

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR “BUILDING A NATION”

a video interview with Professor Érika Pani



### Organizing Questions

- How do leaders of a nation try to create a sense of common identity among its people, and what are some of the challenges of doing so?
- How does the depiction of the Mexican Revolution in official interpretations of Mexican history relate to nation-building?

### Summary

Érika Pani is a Professor of Historical Studies at Colegio de México. In this 10-minute video, Professor Pani attempts to answer the question, “What is a nation?” She discusses how nations are constructed as imagined communities and how conflicts among subnational groups are often glossed over to create a sense of common history and purpose as a nation. Finally, she explains how Mexico has interpreted its own history, including the Mexican Revolution, to read as a story of progress in the name of nation-building.

### Objectives

During and after viewing this video, students will:

- explain why leaders consciously try to shape a common identity among the people of their nation;
- identify the challenges with reframing history with nation-building in mind; and
- explain how the Mexican Revolution can be framed to reinforce a common Mexican identity and a sense of continual national progress.

<b>Materials</b>	Handout 1, <i>Overview of the Mexican Revolution</i> , pp. 5–10, 30 copies Handout 2, <i>Video Notes</i> , pp. 11–12, 30 copies Handout 3, <i>Remembering the Mexican Revolution</i> , pp. 13–14, 30 copies Handout 4, <i>Creating a Museum of the Mexican Revolution</i> , p. 15, 30 copies Handout 5, <i>Textbook Treatments of the Mexican Revolution</i> , pp. 16–17, 30 copies Answer Key 1, <i>Overview of the Mexican Revolution</i> , pp. 18–19 Answer Key 2, <i>Video Notes</i> , p. 20 Teacher Information, <i>Video Transcript</i> , pp. 21–22 Video, “Building a Nation,” online at <a href="http://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/building-nation">http://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/building-nation</a>
<b>Equipment</b>	Computer with Internet access and a Flash-enabled or HTML5-supported web browser Computer projector and screen Computer speakers
<b>Teacher Preparation</b>	Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts.</li><li>2. Set up and test computer, projector, speakers, and video before starting the lesson. Confirm that you are able to play the video with adequate audio volume.</li><li>3. Preview Video, “Building a Nation.”</li><li>4. Become familiar with the content of handouts and answer keys.</li></ol>
<b>Time</b>	Two 50-minute class periods, plus homework before the first class period
<b>Procedures Before Day One</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Explain to students that they will be learning about how history is used to create a sense of a common identity at the national level. They will watch a video featuring Érika Pani, Professor of Historical Studies at Colegio de México. To prepare for the video, students first need to refresh their knowledge of the Mexican Revolution.</li><li>2. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, <i>Overview of the Mexican Revolution</i>, to each student. Ask students to read the handout and respond to the two questions as homework.</li></ol>
<b>Day One</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Organize students into groups of five students each. Allow groups 10 minutes to share their list of the most important dates and events in the Mexican Revolution with each other and discuss how much their lists overlap.</li></ol>

2. Collect Handout 1, *Overview of the Mexican Revolution*, from each student. Use Answer Key 1, *Overview of the Mexican Revolution*, to assess student responses.
3. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, *Video Notes*, to each student. Allow students several minutes to read through the questions before they view the video.
4. View the video, “Building a Nation.” If necessary, pause the video at various points to allow students to respond to the prompts on Handout 2.
5. Once the video has ended, allow students several minutes to write their answers to the questions on Handout 2.
6. Distribute one copy of Handout 3, *Remembering the Mexican Revolution*, to each student. Instruct groups to come to agreement on which five figures, events, or milestones from the Revolution they want to commemorate, and assign each of these to one student in the group. Students should research their assignment as homework and bring their response to the next class period.
7. Inform students that you will also collect their responses to Handout 2, *Video Notes*, during the next class period, so they should complete this as homework if necessary.

## Day Two

1. Collect Handout 2, *Video Notes*, from each student. Use Answer Key 2, *Video Notes*, to assess student responses.
2. Ask students to return to their groups from the previous class period. Distribute one copy of Handout 4, *Creating a Museum of the Mexican Revolution*, to each student. Allow groups 20 minutes to decide how to combine their five monuments, statues, or exhibits in one museum.
3. Bring the class together and allow one spokesperson from each group three minutes to briefly explain the theme and components of its museum to the rest of the class.
4. Collect student responses to Handout 3, *Remembering the Mexican Revolution*, for assessment.
5. Point out to students that in completing the activity on Handout 4, they themselves were bringing disparate perspectives into one narrative, which is how Professor Pani said leaders who want to build a sense of common national identity often treat a complicated past. Lead a short class discussion on this process:
  - a. How easy was it for your group to create a combined theme and perspective for your museum?
  - b. What perspectives did you omit from your museum? Were these omissions conscious or unconscious?
  - c. How did this process help you better understand the benefits and drawbacks of trying to build a common national history?

6. Distribute one copy of Handout 5, *Textbook Treatments of the Mexican Revolution*, to each student. Ask students to complete the handout as homework.
7. Collect student responses to Handout 5 at the beginning of the next class period.

## OVERVIEW OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

After centuries as a colony of Spain, Mexico became an independent country in 1821. It endured years of instability after its independence, contributing to the loss of more than half of its territory to Texas in the 1830s and the United States in the 1840s, and was also briefly conquered and ruled by France from 1863 to 1867.

The 50 years of political instability that followed independence ended when Porfirio Díaz became president in 1876. Díaz ruled Mexico for more than 36 years, defining a period known in Mexico as the *porfiriato*. He invited foreign investment into Mexico, and the country's railroads, mines, and industries expanded greatly. However, the land of peasants and indigenous populations was often seized for these new developments, and those who protested were repressed and sometimes imprisoned. Most of the country's new wealth went to the Mexican elite, which was concentrated in Mexico City. By 1910, 20 percent of Mexico's land was owned by U.S. citizens or companies, fueling resentment among many Mexicans.

*porfiriato*—term used in Mexico to refer to the period of Porfirio Díaz's effective rule over the country, from 1876 to 1911

After around 1900, protests against Díaz's policies and his repressive rule grew more frequent. During an interview in 1908, Díaz told a visiting U.S. journalist that he would not run for president in the 1910 election. This eased many of the political tensions in the country. Francisco Madero, who wrote a popular book criticizing Díaz's long rule and advocating democracy, was seen by many as the favorite to win the election in 1910. Unlike most of the country's political elite, Madero was from northern Mexico. He had studied in the United States and hoped to bring some of the benefits of democracy he saw there to Mexico.

However, Díaz changed his mind and decided to run for president again in 1910 despite his earlier promise not to do so. He imprisoned Madero, whom he saw as a threat, and won reelection in July 1910. After the election, Díaz let Madero out on bail, and Madero fled to San Antonio in the United States, where he issued the Plan of San Luis Potosí, calling for uprisings against Díaz on 20 November 1910. Several revolts against the Díaz regime broke out that day, marking the widely agreed upon start of the Mexican Revolution.

**Plan of San Luis Potosí**—manifesto written by Francisco Madero and published in San Luis Potosí in October 1910 denouncing Porfirio Díaz and urging the people of Mexico to rise up against him on 20 November 1910

Armed groups dedicated to defeating the government quickly emerged. Madero persuaded Pascual Orozco and Francisco "Pancho" Villa to join the revolt; they started fighting government forces in the north of Mexico. While some northerners were motivated by the same democratic ideals as Madero, many simply wanted more autonomy from Mexico City and did not even know who Madero was. Meanwhile, a rebel fighter named Emiliano Zapata led an uprising of villagers in Morelos (central Mexico) who were seeking land and water rights.

In early 1911, northern rebels captured railways that allowed them to quickly transport troops and supplies to battle federal forces further

south. In May 1911, Madero's forces beat government troops in the decisive Battle of Juárez. Díaz and Madero agreed to conditions for a peaceful transfer of power: Díaz resigned and left to Paris in exile, an interim president was chosen, and a new election was scheduled for October 1911. Madero easily won the election and became president in November 1911. At the time, it seemed as if the Mexican Revolution was over. Instead, nine more years of armed conflict and political instability awaited.

Madero was unable to keep all of the unrelated revolutionary fighters who had helped overthrow Díaz satisfied. He did not focus on land reform, and indicated that there would be a long transition to democracy. Zapata, who had led the rebel forces in the south, was adamant about returning lands that had been seized during the *porfiriato* to indigenous farmers. When he discovered that this was not a priority for Madero, he started an armed rebellion that quickly spread among several southern states.

In early 1912, Pascual Orozco, one of the commanders of northern troops, became disillusioned with Madero for failing to carry out several of the social reforms he had promised. Orozco declared a revolt against Madero and won several victories against Madero's troops. In response, Madero asked military commander Victoriano Huerta to defeat and capture Orozco's forces. Huerta defeated Orozco's troops in 1912. However, in a shocking betrayal, Huerta organized a successful military coup against Madero in February 1913 with support from counterrevolutionary forces linked to Díaz and the U.S. ambassador to Mexico. Huerta declared himself the new president and executed Madero and his vice president.

Huerta ruled in a dictatorial manner. He arrested and killed potential adversaries, censored the press, and forced the poor to join the army. Angered by Huerta's actions, Villa aligned with two other northern leaders—Venustiano Carranza and Álvaro Obregón—to fight against Huerta. They announced the Plan of Guadalupe, which named Carranza as the successor president to Huerta but did not mention social reforms. Zapata continued his resistance in the south, and the United States soon declared its opposition to Huerta's government and imposed an arms embargo on Mexico.

In early 1914, Villa signed a film deal with the Mutual Film Company of the United States to raise money for his forces. Real and staged battle scenes starring Villa and his forces were filmed and shown in movie theatres across the United States. The popularity of these films, which featured brutal scenes of war and portrayed Pancho Villa as a sympathetic bandit, made Villa famous around the world and built his reputation as a revolutionary hero.

Huerta's forces lost ground throughout 1914, and Huerta resigned in June 1914 and fled to Spain. As planned, Carranza was named president, bringing hope that Mexico was once again on the road to stability and real reform.

**coup (coup d'état)**—the sudden overthrow of a government and seizure of political power

**counterrevolutionary**—a revolutionary who attempts to overthrow a government or social system that was established by a previous revolution

**Plan of Guadalupe**—document written in March 1913 by a coalition of forces who opposed Victoriano Huerta. The plan stated that Huerta's rule was not legitimate and that once Huerta was defeated Venustiano Carranza would become the interim president and would call for elections as soon as peace had been restored.

**embargo**—an official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country

However, without a common enemy, the uneasy alliance among the victorious armies quickly frayed. Zapata pushed for radical land reform, Villa emphasized political autonomy for northern Mexico, and Obregón and Carranza argued over priorities. Before long, the coalition had fractured and fighting started anew. Zapata and Villa declared war on Carranza in September 1914, less than three months after defeating Huerta. The country was once again in civil war, and 1914 to 1916 marked the bloodiest stage in the ten years of the Revolution.

The United States recognized Carranza as president of Mexico in October 1915 and helped him move troops to the north of Mexico to fight against Villa. Feeling betrayed by the United States, Villa led soldiers on several raids within U.S. territory. They sacked Columbus, New Mexico in March 1916, killing eight U.S. soldiers and ten U.S. civilians. Indignant, the United States assigned General John Pershing to lead a force of 10,000 men that ventured 350 miles into Mexican territory to capture Villa, but they were unable to do so.

**decree**—an order having the force of law

As the fighting continued, Carranza tried to give his presidency more legitimacy by enacting some of the more sweeping reforms that the initial revolutionaries had demanded. In January 1915 he issued a decree that called for land and electoral reform and more workers' rights. In October 1916, a Constitutional Convention met, and the new Mexican Constitution, which was very progressive in terms of human rights for its time, was completed in January 1917. Carranza was elected president under the terms of the new constitution in March 1917. Some scholars mark this as the end of the Revolution, as it formally enshrined many of the reforms the original revolutionaries were seeking. Nevertheless, conflict and instability continued for three more years as Carranza's government forces continued to fight on several fronts.

Zapata was assassinated in an ambush in 1919, ending the war against the resistance forces known as Zapatistas. The same year, Álvaro Obregón—a popular ex-general who had won many famous battles against Villa's forces—declared himself a candidate for the 1920 election. Carranza tried to jail him, but Obregón escaped and declared himself in rebellion against Carranza. Obregón had a wider base of support and was able to quickly advance against Carranza's troops. In May 1920, Obregón's forces captured Mexico City, ousting Carranza and killing him. The ten years of conflict and instability that defined the Mexican Revolution were finally over when Obregón was elected president in October 1920. Most scholars consider this the end of the Mexican Revolution, as all subsequent presidential successions were peaceful.

With a broader network of support than previous presidents in the Mexican Revolution (Madero, Huerta, and Carranza), Obregón was able to negotiate peace agreements with most remaining armed groups, including Villa. He settled a major dispute over oil with the United States and gained official recognition from the United States in 1923. Obregón

also introduced educational reform and greatly expanded access to basic education. He transitioned power peacefully to Plutarco Elías Calles, one of his allies, after Calles won the 1924 presidential election.

By the late 1920s, Obregón and his successors had organized their coalition of supporters into what became the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The PRI ruled Mexico from the 1920s until the year 2000, making it one of the most enduring governments in the world—a stark contrast to the ten years of fighting and political instability of the Mexican Revolution.

In the 1930s, PRI leader Lázaro Cárdenas carried out many of the rural land reforms that Zapata had championed, such as distributing large haciendas to peasants. In fact, many of the demands of the original revolutionaries—wider access to basic education and health services, more protections for workers' rights, and the return of control of key industries to Mexico—came to pass during the 1920s and 1930s.

**hacienda**—term used to refer to a large estate in Spanish-speaking countries (similar to plantation)

#### Sources

"An Educator's Guide to the Mexican Revolution," Stanford University.

"[Mexican Revolution](#)," Wikipedia.

"The Mexican Revolution and the United States: A Chronology," Adán Griego, Stanford University.

"[The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress](#)," Library of Congress.

## Questions

1. The overview mentioned many key figures in the Mexican Revolution. Match the eight figures below with the brief description of roles in the table that follows.

Lázaro Cárdenas

Venustiano Carranza

Porfirio Díaz

Victoriano Huerta

Francisco Madero

Álvaro Obregón

Francisco “Pancho” Villa

Emiliano Zapata

Role	Name
Leader of revolutionaries in central Mexico throughout the Mexican Revolution. He sought the return of land and water rights to the rural poor and indigenous groups and was uncompromising in this demand. This led him to turn against several presidents who failed to prioritize land reform, and he was eventually assassinated in 1919.	
One of the commanders of the original northern forces who defeated Díaz, he later put down an uprising against the Madero government before turning on Madero and taking the presidency in a 1913 coup. His dictatorial rule generated strong opposition, and he was forced to flee Mexico in 1914.	
Issued the call for rebellion that marked the start of the Mexican Revolution after he was jailed for standing against Díaz in the 1910 Mexican election. Became president in 1911, but was unable to unite all of the rebel forces and in 1913 was ousted in a coup by Huerta and executed.	
President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940, he carried out the land reforms that Zapata and others had fought for during the Mexican Revolution. He also provided greater rights for workers and transferred capital from foreign companies back to Mexico, fulfilling several of the other demands of the original revolutionaries.	
Leader of forces in the north of Mexico for the duration of the Revolution. He became a global celebrity when movies of his forces fighting the Mexican government were distributed, earning him a reputation as a frontier Robin Hood. Changed alliances several times throughout the Revolution. At times was supported by the United States but was later pursued by 10,000 U.S. troops after carrying out border raids in U.S. territory.	
President of Mexico from 1914 to 1920. Led the drafting of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which codified many of the reforms that the original revolutionaries had sought. Despite this, the country was in civil war for his entire term, fighting both Zapata’s forces in the south and northern forces led by Villa and others.	
Elected President of Mexico in 1920, effectively ending the Revolution. Signed peace treaties with the remaining fighting groups, gained official recognition from the United States, and peacefully transitioned power to a new president in 1924.	
Led Mexico almost continuously from 1876 until 1911. Greatly expanded Mexico’s economy, but his seizure of land from the poor and indigenous, repression of opposition, and discontent with his long undemocratic rule sparked the start of the Mexican Revolution.	

**handout 1**

2. Choose ten of the most important events from the narrative and place them into the timeline below in chronological order. You will compare your list with your classmates later, so make sure that the dates and descriptions are clear enough for others to understand.

	Date (Year and Month)	Description of Event
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		



3. What examples does Professor Pani give of how Mexico's history has been written as a tale of continuous progress?

**Reference: Defined Terms (in order of mention)**

**Benedict Anderson**—political scientist and historian best known for his 1983 book *Imagined Communities* that defined a nation as “an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”

**sovereignty**—freedom from external control; autonomy

**Ernest Renan**—French author, historian, and writer who defined a nation as a group of people who “having done great things together, wish to do more”

**plebiscite**—a vote by which the people of a country or district express an opinion on their choice of government or ruler

**Americans**—in the Mexican colonial context, someone who was born in Mexico or the Americas, in contrast to someone who was born in Spain

## REMEMBERING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

Throughout Mexico, there are hundreds of monuments, statues, and memorials relating to the Mexican Revolution and its most prominent figures. Your group will now create five of your own commemorations to the Revolution.

Discuss as a group which five figures, events, or milestones from the Mexican Revolution you believe should be commemorated. Once you have decided on these five, assign one to each student in your group.

As homework, each group member should research his/her figure, event, or milestone and bring a prototype of how they would commemorate it. Potential methods include:

- Statue with explanatory plaque
- Monument that includes several statues and/or representations of objects
- Painting
- Public memorial

You may conduct Internet research to gain background on your assigned figure, event, or milestone and learn more about the monuments that already exist in Mexico. For inspiration, see below for eight monuments in Mexico related to the Revolution.



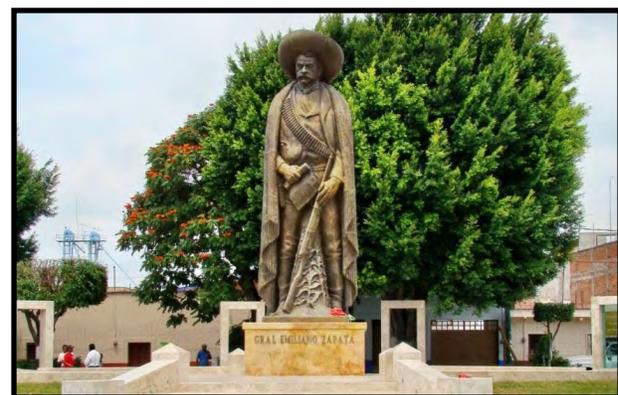
Monument to the Revolution, Mexico City. The monument holds a museum, and the remains of Carranza, Villa, Calles, and Cárdenas are buried under the structure. (Photo credit: Ismael Villafranco)



Exhibit in the Museum of the Mexican Revolution, Mexico City. (Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons)



Monument to Emiliano Zapata, Cuernavaca. (Photo credit: CuernavacaMorelos)



Monument to Emiliano Zapata, Cuautla, Morelos. (Photo credit: Christian Jordan)



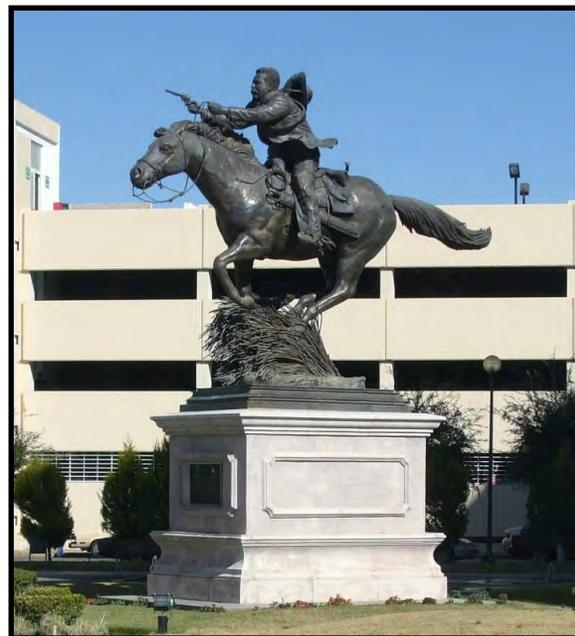
Monument to Emiliano Zapata, Tlaltizapan, Morelos. (Photo credit: Wilhelm Karl Scheper)



Monument to Francisco Madero, Ciudad Frontera, Coahuila. (Photo credit: City of Ciudad Frontera)



Monument to Pancho Villa, Cerro de la Bufa, Zacatecas. (Photo credit: Al Stevens)



Monument to Pancho Villa, Chihuahua. (Photo credit: Lyricmac)

## CREATING A MUSEUM OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

You have 20 minutes to combine your five monuments, statues, or exhibits in one museum on the Mexican Revolution. You will then briefly describe your museum and the five pieces it houses to the rest of the class.

Complete the following steps:

1. Each person in your group should briefly share his/her monument, statue, or exhibit.
2. Discuss how you might bring these pieces together into one museum. How would these pieces speak to each other? What message would you want visitors to take away from the museum? Where would you build the museum and why?
3. If you have time, create a simple sketch of your museum, including its shape, the location of the five pieces, and how visitors would move through the space.
4. Decide on one spokesperson to briefly describe your museum and the five pieces inside to the rest of the class. Each group will have three minutes to describe its museum.

## TEXTBOOK TREATMENTS OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

Below are passages about the Mexican Revolution taken from a U.S. textbook and a Mexican textbook. After reading the passages, answer these questions. Turn in your response at the beginning of the next class period.

1. Which perspectives and actors does the U.S. textbook emphasize?
2. Which perspectives and actors does the Mexican textbook emphasize?
3. Imagine the publisher of the U.S. textbook hired you to expand its entry on the Mexican Revolution. Add three to six paragraphs to the textbook entry with the information you believe is most important.
4. Why did you add what you did? Explain your choices in one paragraph.

### Excerpt from U.S. Textbook

*World History*, Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2003.

#### **Revolution in Mexico.**

In some countries, large landowners supported dictators who looked out for the interests of the ruling elite. Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico between 1877 and 1911, created a conservative, centralized government with the support of the army, foreign capitalists, large landowners, and the Catholic Church. All these groups benefitted from their alliance. However, forces for change in Mexico led to a revolution.

During Díaz's dictatorial reign, the wages of workers had declined. Ninety-five percent of the rural population owned no land, whereas about a thousand families owned almost all of Mexico. When a liberal landowner, Francisco Madero, forced Díaz from power in 1911, he opened the door to a wider revolution.

Madero's ineffectiveness created a demand for agrarian reform. This new call for reform was led by Emiliano Zapata. Zapata aroused the masses of landless peasants and began to seize the estates of wealthy landholders.

Between 1910 and 1920, the Mexican Revolution caused great damage to the Mexican economy. Finally, a new constitution enacted in 1917 set up a government led by a president, created land-reform policies, established limits on foreign investors, and set an agenda to help workers.

**Excerpt from Mexican Textbook (translated from Spanish by Greg Francis)**

*Historia II*, Ediciones Castillo, 2016.

**LESSON 22: Panorama of the Period**

In 1910, Mexico marked 100 years since it declared independence from Spain, convinced that the new century would bring prosperity and progress. Despite its problems—social and economic inequality, lack of education, authoritarianism—Mexico seemed to be overcoming the obstacles that had prevented the consolidation and development of the nation for much of the nineteenth century: there was peace, railways now linked the different regions of the country, the population was growing, the government was building schools and preparing teachers, and modern industries emerged. However, only two months after the Centennial festivities in September 1910, the Mexican Revolution broke out, which would affect the country for 10 years.

The Mexican Revolution ended a regime that ruled for 30 years; violence wrecked the economy, affected thousands of people, and caused half a million deaths. But the Revolution also upset hierarchies and balances of power and inspired hope for a more just and prosperous world. In 1911 the revolutionaries defeated the government of Porfirio Díaz, fighting mostly in the north of the country and in the state of Morelos. Between 1912 and 1914 they fought against Victoriano Huerta, who had overthrown the revolutionary government of Madero. The armed struggle spawned different projects across the country, shaped by the life experience and economic, political, and social context of the different revolutionary groups. The popular armies of the north, the peasants of the south, and the political chiefs of Coahuila and Sonora did not share the same goals for Mexico. As a result, between 1914 and 1920, after the defeat of the antirevolutionary regime [of Huerta], these factions fought among each other for their distinct vision of what the Revolution should be. The winners sought to ingrain their vision into the Fundamental Law that should govern the country. However, the 1917 Constitution, published in Querétaro, integrated some of the wishes of the defeated groups. In 1920, the constitutionalist coalition fractured and the Sonorans, led by Álvaro Obregón, came to power through the Agua Prieta rebellion. It was the last time that a government was overthrown by armed conflict.

The decades that followed the revolutionary process were marked by reconstruction, which sought to create mechanisms and institutions to ensure political stability and promote economic development. By claiming for itself the legacy of the diverse social movements that characterized the Revolution, the State set itself up as regulator of the economy, promoter of modernization, and arbiter of social conflicts. It identified itself as the defender of the popular sectors that comprised the majority of the population and had made up the bulk of the revolutionary fighters. It protected the rights of workers and distributed land to the peasants. At the end of the 1920s, to avoid the instability that had unleashed competition for power, the National Revolutionary Party (PRN) was founded, which at the same time channeled the ambitions of the revolutionary leaders and ensured dominance in elections and the apparatus of government. This state party was a key element of the Mexican political system for the majority of the twentieth century.

## OVERVIEW OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

1. *Ensure that names and roles match as indicated below.*

Role	Name
Leader of revolutionaries in central Mexico throughout the Mexican Revolution. He sought the return of land and water rights to the rural poor and indigenous groups and was uncompromising in this demand. This led him to turn against several presidents who failed to prioritize land reform, and he was eventually assassinated in 1919.	<b><i>Emiliano Zapata</i></b>
One of the commanders of the original northern forces who defeated Díaz, he later put down an uprising against the Madero government before turning on Madero and taking the presidency in a 1913 coup. His dictatorial rule generated strong opposition, and he was forced to flee Mexico in 1914.	<b><i>Victoriano Huerta</i></b>
Issued the call for rebellion that marked the start of the Mexican Revolution after he was jailed for standing against Díaz in the 1910 Mexican election. Became president in 1911, but was unable to unite all of the rebel forces and in 1913 was ousted in a coup by Huerta and executed.	<b><i>Francisco Madero</i></b>
President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940, he carried out the land reforms that Zapata and others had fought for during the Mexican Revolution. He also provided greater rights for workers and transferred capital from foreign companies back to Mexico, fulfilling several of the other demands of the original revolutionaries.	<b><i>Lázaro Cárdenas</i></b>
Leader of forces in the north of Mexico for the duration of the Revolution. He became a global celebrity when movies of his forces fighting the Mexican government were distributed, earning him a reputation as a frontier Robin Hood. Changed alliances several times throughout the Revolution. At times was supported by the United States but was later pursued by 10,000 U.S. troops after carrying out border raids in U.S. territory.	<b><i>Francisco "Pancho" Villa</i></b>
President of Mexico from 1914 to 1920. Led the drafting of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which codified many of the reforms that the original revolutionaries had sought. Despite this, the country was in civil war for his entire term, fighting both Zapata's forces in the south and northern forces led by Villa and others.	<b><i>Venustiano Carranza</i></b>
Elected President of Mexico in 1920, effectively ending the Revolution. Signed peace treaties with the remaining fighting groups, gained official recognition from the United States, and peacefully transitioned power to a new president in 1924.	<b><i>Álvaro Obregón</i></b>
Led Mexico almost continuously from 1876 until 1911. Greatly expanded Mexico's economy, but his seizure of land from the poor and indigenous, repression of opposition, and discontent with his long undemocratic rule sparked the start of the Mexican Revolution.	<b><i>Porfirio Díaz</i></b>

2. *While opinions on which ten events or dates are most important will vary, responses should include most of the following:*

	<b>Date (Year and Month)</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
1	July 1910	Díaz wins reelection. He had previously stated he would not run in the 1910 elections, but changed his mind.
2	October 1910	Madero issues the Plan of San Luis Potosí, calling for uprisings against Díaz to start on 20 November 1910.
3	November 1910	Uprisings against Díaz, as requested by Madero, begin. This is usually considered the formal beginning of the Mexican Revolution.
4	May 1911	Revolutionary forces, led by Madero, defeat government troops in the Battle of Juárez, forcing Díaz to step down and signaling the victory of the revolutionaries.
5	October 1911	Madero wins election as president of Mexico.
6	1912	Factions of the revolutionary forces turn against Madero and begin fighting against government troops.
7	February 1913	Huerta succeeds in a military coup, killing Madero and installing himself as the new president of Mexico.
8	June 1914	Huerta is forced to resign in the face of defeat by rebel forces; Carranza becomes president.
9	September 1914	Villa and Zapata break their alliance with Carranza and begin fighting him.
10	March 1916	Pancho Villa raids Columbus, New Mexico. In response, the United States organizes a mission to enter Mexico and capture Villa.
11	January 1917	The new Mexican Constitution is finalized. It addresses many of the demands of the original revolutionaries.
12	March 1917	Carranza becomes the first president elected under terms of the new Mexican Constitution.
13	1919	Zapata is assassinated by government forces.
14	May 1920	Obregón's fighters enter Mexico City, taking control of the government and killing Carranza.
15	October 1920	Obregón is elected president, effectively ending the Mexican Revolution.

## VIDEO NOTES

1. List at least three of the definitions of “nation” that Professor Pani mentions in the lecture.

*There are more than three definitions mentioned; students should have listed at least three from the following list:*

- *an “imagined community” (Benedict Anderson’s definition)*
- *a group that shares a past together (which may include sharing a language or some ethnic features)*
- *simply a seat of sovereignty (as with Spanish-American nations right after they gained independence from Spain in the early 19th century)*
- *the will of people who are very different but think of each other as belonging to one community that holds sovereignty and is different from others*
- *a people that has memory of having done great things and wanting to do more great things together (Ernest Renan’s definition)*

2. What is problematic about promoting nation-building by framing a country’s history as a common march toward progress?

*The actors of history are not necessarily these predetermined communities that we have called nations—there are often many subnational groups. Further, constructing a singular state and economic system inevitably produces conflict, and some people will benefit more than others. To create a sense of shared history that people believe is positive, the creators have to downplay or ignore conflicts and reclassify civil wars and civil disagreements to present the creation of the nation as something that everyone participated in and enjoyed.*

3. What examples does Professor Pani give of how Mexico’s history has been written as a tale of continuous progress?

- *The pre-Hispanic past is idealized as a moment of harmony. In fact, pre-Hispanic societies were often violent and warred with each other.*
- *The colonial period (when Spain controlled Mexico) is portrayed as a time of constant oppression by Spain of those born in Mexico, when in fact there were very complex negotiations.*
- *The war of independence from Spain is portrayed as a unified war of liberation against the Spaniards, who were outsiders. In fact, it was a civil war between Americans who wanted to stay in the empire and those who wanted to leave.*
- *The wars between Mexico’s liberals and conservatives in the mid-19th century are depicted as conflicts between those who wanted Mexico to progress against those who wanted Mexico to remain in the past.*
- *Finally, the Revolution is portrayed as a unifying vision of revolutionaries who wanted to turn a backwards, poor society into a prosperous modern one. In reality, there were many different social movements with very different visions for Mexico’s future.*

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**On-screen text:**

**Building a Nation**

**a discussion with Érika Pani**

**On-screen text:**

**Érika Pani**

**Professor, Centro de Estudios Históricos (CEH), Colegio de México**

**Érika Pani:** So what is a nation? What is it that makes one American or Mexican or French or Chinese? One of the things we have to realize is that this [which] seems to be part of our nature. To imagine someone with no nation is a little bit tragic—the people after the First World War who had no passport, refugees who have no nation—this seems to us to be a tremendous tragedy. And I think that one of the things we should think about is that nations have been invented, I use the term a little, it's a little bit exaggerated, but quite recently, you know, in the last 200 years, the idea—the word has existed for a very long time—but the idea that national identity defines you as a person is relatively recent, and what it means to be a nation has changed in time.

Also, we have the idea that the nation is a community. Benedict Anderson has described it as an “imagined community.” The fact that a Mexican farmer in Oaxaca belongs to the same community as a hotel worker in Cancún takes a lot, you know, takes some imagination. But the idea that they share language, that they share sometimes ethnic features, that they share a past together, I think that that is some of the things that we have come to imagine as a nation.

But for instance, in the early 19th century when the Spanish-American nations became independent from the Spanish empire, the nation was a seat of sovereignty. And the borders were undefined and they all spoke Spanish, you know, Guatemalans spoke Spanish and Mexicans spoke Spanish and Argentineans spoke Spanish and they were all Catholic. So what made one different from the other? And at that moment, the nation was a seat of sovereignty. So, what made one belong to the nation was belonging to this community which held sovereignty, and it didn't matter if you spoke Quechua or Spanish or Nahuatl or, and, Spanish. So there's this idea, I think, that what makes a nation is the will of these people who are very different, who are divided many times by ethnicity, by language, by class, but they think of each other as belonging to one nation and to be different from others.

What is the relationship between shared memories, history, and nation-building? Since the 19th century, there has been this conviction, especially on the part of those who are at the head of the state, that nations need to be built, that a sense of community needs to be created, and that you need to establish these horizontal bonds between citizens of the same nation. So, the bonds of language, the bonds of education, and also the bonds of history, of a shared, of coming from the same place and going somewhere together. Ernest Renan who is a French academic who has this wonderful conference which he delivered in 1882 said, you know, a nation first of all is a daily plebiscite—this idea that we are a nation because we want to be a community—but also it's a people that has memory of having done great things and wanting to do more great things together.

The problem is history is a lot more complicated than that. And the actors of history are not necessarily these predetermined communities that we have called nations. And that constructing states and constructing economic systems takes division and takes conflict. And usually,

some are treated unfairly, some benefit more greatly than others. And it is difficult to take this history of conflict, which is inevitable, and turn it into something that should be the basis of the members of the nation identifying with each other and wanting to move forward.

So what happens with history in such cases is that, usually, the past that we deliver is a past that has to be tweaked with, where conflicts have to be downplayed, where civil wars that devastated a nation are turned into something else, like a war of independence or a revolution, in order to make it more palatable as a common endeavor, which in reality was a struggle to define the direction where the community was going and where some won and others lost.

In the case of Mexico, what role does history play in nation-building? Since the late 19th century, there is this idea that history is a teacher, that students need to know history in order to live better. But the history that was taught in schools was mostly ancient history, what we now call “universal history,” so world history. And in the end of the 19th century, there starts to be this idea that, no, that we need to know the history of the nation. We need to know where we have been, so that we can have a better idea of where we are going. And this is called, and it becomes a mandatory topic to be taught in school, *historia patria*: “Patriotic History,” the history that built the nation.

And in the case of Mexico, there is this rewriting of history in order to take a very complex, a very conflicted trajectory, and turning it, turning it into this kind of progressive tale of things getting better as the years go by, through the struggles, the common struggles of the people, but the idea is that we started at a place which wasn't that good, and we ended up in a place which is much better. So there is this, I would say glorification, mythification of the pre-Hispanic past as a moment of harmony, which is pretty much mythical because these were very violent warring societies, where science and art were very, had a central place and were very, very sophisticated and important. And then colonial, the colonial period, 300 years long, as 300 years of oppression, again, kind of painting over the very complex negotiations that took place during this time. And then independence, which was a conflict that confronted basically Americans: all the Americans who wanted to stay in the empire against the Americans who wanted to leave the empire—so basically, a civil war—into a war of liberation, which confronted Mexicans against Spaniards, who did not belong to the nation, people who did not belong to the same community. The wars between liberals and conservatives at the, in the middle of the 19th century, are again depicted as a revolution of those who wanted to go forward and those who wanted to remain in the past.

And, I guess the best example is probably the Revolution. Now, the Revolution which was made up of very different social movements, which had very different visions for the country's future, which were kind of papered over as this single movement where these factions which often fought against each other, revolutionary leaders who plotted to assassinate each other, are all put into this one unifying vision of the Revolution as a movement to liberate Mexico—to turn a backwards, poor society into a prosperous modern one.