to identify the differences in the discourse on the generations of 1960, 1993 and 2014 of the standardized free textbooks used in elementary schools in Mexico; as well to attempt to make sense of the data contained in the textbooks in relation to the historical and cultural context of the time. I paid special attention to the political and diplomatic relations between Mexico and the countries analyzed; and considered the ideology of the President in turn when the textbooks of each generation were published.

The constant in all generations has always been the goal to enhance a national cohesion and the creation of a common national identity. The conclusion of this whole thesis can be identified easily in the first page of the textbooks from 1960 where it begins with a personal message from President López Portillo, where he declares that the purpose and the reason the books were created was to “present information about our past, and to awake in children a love for history and love for the country; and to create a sense of common identity among all Mexicans”. The next page states “this book is intended to help you know your country, because by knowing it, you will understand why you love it and how and why you should be willing to serve it”. Similarly, the 1993 generation states in its prologue that the aim of the books is “to present information about our past, and to awake in children a love for history and love for the country; and to create a sense of common identity among all Mexicans”. Even though there had been changes in the style of writing, some historical figures or events had been added or removed, and the portrayal of such had been shifted; the core of the textbooks have been the construction of a national identity.

National identity is constructed on the basis of multiple factors and can be represented in many ways; in traditions, food, clothing, a national anthem, or a football team; but also, in loyalty to

a nation, the will to protect the territory, or the belief and identification to what it means “to be Mexican”.

The propagation of the textbooks with the “official history” and the particular ideology that it entails, becomes a very convenient tool to create in the collective a sense of identity; especially since it is presented as an absolute and indisputable truth to the children that are being formed; which makes it easier to assimilate. Singuenza Orozco (2005) argues that the free textbooks, especially History and Civics, had several purposes. Among them, was to form citizens of a democratic nation; to strengthen the concept of patria; to fulfill school, family, and patriotic obligations; to know about the “founders of the patria”; to promote the cult of national symbols and the respect for national traditions and culture. The idea of national unity was intended to establish the formation of a “new Mexican”.

In the books of 1960, it is easy to identify the importance of nationalist concepts such as *patria*, nation, nationality, and country. In the History and Civics book of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, *patria* is defined as “the land in which we were born and the nation that has bequeathed us the effort, the work, and the noble and generous spirit of the great Mexicans: men and women, famous or ignored. We must know her in order to love her, and we must love her in order to aggrandize her”<sup>98</sup>. The book also indicates that the *patria* must be loved as a mother, honor her with work and defend her with our lives.

The *patria* was represented by a woman with a dark complexion and indigenous features who, covered by a white tunic, is accompanied by the eagle and the serpent, the national flag, a book and various products of the land and industry. This image was the cover of the books from several generations, including the last one of 2014.

The book also explains the importance of the anthem, the flag, and other national symbols. It analyzes the anthem stanza by stanza and explains the meaning behind the colors of the flag. It even gives a detailed instruction on how the flag must be venerated. “In front of the flag we must remain standing and keep silent. We will greet her by crossing our chest with our right hand, perpendicular to the height of the heart, and bending the thumb so that it points

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<sup>98</sup> “la tierra en que nacimos y la nación que nos han legado el esfuerzo, la obra y el espíritu noble y generoso de los grandes mexicanos: hombres y mujeres, famosos o ignorados. Debemos conocerla para amarla, y amarla para engrandecerla” (pág. 106. Generation 1960)

downwards”.<sup>99</sup>This is a ceremony that is still celebrated by all schools, public and private, every Monday morning.



Figure 14 Kindergarten children saluting the flag at school retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BikKLuDKihc>

The Mexican flag has great historical, cultural, and patriotic significance among Mexicans. The flag is one of the main elements that symbolizes identity, and it is also part of the collective imaginary of the nation. Therefore, the flag should never touch the ground.



Figure 15 Civilians helping soldiers protect the flag from touching the ground on a windy day. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXq714NWJBC>

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<sup>99</sup> “Frente a la bandera debemos permanecer en pie y guardar silencio. La saludaremos cruzándonos el pecho con la mano diestra, perpendicularmente a la altura del corazón, y doblando el pulgar en forma de hacerlo que apunte hacia abajo” (pág. 9. Generation 1960)



Colom (2011) expresses that the historical narrative has been one of the main resources mobilized in the process of construction of national identities and highlights the importance of historical memory for national cohesion. He argues that any statement about the past is actually a claim about the present. Hence, also that educational plans and the determination of the school curriculum are questions of the State, since it is about instilling in the new generations some collective criterion of self-recognition that gives credibility to the decisions made on behalf of societies that must want to perpetuate themselves.

Colom stresses that the framework of national identity - the landmarks, myths, and representations that make it unique - is not only expressed in the form of narrative prose. National stories can also be iconic and can be traced to other areas of official culture, such as places of memory, museums, academic codifications, civic rituals, pictorial representations, etc. A tour through museums is enough to identify elements of nationalism and the efforts to create a narrative. One of the reasons that motivated me to write about this topic, was precisely a visit to the Castle of Chapultepec, which welcomes its visitors with a huge painting of Juan Escutia, the child hero, simulating to fall over them rolled in a flag. This image can be overwhelming and impressive enough to awaken a sense of pride and nationalism.



Figure 16 Juan Escutia falling wrapped in the Mexican flag. Retrieved from <https://mnh.inah.gob.mx/murals>

During the 19th century, Mexico suffered invasions or attempted invasions from different countries: Spain, France, England, the United States. But the war with the latter in 1846-1848 is one of the most important events in national history, since in that war more than half of the country's territory was lost. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the books will aim to find union among Mexicans. In the fourth-grade book it is recognized that internal economic and military instability, as well as a lack of peace and unity, resulted in a weak country. In this context, the book offers the following reflection that is presented under the image of a family holding the Mexican flag: “The defeat that Mexico suffered in 1847 left us an experience that we must never forget: the union of all Mexicans is essential, because with inner peace there is progress, and with progress, the strength capable of taking cover from snares and injustices. It is essential that every Mexican, man, woman, or child, prepare every day to serve their country, and learn to make it great in peace by putting into work the same determination with which they would be willing to defend it in war. We must be hard-working, energetic, aware of our responsibility, and unite to give our country greater strength every day”.<sup>100</sup>

The free textbooks emerged as a full and laborious attempt to build national unity "from its roots." These books became the cornerstone for the task of consolidating what “national” is and the formation of “the Mexican”. They meant a great economic, academic, and cultural effort, and a battle between public opinion (Singuenza Orozco, 2005). However, there are some substantial differences in terms of the creation of this sense of national identity through the three History books. In the first analyzed generation, in 1960, surrounded by a Cold War environment, there was a need of union and identity. This generation promoted a nationalism well founded on a broad historical explanation, and also contained an evident diffusion of national values such as "you must love your country and your flag because many men have shed their blood for the freedom you enjoy today”. It was a time of a very polarized world where there was a need for “heroes” and “villains”. A time of us vs. them. The books were the hegemonic tool, the only, or almost only, source of information in many households.

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<sup>100</sup> “La derrota que sufrió México en 1847 nos dejó una experiencia que nunca debemos olvidar: es indispensable la unión de todos los mexicanos, pues con la paz interior hay progreso, y con el progreso, la fuerza capaz de ponernos a cubierto de asechanzas e injusticias. Es indispensable que todo mexicano, hombre, mujer o niño, se prepare cada día para servir a su país, y que aprenda a engrandecerlo en la paz poniendo en el trabajo la misma decisión con que estaría dispuesto a defenderlo en la guerra si las circunstancias así lo requiriesen. Debemos ser laboriosos, enérgicos, conscientes de nuestra responsabilidad, y unirnos para dar cada día mayores fuerzas a nuestra patria” (pág. 98. Generation 1960)

In 1993, on the other hand, Mexico becomes fully integrated into a neoliberal project, joins The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and is the era of progress, economic flourish and the period of the “technocrat” presidents that liberated the market to achieve optimal levels of economic growth. In that sense, is not surprising to see the change of discourse towards Porfirio Díaz, where the chapters focused more on the economic progress and modernization and stopped vilifying him.

It is unquestionable that national identity is in permanent change, and this is clear while analyzing the generation from 2014. Although there are still traces of nationalistic hints in the textbooks, the internet, and all sources of information at our fingertips make it harder to manipulate. The textbooks from this generation invite the pupil to ask parents and do their own research.

### **3.1 Looking ahead**

There is a new version on the way rushed by the new president, López Obrador. The new contents were made in less than a week by people whose identity have not been revealed. These books made in record time have as their main objective to generate the image of a "historic triumph" of the so-called "fourth transformation" (this is what he calls his time in office). According to internal SEP sources, these are important modifications to the contents of the third, fourth and fifth years of primary school, in which new versions of history are introduced, with concepts such as that the current government "is the consolidation of the historical struggles that have marked the central moments of the national development, such as the Independence, the Reform and the Revolution, to conclude that this government is the direct heir of all those national desires". (Soto, 2021)

For example, the foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in the new textbooks would be in 1321 and not in 1325, as historians and specialists have documented. In a presidential speech he dictated that he wants to commemorate the seven centuries of the Foundation of Tenochtitlán together with the 500 years of its fall. If the date remained in 1325, the festivities that he is planning would not be in his time as president. This is an example of how this practice is not just a thing of the past. It seems very easy is for the head of State to change the discourse for future generations. If there are no achievements during a presidential tenure in terms of health, security, employment, or economy, the only thing left is the stronghold of the narrative that he can control and that will remain in the archives, to at least have an imaginary legitimization.

From the social point of view, customs and traditions, myths and legends, festivities and rituals are the most common builders of national identity. However, in some cases the State acts as a superior entity that seeks social cohesion and guides the construction of a national identity through the dissemination of an "official" vision of what the nation is and what it aspires to be. Therefore, it is not accidental that the State would put effort in promoting free standardized books so that all citizens have access to the same information approved by the State and thus standardize a vision of things.

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