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Godfather of the Mexican Revolution:

The Rise and Fall of Venustiano Carranza and His Contributions to

Mexican Constitutionality and Nationalism, 1910-1920

Christian Jesus Rubalcaba

A Thesis in the Field of History

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

March 2011

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Abstract

Most of the academic attention devoted to the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) in recent times has focused on revolutionary leaders. Inspiration for this thesis comes from a desire to understand an important participant of the Revolution, Venustiano Carranza, whose story deserves further investigation because of his catalytic role in the ten-year conflict. This thesis poses the argument that fluctuations in the rhetoric of Carranza's Constitutionalist campaign reflect a sense of willingness on his part to adapt strategically to new contexts; however, to show deep conviction, he always stood behind a platform that was characterized by an unwavering faith in the political doctrine of constitutionality. Even though he shifted some of his positions when necessary, the core of his program remained constant and stood at the heart of his bold state building.

After the introductory chapter, Chapter Two lays the foundation for the thesis as it paints a detailed picture of the birthplace, family, and political environment from which Carranza originated. Emphasis is placed on a number of experiences that gave rise to his drive and passion for politics, from his revealing past as a *Porfirian* senator to his transformation as a leader. This chapter shows how, in mid-1913, Carranza began to express concerns for law and order, two essentials for constitutionality.

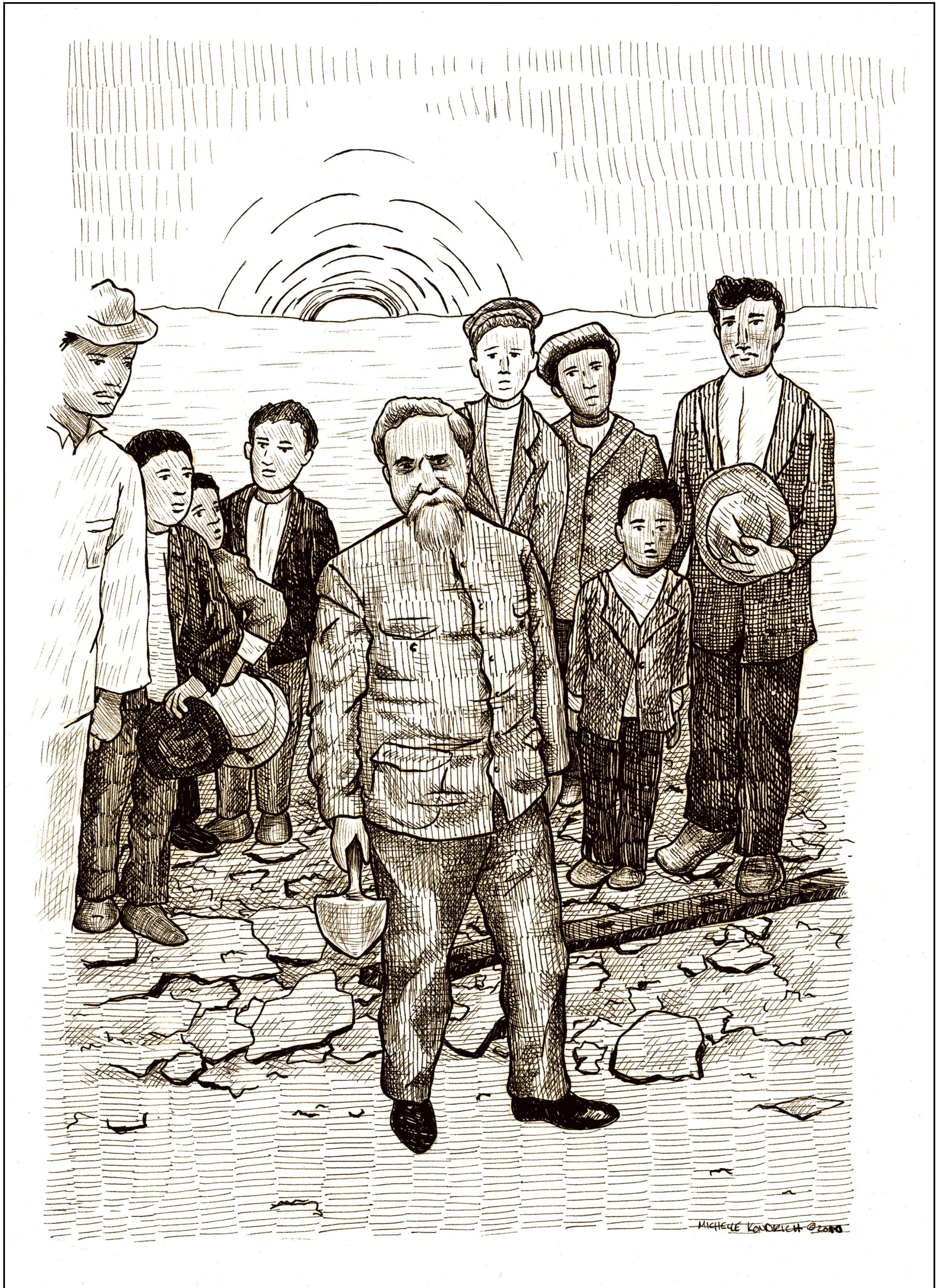
Chapter Three identifies Carranza's ideology between the years mid-1913 to mid-1916. It shows how his priorities changed in comparison to his mode of thinking in 1913, especially as he made and discontinued relationships with other revolutionary leaders,

specifically Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa. This chapter demonstrates that, even in the face of Zapata and Villa, Carranza became more committed to constitutionality.

Chapter Four provides an in-depth study of Carranza's Constitutionalist program at work. This chapter analyzes the organizational attributes of the committee that took part in the Constitutional Convention at Querétaro from mid-1916 to mid-1917. The committee, which was convened by Carranza, served as the taskforce that revised the 1857 constitution so that the new one reflected more contemporary concerns. This chapter explores Carranza's political talents, since this convention put his skills as a tactician and leader to the test. In 1917, when members of the Convention completed the Constitution of 1917, Mexicans were left with a statement of fundamental laws, a new legal order launched by Carranza. Studying the rhythm of the convention and a number of radically changed articles reveal that Carranza had, indeed, achieved a major conquest.

Finally, Chapter Five covers the period from mid-1917 to mid-1920, Carranza's presidency. This chapter brings Carranza's presidency into focus and assesses his effectiveness, not as a revolutionary leader, but as a chief executive. This chapter explains how, even though Carranza failed to be an efficient president and disappointed many with his decisions, his work in the area of constitutional democracy continued, and Mexican nationalism began to appear with more clarity in his state building.

The thesis concludes by underscoring Carranza's successes and failures. In addition to his numerous virtuous attributes, Carranza ultimately felt out of touch with reality, did not know quite how to face the demands of Mexicans in the last stage of the Revolution, and his grand vision of Mexican constitutional democracy required a bold kind of energy that Carranza could not offer.


MICHELLE KONDRICH

Biographical Sketch

Christian Jesus Rubalcaba was born on March 16, 1985, in the midwestern city of Chicago. He attended Purdue University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2007 and majored in English literature and general psychology through an honors program curriculum. After a saber-flashing desire to follow his heart, the author moved to the New England town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he resided for nearly three years. The author recently concluded a liberal arts graduate studies program in history with a focus on twentieth-century Latin American history, politics, and economics at Harvard University. At the end of the summer of 2010, the author moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, specifically to San Jose, to become a part of the Teach for America organization, a movement that strives to close the achievement gap in K-12 schools throughout the U.S. During his stay in northern California, he has and will continue to conduct research at Stanford University as an independent scholar. A plethora of interests consume the author, primarily, history, literature, politics, writing, and, most importantly, spreading his enthusiasm for education.

To the young and curious,

Amarelis Ramos and Izaak Rubalcaba,

so that one day they may become brutally inspired to fan

the blazing fire of their imaginations with the help of history and literature.

Acknowledgments

In my family, the success of one is the success of everyone. This proverbial sentiment has kept my family intact and allowed every member of my family to feel united even when the forces of distance have tried to come in the way. I could not have completed this project or the graduate program by myself, and hence I owe an incredible amount of gratitude to them, my gracious and unfailing family.

In hindsight, as I look back at the start of my time at Harvard University, I notice one aspect about this journey. I arrived here and had the luxury of attaining a stellar graduate education, because I was in the company of a dedicated family and a supportive network of friends, professors, mentors, advisors, and colleagues. Truly, no words can describe the deep appreciation I feel toward those who helped me bring this project to a satisfying close. Without further delay, the following words are a small tribute to those who helped me begin, continue, and finally complete this project of passion in one capacity or another.

I would like to first thank the ALM program in history at the Harvard Extension School for awarding me three graduate degree scholarships, which funded part of my coursework and thesis. The School has been generous with me and the ALM program has proven to be extremely successful in making the graduate program a valuable asset to my academic career and professional development.

Harvard University, as a whole, merits many thanks on my behalf for the cavalcade of resources it made available to me. The research staff at Widener Library, where I am a familiar face, helped me navigate the mazy world of research at Harvard University. Staff members there made themselves fully available to me, and as a result, I even had the honor of establishing lasting friendships with many of them. Special thanks go to the staff at the Interlibrary Loan Services who were cooperative and, as many of them will no doubt say, patient with me.

Other Harvard-affiliated libraries were also of great service to me, namely, the History Departmental Library, Lamont Library, the Harvard Law School Library, the Baker Library (Knowledge and Library Sciences) at the Harvard Business School, and the John F. Kennedy School of Government Library.

Non-Harvard affiliated academic institutions also helped greatly in this journey. In particular, two libraries facilitated research during the last handful of months of this project, and they include Stanford University's Cecil H. Green Library and University of California at Berkeley's Bancroft Library. In addition, the following non-Harvard affiliated academic institutions provided extraordinary services, especially in making book-length published studies and unpublished dissertations available to me in a timely fashion: University of Chicago, Yale University, Princeton University, Ohio University, University of California at Los Angeles, University of California at San Diego, University of Notre Dame, University of Alabama, University of Nebraska, University of New Mexico, American University, Tulane University, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, University of Wisconsin at Madison, University of New York at Binghamton, University of Texas at El Paso, and University of Texas at Austin.

I now turn my attention to naming, in the order in which I met them during my time at Harvard University, individuals who inspired my research and affected my writing profoundly. They are the reason for my overall success as a graduate student.

I begin first by acknowledging Professor Donald Ostrowski, who has been one of the most important and influential individuals with whom I have had the honor to work and interact. Professor Ostrowski is a professional of scope and depth, perspective and flexibility, and discipline and sympathy. I owe much of my growth as a graduate student to this true scholar and advisor, and I feel blessed to have been a direct beneficiary of his wide-ranging knowledge. Particularly, I value his talent at posing ostensibly trivial questions that end up uncovering huge concerns. In fact, during a reading of an initial draft of my proposal, Professor Ostrowski discovered, rather out of curiosity, the leading research questions for my thesis, which were buried somewhere in the musings of a footnote. He would not allow me to brush them aside and thus compelled me to pay great attention to these spontaneous leaks of the mind, a mark of a great scholar. Thank you, Professor Ostrowski, for being a role model for what a historian can and should be.

Special thanks go to lifelong student and scholar Gail Gardner. An intelligent and wise woman, her unbounded generosity, goodwill, and responsiveness turned this journey into a pleasant and memorable one. An expert in medieval French history, her willingness and openness to be an active participant in my academic pursuits has made all the difference in the world. And it was the little things that mattered most: putting up with my biannual graduate term paper excursions into twentieth-century Mexican history, cutting out dozens of Mexico-themed *New York Times* articles and hand-delivering them to me, and taking the time to write those emails of encouragement. She has given me

more than I could ever possibly give back. Needless to say, those monthly dinner dates around campus will be missed.

Hearty thanks go to three fine scholars who in one way or another helped make this thesis a possibility: Professor John Womack, Jr., who is the Robert Woods Bliss Professor of Latin American History and Economics (Emeritus) at Harvard University; Professor Aldo Musacchio, who is an Associate Professor and a Marvin Bower Fellow at the Harvard Business School; and Professor Sergio Silva-Castañeda, who is a Lecturer on History at Harvard University. Scholars Womack, Musacchio, and Silva-Castañeda were extremely helpful in providing advice and initial direction—for there was always a source to be recommended or an idea to be offered.

More importantly, I feel indebted to these three individuals for steering me in the direction of my principle thesis advisor, Dr. Halbert McNair Jones, III, who is a Senior Fellow at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University and a researcher at the Office of the Historian (U.S. Department of State). No words can describe how thankful I feel to have worked alongside Dr. Jones. From the moment I met him, I knew I was in good hands. As my thesis director—or, as in the German tradition, my "thesis father"—Dr. Jones has given me all the preparation I need to succeed as an academic researcher and writer. His patience, understanding, and, above all, eagerness to learn more about my research interests have made me fall in love, all the more, with the profession. I thank Dr. Jones for making himself accessible to me fully and wholeheartedly. I do not exaggerate when I state that the highlight of every week during my last semesters at Harvard University was sitting in his office at four o'clock in the evening on a Thursday. Further, I would like to thank Dr. Jones for keeping me actively

involved in the weekly events at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. Thank you, Dr. Jones, for all of your help, guidance, and mentorship. I do hope that you take as your own the parts in this thesis that please you the most; as for the rest, I shall assume full responsibility. Again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Finally, warm thanks go to my steadfast friends and family, especially Maggie Bennett, Linda ("Luscious") Nichols, Traudi Schroder, Dr. Zenobia Mistri, Domingo C. Santos, Michael J. Hardin, Beata Debek, Leticia Rubalcaba, Jose Rubalcaba, Maribel Rubalcaba, and my adoring parents, Rosario and Maria Rubalcaba, *a quienes le consagró con humildad todo lo bueno que yo hago*.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Morally speaking, he should be respectful of the law; a slave of his political commitments; honest and civically righteous; and dynamic and independent in character. But does that man exist? Yes, he exists; he is well known by the border, where his name enjoys more prestige than those of the Reyes or Madero; but having the great defect of modesty, he is not well known throughout the rest of the country.
His name is don Venustiano Carranza.
—Luis Cabrera, "La Solución del Conflicto"[1]

In many countries, the social and political conditions that existed at the turn of the twentieth century generated an atmosphere of chaos, uncertainty, and hostility. Unarguably, the twentieth century represents a transformative period in human history characterized by revolution, world war, and genocide. In Latin America, and specifically, in Mexico, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1920 violently shook longstanding institutions characterized by nepotism, dictatorship, and exploitation.

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[1] Luis Cabrera, "La Solución del Conflicto," in *Obras Completas*, vol. 3 (México: Oasis, 1975) 230-231. Written by Luis Cabrera, the editorial piece from which this quote was extracted appeared in a newspaper, *La Opinión*, in Veracruz, Veracruz. It was publicly disseminated on April 18th and 19th, 1911. Cabrera, a Mexican lawyer, politician, essayist, and poet, became a vocal and vigorous political voice in Mexico during and after the Revolution. In this newspaper essay, Cabrera writes about the problems, causes, and consequences of the conflict. As the title of his editorial suggests (in English, "The Solution of the Conflict"), he offers many solutions, and one of these focuses on placing a trustworthy figure, Carranza, in an important leadership position. With the rhetorical verve of Octavio Paz and the political enthusiasm of Carlos Fuentes, Cabrera delivers this compelling passage: "En lo moral, ese hombre debe ser respetuoso de la ley, esclavo de sus compromisos políticos, de honradez y rectitud cívicas y de grandes calidades de energía y de independencia de carácter. ¿Pero es hombre existe? Si existe; es muy conocido en la frontera, donde su nombre goza de prestigio más uniforme que los de Reyes o Madero; pero teniendo el gran defecto de ser modesto, no es bien conocido en el resto del país. Se llama don Venustiano Carranza." Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

Some observers have regarded the Revolution as a foreseeable event, claiming that, with social tensions accumulating in *Porfirian* Mexico, it was simply a matter of time before a riotous uprising of some sort would materialize.[2]

For others, such as Neftalí G. García who authored a colorful account, the Revolution began unexpectedly as a consequence of specific decisions and actions taken by certain revolutionary leaders.[3] Their accounts of the Revolution contain many of the elements of a romantic story of willpower and might: protagonists and antagonists, rage and carnage, sweat and blood, passion and ambiguity. Undoubtedly, the Revolution produced a historical narrative with a thrilling beginning, a tumultuous middle, and a questionable end, and yet how it began perhaps does not surpass in importance the way in which it culminated.

Credit must be given to those individuals who, with eagerness and ardor, gave agency to the Revolution. However, not all of the revolutionary leaders have received the same degree of attention and adulation, either academic or otherwise.

Many names come to mind when discussing the Revolution, not least of which include Porfirio Díaz, the longtime Mexican dictator; Emiliano Zapata, the celebrated revolutionary from the South; and Francisco Villa, the famed revolutionary from the North. Other critical political actors, such as Francisco I. Madero, Victoriano Huerta, and Venustiano Carranza also surface in the narratives and discussions of the Mexican Revolution.

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[2] See, for example, Philip Jowett and Alejandro de Quesada, *The Mexican Revolution 1910-20* (Westminster, MD: Osprey, 2006).

[3] Neftalí G. García, *The Mexican Revolution: Legacy of Courage* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2010).

In recent times, however, more academic attention has been given to the two most popular figures of the Revolution, Zapata and Villa. These figures have achieved an astonishing level of fame and recognition not only in Mexican society but also in American academia, and they stand as icons of the Revolution.

Although the historical literature takes into account other key players, sometimes tangentially, sometimes considerably, nonetheless they merit more attention, interpretation, and analysis. For example, the last chapter in the Revolution includes an unorthodox leader, Venustiano Carranza de la Garza,[4] who planted the seeds of great ideas in Mexico during his period of political activism in the Revolution.

Inspiration for this thesis comes from a desire to understand this important participant in the Revolution whose story deserves further investigation for various reasons. Carranza—or don Venustiano, as many Mexicans will respectfully and affectionately refer to him—played a decisive role in the overall development of the Revolution and, in fact, perhaps played a more substantial role than the average student of Mexican history has been willing to admit.

Carranza's ideology and his Constitutionalist cause stand to tell a story of great leadership, political vibrancy, and personal conviction. Carranza began a long and contentious political career in his home state of Coahuila, in northern Mexico. Perhaps what sealed his fate in the Revolution, however, was his *Porfirian* history, since an enormous motive for the Revolution included a repudiation of a *Porfirian* world that was defined by dictatorship and unending oppression. Armed with confidence and determination, Carranza traversed through the Revolution by changing certain habits in order to run a productive Constitutionalist campaign and to try to forestall treacherous

[4] Commonly known as Venustiano Carranza or simply Carranza.

situations with his political counterparts, but he hardly changed his design of progress for the Revolution.

This thesis poses the argument that fluctuations in the rhetoric of Carranza's Constitutionalist campaign reflect a sense of willingness on his part to adapt strategically to new contexts; however, to show deep conviction, he always stood behind a platform that was characterized by an unwavering faith in the political doctrine of constitutionality. While he shifted some of his positions when necessary, the core of his program remained constant and stood at the heart of his bold state building.

An argument such as this one will deepen our understanding of Carranza's program, the Constitutionalist cause, because not only will it show how he helped give rise to a different kind of political character, one defined by constitutionality and constitutional democracy, but also a national mentality that was defined by nationalism and state sovereignty, two preexisting nineteenth-century concomitants. In this way, he played an enormous part—indeed, a bigger part than others—in shaping and orienting the Mexican state that would soon emerge as a result of, and in response to, the Revolution.

At this point, it seems a matter of urgency that the term "constitutionality" be defined. The author uses this term regularly to refer to Carranza's political stance and program. In this thesis, the operational term "constitutionality"[5] draws from the American paradigm of constitutionalism, a school of thought that delineates the legal order of a country as one that derives the power of the government, sometimes directly from the citizens, and sometimes not.

The authority of the government becomes limited by a set of fundamental laws,

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[5] Other terms that will be used in its place may include, but not limited to, "constitutional order," "constitutional platform," "constitutional democracy," and other similar variants.

and these come into place as a result of a constituent assembly, which in theory, though not always in practice, is democratic by nature. Overall, constitutionalism represents a form of government that enables the administration in command to seize and wield power as determined, in this case, by a document, a written constitution with conditions and provisions that define the role and function of lawmaking institutions.[6]

Let us briefly call to mind how Carranza sprang out of his comfortable residence in Coahuila and into the inflamed combat zone of national politics in Mexico City. We begin with Madero, who continues to be regarded as the father of the Mexican Revolution, since under his tutelage the conflict began in earnest in 1910. After the forces of the reactionary Huerta assassinated President Madero, the Revolution halted and found itself at the cusp of failure and devastation. Many believed Huerta symbolized an extension of Díaz, the kingpin against whom Madero had rallied in the first place. After Madero's death, Mexico stood at a critical juncture. For who would dare to defend Mexicans and, more importantly, how?

The torch of the Revolution had been passed on to the hands of someone else moments after Madero took his last breath on February 18, 1913. With a passion many did not understand, along came Carranza, who may be regarded as the godfather of the

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[6] The ideas of a constitutional scholar, David Fellman, inform our definition of constitutionalism. For further reading over this topic, see David Fellman, "Constitutionalism," in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, ed. Philip E. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973) 485-492. Of prominent impact is the following observation made by Fellman: "Constitutionalism is descriptive of a complicated concept, deeply imbedded in historical experience, which subjects the officials who exercise governmental powers to the limitations of a higher law. Constitutionalism proclaims the desirability of the rule of law as opposed to rule by the arbitrary judgment or mere fiat of public officials…. Throughout the literature dealing with modern public law and the foundations of statecraft the central element of the concept of constitutionalism is that in political society government officials are not free to do anything they please in any manner they choose; they are bound to observe both the limitations on power and the procedures which are set out in the supreme, constitutional law of the community. It may therefore be said that the touchstone of constitutionalism is the concept of limited government under a higher law." Fellman 485.

Mexican Revolution. Why the godfather of the Revolution? Recall the two primary definitions of the term "godfather," a person who sponsors another at baptism or one who founds, supports, or inspires someone or even something.

The use of the term godfather here in relation to Carranza takes on both of these definitions. On the one hand, Carranza, symbolically speaking, sponsored Madero's child, Madero's revolution, and at the death of the latter, Carranza assumed full responsibility over the conflict. On the other, Carranza at the same time, and in his own way, founded, supported, and inspired his very own revolution, as he not only subscribed to Madero's revolution, but added his own sets of beliefs to it. Madero could be regarded as the father of the Mexican Revolution just as Carranza could be regarded as its godfather. The co-parenthood—or, in Spanish, the "compadrazgo"—dynamic, a very intimate concept in Mexico, continues to be present and common within Mexican family units today.

Although Carranza continuously showed great ability for political action during the years that followed Madero's assassination, the courage it took to pilot the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States of 1917[7] remains a point of pride in the life of this man. In the words of L. J. Bekker: "One cannot spend much time in Mexico without realizing that in all the tragic years following the retirement of Porfirio Diaz, Venustiano Carranza is the one real leader [who] evolved, the one man [who was] able to hold his own despite opposition at home and abroad."[8]

Additionally, the unstable relationships Carranza held with Zapata and Villa, relationships that were charged with unpredictability and tension, constitute as yet

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[7] Henceforth, "the Constitution of 1917."

[8] L. J. De Bekker, *The Plot against Mexico* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1919) 68.

another compelling chapter in this largely overlooked narrative. One scholar in the field, Charles E. Cumberland, captures the socio-political temperament during this critical time in the following fashion: "Mexico…was characterized by confusion and conflict, both of personality and of ideology; the tremendous complexity of the period has made evaluation of the various forces extremely difficult."[9] Adding to this atmosphere of doubt, "the constantly shifting alignments and loyalties served to obscure even more the nature of those forces."[10] As one of the foci of this thesis, an examination of the ongoing and turbulent relationships between these three individuals will illuminate the factors that created major divisions and acrid controversies among leaders.

Further, this thesis challenges popular ideas held by a number of historians, such as Robert Quirk, who believe that the factions of Villa and Zapata won the Revolution on an ideological base. In an essay on the topic, Quirk states: "Villa and Zapata, despite having embodied the aspirations of the majority and being, with a better title than Carranza, the precursors of the true Revolution, they (sic) were incapable of founding a stable government that would put into practice their programs."[11]

Later on, appearing to contradict himself, though perhaps not entirely, since he does agree that Villa and Zapata were represented at Carranza's Constitutionalist Convention in 1916 to 1917, Quirk relays to his readers: "[T]he principles that served Zapata as a banner were not defeated and became re-vindicated in Querétaro. In the final

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[9] Charles E. Cumberland, "'Dr. Atl' and Venustiano Carranza," *The Americas* 13, no. 3 (January 1957): 287.

[10] Cumberland 287.

[11] Robert Quirk, "Liberales y Radicales en la Revolución Mexicana," *Historia Mexicana* 2, no. 4 (April to June 1953): 510. "Villa and Zapata, a pesar de encarnar los anhelos de la gran mayoría, y de ser, con mejor título que Carranza, los precursores de la verdadera Revolución, fueron incapaces de fundar un gobierno estable que pusiera en práctica ese programa."

analysis, it was the liberals [Carranza] who lost the ideological battle, since it was impossible for Mexicans to become fully content with purely political reforms."[12]

Quirk's argument that Zapata and by extension Villa "won" seems plausible but only if looked at from the perspective of popular acceptance, since on balance this position appears relatively less important, as he seems to place too much weight on dubbing individuals as "winners" and "losers" of the Revolution. The culprit is this name-calling. Given that Quirk focuses heavily on labeling "winners" and "losers," there may be a temptation to draw simplistic assumptions about the Revolution, assumptions that clearly place Carranza at a disadvantage, since he took no part in that coterie of youthful and popular revolutionaries.

By diverging from the views espoused by scholars such as Quirk, this thesis will follow another path in order to explain how Carranza can be viewed as a truly pivotal figure in the revolutionary process.

This thesis will not deliver a political biography of Carranza since not only has a graduate of the University of Chicago, Luis F. Barron, already completed that assignment, most recently in a 2004 dissertation,[13] but also the leading research questions of the present project delimit such an undertaking. Nevertheless, this thesis implements various arguments proposed by Barron, because his dissertation continues to be the most current, complete, and well-researched academic biography of Carranza's early years and his career prior to the Revolution. Barron's dissertation fills in the lacunae in the

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[12] Quirk 526. "[L]os principios que sirvieron de bandera a Zapata no fueron vencidos, y quedaron reivindicados en Querétaro. En fin de cuentas, fueron los liberales quienes perdieron la batalla ideológica, pues era imposible que los mexicanos se contentaran con reformas meramente políticas."

[13] Luis F. Barron, "Porfirian Politics in Revolutionary Mexico: Venustiano Carranza and the Mexican Revolution, 1859-1913" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2004). A revised version of this thesis has now been published as *Carranza: El último reformista porfiriano* (México, D.F.: Tusquets Editores México, 2009).

historiography of Carranza's beginning, formative years, just as this thesis makes a contribution by placing Carranza at the center of the discourse on the Revolution during the ten-year period.

By dismantling or at least challenging traditional accounts of the Revolution, this thesis endeavors to highlight Carranza's importance and to direct academic attention to this revolutionary leader, as much can be learned from the example he set. Although scholars of the Revolution failed to fully depict the complete story behind Carranza, this very fact adds fuel to the sentiment that drives this thesis.[14]

In the words of Barron, "[e]ven though it was Carranza's army during his tenure as First Chief that destroyed the Porfirian state, and under his leadership that Mexico returned to the constitutional order, historians in general do not consider his presidency (1917-1920) as a foundational period of the modern Mexican state." [15] Jesus Carranza Castro intensifies Barron's observation by listing a number of acts overcome with success by Carranza, such as the invasion of Veracruz by U.S. troops, the Niagara conferences, the petroleum problem, the conferences of Ciudad Juárez and Atlantic City, and the Punitive Expedition.[16]

Despite an availability of sources, "the presidency of Carranza is," as Barron continues to claim, "the least studied period of the Mexican revolution, and among the most important syntheses of the revolution, not one gives a central role to Carranza or

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[14] For a rich discussion on Carranza's place in the historiography of the Mexican Revolution, see the first chapter in Barron.

[15] Barron 28.

[16] Jesus Carranza Castro, *Origen, Destino y Legado de Carranza* (México, D.F.: B. Costa-Amic Editor, 1977) 411.

Carranza's regime."[17] For this and other reasons, this thesis will traverse into the life of Carranza, especially taking into account those times of direct involvement during the Revolution up to his presidency.

In this way, this thesis serves as a follow-up or an extension to Barron's dissertation, for it picks up where that study left off. Whereas Barron focuses his attention on the years that preceded the Revolution, namely from 1859 to 1913, this thesis takes on Carranza and his movement from just before the Revolution, from the early 1900s, until his death, in 1920.[18]

In addition, the focus of this thesis should not be confused with the one taken by Douglas W. Richmond, who also, as the very first sentence in the introduction of his signature work informs readers, "analyze[s] the career of Venustiano Carranza from the time of his rise to power as governor of the state of Coahuila in 1911 until his assassination in 1920."[19] Richmond chiefly argues that, with the help of Carranza, "[t]he first genuine practitioner of modern Mexican nationalism,"[20] Mexican nationalism allowed for the Revolution to yield various results, among them the reduction of foreign control of the economy, a sense of egalitarianism in the transformation of society and the economy, and the independence of a sovereign nation.[21]

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[17] Barron 28.

[18] Douglas W. Richmond's *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920* so far is the only major academic work that solely focuses on Carranza during this crucial period; however, Richmond's research questions and arguments differ from those that will be explored in this thesis. Namely, at the center of his argument is the statement that Mexican nationalism, as solidified by Carranza, was not only the most potent political model in the Revolution, but the most powerful armament in destroying old and repressive systems of power in Mexico and elsewhere in the world.

[19] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* xviii.

[20] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* xviii.

[21] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* xviii-xix.

Unlike Richmond's claim, the argument that will be proposed in the following chapters goes a step further and asserts that in addition to Mexican nationalism, constitutionality or constitutional democracy stood as the second political ideology that helped depose a dictatorial system in Mexico, oppose the hegemony of the U.S., and launch a hopeful, prosperous, and democratic national existence marked by economic independence and social tranquility. In both the construction of Mexican nationalism and constitutional democracy, Carranza stood as the principal draftsman.

This study, therefore, contextualizes Carranza and places his personal history, his relationships with important men of the Revolution, and his contributions to the Revolution in a suitable context. Undoubtedly, investigating all three of these areas will yield critical information that will suggest that Carranza was no more and no less flawed than were the other, more celebrated figures. A human being with deep-seated aspirations, Carranza took the conflict a step further, to a whole new dimension, and incorporated new perspectives that marked a definite change in the trajectory of the Revolution.

But just as he changed the nature of the conflict, the conflict changed him. This mutual relationship is important to acknowledge, especially in our understanding of the process of the Revolution. Recall that the Revolution unleashed a cornucopia of forces, many of which became rival elements to Carranza. As a non-dictatorial leader, Carranza did not eliminate these forces but instead worked with them.

In the process of the Revolution, Carranza had a great deal of influence and, contrary to popular speculations, he did not have a fixed, unwavering mentality on how to handle the conflict and on how to prioritize the nation's leading concerns. He reacted

tenaciously in getting his demands met and adamant about restoring social order, but he was not rigid and obstinate in character. Carranza exemplified and simultaneously reflected the process of the Revolution, one that was adaptable, since instead of following an authoritarian method of leading the country he allowed his national project and ideology to become altered progressively in order to adapt to emerging situations and prevailing political outlooks.

Carranza's versatility helped him navigate the conflict, and although it has not been fully recognized in the historiography, he managed to incite social progress, a legal reconfiguration, and a political renaissance during the decade-long period of the revolutionary struggle. And arguably, more than any of his contemporaries, he helped shape today's modern Mexican state, an observation that has long languished outside of conventional studies.

As a protagonist and not simply a side character, he provided a voice in legal and constitutional matters, succeeded at asserting a program that was national in scope and implemented various legal dictates that had international implications.[22] To understand Carranza's national project, studying his relationships with Zapata and Villa, who were his two political opponents, will be indispensible. Finally, it will be crucial to investigate Carranza's contribution in drafting the Constitution of 1917 and his role at the Constitutionalist Convention in Querétaro.

After developing a discussion over Carranza's upbringing, this thesis goes on to

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[22] Refer to the following sources for discussions on the question of nationalism and the Constitutionalists' struggle for international recognition as a sovereign nation. Charles C. Cumberland, *Mexican Revolution: The Constitutionalist Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), and Douglas W. Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

show that the relationships of power[23] that Carranza held with Zapata and Villa weakened, if not completely collapsed, because Carranza had a vision of Mexico's future that differed fundamentally from those of his rivals. His vision was far reaching, complex, comprehensive, and deeply philosophical. Although armed with the best intentions at heart, Zapata and Villa proposed programs for Mexico that seemed, contrastingly, narrow and confined to addressing immediate, local concerns and issues.

Overall, Carranza espoused the position that Mexico faced urgent challenges of two different kinds: first, local problems that, if not alleviated immediately, would have jeopardized the very foundations of Mexican society, and, second, threats from external forces. Carranza resolved to carry out an important mission; in fact, Carranza biographer Josefina Flores emphasizes that "[i]n response to the legal order shattered by Huerta, Don Venustiano committed himself to consolidating in Mexico a fully defined state and nation."[24] On the other hand, Zapata and Villa, reacting impulsively to a nation torn asunder by constant strife and injustice, appeared to Flores to be dim of vision, lacking the foresight that was so clearly required to defend the sovereignty of Mexico on a global, massive scale.

In seasons of difficulty and trial, Carranza proved to be more than a politician attempting to be placed at the helm of his country during those countless precarious times of the Revolution, as can be evidenced by the decisions he took during the passing of the

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[23] This study borrows the expression "relationships of power" from American scholar of French history, Joan Wallach Scott, who is the Harold F. Linder Professor at the School of Social Science in the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, and who has used this expression in several of her academic works. Many, many thanks go to Professor Maura A. Henry at Harvard University for providing this useful expression during her lectures in a graduate course on 18th-century British history, literature, and economics.

[24] Josefina Moguel Flores, *Venustiano Carranza* (México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta Mexicana, 2004) 9. "A cambio del orden legal roto por Huerta, don Venustiano se comprometió a consolidar en México un estado y una nación bien definida."

Constitution of 1917, despite pressures brought upon by World War I and by imperialistic activity.[25] While this study does not treat the questions concerning imperialism and World War I, it does acknowledge them, since these influenced Carranza's decision-making on various fronts and at different points during the conflict. At its very core, the Revolution, we must recall, became to be viewed as the paradigmatic response to imperialism in the Latin American world, the extent of which is in fact a matter of some debate.

Generally, historians credit Carranza with having drafted an important document, the Constitution of 1917, the Revolution's most visible triumph. As scholar Lorenzo Meyer adds: "[t]he Constitution of 1917, which is still in effect today, was the work of Carranza's victorious faction. It was to provide the legal basis for putting into effect the political and economic reforms that had been included in one way or another in the potpourri that was the Constitutionalist platform."[26] The force behind the drafting of this constitution came from Carranza's Constitutionalist movement.

It will be imperative to decide how Carranza utilized the Constitutionalist party and the Constitution of 1917 as two powerful tools that carried out his agenda against the always intense, sometimes unjust manipulation of Mexico's economy by foreign forces. Having had an unconquerable fidelity to duty, Carranza achieved his objectives by drafting a constitution and by assembling an organization of delegates to write a constitution, both of which fulfilled the mission of finding a solution to both local and

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[25] For book-length studies on imperialism and the oil situation, see Lorenzo Meyer, *Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917-1942*, trans. by Muriel Vasconcellos (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972); and Jonathan C. Brown, *Oil and Revolution in Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[26] Meyer L. 540.

external concerns.[27]

To test the hypothesis, this thesis includes four chapters and a conclusion. Each chapter examines a different stage in the political life of Carranza during the Revolution. With the exception of Chapter Two, which brings into focus moments in Carranza's life prior to the conflict, every chapter engages in a discussion of a particular period. For purposes of chronological order, this thesis focuses on four developmental stages, each of which tries to contribute an understanding of the life, times, and struggles of Carranza in the Revolution:

- mid-1910 to mid-1913, the embryonic or incubating stage, a time of reflection;
- mid-1913 to mid-1916, the radical or crisis stage, a time of conflict;
- mid-1916 to mid-1917, the culminating stage, a time of action;
- and mid-1917 to mid-1920, the downfall stage, a time of decline in power.

Chapter Two lays the foundation for the thesis as it paints a detailed picture of the birthplace, family, and political environment from which Carranza originated. This chapter begins by noting the level of education he attained and the intellectual interests he developed. Emphasis is placed on a number of experiences that gave rise to his drive and passion for politics, from his revealing past as a *Porfirian* senator to his transformation as a leader.

This chapter follows this transformation and argues that every aspect of his upbringing and early political life had a clear purpose, for nothing was spontaneous or

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[27] For a complete study on Mexico's controversial relationship with the international community, see Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

stochastic.[28] Ultimately, this chapter explains Carranza's political outlook during the first stage in his development as a leader, in mid-1913, when he officially became a part of the revolutionary struggle as the *Primer Jefe* of the Constitutional Army. This chapter shows how, in mid-1913, Carranza began to express concerns for law and order, two essentials for constitutionality.

Chapter Three identifies Carranza's ideology between the years mid-1913 to mid-1916, the second stage. It shows how his priorities changed in comparison to his mode of thinking in 1913, especially as he made and discontinued relationships with other revolutionary leaders. In order to arrive at this understanding, an examination of his relationships of power will prove to be beneficial. After Huerta no longer stood as an oppressor or as a barrier, the politics shifted emphatically, as new forces began to ascend, and Carranza witnessed two of the most potent regimes develop and rebel.

Of the most important and influential rebel groups, the cadres led by Zapata and Villa posed the greatest danger to Carranza, and this chapter explains the political agendas of Zapata, Villa, and Carranza in comparison, as only in comparison can we really appreciate and evaluate Carranza's ideology. This chapter demonstrates that, in the face of resistance by Zapata and Villa, Carranza only became all the more committed to constitutionality, foreshadowing what was to come in the next stage of the Revolution.

Chapter Four studies Carranza's third stage of development as a leader and treats the topic of his program at work. This chapter analyses the organizational attributes of the committee that took part in the Constitutional Convention at Querétaro from mid-1916 to

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[28] Because Chapter Two deals with a large time span, over fifty years, the rules of chronological order may be sacrificed in favor of brevity and smoother analysis. An attempt will be made not to summarize information that has already been established but to selectively draw pieces of Carranza's early history that elevate aspects of our hypothesis.

mid-1917. The committee, which was convened by Carranza, became the taskforce that revised the 1857 constitution so that the new one reflected contemporary concerns. This chapter explores Carranza's political talents, since this convention put his skills as a tactician and leader to the test. As Carranza's first major operating project, analysis of this legislative assignment can serve to demonstrate his ability to lead a full-scale operation in which his sense of diplomacy, flexibility, and open-mindedness were questioned.

This chapter also assesses the changes that were made to the Constitution of 1857 and points out the articles that the committee strengthened and focused on the most. Studying the kinds of changes that were actually applied will allow us to determine whether Carranza's project changed and, if so, in what ways. In 1917, when members of the Convention completed the Constitution of 1917, Mexicans were left with a statement of fundamental laws—a new legal order launched by Carranza. Studying the rhythm of the convention and a number of radically changed articles reveal that Carranza had, indeed, achieved a major conquest, that is the full application of constitutionality into Mexican Law.

Chapter Five covers the period from mid-1917 to mid-1920, Carranza's presidency. This chapter brings Carranza's presidency into focus and assesses his effectiveness, not as a revolutionary leader, but as a chief executive. This chapter explains how, even though Carranza failed to be an efficient president and disappointed many with his decisions, his work in the area of constitutional democracy continued, albeit at a slower and less intense pace. As efforts to "constitutionalize," as it were, Mexico's legal structure continued, an important thread, Mexican nationalism began to

appear with more clarity in his state building. All along, the cornerstone of his ideals, constitutional democracy, paved the way for the reflective emphasis of Mexican nationalism, and this, along with the ultimate failure of this leader, is what this chapter argues.

Overall, these four chapters do not relocate the horizon of present knowledge about the Revolution or Carranza but follow his political development during the ten-year conflict, highlighting those key moments that truly exhibited the maturation process of a leader. As it moves closer to its conclusion, this thesis reveals that Carranza grew as an individual from one stage of the Revolution to the next, clearly demonstrating that, as an agent of change, by no means did he play the role of a static or flat character.

As in a *bildungsroman*, the story of this man can be read as a didactic lesson about the difficulties of becoming a leader in a society that struggled to accept him. In the psychological, moral, and social shaping of this leader, disappointments and mistakes became as important as successes. This thesis shows the gradual growth of this revolution-hardened leader, and that is the contribution that this study offers to the still-evolving narrative of Carranza.

Chapter II

A capa y espada:

An Audacious March into Mexican Revolutionary Politics[29]

> In Chihuahua [Madero] addressed the people from the balcony of the Governor's palace. As he told of the hardships endured and the sacrifices made by the little band of men who had overthrown the dictatorship of Diaz forever, he was overcome with emotion. Reaching inside the room he pulled out a tall, bearded man of commanding presence, and throwing his arm about his shoulder, he said, in a voice choked with tears: 'This is a good man! Love and honour him always.' It was Venustiano Carranza, a man of upright life and high ideals; an aristocrat, descended from the dominant Spanish race; a great landowner, as his family had always been great landowners; and one of those Mexican nobles who, like a few French nobles such as Lafayette in the French Revolution, threw themselves heart and soul into the struggle for liberty.
>
> —John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*[30]

As is well-known by now, most of the academic attention and interest devoted to the Mexican Revolution in recent times has focused on revolutionary leaders, particularly those active during the years of the Revolution. The early twentieth century can be

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[29] The expression "A capa y espada" in the chapter titles literally translates to "With Cloak and Dagger" but means "To Defend with Cloak and Dagger." The expression comes from 17th-century Spanish literary works, mainly theatrical plays, in which soldiers, cavaliers, and courageous heroes approach situations, especially physical encounters, with noble gallantry. The expression appears in Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and in the plays by two Spanish Baroque dramatists, Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina.

[30] John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico* (New York: D. Appleton, 1914): 211. During the last handful of months in 1913, the U.S. magazine *Metropolitan* sent John Reed, a famous and well-paid reporter, to Mexico to cover the Mexican Revolution. Reed travelled extensively throughout Mexico during this time and had the opportunity to seek out various important individuals, among them Francisco Villa and Venustiano Carranza. *Insurgent Mexico* represents a journalistic reportage by Reed written in a semi-narrative, semi-analytical fashion. The quote presented above took place two years before Reed's assignment, that is, in 1911, when the forces of Díaz and Madero had declared a peace treaty during the initial fighting phase of the Revolution. Here, Reed reflects upon and reenacts the moment after the peace treaty had been signed and declared. He places an emphasis on the moment when Madero spoke to his people. In this scene, Madero, projecting a confident voice, delivered a message that perhaps surprised many. In this public declaration, Madero took the opportunity to introduce, in somewhat of a glorious presentation, someone exceptional in his eyes, Venustiano Carranza.

characterized as a time in Latin American history when the pillars of Mexican society became unstable due to seismic human rebellion, and those few who reacted in the most fervent and fanatical of ways stimulated inconceivable amounts of curiosity and allure.

Historians have proven to be wise economists in the world of research, however, as they have capitalized on these Mexican revolutionaries, all of whom have provided narratives saturated with splendor, passion, and personality. When historians research the lives of these individuals, they oftentimes find most fascinating ordinary men and women taking extraordinary actions, and for good reason. When placed on the pedestal of historical approval and praise, these characters add dazzling shades of excitement to national narratives that might otherwise appear mundane, stale, or even empty.

At the same time, these characters have stories to tell, and they sometimes, if not most of the time, represent the millions of people who have become rendered voiceless, powerless, and even nameless. Both historians and readers, therefore, want to hear, see, and read about how these individuals have represented the downtrodden and the demoralized. For that is how myths become established and imbedded in the national memories and mentality of a people, and for that is how national narratives sustain and keep themselves alive, functioning for generations and generations.

In the context of the Revolution, analysis must germinate in an attempt to promote and enrich the narratives of political actors who are often disregarded in the relevant body of research. In a study focusing on the intersection of economics, foreign involvement in Mexico, and Carranza's regime, Emily S. Rosenberg agrees on this point. Speaking to the matter, she begins her insightfully crafted essay with the following observation: "During the years 1917-1918 Mexico stood at the crossroads between revolutionary nationalism

and foreign control. Nevertheless, much of this wartime period and the variety of foreign threats to the regime of Venustiano Carranza remain obscure."[31]

Integral to the study of the Revolution, Carranza has not received equitable analysis, especially not in modern times. Much of the research devoted to this early twentieth-century figure has been written in Spanish by scholars and writers based in Mexico. More importantly, most of these book-length research materials were composed during or shortly after the Revolution, a fact that arguably shows the fundamental importance of Carranza as a catalyst of the Revolution during his complicated stint in Mexican politics. As time has shown, however, Carranza's role in the Revolution became hidden or at least downplayed in the dusty and often unsympathetic pages of history.

Although Carranza did not emanate or radiate the revolutionary spirit in dress or in speech or even in upbringing, he did have a revolutionary, not rebellious, mentality that was unwilling to expect and much less accept unsatisfying results. The uncommon characteristics of Carranza added a particular edge of diversity to the revolutionary movement.

Unlike his fashionable counterparts, namely, Zapata and Villa, Carranza hailed from a middle-class background that afforded him many opportunities, such as the prospect of pursuing an education. From the outset, Carranza also distinguished himself from other revolutionaries by exuding a sense of dignity and poise. Simply put, he was not one to walk around with a rifle in hand at all times.

Furthermore, his role as the chief of the Constitutional Army gave him both freedoms and restrictions, both of which need to be emphasized at this point. On the one

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[31] Emily S. Rosenberg, "Economic Pressures in Anglo-American Diplomacy in Mexico, 1917-1918," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 17, no. 2 (May 1975): 123.

hand, Carranza had to respect certain expectations demanded of him by Mexicans and Mexican law, for he had to behave with equanimity and had to demonstrate that his actions were driven by rational and sound decisions and not by sentimentalism, something that was manifestly common among other revolutionaries.

On the other hand, his political position afforded him the opportunity to put into practice many of the dictates that he deemed appropriate and necessary to implement. Whether fulfilled or unfulfilled, whether beneficial or unprofitable, his attempts to exact changes in his republic were respected, and unlike the others, he had direct and formal leverage over his nation. After all, he took the initiative to erect a Constitutionalist Army and, after all, he had worked his way into the *Palacio Presidencial* through political merit and, most importantly, with his own brand of passion.

It is imperative to underline Carranza's two-sided role as an official political agent for two reasons. First, it allows us to understand that Carranza's political position as the chief of the Constitutionalist Army was a bit more complex than one would like to believe, since as long as he kept this title, he was required to acknowledge certain responsibilities and duties. In other words, his position in power served Carranza purposes different from those of his peers.

Second, it will make for a useful contrast in a subsequent chapter between the role played by Carranza versus those played by Zapata and Villa. This contrast will be instrumental in ascertaining the differences in outlook among these three individuals. The breadth and depth of the visions of these three can partially be explained by the roles that they each played in the Revolution.

Before becoming president of Mexico, Carranza stepped onto the revolutionary scene with confidence and a willingness to coalesce his mission with the objectives of his contemporaries. He showed no reluctance in compromising, and perhaps this allowed Carranza to galvanize so much support, as his willingness to amalgamate different outlooks placed him on good terms with many. Overall, he embarked on a journey that would be relatively short lived and one that would be filled with endless complexities, mainly because Mexicans questioned his motives.[32]

As for his circle of associations, Carranza made scores of relationships with individuals inside and outside of his gubernatorial circle, especially outside of it. For instance, outside the orbit of his administration, he made a plethora of relationships with the intent of keeping the Revolution well alive and moving in the right direction. One must recall that the Revolution operated as an all-encompassing conflict, and oftentimes the viewpoints of dissidents and objectors would travel quickly through the columns of Mexican society, demonstrating that it was a time like no other, a revolution like no other before.

As a phenomenon, the Revolution proved to be a powerful force that managed to shatter relationships effortlessly, sometimes even nonsensically, and in this way, this civil conflict acted as a stage where relationships were temporary, emotions abundant, and consequences complicated and thorny. Later on, this thesis will explore the theme of relationships of power as well as their causes and trajectory in the life of Carranza.

This chapter, however, demonstrates to the reader three aspects of Carranza that demand consideration. The first aspect concerns Carranza's personal history, especially

[32] There were many questionable aspects about this Coahuilan leader, especially his past as a *Porfirian* senator, his socio-economic status, and even his age.

aspects that show how his upbringing fashioned his role in the Revolution. Also of great importance are the demands made on him that shaped his thinking and decision-making, especially the decision-making that occurred after his becoming president.

Finally, the philosophy Carranza adopted as part of his political agenda to counter foes of the Revolution represents the third crucial aspect. The main point of this chapter is to show where Carranza stood ideologically in the period 1910 to 1913, a period we will refer to as the embryonic stage. During this stage in the political life of Carranza, his convictions and ideas about the future of Mexico were beginning to take shape.

Successive events during the opening years of the Revolution helped form the political foundation of Carranza. From 1910 to 1911, for example, leading figures of the Revolution centered their emphasis on ejecting Díaz from the presidential throne. Once he was officially out, in May of 1911, Francisco I. Madero assumed political leadership.

Everything seemed to have changed in 1913, though, when the intransigent General Huerta also entered the scene. This authoritarian figure seemed to have defied many aspects of the revolutionary spirit, such as reviving the all-too-recent memory of Díaz. Therefore, an impassioned political battle between Madero and Huerta ensued.

In February of 1913, *Huertistas*, political followers of Huerta, defeated and executed Madero. At this point in the conflict, the path appeared to be cleared for Carranza to enter the struggle not only in the name of Madero's memory but also on behalf of his own sets of beliefs.

Evidently, the death of Madero inspired and allowed Carranza to penetrate the politics of the revolutionary movement. After doing so, Huerta then turned his attention to Carranza, who seemed to have posed the greatest threat. The war of words that

transpired between Carranza and Huerta signals the kinds of ideological clashes that dominated the political environment. As this chapter will show, Carranza's rhetorical campaign against Huerta illustrates a political program in its nascent stage. During this time, his ideas about the Revolution began to take shape, and written exchanges between Carranza and Huerta show how Carranza articulated his political agenda by dealing with local animosity.

After understanding Carranza's background and upbringing, this chapter then takes a look at how he dealt with the conflict from 1910 to 1913, the ultimate objective of which is to explain the ideological groundwork of his politics during the early stage of his political development.

One Rocky Road to the *Palacio*

Before devoting analysis to Carranza's philosophy and decision-making, as well as to his relationships with the other revolutionaries, one must begin by examining the environment from which he originated. This brief investigative analysis will yield information that, in turn, will strengthen and corroborate discussions in the ensuing chapters over Carranza's growing political vision.

Four days after Christmas, on December 29, 1859, Venustiano Carranza de la Garza was born in the subtropical region of the state of Coahuila in Northeastern Mexico. One of fifteen siblings, Carranza grew up in an unassuming and unexceptional town, Cuatro Ciénegas, Coahuila, where the land looked arid; where the architecture of the houses somewhat resembled medieval styles; and where the general tenor of the atmosphere conveyed feelings of seclusion, solitude, and quietude. The desert-like city of

Cuatro Ciénegas, which translates to “four marshes,”[33] lacked the appeal of other loud and booming cities, such as Guadalajara, Juárez, or Mexico City.

Aside from engendering a feeling of remoteness, Cuatro Ciénegas also created a sense of austerity. Of the connection between the character of Carranza and this fairly forbidding setting, Richmond says: “The rugged personality of Carranza is mirrored in this demanding environment, where only those who toiled could survive.”[34] In this rigorous landscape, families, even those well-off, strove with utmost diligence to survive. That was the way of life in Cuatro Ciénegas.

The financial status of the Carranza family could be considered neither indigent, nor affluent. Carranza’s father owned a considerable amount of land, land that was used thoroughly by the Carranza family to provide necessary nourishment for its seventeen-member family unit. On the whole, the Carranzas were a hardworking, cattle-ranching family. A united, tightly knit family, the Carranza brothers learned the enterprise of cattle-ranching and the business of owning and maintaining land.

When learning that Carranza hailed from a middle-class background, the reader might be inclined to assume that he grew up and lived well and rather comfortably. In reality, however, the middle-class in late nineteenth-century Mexico was somewhat modest and humble in many respects. In the words of Barron, “the Carranza family was not one of those ‘pedigree families’ that could trace their wealth or power back to colonial Mexico.”[35]

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[33] Today, the town is officially known as “Cuatro Ciénegas de Carranza” in honor of its most famous and respected resident, Venustiano Carranza.

[34] Richmond, *Carranza’s Nationalist* 1.

[35] Barron 39.

Also, Cuatro Ciénegas was no thriving metropolis, but rather a dry agricultural landscape fraught with an air of stillness. The Carranza family made the most of their stay in Cuatro Ciénegas, and although the home in which Carranza grew and lived had fifteen rooms, its "only claim to luxury [was]," according to Richmond, "an airy patio which [lay] behind the family quarters."[36] It seems rather paradoxical that Cuatro Ciénegas became the birthplace of a man who, in the throes and euphoria of the Revolution, would later be destined to defy local and foreign assaults on the Mexican economy and government structure.

However, the paradox loses its intensity as one learns more about Carranza's family. We begin with his father. Known simply as don Jesús,[37] this parental figure inspired and impacted Carranza and the direction of his later life like no other, and the little that is known about don Jesús' personal life suggests that he lived a wondrous life for a brief time during his adolescence.[38] Carranza's father had a personal history steeped in adventure, danger,[39] but also a certain degree of unexpected maturity. For instance, after various ventures with American travelers in Mexico; being saved by a Spaniard at one point (don Jesús was himself of Spanish descent); and eventually getting married,

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[36] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 2.

[37] His full name was Jesús Carranza Neira, and virtually nothing is known about Carranza's mother, doña Maria de Jesus Garza.

[38] The little known history that exists about don Jesús is probably as fascinating as that of his son, for he had close ties with Benito Juarez and had resisted from owning a *hacienda*, despite having the land and power for it. For more information about him, refer to Jesús Carranza Castro.

[39] Political involvement ran thick in the blood of the Carranzas. During his time, don Jesús partook and fought in the Reform War (1857-1861) and Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867).

raising cattle, and settling down in Cuatro Ciénegas, don Jesús served as an outstanding role model to his fifteen children.[40]

He was a constant source of kindness and love to his children, despite playing the role of a harsh enforcer of discipline and hard work. Perhaps most important, as Richmond goes on to observe, don Jesús "instilled in his children a sense of civic duty,"[41] a lesson that served them well. The moral and civic values don Jesús inculcated in his children perhaps served his children in ways he would have never anticipated, and Carranza stands as a fine testament to these virtues. Having fulfilled his duties as a responsible father, soon after his passing in 1899, don Jesús was highly thought of and commemorated in his town.[42]

Aside from family history, one fundamental aspect remains to be highlighted and analyzed, Carranza's education. This area of his upbringing will open a didactic exposition of the transformative power of education, a human right that Carranza championed throughout his career, despite rarely receiving any recognition for it.[43] Education became one of the general foci of his agenda, perhaps one of the few aspects that remained unchanged during his transformation from a *Porfirian* to an anti-*Porfirian* official.

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[40] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 2.

[41] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 4.

[42] The Veracruz town of Jesús Carranza was named in his honor.

[43] Many thanks go to Michelle Kondrich, a New York City-based artist, who created the frontispiece for this project. The frontispiece is a modern remake of an old, black-and-white 1915 picture of Carranza setting the foundational cornerstone for a school, the *Escuela Normal de Saltillo*, in Coahuila. Gratitude must also be expressed to the staff at the *Centro de Estudios de Historia de México Carso* in Mexico City, where the original picture is kept. The staff answered many questions regarding picture reproductions and they directed the author to a facsimile print from which the illustrator, Michelle Kondrich, reproduced the frontispiece.

Carranza enjoyed a rich educational experience. He received the privilege to attend school, the equivalent of elementary school, high school, college, and a few years of medical school.[44] But long before embarking on his journey to higher education, Carranza became introduced to reading at a tender age, during which time a world rich with storied pasts opened up for him. He became instantly intrigued by these objects of the imagination and remained largely indifferent about school, however. Throughout the educational process, he felt unmotivated by the repetitive and oft-mundane nature of a daily regimen of attending school.

Carranza preferred instead to wake up early on a sun-drenched day and devour a fair amount of pages from a good book, a political magazine, or simply a local newspaper. Reading introduced Carranza to the realm to which he would dedicate his entire life, politics. Alfonso Taracena puts it this way: "When not contemplating about nature, which was one of his pleasures, or when not practicing horseback riding, he would dedicate himself to devouring world or Mexican history books."[45]

Needless to say, his favorite subject was, indeed, history.[46] The study of the past fascinated Carranza. History probably offered Carranza what the other subjects, say, the natural sciences or mathematics, could not offer him, that is, the opportunity to acquire a perspective on the problems of the present. Thus, he utilized history in general and Mexican history in particular as his lodestars. As a reflective, pensive, and solemn

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[44] Alfredo Breceda, *Don Venustiano Carranza: Rasgos Biográficos en 1912* (México: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1930) 4.

[45] Alfonso Taracena, *Venustiano Carranza* (México: Editorial Jus, 1963): 6. "De no contemplar la naturaleza, que era uno de sus placeres, o cuando no practicaba la equitación, se dedicaba a devorar libros de historia patria o universal."

[46] Barron 42.

individual, whose "circumspection was marked by practicality and action,"[47] Carranza naturally had the patience that the study of history necessitates.

In comparison to the eighty percent of Mexicans who were considered completely illiterate at the time,[48] Carranza came prepared to absorb written materials, such as constitutions and public declarations, written by politicians, presidents, and the literate community. Growing up in an environment conducive to learning and reading helped widen Carranza's collection of knowledge and awareness.[49] By reading politically charged materials, he was invited and sometimes even forced to grapple with different political outlooks, differing arguments and refutations, a wide assortment of empirical corroborations, and other literary and political ruminations of all sorts. A fire in his belly for civic duty had definitely been ignited.

Before Carranza's arrival in the presidential quarters of the *Palacio Nacional*, he had a lengthy and distinguished résumé. By then he had already filled many political roles on a local level, and although his work history before becoming president looked impressive, polemic and crafty deception characterized his steady movement into

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[47] Taracena 6. "Su prudencia era práctica y de acción."

[48] Luis Cabrera, "Address of Mr. Luis Cabrera," *Mexican Revolution* (New York: Latin-American News Association, 1916) 8.

[49] In particular, Carranza gravitated toward the works of Plutarch, a Greek historian, essayist, and biographer during the first century in the Common Era. Enamored by his written testimonials and stories, Carranza developed a consciousness over the ageless struggle over land, as well as other profound and reflective topics, such as morality and ethics. In his most celebrated work, *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch navigated through the lives of Roman and Greek leaders and political figures. He did so not because he necessarily wanted to historicize them, but rather because he thought that much could be learned from reading biographical sketches of men whose decisions changed the destinies of entire nations. The lives of extraordinary men and women, of those who gave agency to history, become history's most important subjects, and Plutarch, as a historian, ventured to bring the stories of these individuals to life. Plutarch understood all too well the purpose of studying History.

national politics. Prior to the Revolution, Carranza's involvement with politics spanned over a period of 22 years, from 1887 to 1909.[50]

Carranza's journey into politics began by assuming a variety of local political positions, first in his hometown as its municipal president and later on the national scene as a *Porfirian* senator. Although Carranza remained in this latter position for a short time, this position provided Carranza with various opportunities to witness firsthand the acts of injustice executed by Díaz.

A turning point in the political life of Carranza arrived when, in 1910, Díaz announced his own reelection program, which would promise Díaz the presidency for yet another term. This incensed Carranza.[51] It infuriated him to the point that he immediately and deliberately transformed himself from a *Porfirian* to an anti-*Porfirian* and wasted no time in devising his own plan of action.

When Francisco I. Madero, Díaz's main presidential contender, launched his non-reelection program against Díaz, Carranza saw this as a serendipitous opportunity to counter the tumultuous chaos that Díaz had begun to create.[52] After the disingenuous and

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[50] Barron's dissertation provides a detailed account of these twenty-two years of service to Mexico as a political figure.

[51] There is also reason to believe that Carranza had held a previous grudge against Díaz. In 1909, Carranza aspired to be the governor of Coahuila and even upon being purportedly backed by Díaz, he eventually lost his bid. Díaz never formally supported him, and Carranza kept this feud, for the most part, in private. Many scholars have disagreed whether this grudge served as the ultimate reason for Carranza to join the Revolution. Little evidence exists to fully support either side; however, the argument that this grudge was the decisive reason not only seems unsatisfactory and dubious but also reductive. A proponent of this reductionist hypothesis is Alfonso Junco, in *Carranza y los Origenes de Su Rebelion*, Segunda Edición (Méjico: Editorial Jus, 1935).

[52] A crucial point must be put forth and clarified. Disclosing the following piece of unseemly information shall hopefully fix the sun in its proper orbit, as it were: The fact that Carranza flip-flopped on various occasions must be brought to awareness. For example, before Carranza joined Madero, he was opposed him. At the time, Carranza had pledged loyalty to Díaz. Then, after Díaz denied Carranza the governorship of Coahuila, Carranza turned against Díaz, arriving at the conclusion "that the 80-year-old dictator was too feeble to rule. So this Juarista landowner backed Madero's thrust for power, joined his cabinet, and received the governorship of his state." In Donald C. Hodges and Ross Gandy, *Mexico, the*

momentary self-appointment of Díaz as president of Mexico in 1910, Carranza joined Madero in San Antonio, Texas.

Carranza and Madero's brief stint in San Antonio did not represent an act of escapism or even cowardice. Madero had made a deliberate decision to move to San Antonio for a short time, because this would provide him with the time and space needed to begin to machinate against Díaz, and this action would free of any interruptions and unwanted intrusion by Díaz. Madero, regarded today by many as the father of the Mexican Revolution, placed a significant amount of thought and effort into trying to concoct the exact recipe that would oust the ignoble presence of Díaz in Mexico indefinitely.

It may help to provide a brief explanation of the factors and circumstances that moved Madero to co-author, publish, and announce the *Plan of San Luis Potosí* on October 5, 1910. While in San Antonio, Madero and a fragment of his entourage, which included Carranza, worked hard to compose a proclamation that would cast an attack on Díaz's dictatorship. The proclamation specifically targeted Díaz and his reelection program, a program that had gone on for over thirty years.[53]

Further, it attacked the *Porfirian* system—a system riddled with military allies who stood religiously behind Díaz—that turned Mexican politics into an illegal, fraudulent business affair, since it oppressed the masses economically and

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End of the Revolution (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002) 22.

[53] Díaz even had the audacity to amend the Constitution of 1857 twice in order to get around restrictions that blocked him from reelection. In essence, this kingpin ran a mafia that had at the time controlled the country. In this crime-infested and corruption ridden environment, Díaz managed to trample over human rights and ran an economy based on favoritism. Worse yet, the terror he created in society remains unspeakable to this day, especially his public program of "Pan o palo," which translates to "Bread or a beating," a scare tactic he used to manipulate the masses. Either people listened to this man and willingly received what was given to them ("Pan," "Bread"), or they faced dire consequences ("Palo," "a beating").

psychologically. During exile, Madero and his crew banded together to confront Díaz's regime and put an end to his absolute rule.

The *Plan of San Luis Potosí*, advanced on the 5th day of October 1910, soon became the answer: It was a succinctly written proclamation of how Mexicans were being wronged by Díaz. Complemented with the declaration of a full-blown revolution, this manifesto provided Madero with a powerful armament. According to Hodges and Gandy: "Madero's *Plan de Potosí* promised democracy and a bit of agrarian reform—the land stolen from the peasants of Morelos would be returned to them. The program called upon Mexico to rise in revolution against the dictator."[54] This document also advised Mexicans to mark their calendars: November 20, 1910, for it was on this date that the commencement of a violent reinstitution of democracy would be initiated via direct action on the part of the Mexican populace.

The *Plan of San Luis Potosí* stands as a national and historical symbol. What made this document one of such great impact was that Madero composed it with candor, fervor, and utter commitment. He understood only too well the power of the written word and realized that the written word embodies the translation of human feeling and thought.

Experiencing Madero working in the mighty realm of words in order to ignite a chorus of followers all over Mexico in the name of one, single cause must have given Carranza incredible inspiration. For these are the defining moments in the life of a prospective politician or would-be president; these are the moments that transform, shape, and sometimes challenge the foundations of one's character and belief structure.

Madero's program to prohibit Díaz's plan for reelection in 1910 provided the impetus that awakened not only Carranza but also the country into a state of heightened

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[54] Hodges and Gandy 18.

alertness. Paul J. Vanderwood observes that the time-consuming breakdown of the *Porfirian* administration kindled the civil war, that it was the ultimate tipping point, and that it helped fuse scattered revolts into a full-blown revolution.[55] Further, the rhetoric Madero used in his *Plan of San Luis Potosí* and that which he used to broadcast his message exhibited strong emotions that called for sudden and radical changes in the system. The years that followed this manifesto, Madero, with Carranza largely on his side, ran the political bodies of Mexico and showed little concern for Huerta.

At first, Carranza followed Madero's plan fully and sonorously and chased after the wave of the Revolution, becoming a crucial component of it. To show his support in helping Madero run the country democratically, on May 22, 1912, Carranza wrote Madero a letter guaranteeing complete freedom to an upcoming electoral campaign. From Saltillo, the state capital of Coahuila, Carranza assured Madero the following: "this Government is willing to allow different political parties, whether already organized or that will organize, to work with absolute liberty during the political work in which these will soon engage and carry out."[56] In this way, Carranza began to whittle a political personality that would allow him to prove his versatility, fidelity, and commitment to a

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[55] Paul J. Vanderwood, "Explaining the Mexican Revolution," *The Revolutionary Process in Mexico: Essays on Political and Social Change, 1880-1940* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1990) 105. In this same instance, Vanderwood makes an interesting observation about the changing mentality of Mexico in the early twentieth century as another legitimate cause of the Revolution. He says of the struggle between modernizers and traditionalists: "while Diaz had constructed, and for most of his administration protected, his regime by balancing and thereby neutralizing the competing ideologies, he had by the turn of the century inclined toward the modernizers (*científicos*) at the expense of the traditionalists (*Reyistas*). In doing so he fatally altered the mechanism which had held his dictatorship in place."

[56] *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, Vol. 14, "Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista," editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana, bajo la dirección de Isidro Fabela (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968) 42. "[Q]ue este Gobierno estaba dispuesto a dejar obrar con entera libertad a los diferentes partidos políticos, organizados o que se organizasen, durante los trabajos políticos que estos verificasen."

nation that found itself far from pacification and conciliation.

As in the words of Robert Freeman Smith, "those Mexicans who thought that the elimination of Diaz would end all agitation were sadly mistaken."[57] The nightmare of the Revolution had merely begun, just as the Díaz one had finished. Furrowed and raged, Carranza stepped on the revolutionary platform that others had helped build.

Although the trials and toils of the Revolution made it appear as though Mexico had undergone a prolonged and definite traumatic tribulation with no prospects in the betterment of the social and political system, some of the actions taken by certain individuals also reveal another picture, and this is the point at which Carranza stepped onto the scene. After a chain of unfortunate events, in which Madero was assassinated and then Huerta thrown out of power, history ushered in Carranza.

Carranza, who had been waiting diligently though by no means timorously, came prepared to change how the history of the Revolution would play out. Of course, he soon became forced to confront a variety of ghosts, in a manner of speaking, that were scattered and that loomed throughout Mexico, namely, the ghostly manifestations of imperialism and World War I. For one, the former, imperialism, was like a growing tumor that Mexico had attempted to treat during the Revolution; and, the latter, World War I, generated nearby consequences and effects, despite being a faraway event and despite having started until 1914. Coming to terms with this global atmosphere of madness only prepared Carranza to take on the conflict with confidence and awareness.

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[57] Robert Freeman Smith, *The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico, 1916-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972) 15.

Summoned to Take Action

At last, after Carranza had acknowledged and partially understood the alchemical mixture of the remnants of the Díaz administration, imperialism, high politics in urban Mexico, revolutionary politics in rural Mexico, and much more,[58] finally history put him up to the test. The year was 1913, a crucial one for Carranza and for the history of the Revolution.[59]

Recall that from the period between 1910 and early 1913 the Revolution found itself still in its embryonic stage and overall lacked direction and a cohesive revolutionary message for all to ascertain. During this time, national politics hung like a thick fog over Mexico: opaque, obscure, dense, and indistinct. This phase of the Revolution included characteristics that were symptomatic of a conflict still lacking definition and a clear socio-political context, and although post-1913 revolutionary times were times of confusion and controversy, the political landscape of Mexico began to take shape after 1913 in ways that allowed other issues, besides those that initially prompted the Revolution, to be addressed.

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[58] Alan Knight informatively reveals the mounting problems that Carranza faced: "Like any government…Carranza's faced basic problems created by size and poor communications, class, ethnic and geographical divisions, and provincial antipathy to central rule. And like any government of this decade…it also confronted the specific problems engendered by the Revolution: agrarian conflict, popular protest, *caudillismo*, regional and personal vendettas. Finally, Carranza had to tackle the more recent problems occasioned by economic collapse, inflation, dearth and disease." Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution: Counter-revolution and Reconstruction*, Volume 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 435.

[59] Up to this point, Carranza had been the governor of his home state of Coahuila for close to two years, from May 1911 to March 1913. According to William H. Beezley, Carranza had already accomplished a great deal and showed great ability to lead his hometown, since he had managed to move forward with a social program that required complex restructuring. "In attempting to make all people in the state equal before the law," for example, "the governor moved to replace profirian [sic] judges, officeholders, and administrators, with men dedicated to even-handed enforcement of the statues. In time he also directed initiatives in the legislature to revise the state's law code." William H. Beezley, "Governor Carranza and the Revolution in Coahuila," *The Americas* 33, no. 1 (July 1976): 54; 53-57, for more details on Carranza's social, political, and economic accomplishments in the state of Coahuila during this two-year period.

It all began with *La Decena Trágica*, known in English as "The Ten Tragic Days," which took place from February 9 to February 19, 1913. During this ten-day period, Huerta arranged to have Madero arrested and killed, an event that brought dramatic and rapid change to the development of the Revolution. Huerta's associates planned a successful ambush that resulted in the assassinations of President Madero and his then Vice President, José María Pino Suárez.

These assassinations, along with many others, occurred during *La Decena Trágica*, and arguably the reason behind this arrest became clear from the beginning: Aside from subsequent political tensions, Huerta refused to accept that Madero had won the presidential elections against Díaz; the latter did so in what would have been considered at the time to be the most fair and democratic presidential elections held in over three decades. Huerta's response threw society into pandemonium, since he employed tactics known all too well in the republic, maneuvers that were characteristic of the Díaz dictatorship, since the assassinations were carried out in a terroristic fashion.

In trying to understand Madero, Hodges and Gandy ask: "What was this man like, and the clan he brought to govern? Madero was a political liberal: he believed in the economic 'liberalism' of his time: free enterprise and a free market. The Maderos, one of the richest families in Mexico, were hacendados getting into manufacturing and finance."[60] It was soon after Madero had won the elections that pessimists and dissidents began to rise. Unfortunately for him, he did not have the opportunity to campaign fully

[60] Hodges and Gandy 19.

for his presidential bid beforehand. Thus, a considerable portion of the Mexican population knew very little about him, was misinformed, or knew nothing at all.[61]

In addition, after Díaz left the country and exiled himself in Paris, a good part of his governmental entourage remained in Mexico, and members of his government managed to pick apart at the flimsy seams of Madero's administration. Clearly, the well of opposition fed from different sources, and, as a result, idle speculation of an overthrow challenged, almost on a daily basis, the prevailing winds of Madero's revolutionary agenda, and these unverified reports also imperiled his future in Mexico and ultimately his life.

La Decena Trágica created a farrago of suspicion, uproar, and terror; a concoction of falsifications; and unpromising prospects for a revolution on the verge of complete failure and devastation. With great promise, *La Decena Trágica*, catastrophic as it was, also served a myriad of purposes, some of which were actually productive. As was mentioned in the introduction, this event provided Carranza with a golden opportunity. Considering that, according to Kenneth J. Grieb, "[t]he only contemporary records available…strongly indicate that Carranza did not revolt because of Madero's

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[61] The people who knew the most about Madero and about the Madero family were mainly those in the northern part of Mexico, where the Maderos were prominent for having established the first bank in Mexico; for having mined and smelted copper; for having produced wine; and for having extracted sap from trees. In particular, the discovery of copper by the Maderos set them apart from the very beginning, as they were increasingly becoming well-known among other American businesses for this entrepreneurial accomplishment. In fact, "[t]he American Refining and Smelting Company, owned by the Guggenheims, sullenly stared at this new rival. The Guggenheim hated the Maderos. And the Maderos, like the class they led, despised foreign capital." In Hodges and Gandy 20.

assassination, but merely cited as a pretext,"[62] there is reason to suggest that "[h]is rebellion actually appears to have stemmed from personal ambition more than outrage."[63]

The centrality of this event lies in that it served to promote a fever of enthusiasm among revolutionaries who wanted to act in concert, at least initially. One might want pause for a moment here and reflect on the system of relationships that defined the Revolution before, not after, *La Decena Trágica*. Hodges and Gandy express the situation sensibly:

> In the northern states three men symbolized the social movements emerging there: Álvaro Obregón of Sonora, Pancho Villa of Chihuahua, and Venustiano Carranza of Coahuila. *United at first* [emphasis mine], these men (and their movements) would end up fighting one another: "This is the fate of all revolutions," remarks one student of the subject [that is, Friedrich Engels]: "No sooner is the victory gained against the common enemy than *the victors become divided among themselves into different camps and turn their weapons against each other* [emphasis mine]." But in 1913 Zapata, Obregón, Villa, and Carranza had a common enemy—the new dictator, Huerta. [64]

After a knee-jerk reaction at the beginning of *La Decena Trágica*, later the response that it produced quickly became one that Mexicans welcomed eventually, though not immediately.[65]

For instance, on the one hand, this reaction legitimized revolutionary will, applauding ceremoniously the ongoing work of Zapata, Villa, and others and

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[62] Kenneth J. Grieb, "The Causes of the Carranza Rebellion: A Reinterpretation," *The Americas* 25, no. 1 (July 1968): 32.

[63] Grieb 32.

[64] Hodges and Gandy 22.

[65] *La Decena Trágica* froze the country and helped spread fear and anxiety like a contagious virus. Mexicans were largely unaware of what was to come, as violence seemed to have erupted at almost every corner in the republic. The government had clearly deviated from its original track, and the only way for Mexicans to believe in the continuation of the Revolution was for them to encourage non-government affiliated figures (e.g., Zapata, Villa, among others) who roamed the streets, valleys, and plazas of Mexico in search of social justice. The blind passion that drove these revolutionaries gave Mexicans a chance to aspire, dream, and expect the best results possible. In this way, *La Decena Trágica* helped reinvigorate the Revolution—at a violent cost, of course.

simultaneously, on the other, it also encouraged revolutionaries to join forces, if only temporarily, with those politicians who had parallel or compatible visions of the Revolution. The cementing of strong relationships of power served to confirm that the Revolution had not, under any circumstances, withered, since without these relationships of power, there would be no Revolution.

Numerous new relationships of power also concretized throughout Mexico, because no other alternative would have guaranteed that the Revolution would continue to expand and venture into new realms of possibility. The more it expanded and intensified in significance and scope, the better the chances that all the major factions, both revolutionary and otherwise, would eventually fulfill their objectives.

Nevertheless, other consequences of *La Decena Trágica*, such as direct action by Mexicans themselves, suffered from a disorganized and anarchic quality, since Mexico had been thrown into an abyss of pandemonium. Soon it became clear that hesitancy and indecision became qualities of yesteryear, as spontaneity and impetuosity emerged as the new qualities of the Revolution. Curbing these qualities became a matter of urgency, though, since it took sometime before chaos and violence would finally diminish in intensity.

Stationed in Coahuila, the then superintendent of the Botapilas Mining Company expressed the situation to his U.S.-based supervisors and directors in the following way: “From the best information obtainable, the revolutionaries are breaking up into small bands making it almost impossible to travel or freight through the mountains. The

freighters say they are afraid of having their mules taken from them on the trail."[66] Hysteria spread all over Mexico, oftentimes with brutal acts of violence occurring throughout the nation. The situation was unquestionably paralyzing.

The Botapilas superintendent continued to explain the situation: "It is hard to say how far off the end of trouble is in the country. The common people are, however, fast coming to the point where they will be unmanageable for the lack of a general Government."[67] His final comment to his board of directors echoes a lasting sentiment about how, lacking a government, the Mexican populace created its own system of law.

Although debatably charged with exaggeration and a bit of cynicism, plenty of truth can be extracted from the following statement: "In general, the lower people are beginning to act upon the principle that might is right and what is here in the country belongs to them and that all that remains for them to do is to take it."[68]

In the midst of what seemed to be turning into a tenuous revolution, Mexicans continued to wait for a head of state to take the reins of the Revolution and restore a certain level of order. As Hart assures us: "Madero's murder galvanized Venustiano Carranza, the governor of Coahuila, to immediately issue his *Plan of Guadalupe* and proclaim a new revolution."[69] At this point in the Revolution, little had been addressed, and virtually nothing had been resolved.

La Decena Trágica presented Mexico with both promising and unpromising possibilities. Whether Mexico leaned toward the direction of one set of possibilities or the

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[66] Quoted in John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 298.

[67] Quoted in Hart 298.

[68] Quoted in Hart 298.

[69] Hart 298.

other depended on the potential of Mexican leadership and determination. As Hart highlights, Carranza symbolized a beacon in the distance, as the tempo of his leadership, coupled with his veritable calculus to address the ailing economy, satisfied the exigencies of the country in the short run, and after he came with a revisionist *modus operandi*, Mexico's panorama began to shift, albeit modestly.

At this point one must question Carranza's agile ability to spring into action, as well as his capacities to attain and maintain a level of order in Mexico, as had never been achieved before from the start of the conflict. The first topic that comes into question concerns the influence of American presence during the Revolution.[70] As was noted previously in this chapter, Carranza fostered a plethora of relationships of power throughout Mexico in an attempt to stimulate support and build the credibility of his administration.

At the same time that he succeeded in establishing relationships with men of the Revolution and among Mexicans in government, he also created close relationships with Americans and with powerful U.S. companies operating in Mexico. His relationships with Americans serve as confirmation that Carranza had a program for Mexico that looked beyond national borders. Like Díaz and other presidents before him, Carranza became committed, in accordance with his gubernatorial responsibilities, in keeping a good part of his focus on American and other foreign interests.[71]

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[70] In 1914, Carranza appointed Andrés G. García as the Mexican consul in El Paso, Texas, in order to "[oversee] an extensive enterprise of espionage and propaganda" aimed at "focusing upon specific transnational operatives." For a study on the depth of American intrusion in Mexico during the conflict, refer to Michael M. Smith, "Andrés G. García: Venustiano Carranza's Eyes, Ears, and Voice on the Border," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 355.

[71] See Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 83-107, for an in-depth chapter on the changing face of Mexico's economy, Carranza's role in this transformation, and his keen focus on the international community.

Unlike Díaz, however, Carranza also maintained relationships with foreign actors not directly involved with the political bodies of the United States and Mexico. He made acquaintanceships and friendships that included both government and non-government affiliated American individuals.

A wise individual, Carranza certainly realized that burning feelings of anti-Americanism needed to be aborted or at least moderated. Although Carranza was no admirer of an excessive amount of American presence in Mexico, he attempted to pacify the Mexican population by treating the situation with an open mind.

To understand the level of anti-Americanism that was pervasive in the early part of the Revolution, Hart recalls an instance when Mexican citizens took to the streets in pursuit of Americans: "On 10 and 11 November 1910 angry citizens followed crowds that marched through Guadalajara, attacking American residents, homes, and businesses…and damaged sites that visibly symbolized the ostentatious American presence."[72]

Invariably, anti-Americanism continued to intensify, an emotion fueled by a nation that tried to free itself from the chains of foreign manipulation. Even worse, the fight for land in Mexico placed Americans as well as other foreigners at the epicenter of the struggle, and Americans clearly were caught in the middle of things. To Mexicans, American foreigners were considered as major threats to the autonomy and dominion of Mexico, a classic instance of "us" versus "them." Instead of equivocating or evading the

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[72] Hart 273.

issue, Carranza opted for a more reasonable solution, that is, he attempted to harmonize the situation to the best of his abilities.[73]

Although never directly expressed as part of his national rhetoric, many of Carranza's attempts were definitely aimed at ridding Mexico of militarism, since the restoration of order appeared to always be at the vanguard of his agenda. This aspect of Carranza will become clear when we establish comparisons between Carranza and the popular revolutionary factions.

It must also be made apparent here that Carranza did not make it to the presidential seat solely based on his own merit, and in this sense, he was definitely unremarkable. Politics is a field entangled in a complicated maze of connections, and these connections, most of which tend to be ephemeral and therefore empty, can play in favor of one's future in politics. In the case of Carranza, he had the support, though not necessarily the financial patronage, of prominent Americans during his path to the presidency, and this support helped Carranza incorporate the interests of both Mexicans and Americans, with a greater emphasis, of course, on the former.

For a brief moment, at the beginning of Carranza's path to the presidency, he remained under good terms with American president Woodrow Wilson. This alliance was partially the result of Wilson's own admission that he did not approve of Huerta as president of Mexico, because he deemed Huerta as a dictator and refused to support someone who he thought would not restore stability to an already torn nation.

He especially opposed Huerta for breaking one of the essential rules of the American democratic philosophy. In the words of Hart, Huerta "imposed himself on the Mexican people after murdering his democratically elected predecessor and had then

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[73]Cumberland C., *Mexican Revolution* 275-276.

refused to hold a 'fair and free election.'"[74] For Wilson, Huerta revived the memory of Díaz all too soon, and in order for Wilson to be able to interact with Mexican leadership on an economic and political basis, Mexican leadership had to be fundamentally free from oppressive inclinations and dictatorial habits. The Wilson administration accelerated the race for a Mexican leader.

Carranza seemed to be the answer not only for Wilson but also for Mexicans. He was at once a man prepared with aspirations to actualize change and a man prepared with the knowledge of the economic infrastructure of his country. Above all, he was also the man with the right connections that helped him surmount a considerable amount of obstacles in the political arena.[75]

Although his regime's arms buildup became curtailed by refusals on the part of the U.S., among other roadblocks,[76] Carranza's administration nevertheless stood mighty in terms of its marketing skills and in terms of its ability to coalesce a cadre of followers who were loyal to his cause. He slowly managed to conquer the hearts of many Mexicans from many different socio-economic backgrounds and political persuasions. Concerning this accomplishment, Douglas W. Richmond found that Carranza, for example, helped *obreros* or workers with labor law issues on various occasions.[77]

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[74] Hart 305.

[75] As Barron explains in chapter three, Carranza participated in a variety of political circles during his advancement into the Revolution. He first became involved with Díaz regime as a local politician, then befriended Miguel Cárdenas, the governor of Coahuila from 1894 to 1909, and finally associated himself with Bernardo Reyes, the reputed *Porfirian* leader of the northeast. He also played a role in the *Reyista* movement.

[76] The Wilson administration placed various embargos on the exportation of weapons to Mexico, many instances of which can be found in Douglas W. Richmond, "Intentos Externos para Derocar al Régimen de Carranza (1915-1920)," *Historia Mexicana* 32, no. 1 (July to September 1982): 106-132.

[77] See the following source for a detailed account of Carranza's contributions during the Revolution in the labor sector. Douglas W. Douglas, "El Nacionalismo de Carranza y Los Cambios

Even though the promises that came appended to Carranza's program appeared optimistic, the economic situation following *La Decena Trágica* continued to look unpromising in countless ways. Speaking of this issue, Knight believes the following of the situation at hand: "Crime and banditry mirrored the destitution of the country. After five years of continued upheaval, Mexico was economically shattered. Economic rhythms, as already noted, followed a different, slower tempo compared with their political and military counterparts." [78] In addition, "not until the turn of the year 1913/14 did the accumulated effects of political conflict begin seriously to undermine the robust Mexican economy."[79]

Further magnifying the situation, the U.S. invasion of Veracruz ordered by Wilson in 1914 placed the Carranza-Wilson relationship on shaky grounds. During moments of trials, such as during this invasion, the strengths and weaknesses of a relationship tend to come out. As we will also notice in the relationships Carranza held with both Zapata and Villa, trying and demanding circumstances either fortify or deteriorate relationships; the result depends on the outcome of the situation and also depends on the interests at stake. In the context of Carranza and Wilson, the invasion of Veracruz served to showcase different aspects of the Carranza-Wilson relationship.

First, it showed the world that the U.S., after all, had leverage over Mexico by attempting to curtail the importation of military weaponry, artillery that, according to the common assumptions of the time, was supplied and funded by Germany. Second, it demonstrated that, debatably, in the name of goodwill and the advancement of human

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Socioeconómicos: 1915-1920," *Historia Mexicana* 26, no. 1 (July to September 1976): 118.

[78] Knight 406.

[79] Knight 406.

rights, the U.S. would not hesitate in intervening in the politics of a nation riddled with injustice and turmoil. Third, it illustrated Wilson's readiness to fight, an imperial display, indeed. Fourth, and probably most important of all, Wilson wanted to help in the removal of the Huerta regime. These four explanations served as some of the most popular banners presented as rationales for this intervention.

Discussing this intervention provides us with an angle of analysis to understand Carranza's method of dealing with an actual foreign encounter, in this case a physical intervention. This experience, which occurred during the early stages of Carranza's interaction with foreign elements, provided him with the opportunity to accept the inevitability of foreign intrusion. It gave him a chance to gauge the potentialities of foreign imposition and moreover, one can make the observation that this experience had some, albeit unspecified amount of impact on Carranza's foreign policies during his later time as president. [80]

It is impossible not to question Wilson here. Were there other reasons behind this hurried decision on the part of Wilson to invade Veracruz? It seemed unlikely and therefore dubious that Wilson, while mixed up and involved in matters of a world war, would have had the energy, much less the motivation, to move forward with what would have seemed at the time to be a comparatively trivial invasion.

Naturally, Wilson wanted to impede Huerta from continuing to commit acts of aggression and he thus expressed incredible disappointment at the loss of Madero. This

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[80] A laconic though revealing interpretation of what prompted the invasion of Veracruz will suffice for the purposes of this study. The port of Veracruz stood as an important sea gate for Mexicans, since they received a good portion of their military supplies from the outside via this port. Wilson's initial rationale for invading this port was halting the Huerta regime, a regime he wanted to terminate for reasons mentioned beforehand. Not quite a recalcitrant individual, Carranza subscribed to the terms of this rationale and hoped to gain ground by welcoming Wilson's attempt to eliminate Huerta, a common political opponent.

became Wilson's way of showing Huerta his discontent, and perhaps more importantly, however, Wilson also wanted to protect American interests in Mexico, especially interests such as rubber and oil. With Huerta in power, these were threatened.

In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the research devoted to Wilson's Mexican foreign policy also showed, more or less, that Wilson's intervention in Veracruz represented a grand attempt to turn Mexico, once and for all, into a liberal and capitalist society.[81] Although a plausible and persuasive argument, one can take it a step further. After the invasion of Veracruz, Wilson realized that Mexicans needed to be given ample space to choose the most viable course for change.

Nevertheless, it took Wilson several missteps and a great deal of time before arriving at this realization. Kendrick A. Clements complements this observation by noting: "Taking economic and social opportunity for granted, Wilson felt little initial sympathy for revolutionaries whose struggles with entrenched privilege produced violence, instead of legal, gradual change."[82]

Wilson's attitudes toward Mexico and the Mexican situation appeared at times defective and consequently mishandled. Before puncturing Veracruz, "Wilson…[had] confronted the ruin of his well-intentioned but inept policy. He had bungled in a variety of ways: in misreading Huerta; in failing to find out what the Constitutionalists wanted;

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[81] For discussion, see P. Edward Hailey, *Revolution and Intervention: The Diplomacy of Taft and Wilson with Mexico, 1910-1917* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970); N. Gordon Levin, Jr., *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

[82] Kendrick A. Clements, "Woodrow Wilson's Mexican Policy, 1913-15," *Diplomatic History* 4, no. 2 (April 1980) 115.

and in assuming that an election would be a panacea of Mexico's troubles."[83] Wilson's incomplete and incompetent views of Mexico confirm the notion that, historically, American awareness of its Mexican neighbor has been minimal, at best.

Wilson's invasion proved to Carranza that imperialism was ever-present and indeed unavoidable. Even as Carranza needed to comprehend the place of Mexico in the global economic and political context, Wilson also needed to arrive at a crucial realization about the consequences of his imperialist actions. "Confident of American rectitude and secure in the altruism of [Wilson's] own motives," argues Clement, "he did not yet realize that virtuous American intervention might be just as destructive of self-determination and just as likely to create a dependency relationship as more traditional imperialism."[84]

Aside from the invasion of Veracruz of 1914, the discussion over *La Decena Trágica*, which took place a year earlier, is important in one's understanding of Carranza. This event marks an important point in Mexican history, given that henceforth relationships of power began to complicate and new situations triggered a different political landscape.

In essence, *La Decena Trágica* resulted in a realignment of relationships, since the old political order had been swung out of place. The Veracruz invasion of 1914 can be seen as an American attempt to swing the political order back in place, but by then, of course, political relationships had already been modified. As friends turned into foes and winds from different directions began to howl, only one individual truly stood out among a torrent of revolutionaries.

[83] Clements 117.

[84] Clements 117-118.

On February 19, 1913, Carranza released a statement that portended a step he would soon take in order to provide the political corpus of Mexico with legality and order. Taking a clear legal voice, he called on to all the military leaders and governors of state:

> [U]nder my guidance, the Government, in compliance with the sovereign mandates of our Mexican Political Constitution, and in compliance with our institutions, faithful to its responsibilities and inspired by the most pure kind of patriotism, sees itself denying and rejecting that unspeakable attempt against our fundamental pact, and in our duty of declaring in this manner, in the face of the entire nation, inviting the governors and all of the military leaders of all of the States of the Republic, to place the national sentiment at the forefront, justifiably indignant, and unfurl the flag of legality, to maintain the constitutional Government, emanated from the last elections, verified in accordance with our laws of 1910.[85]

The Philosophy of a "Man of Granite"

The three parts that have thus far been developed in this chapter revolved around Carranza's familial background, his experiences with politics, the socio-economic background of Mexico, and Carranza's breakthrough in the Revolution. The analysis included two important events during the Revolution: *La Decena Trágica* and, only fifteen months later, the invasion of Veracruz. A third incident, Carranza's writing of the *Plan of Guadalupe* on March 23, 1913, sheds light on a decisive factor in the overall early political character of Carranza. His involvement in these episodes provides one with information to determine how Carranza confronted and internalized the insurrection.

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[85] *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, vol. 1, "Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista," editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana, bajo la dirección de Isidro Fabela (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968) 3-4. "[E]l Gobierno de mi cargo, en debido acatamiento a los soberanos mandatos de nuestra Constitución Política Mexicana, y en obediencia a nuestras instituciones, fiel a sus deberes y animado del más puro patriotismo se ve en el caso de desconocer y rechazar aquel incalificable atentado a nuestro pacto fundamental, y en el deber de declararlo así, a la faz de toda la nación, invitado…a los gobiernos y a todos los jefes militares de todos los Estados de la República, a ponerse al frente del sentimiento nacional, justamente indignado, y desplegar la bandera de la legalidad, para sostener al Gobierno constitucionalista, emanado de las últimas elecciones, verificadas de acuerdo con nuestras leyes de 1910."

Thus far, it has been shown that Carranza's experiences with the Díaz administration and with *La Decena Trágica* harvested feelings of nationalism as well as ambitions and desires to guarantee both national sovereignty and internal order. All of these points help to move forward the argument that Carranza differed ideologically from the vast majority of popular revolutionaries, such as Zapata and Villa. Carranza gradually grew an interest in protecting Mexico, both within and outside the ambit of Mexican territory. This gradual interest in redefining Mexican foreign policy can be observed by following Carranza as his time as president neared.

After the turmoil of *La Decena Trágica* had been reasonably moderated, Carranza's conscience began to stir, and a brief period of contemplation and reflection ensued. Carranza spent over a month, from February 9, 1913 to March 23, 1913, carefully devising a plan of action. An important breakthrough would soon emerge. Drawing inspiration directly from a recent precursor, namely, Madero's *Plan of San Luis Potosí*, Carranza flexed his political muscles, and no sooner had February turned into March that he drafted his *Plan of Guadalupe*.

On March 26, 1913, Carranza convened an enormous gathering at his estate in Coahuila for an event that would transmute the dynamics of the Revolution. On this day, Carranza proclaimed his *Plan of Guadalupe*, a manifesto to the nation consisting of seven dictums. Before the eventual removal of Huerta from power, the manifesto garnered approval by military leaders such as Zapata, Villa, Álvaro Obregón, and Felipe Ángeles. In a set of declarations after the announcement of the manifesto, Carranza indicated that not only his closest comrades but also all members of the Constitutionalist Army, which

at the time included generals such as Villa, Obregón, and Pablo Gonzáles, subscribed to the plan.[86] The manifesto drew tremendous initial approval.

The final analysis in this chapter uses Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe* as a vehicle through which to establish, clarify, and reflect upon Carranza's philosophy in 1913. This investigation will examine Carranza's possible motivations for having drafted and declared his very own manifesto.

To understand the urgency behind the writing of the *Plan of Guadalupe*, one may begin by understanding certain shades of Carranza's personality. Javier A. Echeverría Marquina, for example, described Carranza as a "man of granite" to convey an aspect of Carranza's personality.[87] Marquina portrays Carranza as a strong, resilient man. And because of his ability to show open-mindedness and sympathy to the plight of others, Carranza attracted support from many, class notwithstanding.

Those who had encountered Carranza understood the immense breadth of his character, and touched by his sense of tranquility, they also considered him to be reserved and endearing. In the eloquent words of Edmundo Gonzáles-Blanco, "His social joviality and the precision and gallantry of his ways; his enthusiasm for the significance of art, science, and civic duty…his great simplicity in character, it is captivating."[88] Carranza quickly became considered to be warm, deliberate, as one who carried himself with a down-to-earth attitude.

Explaining further how Marquina used his expression "man of granite,"

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[86] *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 501.

[87] Javier A. Echeverría Marquina, *!Viva Carranza!* (México, 1963) 188-189.

[88] Edmundo Gonzáles-Blanco, *Carranza y La Revolución de México* (Valencia: Editorial Prometeo, 1914) 25.

Richmond comments: "Carranza's unusual charisma included an ability to impress people with his physical toughness. Carranza startled followers by lying down to sleep on freezing mountain slopes or by bathing in hot springs."[89] Carranza certainly had a charm about him that was not outlandish, as instead it was authentic, believable, and commendable. "Carranza's demeanor suggests that," as Richmond goes on to conclude, "he was rarely prey to nervousness or uncertainty. Such a life style was a reflection of his self-confidence." [90]

With an affirmative attitude, Carranza shielded Mexicans from the autocratic grasp of Huerta and stopped history from repeating. As Madero had done five years before, Carranza turned his personal philosophies into deliberate actions with algebraic brevity. As the First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, a leader had clearly emerged from the pine-oak forests and dry lands of Coahuila. Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe*, among other things, showed Carranza's willingness to try to change the face of Mexico at the national level.

The *Plan of Guadalupe* gave Carranza a valid voice in Mexico. Carranza, no longer a follower, had finished adhering to the political strategies of previous Mexican leaders, such as Díaz and Madero. He had begun to be recognized as an enabler, a fighter, a motivator. People responded to this man. When Carranza made public his *Plan of Guadalupe* on March 26, 1913, he rewarded Mexico with the gift of assurance, with the gift of a promise. He promised Mexicans that he would wage a battle in an attempt to bring order, justice, and integrity to the Mexican republic. As with any written document

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[89] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 6.

[90] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 6.

or declaration, Carranza's declarative document conveyed the idea that the foundation of his cause was serious and bona fide in nature.

Through this document, Carranza took a tremendous step in keeping the Revolution alive, while at the same time attempting to keep violence at a minimum. Also, one of the most important results that this document created was that it diminished confusion and mystification, to a certain degree at least. The written word has that power and within a social and political context, it can even reach higher peaks.

By contrast, for instance, Madero's *Plan of San Luis Potosí* did not have the same effect, which was in part due to the different political backdrop, since in Carranza's case *La Decena Trágica* itself caused a real shift in politics and changed the way leaders were fueling the locomotive of an ongoing revolution. In Madero's case, his *Plan of San Luis Potosí* arrived at a time during which the country had not fully committed itself to a full-scale movement, even though revolutionary factions had already waged their own battles in various arenas throughout the country.

Even though the *Plan of San Luis Potosí* marshaled in the Revolution by chasing after the collapse of Díaz, it did not reconfigure Mexican politics or promised specific social reforms. The *Plan of Guadalupe*, in contrast, gave the Revolution momentum, credibility, and a clear direction. Whereas the *Plan of San Luis Potosí* wanted to put an end to the Díaz regime, the *Plan of Guadalupe* wanted to accomplish multiple endeavors, chief among them ousting the Huerta government as well as helping Mexicans achieve stability and freedom through the configuration of a Constitutionalist government, headed at the time by Carranza himself.

In general, the heart of the message that the *Plan of Guadalupe* conveyed revealed itself with clarity: Mexicans no longer considered Huerta as the president of Mexico, and the new government, the Constitutionalist party, headed by Carranza, would preside over the *Palacio Nacional*, with a promise of open elections. With the *Plan of Guadalupe* in the background, this message did not face any challenges, and thus the reason why generally historians believe that confusion among the masses was kept at a minimum and hence that order was restored.

The *Plan of Guadalupe* aimed to set forth a plan of action, even though many have accused the writing as being convoluted and even vague at times. Attacks from various elements of the Revolution brought to national attention the argument that Carranza had failed to compose a document free of ambiguity. In particular, Zapata and Villa opposed the document on grounds that it failed to be clear and easily accessible to the masses.

On the other hand, one can argue that this reaction was inevitable and predictable, because those who disputed the document usually were those who were already deeply involved in the Revolution. These individuals felt compelled to pick at certain points of the document where it seemed as though their political directives and those of the author, Carranza, did not run parallel to each other. Simply put, just as with any constitution or set of written laws, in the end not everyone is left pleased. Irrespective of time or place, that is how the world of politics functions.

What made the Mexican situation graver than most others of the past has to do with the notion that the Revolution contained revolutionaries and statesmen of varied and disagreeing perspectives and, at the same time, their ultimate cause appeared to be nearly

the same: to move forward with the Revolution and bring about social order and social justice. Perhaps this may be the reason why the narrative of the Revolution continues to read as a primetime soap opera script or as one suspenseful, lively twentieth-century war novel. The antagonists have been scripted as supremely villainous and the protagonists, though well intentioned, cannot seem to get along.

Often stubborn and always determined, these revolutionaries and statesmen found that the only way to follow the luminous light of their cause was to take their separate ways. Unfortunately, the consequences caused by these splits produced more widespread rivalry and unnecessary aggression than the pages of history will ever be able to cover and thus reveal. Following, tracking, and probing into these relationships of power are no easy tasks, mainly because the ruinations of important relationships tend to be kept concealed from public awareness. On the other hand, one is indeed left with a multitude of recorded actions, and these help to paint a fuller picture of the dynamics behind these relationships.

One reason that explains why several relationships dissolved both after *La Decena Trágica* and after Carranza became the leader of the Constitutionalist party has to do with a prevalent critique on how Carranza dealt with the *La Decena Trágica*. Specifically, various opponents of Carranza harshly criticized his *Plan of Guadalupe*, because, according to them, it did not address all the problems of the Revolution, as it apparently should have.

Critical of Carranza, Adolfo Gilly believes that Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe* lacked inclusivity, that it was far too concerned with restructuring Mexico's government. As Gilly views it, the declaration disregarded immediate social reform. To him, Carranza

had merely followed an old tradition: an age-old tradition of attaining military success first and then afterwards fulfilling social reform.

Gilly writes: "By means of this old argument, typical of a leadership seeking to contain a revolutionary movement within its own horizons, Carranza forced acceptance of the Guadalupe Plan with its call for nothing more than change in government."[91] Gilly believes that Carranza lacked spirit and true vision. Carranza, to Gilly, did not prove to be bold and revolutionary enough to take on the immediate, local demands of the people, especially those who remained landless.

However, other bits of information might perhaps put this debate into a more factual context. In 1963, Mexico's Commission of Military History paid homage to Carranza and his *Plan of Guadalupe* by compiling a motley number of old letters, pictures, collection of signatures, bodies of written materials, public and private announcements, and the like. Compliments of a special collection owned by Widener Library, at Harvard University, this priceless source sheds light on an array of themes concerning the passage of the *Plan of Guadalupe*.

An interesting entry in this source comes from one written by Isidro Fabela, the Secretary of Foreign Relations to Carranza's government from 1913 to 1915. In the following gobbet, Fabela indicates what he believes to be the purpose behind the *Plan of Guadalupe*:

> The Plan of Guadalupe was not, and there was no necessity for it to be, a *programmatic* [emphasis mine] revolutionary manifesto; it was nothing more and nothing less than a code of the Mexican Revolution; a brief legislation that intimated the elemental political norm of a nation trampled over, a nation whose most important civic rights were stepped on….That was the urgent and indispensable purpose of the plan from the beginning of the civil war; even

[91] Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution: A New Press People's History*, trans. by Patrick Camiller (New York: New Press, 2005) 97.

> though many issues of transcendent importance took form in the nation due to the military triumph of the constitutionalists, they nevertheless had to wait patiently to be managed.[92]

Fabela's comment comes from a unique perspective, and he remains clear about how the *Plan of Guadalupe* should be understood. For instance, he does not say that social and economic reforms did not merit mention but does draw attention to the idea that these social and economic considerations needed to be undertaken later, after the imperative change in the political order had been put in place.

One could counter Gilly's criticism by proposing the idea that Carranza wanted to expose a plan that would not cause heated controversy or destructive tumult throughout the nation. Mexicans had already suffered their share of ordeals with Huerta, Díaz, and even Mexican emperor Maximilian long before *La Decena Trágica*.

Ultimately, Carranza showed prudence and sensibility, since he knew that if he had released a set of dictates on, say, how land would or should be redistributed the masses would simply erupt volcanically. Not everyone would agree with him and not everyone would be satisfied by the orders of an edict created in haste and out of a wrath directed against the Huerta regime. No, the entire situation, including both the social and economic vulnerabilities of the country, needed to be assessed with diligence and careful thought.

Carranza proved to be the wiser, for he wanted to get to the crux of the problem first. Since eradicating the Huerta regime seemed to be the practical and immediate

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[92] Isidro Fabela, "Plan de Guadalupe," *Plan de Guadalupe: Homenaje del Ejército Mexicano, Cincuentenario 1913-1963*, organized by Ruben E. Valbuena from the Comisión de Historia Militar (México, D.F.: Taller Autográfico, S-2 E.M.S. S.D.N) 35. "El Plan de Guadalupe no fue, ni era necesario que fuese, un manifesto programático revolucionario; fue nada más y nada menos que el código del honor de la República un estatuto breve que entrañaba la elemental norma política de un pueblo pisoteado en sus más grandes derechos cívicos…Eso era lo urgente e indispensable al inicio de la guerra civil; lo demás de enorme trascendencia para la patria, tendría que venir después y tomo forma al triunfo militar del constitucionalismo."

solution, he spent all of his energies trying to execute this action first. An immediate restructuring of the government seemed to be a fundamental step that would open up opportunities to address other, although no less important issues. Timing was everything. Carranza had to determine which issues needed to be addressed and in which order. His method of calculation seemed impeccable and carefully selected, and not many may be willing to give him credit for it.

One may also observe that social reforms in the *Plan of Guadalupe* were not the only excluded items, since Carranza also excluded other reforms, such as economic reforms and foreign policy concerns. He tried not to write this manifesto based on prejudices and did not ignore many of the social reforms for which the Mexican population eagerly awaited.[93] In this sense, Carranza exercised good diplomacy and bipartisanship.

His *Plan of Guadalupe* did not focus on favoring one social group over another, since above all the document primarily condemned the Huerta regime and intended only to remove Huerta from power and thus restore order to the Mexican government. Many of Carranza's contemporaries tried to challenge the plan, since they had hoped for the inclusion of a concoction of directives. They failed to realize, however, that the plan meant to function as a steppingstone for the fulfillment of other political and social directives. In fact, the plan served to predict and ensure further action, as it merely signaled the beginning of a project that was under way.

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[93] Carranza articulated the purpose behind his manifesto, noting that the plan "was not and could not be a Government program or a revolutionary Plan, but a political Plan, simply as is. In my role as constitutional governor, my only obligation was protesting against the anticonstitutionalist actions in Mexico on February of 1913, ignoring the usurping Government with weapons at hand." In *Documentos Históricos*, vol. 1, 501. "[E]l Plan de Guadalupe no es ni podrá ser un programa de Gobierno ni un Plan revolucionario, sino un Plan político, simple como es. En mi carácter de Gobernador constitucional, mi único deber era protestar contra los actos anticonstitucionalistas ocurridos en México en febrero de 1913, desconociendo con las armas en la mano al Gobierno usurpador."

To gain better insight, the *Plan of Guadalupe* may be compared to the *Virginia Plan* created in 1787 by Virginian delegates in the U.S. In this plan, the writers, the main of whom was James Madison, proposed a system of how the government should be organized, branched, and proposed. It also suggested a process for debate during the Philadelphia Convention. The *Virginia Plan*, like the *Plan of Guadalupe*, did not tap into specific social, economic, or political decisions, since Adams merely suggested ways to organize the American government and its legal proceedings. Furthermore, the plan functioned as a tool that would later be used to fashion the ensuing constitution, the Constitution of United States of America, created in 1788 by the delegates of the Philadelphia Convention.

Therefore, much like the American case, it would seem absurd to endorse dissenters, both Mexican revolutionaries and contemporary scholars alike, who attacked the *Plan of Guadalupe* based on the premise that it lacked comprehensiveness. In the end, it was not supposed to be comprehensive but succinct, to the point, and specifically directed at commencing a major rearrangement of the national government.

Carranza also did not address social concerns in his plan because of his efforts in trying to synchronize his relationships of power and wanted to keep these on somewhat of an equal footing, on a single path of the Revolution, harmonized and neutralized. He was not ready or aspiring to make new enemies, since it was important for Carranza to maintain the political climate as calm as possible. Without this kind of pacification, he would probably have never been able to propose reforms during subsequent years, bolster and update foreign policy, and apply many other directives that were meant to be beneficial to the state of the economy.

Marked by succinctness and a sense of confidence, the *Plan of Guadalupe* imparted Carranza's political philosophy in 1913. Although one could bring the *Plan of Guadalupe* to its knees by bombarding it with attacks on the rhetorical flaws and linguistic inadequacies that may well afflict it, instead one can focus on interpreting and elaborating on the points that have caused the most amount of agreement.

In order to restore order in the most efficient and expedient fashion, Carranza turned the focus of his *Plan of Guadalupe* on putting into place a defined government with fully expressed goals.[94] Carranza made an informed decision not to overcrowd his plan with social reforms perhaps because of his suspicions that adversaries would attack his political program.

Sufficient evidence exists concerning Carranza's awareness over the criticality of social reforms. The fulfillment of social reforms may have not been at the forefront of his mind at any given time during the Revolution, but it did influence his program. Carranza kept this major concern of the Revolution close to his decision-making and knew that within a short period, he would be compelled to begin the process of actuating and exposing social reforms.

As has been discussed previously, Carranza did not include social reforms in the body of his manifesto; however, this was done in order that he would have ample time to contemplate such matters, and so that he would have sufficient time to survey the demands of his acquaintances and fellow revolutionaries. "[A]s the fight for justice and [human] rights has advanced," he later commented during a debrief at the Constitutional Convention in Querétaro in 1917, "there has been a manifestation of how the ideas of

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[94] To see a detailed description on how Carranza and his *Carrancista* regime devoted time and energy to restoring order by various means, see chapter one in Edmundo Gonzáles-Blanco, *Carranza y la Revolucion de Mexico*, Segunda Edicion (Madrid: Imprenta Helénica, 1916).

social renovation that the people have desired and anticipated since times past, thereby transforming the constitutional movement into a true Social Revolution."[95]

Another important aspect of this debate is that, even though Carranza attempted to reconcile the viewpoints of his followers and other revolutionaries, a settlement or agreement was never reached. According to Richmond, "Carranza's followers accepted his cautious approach after heated debate over a more militant course. The militant faction that signed the document demanded that Carranza crush the clergy, distribute land, and destroy capitalism."[96]

Military factions wanted Carranza to make selective refinements to the manifesto; but, much to their disappointment, Carranza had other plans. As Richmond continues to insightfully observe, "[a]lthough unimaginative, the plan enabled Carranza to claim undisputed leadership of the revolt and to insist upon unconditional victory."[97] Carranza's first substantial experience with national politics was not marked by conservatism, even though on the surface that seems to have been the case. Later actions on his part will attest otherwise.

What may strike a chord in the reader regarding Carranza's decision not to include social reforms in his manifesto is that no one questioned its lack of reforms in foreign policy. Why did not those very same naysayers criticize Carranza's manifesto for its lack of a reform in foreign policy, a concern that was arguably as important as all the others?

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[95] *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 501-502. "[A] medida que la lucha por la justicia y el derecho ha avanzado, se han manifestado como lo deseaba y esperaba, las ideas de renovación social que el pueblo tenía desde mucho tiempo antes, transformándose entonces el movimiento constitucional en una verdadera Revolución Social."

[96] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 45.

[97] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 45.

Moreover, expressions of Mexican nationalism in the Carranza administration show to the reader that Carranza had political aims that transcended his immediate surroundings. Carranza's rise from the first leader of the Constitutionalist army to the president of Mexico in 1917 has a strong thematic overtone of nationalism. This nationalism helped Carranza forge a high level of popularity among many members of Mexican society, and many seemed to have been invested in Carranza's gradual development of social and economic reforms.

With the steady passage of time, the public began to have a firm belief in this man, who seemed to be able to lead his Constitutionalist Army with great leadership, confidence, and discipline. These qualities gave Carranza credibility, and without credibility, the push to have Carranza accepted and consecrated by the masses as their leader, and ultimately as their president, would have been an utter failure.

Further, Carranza knew that if he did not attempt to eradicate foreign adversaries or find ways to lessen the effects of foreign activity and interaction, the Revolution would have been carried out in vain. Although difficult to actualize, the system of change in Mexico was easier to understand. Cosmic, not cosmetic, changes in the local situation in Mexico had colossal implications derived from the global scene, as the two carried a mutual yet problematic relationship. For this reason, Carranza began to develop an outlook for change that called for a complete redirection in Mexican politics.

In this chapter, much discussion has been devoted to following Carranza as he emerged from a *Porfirian* world, suggesting that this experience granted him a perspective that was both useful and valuable. During Carranza's time as governor of

Coahuila, he worked relentlessly in the pursuit of social, educational, and fiscal reform, albeit at the local level.

During his governorship, Carranza showed just how committed and active he became as a political representative. For example, during his time as interim governor in Coahuila "[h]e authorized a 15% increase to the budget for elementary education and 33% increase for intermediate education…opened nine new nighttime schools for illiterate adults and encouraged education inside of state prisons." [98] The best predictor of ability is a person's past record.

Even before stepping onto the revolutionary battlefield, Carranza already benefitted from a record of distinction, since he had implemented a vast array of social and educational policies in his home state. Indeed, Carranza's entrance into the Revolution followed a unique path that differentiated him from the rest. He came prepared with political experience, a *Porfirian* perspective, and a quench for reform at the national level.

Clearly, for this once *Porfirian* senator, entering the Revolution took an impressive amount of ambition and deep conviction. Despite having endured a falling out with Díaz, Carranza nevertheless knew that he not only ran up against Díaz or Huerta but an entire *Porfirian* system. The Revolution came to an end only when the *Porfirian* system had finally disintegrated. To understand and fully accept this assertion, one has to come to the realization that Carranza became the only individual who not only wanted to shatter the *Porfirian* system, but also realized exactly what approach to take. This argument can be corroborated by taking into consideration Carranza's constitutionalist platform and his eagerness to set up, from the ground up, a system of government. One

[98] Barron 149.

can come to appreciate Carranza's program at the beginning of his journey into the Revolution by confronting this reality.

As we have seen, the aims of the present chapter focused on understanding Carranza's political philosophy and his definition of the Revolution. In particular, the chapter concentrated on explaining to the reader Carranza's political convictions prior to his committing to the Revolution, that is, around the time when the forces of Huerta had done away with Madero. Historiography here is important, for it was during this time that Carranza had begun to machinate against antagonists of the Revolution, such as Huerta.

Days after Carranza learned of Huerta's plot to have Madero assassinated, he then proclaimed and repeatedly confirmed his opposition to the forces of Huerta. The Revolution would not die or even lie dormant because of an unfortunate twist of fate on the part of Huerta, the ill-reputed usurper. Instead, Carranza had resolved to continue to work in the direction of his program, a vision that was then beginning to form.

To demonstrate Carranza's vision while in its nascent state, it would be helpful to observe a few of Carranza's own words. What follows is a letter exchange between Carranza and Huerta. The letter exchange took place during the months of February and March of 1913. After learning of Carranza's opposition to the deposition and murder of Madero by Huerta's regime, Huerta wrote the following letter to Carranza, a letter that was also signed by Felix Díaz.

Mexico, D. F. 27 de Febrero 1913

> DON VENUSTIANO CARRANZA,
> Gov. of the Free and Sovereign State of Coahuila,
>
> Dear Sir—
> By letters of recent date we have informed you of the plausible reasons which have inspired the army against the dissolving régime of Don F. Madero,

and we have likewise justified the acts which placed General Huerta in the office of the President of the Republic.

We have been informed that it was your intention to rebel against the legal authority of the Government. We beg to insist, in the name of the country and for its exclusive benefit, that you change your announced attitude not to collaborate with us in the work of peace which we intend to pursue to the end, at any price. If for some personal action you wish to leave the office which you occupy, and if that can be done without offending or hurting our patriotic end, the Government will give you all sorts of guarantees and will pay your salary up to the end of your term.

This letter, as you understand, must be absolutely of a particular and private character. On this basis we beg to inform you that on our part there will be no obstacles that could arise between ourselves, which cannot be solved in the manner most suitable to you. It would be advisable for you to retire into the United States (for your greater safety). We shall make all sorts of sacrifices (should you demand them) so as to satisfy all your wishes and demands. Our envoy (agent) will bring you instructions on the subject. He is empowered to arrange matters on the spot.

We beg you to accept our assurance of admiration and respect.

(Signed) VICTORIANO HUERTA
FELIZ DIAZ[99]

Approximately twelve days later, Carranza wrote back:

11th March, 1913

Messrs. V. HUERTA Y FELIX DIAZ:

My only answer to the despicable proposals offered to me in your letter dated February 27th, is that I want to inform you that men like myself do not betray, do not sell themselves; that is your function, you who have no other objects in life than the shameful satisfaction of ignoble ambitions.

Raise the black flag of your tyranny, and over the country the voice shouts: “Treason and Death.”

On my part, with the help of the Mexican people, I shall lift from the mud into which you have thrown it, the flag of the country. Should I fall defending it, I shall have obtained for my small action in life, the greatest prize which we honest men can aspire to.

(Signed) VENUSTIANO CARRANZA[100]

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[99] Carlo De Fornaro, *Carranza and Mexico (with chapters by Colonel I. C. Enriquez, Charles Ferguson and M. C. Rolland)* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1915) 20-21. Translated by De Fornaro.

[100] De Fornaro 21-22. Translated by De Fornaro.

Carranza's response, albeit idealistic and patriotic, shows the reader the level of commitment he had from the start of his involvement in the Revolution. At this point in the Revolution, Carranza had sufficient time and, according to Huerta's letter, plenty of enticing incentives to turn his back on the conflict and live peacefully and comfortably somewhere far, far away.

The letter he sent to Huerta clearly placed Carranza in an entirely different category, since he was not willing to succumb to the psychological manipulations by Huerta. For Carranza, his strong convictions were his best defense, and in the letter exchange, he did not waver, compromise, or fall prey, even momentarily, to naiveté, ignorance, or deception.

Up to the point of Madero's assassination, the growing philosophy of the *Porfirian* senator can be described in the following manner. In 1913, Carranza stood at a very climactic point in his life, for it was during this time that he had decided, after a multitude of opportunities, to finally take action. There was definitely something noteworthy about his decision in 1913, and although the historiography seems to be madly focused on finding a clear-cut reason concerning why Carranza joined the movement, as well as why after Madero's death, it may be best to pose and address another question.

What were Carranza's personal beliefs and political principles about the Revolution in 1913? This chapter has been attempting to lead up to this critical question. Now that the reader has a fuller picture of Carranza's upbringing, the socio-economic situation in Mexico, and his changing place in the political realm, it may now be an opportune time to address this question.

In 1913, Carranza had a mentality not so much for revolution as for restoring order. He had at that time not been too preoccupied with initiating and engaging in fights and political bickering. One needs to understand this dimension about his personality, and his conduct seems like a perfect example. Addressing this aspect of Carranza's personality, De Fornaro explains: "Carranza's talent as a good listener made him the despair of journalists, who preferred the generals who fought, talked, gave orders to shoot a few prisoners, and between snatches of food, dictated incidents from their lives or told what their plans were for the future of Mexico."[101]

Carranza was different. "[He was] more subtle if not sufficiently romantic," explains De Fornaro.[102] "The careful observer must read between the lines, when the personality grows on one, like the taste for olives or the magnitude of the Chief Magistrate in Washington."[103] Carranza truly redefined the role and character of a Mexican leader. Like De Fornaro points out about leaders such as Carranza, "[s]ome leaders are unattractive because of their very uprightness, their justice, their integrity, their polish; their flawlessness offers no purchase to a sly attack."[104]

Three words perfectly define Carranza's political mentality in mid-1913, patriotism, liberty, and justice. Broadly speaking, a passion for a sovereign nation whose priorities—patriotism, liberty, and justice—would be upheld motivated Carranza to join the conflict. This eagerness for an autonomous Mexico prompted him to take initiative and lead a political agenda of his own devising.

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[101] De Fornaro 26.

[102] De Fornaro 26.

[103] De Fornaro 26.

[104] De Fornaro 26-27.

On May 14, 1913, in a letter to the governor of Campeche, Señor Don Manuel Castillo Brito, Carranza exhorted him to join the governments of Sonora and Coahuila in the battle against Huerta. Carranza wrote: "I believe that now an organizing of an armed protest will be greatly facilitated in your state, which I have no doubt you will accomplish given your soaring sentiments of patriotism and love for liberty and justice."[105] Using this kind of rhetoric, Carranza began a movement of his own to end a dictatorial tradition begun most evidently by Díaz and sustained by Huerta.

Probably no one knew Carranza better than one of his most trustable aides, Isidro Fabela. Aside from becoming fully aware and committed to fixing a long list of problems with the international community, Carranza, most importantly, from day one, expressed his plan to rejuvenate a severely afflicted political system. Fabela commends Carranza for having the wisdom and, indeed, the bravery to confront Mexico's twentieth- century dilemma. "The work of Carranza," Fabela clamors, "was extraordinary."[106] It was extraordinary, he believes, "[b]ecause he instituted a preconstitutional regime, both civil and military, that provided not only military but also civil necessities, so that the nation may resume its administrative activity to organize services that the State must be in need of to recover its normal stride."[107]

We may conclude this chapter by pointing out that a misunderstanding of

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[105] *Documentos Históricos*, 14: 233. "[C]reo que ahora se le facilitará grandemente organizar en ese Estado una protesta armada, lo que no dudo hará Ud. dados sus altos sentimientos de patriotismo y amor a la libertad y a la justicia."

[106] *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, vol. 4, "Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista," editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana, bajo la dirección de Isidro Fabela (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968) x. "La obra de Carranza fue extraordinaria."

[107] *Documentos Históricos*, 4: x. "Porque instituye un régimen preconstitucional, civil y militar que provee a las necesidades no sólo bélicas sino civiles para que la nación reanude su acción administrativa que organice los servicios que ha menester el Estado para recobrar su marcha normal."

Carranza signals a misunderstanding of the Revolution. It is reasonable to suggest that Carranza represented a force in Mexico that turned out to be fundamental in the overall success of the Revolution. As a later chapter will reveal, Carranza did not spew insincere support or agreement, since he followed up his words with direct action.

There seems to be a prevalent sentiment—not only in secondary sources but also in primary ones—about Carranza's being detached from the Revolution on a psychological and emotional level. This argument, or better yet generality, contradicts all of the actions Carranza took before and during the Revolution. Perhaps one needs to understand that he, aside from all the popular and mainstream objectives of the Revolution, made renovations to a Revolution that risked being weakened, and not many seemed to have understood these legal renovations.

This chapter finishes by indicating something about Carranza that may escape the perceptions of some students of Mexico's revolutionary history. Carranza had as much or more heart for the Revolution than the other revolutionaries. This is perhaps a statement that fanatics of Zapata and Villa would surely and blatantly reject, or at least question. If one considers that Carranza came from a background that did not first-handedly provide him with an urgent, immediate reason to join the general revolutionary movement, then one can begin to understand this individual with deeper appreciation and meaning.

In other words, unlike other Mexicans during the Revolution, Carranza compelled himself to join politics and to join the travails of the Revolution, as opposed to being circumstantially obligated. This involvement allowed him to follow his moral philosophy of social justice, civic duty, and the attainment of national sovereignty. In the final analysis, this multi-faceted philosophy, profound as it was, alienated him from other key

players of the Revolution, as Mexicans in general were perhaps not ready for a leader who could guide the country on multiple fronts.

During the Revolution, Mexicans wanted simple plans and simple actions. They were perhaps not prepared to accept a person into the *Palacio Nacional* who would have not just one but various objectives in mind, a person who bridged the gap between the Old and the New World. This uneasiness on the part of Mexicans is, of course, understandable, as they had been subjected to decades upon decades of social injustice and totalitarian rule.

Chapter III

¡Válgame Dios!:

The Discordant Political Directives of Carranza, Zapata, and Villa[108]

> [M]y first glimpse of Don Venustiano did not dampen my budding revolutionary ardours. In that interview he impressed me as a plain, calm, intelligent, upright, and capable man. His habit of combing his beard with his left hand, which he would put under the snowy cascade, palm outward and fingers curved, throwing back his head a little with each movement, seemed to indicate tranquil habits of thought which made unthinkable—so I thought at the time—all violence and cruelty. "This may not be," thought I, "the man of genius that Mexico needs, nor the hero, nor the great, self-sacrificing statesman, but at least he does not play his title false: he knows how to be the First Chief.
> —Martín Luis Guzmán, *The and Eagle and the Serpent*[109]

The demise of Madero unstitched old wounds. His passing away caused Mexicans to face not only the possibility but the reality that another Díaz-like dictatorship could envelop the country once again. Renewed fears turned into renewed realities, and on February 22, 1913, when Huerta's forces assassinated Madero, the country froze in paranoia. Days later, in the early days of the month of March, in 1913, when Carranza committed himself to the cause, a new chapter in the Revolution had begun, and, of course, paranoia, by then a feeling all too common among Mexicans, continued to persist.

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[108] The expression "*¡Válgame Dios!*" in the chapter title translates to "Oh, my God!" or "My goodness!" in English. It's a staple in Mexican colloquial speech, a sentimental way to emote.

[109] Martín Luis Guzmán, *The Eagle and the Serpent*, trans. Harriet de Onis (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1930) 17.

Madero's death, along with Carranza's rising, created one of the most visible and, indeed, critical changes in the political climate. Relationships of power shifted uncontrollably, as every leader scrambled to assess his proclivities and those of Carranza, the newest and perhaps most powerful leader of the Revolution. Only one thing became certain. The Coahuila native, now to be addressed formally as the undisputed *Primer Jefe*, acquired authority that would be respected and who took on a stance that would soon change Mexican politics in ways that very few envisioned.

Nothing came easy to Carranza, of course. People responded to this man, absolutely—but the responses channeled by the leaders of other military and revolutionary units were an entirely different matter. These leaders believed staunchly in their creed. These were dogmatic leaders. Nevertheless, Carranza believed in his message and program firmly enough to be known throughout the nation not only as an emerging leader but as a primary one.

On May 30, 1913, Carranza wrote and sent a letter to doctor Francisco Vázquez Gómez in Piedra Negras, expressing opposition toward other military and political groups that refused to endorse or otherwise support the *Plan of Guadalupe*. He told doctor Gómez:

> I feel as though I shall divert from the ideas that you have expressed, regarding a Union of the revolutionary parties in our Republic, since a few of these include elements that are completely malignant and would not offer any guarantee whatsoever of the consolidation of the peace of our fatherland but, instead, would bring the germ of new revolutions. Therefore, I believe that only the elements that adhere unconditionally, without outside commitment, to the Plan of Guadalupe on behalf of the constitutionalist movement that I lead will be acceptable.[110]

[110] *Documentos Históricos*, 14: 499. "Siento diferir de las ideas que usted me expresa, acerca de la Unión de los partidos revolucionarios en nuestra República, pues como en algunos de ellos figuran elementos completamente nocivos, no ofrecerían garantía alguna para la consolidación de la paz en nuestra patria, sino que, lejos de ello, traerían, el germen de nuevas revoluciones. Por tanto, considero que sólo son

In this way, Carranza began a rhetorical movement charged with forthrightness and determination, a man willing to liberate himself from opposing forces that would soon challenge the foundation of his cause.

Opposition arrived soon. Some of Carranza's acquaintances and even friends began to doubt his newly assigned position and thus began to alienate themselves from him. After Madero's death and then Huerta's inevitable fall, the revolutionary scene completely changed. Dramatic changes brought new sets of problems, as the Revolution that began in 1910 appeared remarkably different from the one that took hold of the country in mid-1913. These changes, of course, make perfect sense, especially if one considers that the Revolution sought to reconsider and, more importantly, reorganize Mexican leadership and during this time, an enormous reorganization had begun.

The Revolution focused on law, order, and economics as much as it did on making sense of relationships of power. The period from mid-1913 to mid-1916 became one of realignments in terms of relationships. Neutrality was neither an option nor a possibility. On this stage, only truly determined, passionate, and audacious characters survived. Only those few who possessed these qualities made it to the next episode of the Revolution.

In mid-1913, the political situation welcomed new leaderships and relationships. With Díaz, Madero, and now Huerta no longer on the political scene, those still willing to partake in the movement were left to shape the character of the Revolution. How the Revolution would be shaped remained entirely up to the men of the Revolution. Leadership skills were put to the test, as were determination, purpose, and courage.

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aceptables los elementos que se adhieran incondicionalmente al Plan de Guadalupe, sin compromiso alguno por parte del movimiento constitucionalista que encabezo."

As we turn to describing the budding political order in mid-1913, we will see that no one jumped into action with ferocious rapidity as did Carranza. This man ascertained the situation judiciously and realized the risks that would follow. He realized that relationships of power posed the greatest danger and imperiled his future in politics. As Carranza slowly yet unexpectedly rose to power, previous friendships disintegrated and new friendships became problematic, too complex to juggle even.

Zapata and Villa always represented the most intricate and problematic individuals Carranza faced and in mid-1913, these only became more troublesome. In the simple words of Enrique Krauze, author of *Mexico: Biography of Power*, "[a]side from being Mexican, they had nothing in common."[111] With so many currents working against him, Carranza felt the rage and fury of these individuals as they continued to follow their respective political endeavors. A dismissal of Carranza as the *Primer Jefe* by Zapata and then Villa became the only fact understood clearly by all. The actions and sentiments that followed this dismissal, however, appeared more difficult to ascertain, and so putting these into their proper context can be a slippery situation.

Still, in the eyes of Wilson and in the eyes of the world, Carranza, Zapata, and Villa comprised the three most prominent power bases in Mexico in 1913. With respect to American recognition of Mexican leadership, Wilson struggled to recognize a true and dominant leader, a clear symptom that alliances in Mexico had gone astray. Thus, a long, arduous, and painful battle ensued to locate a capable leader.

This chapter poses two important questions. How did Carranza's political program and mentality change during the period from mid-1913 to mid-1916? And to

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[111] Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Mexico* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998) 348.

what extent did his relationships with Zapata and Villa influence this change during post-Huerta times but before mid-1916? To address these questions, this chapter will follow the relationships Carranza held with these two men and draw comparisons between their political approaches to the Revolution. In the period from mid-1913 to mid-1916, Carranza entered the next developmental phase of conflict, the crisis stage. During this three-year period, violence continued to erupt, relationships became tremulous, and Mexico's relationship with the United States deteriorated.

This chapter shows that Carranza found it nearly impossible to continue contact with Zapata and Villa, since these two either refused to understand or could not see any value in the political angle from which Carranza approached the Revolution. Carranza's interest in constitutionality and in revamping foreign policy ran counter to the objectives campaigned by Zapata and Villa. The following pages illustrate what occurs when men of the Revolution do not utilize healthy forms of communication and cooperation to their advantage. Relationships become fated to go toxic, since, given the problems that loomed in the background, trying to cultivate nourishing relationships became, figuratively speaking, akin to growing flowering plants in a wasteland. It was simply impossible.

A Power Relationship with Zapata

For nearly a century, Mexicans have given devout thanksgiving and homage to a revolutionary from southern Mexico who fought for human rights with sincerity, humility, and audacity. As one of the signature names of the Revolution, Emiliano Zapata continues to have great symbolic power in post-revolutionary Mexican culture. Indeed,

his mythic status in the cultural, political, and social history of Mexico has earned him a recognized place in the pantheon of heroes.

In *Woodrow Wilson and the Mexican Revolution (1913-1916)*, Louis M. Teitelbaum venerates the memory of Zapata, when he enthusiastically and with a tinge of peculiarity switches from writing analytically to writing poetically and even nostalgically in the following passage:

> Zapata was the author of the most understandable of all statements of principle: land for those ravished of their land; the leader never tarnished by the responsibilities and compromises of duty to govern; the purest figure of tragedy in the tragic history. Isolation was part of Zapata's tragedy—isolation by the geography of Mexico; by the moment of his effort a blink ahead of radio and airplane; and by his inarticulateness.[112]

Smothered in hyperbole, this passage represents the kind of writing that proliferated in an attempt to revere and, indeed, worship Zapata.

Although it is neither the focus of this thesis and nor of this chapter, the narrative of Zapata nevertheless is definitely an intriguing one, and one worth exploring further. A revolutionary from Mexico's indigenous south, Zapata continues to have an influence over millions of Mexicans, especially in the revolutionary and radical ways of his region. In the introduction to *Essays on the Mexican Revolution*, Michael C. Meyer tells us that "[t]he heroes loomed larger in death and their errors of judgment and human frailties could be overlooked."[113] That seems to have been the case in the mythmaking process of this man.

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[112] Louis M. Teitelbaum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Mexican Revolution (1913-1916): A History of United States-Mexican Relations, from the Murder of Madero until Villa's Provocation across the Border* (New York: Exposition Press, 1967) 17.

[113] Michael C. Meyer, "Introduction," *Essays on the Mexican Revolution: Revisionist Views of the Leaders*, ed. George Wolfskill and Douglas W. Richmond (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979) xvi.

Part of this chapter compares the political philosophies of Carranza and Zapata; to find reasons why these two could not work as a team during the Revolution. As was the case with the previous chapter on Carranza, this chapter by no means attempts to write a political biography on Zapata. Not only will the objectives of this thesis not allow such an undertaking; but, more importantly, the body of research devoted to Zapata continues to be extensive, as an untold number of political biographies about him have already been written.[114]

A few scholars of Mexican history have completed some brilliant and unique work on Zapata and the Revolution, most notably John Womack, Jr., and Samuel Brunk,[115] both of whom have refrained from following the pathways of others who commonly utilize generalities to interpret Zapata.[116]

Our analysis draws from various ideas by Samuel Brunk, who has written extensively on challenging and debunking myths on Zapata. He finds it bothersome that many scholars who claim to specialize in the history of Zapata hardly touch on the subject of Zapata, the man, and instead focus on a narration of the Zapata movement.

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[114] We will put into question the narrative of Zapata not only because this present analysis is in pursuit of specific questions that require it, but also because the narrative of Zapata appears to be falling into a habit of traditional, standard, and accepted accounts. This analysis proposes to shed light on other aspects of Zapata that, for the most part, tend to be broached briefly and cursorily. Traditional accounts over Zapata tend to have similar trends: they discuss Zapata's context briefly, skimming layers of analysis that defies his historical narrative; magnify and glorify *Zapatismo*, often in an attempt to link it to Mexican nationalism; and conclude with the myth of Zapata, lionizing Mexican history through all the avatars that this myth may take on.

[115] For research on Zapata conducted by Womack, see John Womack, *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1970); for research conducted by Brunk, see Samuel Brunk, *Emiliano Zapata: Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

[116] Louis M. Teitelbaum can be considered the exception. The reader will be quick to point out that we quoted a passage from one of Teitelbaum's published works in the introduction of this chapter to advance the idea that Zapata's narrative overflows with romantic prose and hyperbolic interpretation. One may excuse Teitelbaum on the simple fact that his published work does not focus on analyzing the historical character of Zapata but instead explores American political relations with Mexico.

Historicizing Zapata, versus historicizing the movement, produces an entirely different kind of analysis. For one, this analysis tends to be less charming and magical; it is filled with contradictions and defects. In *Emiliano Zapata*, Brunk says that "the task of disentangling the real Zapata from his mythical twin is daunting, and there are limits to what a biographer can discover."[117]

It is important that one investigates Zapata, the individual, because the ultimate goal concerns arriving at a conclusion about what philosophy or philosophies Zapata held during the Revolution. After doing so, we will then compare them against the political ideologies of Carranza, and determine how their relationship suffered as a result.[118]

The Carranza-Zapata relationship of power suffered a complete separation because Carranza and Zapata espoused two very different perceptions of the meaning, function, and process of the Revolution. Carranza's wide-ranging program to transform Mexico crashed with Zapata's more specific plan to change the agrarian, rural community in southern Mexico. Moreover, because their respective programs offered different prescriptions for some of the same issues, a destructive rupture took place between them.

Two weeks prior to Carranza's denunciation in his letter to doctor Francisco Vázquez Gómez of revolutionary leaders who did not back his program, the Primer Jefe sent Zapata a letter asking for his support. Sending his letter with Señor Alfredo Quesnel,

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[117] Samuel Brunk, *Emiliano Zapata: Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995) xv.

[118] This thesis will also postulate that the directions in which the Revolution headed can best be understood and located by examining with precision the revolutionary triangle that may be called the Carranza-Zapata-Villa triangle. In all of its controversy, this triangle warrants a fuller understanding. Oftentimes, the scholarly research will investigate the Zapata-Villa connection, but when Carranza's narrative becomes added to the mix, new possibilities of interpretation become available to the historian. Hence, here we treat the Carranza-Zapata relationship, and decide how this relationship became bitterly polarized.

on May 16, 1913, he wrote to Zapata: "If you are in agreement with the Plan de Guadalupe and with what I said, which you may explain yourself to señor Alfredo Quesnel, then you will second our plan, making public your support and that of your chiefs and officials of your army."[119] But Zapata did not concede.

After Carranza became the national leader of Mexico in 1914, Zapata immediately became skeptical of him, the primary reason for Zapata's skepticism being his disapproval of Carranza's crafting of the *Plan of Guadalupe*. To Zapata, the *Plan of Guadalupe* represented a useless document that failed to address his fundamental concern with agrarian issues.

Zapata insisted on having the Revolution follow a more pragmatic route, one that invested less time in time-consuming stages and steps toward social reform. He was an impatient man and every one of his comrades knew that about him. Zapata was also fond of quick action and was not willing to wait around in idle mode for a change in the system. In fact, August 23, 1914, Zapata sent a letter to Wilson, detailing the plight of his southern community, his political agenda, and his sentiments against Carranza.

Interestingly, all of the paragraphs in the letter focus on describing agrarian concerns and land politics. Only one line seems out of place; it reads: "This is not solely a question of social reform, in other words, of an agrarian distribution, but also a question of political reform, in other words, of the way in which to designate an interim President to convoke elections and begin to put into practice social reforms."[120] The letter goes on

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[119] *Documentos Históricos*, Vol. 1, 493. "Si usted estuviere conforme con el Plan de Guadalupe y con lo que digo expondrá a usted el expresado señor Quesnel, espero que secundará nuestro plan, haciendo pública la adhesión de usted, jefes u oficiales de su ejército."

[120] *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, vol. 21, "Emiliano Zapata, El Plan de Ayala, y su Política Agraria," editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana, bajo la dirección de Isidro Fabela (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968) 98. "Esto no

to denounce Madero and Carranza in less than respectable terms. The letter was largely ignored by Wilson, who did not view Zapata as a serious potential leader.

As an agent of agrarian reform, a multitude of people counted on Zapata. He had left his hometown in Morelos with aspirations to return with satisfying news that land would be distributed evenly and returned to those who had lost it to the forces of injustice.

Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe* accomplished little to placate Zapata's feelings of vengeance against local elements, including Carranza. "For his part," Richmond tells us, "Zapata saw Carranza as an egotistical, personalistic [sic] old man uninterested in immediate reform."[121]

Carranza, too, disapproved many of the ways in which Zapata used to wage his own revolutionary campaign. In particular, he did not believe that the anarchic and violent qualities of Zapata's movement were necessary or pardonable, and felt that Zapata's movement became at times, if not invariably, counterproductive. Evidence of this sentiment can be found in Frank McLlynn's *Villa and Zapata: A Biography of the Mexican Revolution* in a chapter entitled "The Twilight of Zapatismo."[122] Most prominently, the following thesis raised by Adolfo Gilly also substantiates this sentiment: "The mighty revolutionary impetus of the peasantry managed to reach the city, but one

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solo en cuanto a la cuestión social, o sea, a la necesidad del reparto agrario, sino también en lo referente a la cuestión política, o sea, a la manera de designar al Presidente interino que ha de convocar a elecciones y ha de empezar a llevar a la práctica la reforma social."

[121] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 62.

[122] See Frank McLlynn, *Villa and Zapata: A Biography of the Mexican Revolution* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 335-362.

there it could do no more than leave power in the hands of a weak and terrified petty bourgeoisie which did, however, represent a viable option: that of the bourgeoisie."[123]

Zapata's factions came to be known as notorious for overly violent, disrespectful, and disruptive behavior, and instead of helping to restore social order, they helped decelerate it. "Unfamiliar with the peculiar regional issues of southern Mexico," Richmond observes, "Carranza considered the Zapata movement, with its policy of undisciplined destruction, to be incapable of victory,"[124] a judgment that Richmond bases on the "ineptitude and disunity"[125] not only of Zapata's regime but also of all the revolutionary movements taken together. Furthermore, in contrast to Zapata, two of Carranza's concerns about the revolution included restoring social order and mitigating the widespread terror that had already been caused by recent tyrants, and he would not tolerate a new form of oppression to continue to tear the country apart.

The split between Carranza and Zapata officially began immediately after Carranza declared his manifesto in 1913. Of course, Zapata set on a path of disagreement with Carranza well before the enunciation of the *Plan of Guadalupe*, when Zapata countered Madero, and therefore the antagonism that existed between the two can be taken as neither spontaneous nor unexpected. The split, along with others, brought to the Revolution complications that sometimes distracted many Mexicans in general, and Carranza and Zapata in particular, from the aims of the conflict. This distraction caused the development of the Revolution to resemble the unexpected shifts of a non-linear

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[123] Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution*, trans. By Patrick by Camiller (Norfolk, Great Britain: Thetford Press, 1983) 79.

[124] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 62.

[125] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* 59.

arithmetical function.

On various occasions, before Carranza came into power, he sought the support and comradeship of Zapata and actually reached the point where he was willing to compromise with Zapata on certain, important issues.[126] For instance, in an attempt to try to gain Zapata's support, Carranza sent him a series of messages expressing an earnest interest in establishing a healthy, productive relationship, but Zapata would not have it. Unless Carranza completely adjusted his *Plan of Guadalupe*, Zapata would not waste his time dealing with him, not personally, and not politically.

Zapata always articulated what he wanted clearly, and in this way, he posed no unwarranted complexities to the Revolution. His main guiding principle was land reform, and he cared marginally about any other factors that might have been in play. To Zapata, the Revolution gave birth to an obsession that occupied his mind incessantly, land reform. By asking Carranza to relinquish his *Plan of Guadalupe*, Zapata, in essence, was asking Carranza to give up his position as a man in power.

Zapata was not compromising, a tree that would not bend. Rather, he tried to take advantage of the situation. Fortunately for Carranza, he did not fall prey to Zapata's rebellious desires and manipulation, but instead remained confident about his position and remained convinced that his plan to reorganize politics, the economy, and society

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[126] One way in which he actively requested Zapata's support was by having some members of his constitutionalist circle seek him out. One such member was Dr. Atl, who on September 11, 1914, wrote Zapata a letter, stating: "Public opinion of all of the nation sympathizes with the movement that you are leading, but this same opinion has inclined to believe that at the heart of the Liberating Army there exist elements capable of impeding the development of the 'program of the nation.' We ought not to shed one more drop of blood, for in addition the moment has come to put into effect our reason and our moral force, elements that in the present circumstances can have more effectiveness than one victory with weapons at hand." "La opinión publica de todo el país simpatiza con el movimiento que usted encabeza, pero esta misma opinión se inclina a creer que en el seno del Ejercito Libertador existen elementos capaces de impedir el desarrollo del 'programa del pueblo.' No debemos derramar ya ni una gota de sangre, mas ha llegado el momento de hacer obrar nuestra razón y nuestra fuerza moral, elementos que en las actuales circunstancias pueden tener mayor eficacia que una victoria con las armas en la mano." *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 347.

was the most beneficial course of action. But perhaps, just perhaps, Carranza did not fully understand the origins of Zapata's cry. One's home, a person's place of origin, comes into play here.

Growing up in the small town of Anenecuilco in the southern state of Morelos provided Zapata with a deep appreciation for land. In this town, stories about unjustified seizures of land were abundant,[127] and the telling and retelling of stories about the struggle for land against the *haciendas* became plentiful.[128]

"Raised in this oral tradition," says Brunk, "and on the realities that gave it shape, Zapata became conscious at a young age that injustice and inequality surrounded him."[129] Unlike Carranza, who read about struggles for land, Zapata actually lived through these, and his family and friends often became the victims of land seizure by greater forces. We must recall that by 1910, the social and territorial structure of Mexico had been divided into two, with the wealthy owners of expanding, export-oriented *haciendas* increasingly encroaching on the traditional landholdings of the country's poor rural communities as Mexico became more and more integrated into the international economy.

Understanding the *hacienda* lifestyle in Mexico during the early twentieth century helps one to come to terms with Zapata and his ambitions.[130] He was born into a world

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[127] The Spanish had enjoyed influence in Morelos long before Mexico achieved independence in 1821, and even afterwards, the effects of Spanish imperialism were lasting. The major effects of Spanish presence in Mexico were the conquering and manipulation of land, oftentimes into the form of large *haciendas*. Because Morelos was a place in Mexico where the effects of national politics reverberated, the harsh realities faced by the people of Morelos throughout the years had turned into popular and frequently told oral stories.

[128] Brunk 9.

[129] Brunk 13.

[130] Besides the notorious *científicos*, the *patrones*, or owners who ruled in the great kingdom of *haciendas*, constituted the most powerful force in Mexico. They controlled national politics and impeded the voice from peons and villagers to be heard in Mexico City. Frank McLlynn explains, "The core

troubled by land disputes, and in spite of limited knowledge about Zapata's childhood and family history, one aspect remains clear: He enjoyed an extremely personal relationship with the concept of land, one marked by mysticism, history, myth, and tradition.

Throughout Zapata's life, in Morelos, people viewed land as an ancient and praiseworthy gift that families passed down from generation to generation. This gift symbolized the pinnacle of tradition, the only way of truly being able to venerate and connect with past ancestors. Land became transcendent, the sole aspect of family life that never died. In the mind of Zapata, land became worth fighting for—and worth dying for.[131]

The theme of psychology behind this topic is important to underscore. Grasping the psychology behind Zapata's ideological framework allows one to appreciate and comprehend the way in which Zapata made, held, and discontinued relationships of power during the Revolution. When groups or members of other regimes misunderstood

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problem of the Diaz years was the way the hacienda had encroached on village lands. Most villages had enjoyed their communal lands for centuries through customary right and had not filed documentary title to the territories in Mexico." On behalf of countless *hacendados*, lawyers took advantage of the situation by legally yet immorally affirming ownership of lands and bodies of water. Worse yet, according to McLlynn: "By 1910 half of the rural population of Mexico had been reduced to dependency on the hacienda and many villages were hacienda *pueblos*." Most, if not all, *hacendados* exploited their workers and most of the workers lived inside these *hacienda* compounds and provided labor for the upkeep of these enclosed communities, day and night. The *haciendas* employed centripetal force to lure workers from surrounding villages. Oftentimes, *hacienda* work represented as the only resort for many, and in almost every imaginable way, *hacienda* work took the form of slavery. Even those who did not live inside these compounds were forced to travel to work there to make a living. McLlynn draws an interesting parallel when he points out that *hacienda* work, coupled "by the nefarious system of debt peonage," ultimately "made the states of Veracruz, Campeche, Chiapas, and Yucatan the closest thing to the notorious serfdom of Russian and eastern Europe." The other world in Mexico, the Indian, *hacienda*-free territories, also became heavily influenced by the *hacienda* world. The *hacienda* world claimed superiority in Mexico, and in terms of the leverage it exerted in all aspects of Mexican life, it definitely became a superior to the indigenous world. In Frank McLlynn, *Villa and Zapata: A Biography of the Mexican Revolution* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000) 35.

[131] To understand how land and life existed as one in the mentality of Zapata and in that of his community, see Enrique Krauze, *El Amor a la Tierra: Emiliano Zapata* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Economica, S. .A. de C. V., 1987).

his philosophy or, much worse, belittled or overlooked it, he would turn into a vicious enemy—a friend turned foe—willing to take any necessary step in order to get his point across.

Unlike Carranza, who grew up with literature and other niceties of a good life, Zapata can be characterized as a man of fiestas, fireworks, cockfights, card games, dancing, singing, loud music, fighting, spicy food, beer, and bull-roping. A man fond of horses, Zapata developed a passion for bull-roping, a sport that involved violence, strength, and excitement. This cultural background helped inform much of his philosophy.

Growing up in a town that instantaneously became a cohesive community during days of celebration gave Zapata a sense of solidarity with respect to the people of his town. Because his community became bound together by common struggles, Zapata nurtured a perspective that respected this warm, communal cohesion. Aside from being bound together by religion, specifically Catholicism, "[t]hey were [also] united by their lasting tradition of owning land…[a]nd, above all, they were united by their long history of struggle to protect what they owned against the insatiable haciendas."[132]

From this backdrop, Anenecuilco gave rise to a revolutionary leader and also to a rebel who bred a blind passion for land reform, a passion that caused Zapata to overlook many important facets of the Revolution, aspects that, as we will see, needed to become part of the revolutionary movement aimed at promoting Mexican nationalism, for example, by overhauling foreign policy. For to prevent the Revolution from being rendered obsolete or ineffective, a new look at foreign policy and other constitutional matters became as important, if not more so, than social reforms at the local level.

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[132] Brunk 21.

Zapata's rivalry with Carranza dates as far back as 1911, when Zapata drafted and presented his *Plan of Ayala*, whose main objective was to reject the presidency of Madero and to restore land to villages and citizens, the land being primarily owned by *haciendas*. But the *Plan of Ayala* was no typical set of dictates, since this document served as a biblical text to those who adhered to it. In *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, Womack tells us: "the Zapatista chiefs considered the plan a veritable catholicon, much more than a program of action, almost a Scripture. They would brook no compromise of its provisions, no irreverence toward its projects—which were to issue in a classic Mexican millennium."[133] The Zapatista mentality, along with its reverence for this text, may help to explain the enmity that developed between Carranza and Zapata even before the former became proclaimed as the *Primer Jefe*.

While Carranza supported Madero between 1911 and 1913, Zapata began to work against the president, who, Zapata believed, would not help move a revolutionary agrarian program forward. Zapata became relentless in his pursuit to fulfill his objectives at land reform, and in his *Plan of Ayala*, he championed land reform and other revolutionary ideals that he thought needed to be addressed urgently, such as the continuous overthrow of dictatorial regimes, war expenditures, and specific political concerns of the people of the state of Morelos.

Zapata's *Plan of Ayala* showed him to be idealistic, however, and his demands did not appear to have been the product of thoughtful deliberations. Consider Proposition 9, perhaps one of the most creatively and eloquently written of the fifteen propositions:

> In order to execute the procedures regarding the properties aforementioned, the laws of disamortization [sic] and nationalization will be applied as they fit, for

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[133] John Womack, Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968) 393.

> serving us as norm and example can be those laws put in force by the immortal Juárez on ecclesiastical properties, which punished the despots and conservatives who in every time have tried to impose on us the ignominious yoke of oppression and backwardness.[134]

Turning to dense rhetoric, he seemed to have been moved by desperate times, and the feeling of desperation manifested itself in the written plan, and perhaps this frustrated idealism elevated Zapata's name to national attention. His frustrated idealism helped promote a Revolution from which every Mexican could ostensibly benefit, if only psychologically. Land was a powerful theme. Land was everything for people, an intimate possession. The same response continues to apply today, as land ownership represents an undying emotion, a social institution invested in the sanctity of the family.

Especially for people in the rural communities, land was not only a way of life but was life itself, so the philosophical thread that ran through the topics of land reform and social progress must be emphasized here. This philosophical thread gave vitality to Zapata's movement and also inspired Zapata to continue on his journey to social change.

The transference of land to, in Zapata's view, rightful or deserving owners became the ideal that he upheld throughout the Revolution, and the impact of his passion for land reform was incalculable. As Hart observes, he "created a legacy of idealistic revolutionary proclamations that explained in absolute terms the plight of the rural people who had been dispossessed….His idealism and evident unselfishness attracted an intense following among the campesinos."[135]

Moreover, the *Plan of Ayala* purportedly created immediate results, not so much in the socio-economic state of Mexico, but in the way in which Mexicans began to

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[134] "The Plan de Ayala," translated by John Womack, Jr., in Womack *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, 403.

[135] Hart 274.

incorporate the Revolution into a ubiquitous sense of Mexican nationalism. This shared emotion led to *Zapatismo* being acknowledged by every unit of the Mexican government. People from all over the country came to see Zapata as a humble man with fierce aspirations, and in comparison to Carranza's version of nationalism, Zapata equated it with agrarianism.

The *Plan of Ayala* solidified many of the social struggles that plagued Mexico's indigent and indigenous population and served to aid those who were left with no one on their side. Whereas Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe* appeared to be primarily a political document, Zapata's *Plan of Ayala* appeared to be primarily a social or communal document, and it was this difference that separated and polarized them as political agents.

After several attempts at trying to mend a relationship that had long gone sour, Carranza and Zapata briskly terminated all connection in the months that followed Carranza's manifesto proclamation. They embraced different mentalities and different ideas about how to champion their ideals.[136]

The people of southern Mexico, not a backward society in any way as thought by some, felt that it was of little importance if Mexico turned capitalist and became fully industrialized. Their main concern—a concern that continues to have contemporary reverberations—focused on the sentiment that southern Mexico should not have to pay the price for northern Mexico's transformation. More critically, the inhabitants of southern Mexico felt that Mexican national politics had gone too far by allowing the

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[136] These differences manifested themselves in the military armies led by these leaders. Carranza's *Constitucionalistas*, for example, showed a greater concern for the northern parts of Mexico, as they were extremely keen on surrounding Mexico City, the epicenter of power, since this was their way of having leverage over national politics. The *Zapatistas*, on the other hand, remained in the southern parts of Mexico, where the people cared very little about Mexico's late nineteenth-century, early twentieth-century capitalist transformation.

infiltration of elements, both foreign and local, to seize and appropriate land from southerners.[137]

Brunk favors Zapata and his political ideologies over those of Carranza. He believes that Carranza should have been more diplomatic and gregarious toward Zapata, and less unyielding and inflexible. He also argues that their upbringings had a tremendous amount of impact on the way in which they formed and articulated the basis of their agendas: “From Zapata’s point of view this loyal Maderista [that is, Carranza] was merely another hacendando who had little concern for social reform and hoped to use the revolution to fulfill his own ambitions.”[138] Brunk concludes: “About this he was not far wrong.”[139]

The basis for Brunk’s stance follows that Carranza lacked a complete understanding of land politics and suggests that Carranza remained ignorant of the pain and suffering brought about by the immoral confiscation of land. Harsh in judgment, Brunk believes that Carranza only paid “lip-service to land reform,”[140] and that his attempts to create social change were but merely a function of his political position. Here the implication follows that Carranza became an inconsiderate, thick-skinned politician.

On the other hand, Brunk dismisses a cavalcade of factors behind Carranza’s administration. The problem, however, lies in that Brunk does not understand Carranza,

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[137] For Mexican southerners, the last straw had been dropped in the early 20th century. The sequestering of land was the southerners’ tipping point. The *Zapatistas* sang the song of land reform, while the *Constitucionalistas* sang the song of economic and political reform. In the end, the competing outlooks of the Revolution led to an internal conflict that ultimately lost a handle on the Revolution at large. One may argue here that two revolutions, not one, took place simultaneously in Mexico, a big one, the Mexican Revolution, and a small one, the war between the winners, and the opposition that grew between Carranza and Zapata intensified as the Revolution continued.

[138] Brunk 113.

[139] Brunk 113.

[140] Brunk 113.

and we will use Brunk's argument as an example to show how Carranza can be misunderstood, thereby continuing with our provisional interpretation of Carranza.

To begin with, Carranza seems to always fall victim to accusations that he typifies the role of a politician, a corrupt one—and that, therefore, his interests failed to be consistent with those of the people. This argument appears to be flawed and at the same time detrimental, not only to the memory of Carranza, but also to the memory of the Revolution. Although Carranza arrived at the Revolution through political means, his heart settled on helping Mexicans in various ways.

For instance, as stated earlier, Carranza treated the conflict with dignity and sagacity. Tired of individuals taking hasty, irrational decisions, Carranza instead chose to take a less traditional course. He favored, within reasonable limits, deep analysis, contemplation, and reflection. In the wise words of Krauze, among those attributes that have thus been highlighted elsewhere, "[a]nother characteristic of his style was a certain slowness of manner. There was something naturally deliberate in his voice, in his gestures, and…even in his intelligence. [He] lacked Díaz's political instincts but made up for it by letting events simmer and by filtering problems and people."[141] He refrained from catapulting bold political designs or sweeping changes to a social structure that would react with social turbulence, apprehension, and disorder. That was the old standard. That was the Díaz standard.

When Carranza took a major leadership role in 1913, he agreed to make wise, lawful, and calculated decisions on behalf and in benefit of his constituents. Unfortunately, Brunk as well as others, such as Katz even, expected Carranza to

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[141] Krauze 341.

implement a countless number of reforms rapidly. They expected him to move mountains.

Brunk also fails to consider that Carranza, indeed, took action in the area of social reform and for him to dismiss this fact is rather disappointing. Did he not consider Carranza's Constitution of 1917, which, as will be discussed in a later chapter, shows that Carranza did have a concern with social issues? Also, did he not consider the reality that Carranza, after becoming president, faced an extravagant number of issues, ranging from helping to put into place local reforms to helping define and defend Mexico through foreign policy? It is easy to point the finger at one person. Needless to say, the case of attribution here can be a slippery slope.

Although the centerpieces of Carranza's political agenda quickly became foreign policy and constitutionality, a dismissal of local concerns on his part never occurred. Zapata, on the other hand, never took into consideration or even acknowledged that the international scene needed to be factored in, and beyond a flagrant rejection of American or European landowners in or near his hometown, he never adjusted his agenda to include the critical factor of foreign policy or something even more relevant, civic and constitutional order. The narrative of Zapata tends to make counterintuitive the idea that he and his movement could have benefited from changes in foreign policy, had they been instrumental in influencing decisions in this sphere of politics.

Perhaps the problem centers on the way in which men of the Revolution defined the aims of the conflict in the face of a damaged legal order that was corrosive to a healthy existence of law and order. For some, the Revolution may have been a conflict aimed to rid Mexico of the nineteenth-century autocratic style of leadership; whereas for

others, the Revolution may have been a conflict intended to restore land and freedom, regardless of who led the country.[142]

In other words, for those of the latter persuasion, national politics became of little importance, as social justice would be sought even if authoritarian leadership persisted. For others still, the Revolution meant everything, a complete alteration of the structure of Mexico from top to bottom and from side to side. For these individuals, the Revolution meant redefining the political system, restoring social justice via social reform, and changing the relationship Mexico carried with the outside world.

The definition of a visionary is one who has unusual imagination and foresight. A visionary always views forward, imagining countless possibilities, even despite adversity and utter misfortune. Zapata may have been a passionate revolutionary but not quite a visionary.

Contrastingly, the pace of Carranza's movement indicated that he, indeed, can be considered a visionary, a visionary among a convoy of revolutionaries. His definition of the Revolution was all-encompassing, the result of his two-dimensional role as both a politician and a revolutionary, if an atypical revolutionary.

Certainly, Carranza did have responsibilities and expectations as a politician and later would become a president. One cannot over-exaggerate his position in government, as this cannot be used as an excuse or as an easy way to lessen the importance of his efforts. One needs to understand that Carranza led an administration with countless forces working against it, forces that included local opposition, imperialist activity, the Great War, the Wilson administration, Mexico's questionable economy, and dichotomous

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[142] In other words, the collision of these two paradigms can be phrased as follows: effective suffrage and no reelection vs. justice and land.

relationships, such as the ever-querulous relations between the *Carrancistas*, *Zapatistas*, *Villistas*, *Maderistas*, *Felicistas*, *Orozquistas*, *Magonistas*, *Vasquistas*, and *Huertistas*.

In addition, Carranza reaffirmed to his people that the Revolution had not come to a standstill with his successive political triumphs, first as gaining the lead role as a constitutional leader and later as Mexico's president. Gradually, Carranza achieved various key goals, many of which either received opposition or no acknowledgement whatsoever.

Carranza was no ideal or popular figure of the Revolution. He was not the defiant fighter, the flirtatious womanizer, or the passionate revolutionary in whom the agrarians and peons believed. Broadly speaking, one of the greatest contributing factors in the eventual downfall of Carranza focuses on the fact that he did not outwardly seem to resemble everyman. People immediately questioned his intentions based on his appearance, demeanor, and socio-economic background. Frank McLlynn reminds us: "Race was a factor of extreme importance in Mexican society; in 1910 a third of the population was Indian and half *mestizo*. As to the extent of racial prejudice, experts differ."[143] An important detail, however, and one that continues to spark considerable discussion and debate, was Zapata's racial background: A *mestizo*, that is, part Indian, part white.

After the political manifestoes of Carranza and Zapata finished receiving considerable attention, their relationship began to take on a new character, as it became increasingly clear from Carranza's persistent though unsuccessful attempts to make peace with Zapata that he, Carranza, had not the slightest intentions to change or even slightly tweak his *Plan of Guadalupe*. Just as Zapata kept an unwavering determination, so too

[143] McLlynn 33.

did Carranza foster a resolute side of his personality. By not succumbing to Zapata's demands, Carranza indicated to Zapata and to all Mexicans that he earnestly believed in the way he handled his administration and all the decisions that were taken under his direction. Confidence was pivotal.

In the final analysis, as Romana Falcón points out in an essay that appears in *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution*, "[e]ach rebel band allied with national leaders who more closely shared their world view and belief in what the revolution should entail,"[144] because after all no one in the popular revolutionary movements was driven by false or corrupt beliefs. Rather, heterogeneity—culturally, socially, and economically—was ever-present in the Revolution, an aspect that impaired a smooth developmental process. Also, heterogeneity in the Revolution welcomed diversity, while at the same time it solicited an abundance of complexities and, as we have seen, conflicts of opinion.

The expression "war of the winners," borrowed from Knight's *The Mexican Revolution*, describes exactly what happened in Mexico shortly after the disintegration of the Huerta regime. The three main factions, the three "winners," fought to conquer regions in Mexico that were either largely untouched by the Revolution, in which case the objective was to transmit the word of the Revolution, or troubled by *haciendas*, in which case the objective was to restore and redistribute land by force. Divided, instead of united, these three factions scrambled furiously to win over territory and supporters, and often they zigzagged and trekked into dangerous, already conquered territories.

With all of these intergroup complexities, Zapata continued to stake out his own respectable place in the collective revolutionary movement. Although he has received

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[144] Romana Falcón, "Charisma, Tradition, and Caciquismo: Revolution in San Luis Potosí," in *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. Friedrich Katz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 434.

attacks for a limiting program, some historians, Arturo Warman for example, point to another version of Zapata—to a man who probed into other areas of Mexican society. In another essay that appears in *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution*, Warman explains: “Zapata made proposals regarding individual guarantees, municipal liberties, state and national government, and labor relations, as well as agrarian reform.”[145]

Warman also points out that Zapata’s program produced explicit implementations of change but tends to exaggerate this point a bit. For instance, he begins by arguing: “It may be said that the ideological influence of Zapatismo surpassed its military capacity and extended more widely and profoundly than did its direct actions.” [146] At the same time, he poses the argument that “Zapatismo generated a radical class-based and coherent political plan for the global transformation of a complex society.”[147]

Even though Warman holds seemingly contradictory viewpoints, his analysis is for the most part judicious and well balanced because he focuses on explaining the impact and changes created by Zapata and *Zapatismo*, in particular emphasizing the creation of new and unsung chapters in the life of this man.

After establishing a powerful influence in Mexico, Zapata went on to pursue other directives that he thought needed to be immediately installed as part of the reformulation of a national government. Similar to the trajectory of Carranza’s political life, Zapata’s life took various turns that left lasting imprints in his political philosophy. It is important to point out, however, that Zapata’s political philosophy changed minimally because he

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[145] Arturo Warman, “The Political Project of Zapatismo,” trans. by Judith Brister, *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. Friedrich Katz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 322.

[146] Warman 322.

[147] Warman 322.

had only one social reform in mind, and that was land. Just as constitutionality took a supreme place in Carranza's politics, agrarianism took hold of Zapata's mentality, even though one can observe minor changes that occurred sporadically.

In the latter half of the Revolution, Zapata began to understand as never before politics and its effects on the quotidian lives of Mexican people. This realization, along with the relationships of power he had with Carranza, Villa, and others, placed him in compromising and defining situations. He became compelled to take his movement to new heights and his countless public proposals changed as he became more entangled with the concerns of national politics.

Zapata underwent a noticeable but not spectacular transformation, suggesting that he was not closed-minded, at least insofar as local politics and local issues were concerned. We can make an interesting, and perhaps obvious, comparison between the political lives of Carranza and Zapata. On the one hand, Carranza, a politician by profession, began with an emphasis on rearranging the Mexican government, later to be fully invested in the espousal of local affairs, such as land reform, and then more specifically, constitutionality. On the other hand, Zapata, a radical reformer by choice, began by concentrating his reform efforts in local situations and only later became fully engaged in national politics and in pursuing economic and political directives.

Consider, for example, a political move made by Zapata to implement agrarian law. The adoption of a law differs from declaring a reform because of the action that takes place. In the case of the latter, a declaration of a social reform such as Zapata's *Plan of Ayala* invites people to accept a movement or a belief and to act upon it. A plan

of that nature does not necessarily demand immediate, legal action and accordingly is not a law.

Although he may not have acknowledged it himself, this role reversal played in his favor. According to Warman, "The Zapatista Ley Agraria was passed on October 28, 1915, almost six months after the successful distribution of land among 100 villages in the pueblo of Morelos, and almost four years after the first agrarian actions ordered by the Army of the South."[148] As an interesting aside, only months earlier, on January 6, 1915, Carranza issued his version of an agrarian law.[149] Competition clearly took place between these two and it was as if they were each other's foil.

Zapata gave birth to various similar laws, despite their not having been rendered abundantly and noticeably successful. The abovementioned law failed miserably because he intended it to use it for arguably the wrong reasons. It may seem wise and acceptable to applaud Zapata for his participation in the legal world, in the world of law-making because this would mean that he took his philosophy of agrarian reform to an entirely different altitude but, as Warman is quick to point out, "[i]n the public documents of Zapatismo, and in spite of their exalted and grandiloquent language, there is almost no demagoguery but rather propaganda in the strictest sense."[150] In addition, "[v]ery few of the Zapatista laws could be applied after their passage, although there are precedents in

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[148] Warman 325.

[149] This fact provides emphasis to Knight's expression "war of the winners," which was previously pointed out. Further accentuating the notion of this "war of the winners," a similar occurrence transpired with the political plans of Madero, Zapata, and Carranza. First, Madero came out with his *Plan of San Luis Potosí* (in 1910), followed by Zapata's *Plan of Ayala* (in 1911), and finally followed by Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe* (in 1913). Chronology here is important.

[150] Warman 325.

their implementation, since the peasant army had lost control over the territory and the institutions of government."[151]

The result: "The laws were propagandistic, directed toward extending Zapatista ideology and toward political agitation,"[152] and because these laws were propagandist by nature, they were hardly taken seriously. Nevertheless, Zapata kept himself engaged in serious political activity. Regardless of the fact that the laws that he and his army tried to institute became rendered complete failures, his voice in politics continued to enjoy multiple, thunderous effects.

His work persisted, slowly but surely, and Warman cites one of the most appealing characteristics of his work with civilians: that is, Zapata carried a strong relationship with the civilian population. To understand the internal workings of Zapata and his political work, Warman explains:

> The relationship between the civilian population and the army of the south was not abstract, but on the contrary, was based on class identity. The memoranda in which priorities were set with regard to the confiscation of cattle [are] a case in point: first the cattle of the large landowners were confiscated, then those of the rich, and only in cases of extreme necessity those of poor peasants. In order to guarantee the future means of production it was absolutely prohibited to kill cattle. The term "capitalist" was linked to landowners, proprietors, and merchants when reference was made to war taxes. The concept of the "enemy of the cause" did not have just one political or partisan meaning for Zapatismo, but was an objective social definition.[153]

The passage indicates that the interaction between Zapata and civilians resembled a special bond, a relationship of power that benefitted both. This relationship meant that Zapata continued to preserve a handle over politics and it is important to stress the point

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[151] Warman 325.

[152] Warman 325.

[153] Warman 328.

that even though the laws and ordinances loosely orchestrated by Zapata and his army leaders turned out to be ineffective, he continued to have power over national politics. Power, influence, and control come in different forms.

Nevertheless, Daniel Levy and Gabriel Székely, in *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change*, criticize Zapata and his program in the following manner: "Zapata's forces had a coherent revolutionary program but were perhaps essentially conservative socially. Even their cry for land was an attempt to preserve their communal, insulated traditions."[154]

Using Zapata as an example, Ilene V. O'Malley argues that the construction of the Zapata myth included material that was not entirely true. For example, in a 1922 ceremony in Mexico, the memory of Zapata was described as follows: "[The speakers] apparently did not think…class oppression per se justified Zapata's revolt. On the one hand, they presented Zapata as an agent of class struggle; on the other, they appealed to Christian values, nationalist sentiment, and the code of machismo to make him acceptable." [155] The speakers also "cast[ed] [Zapata] as a patient, self-sacrificing, Christ-like man who would [have] long endured physical abuse and insult to his manly honor before taking up arms. The remark about Zapata's openness to rich and poor softened the notion that he disliked individuals of the upper classes."[156]

At the same time, "the remarks about the foreign overseer (as opposed to a Mexican one) and his Mexican ways showed Zapata as a man with whom all Mexicans

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[154] Daniel Levy and Gabriel Székely, *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983) 29.

[155] Ilene V. O'Malley, *The Myth of the Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986) 46.

[156] O'Malley 46.

who appreciated 'national culture' and resented foreign domination had something in common."[157] Notice that O'Malley mentions something that substantiates an earlier point; that is, the argument that *Zapatismo* had been associated with Mexican nationalism or, as O'Malley puts it, "a nationalist sentiment" or "a national culture."

Overall, O'Malley's point is well taken, and one can see how the myth of Zapata gained momentum in post-revolutionary Mexico. In the construction of this mythical personage, myth and fact did not quite coincide. In order to understand the Carranza-Zapata relationship, this aspect of Zapata as a subject of mythology, as an idealized conception, must be acknowledged, as Carranza must have been cognizant about this myth-in-the-making.

A unique aspect of Zapata's regime is that while other revolutionary groups progressively changed their outlooks to minimize opposition, his movement spurned reconciliation. This fortitudinous intractability challenged Carranza. Along these lines, Friedrich Katz argues: "As these movements transcended their states of origin, they began to seek allies in other parts of Mexico, frequently with very different social ideals and of very different social origin. At this point, some of the movements began to be transformed and some of their aims and purposes changed."[158] Insists Katz: "The least affected by such changes was the Zapata movement, since it scarcely extended beyond the confines of Morelos and its surroundings."[159]

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[157] O'Malley 47.

[158] Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) 569.

[159] Katz 569.

Overall, Carranza and Zapata reached a crossroads during the Revolution and, unfortunately, both were looking in different directions. Their gazes were not fixed in a single direction, each was looking to a different horizon, and so naturally the outcome of the Revolution was envisioned in distinct ways. Zapata's gaze looked in the direction of agrarianism, Carranza's in the direction of constitutionality. On August 20, 1914, speaking on behalf of Carranza and the *Carrancistas*, an article that appeared in the Mexican newspaper, *El Constitucionalista*, a journalist noted: "[T]he military triumph of the armed movement brings prepared the victory of justice and is the precursor of the rule of law as the base that must support the regular functionality of an Institutional Government."[160]

Crime, Punishment, Villa

If in the South Zapata posed the greatest challenge to Carranza; in the North Villa provided Carranza with a plethora of problems that would consume much of Carranza's time during mid-1913 to mid-1916. There may be a temptation to lump Villa in the category into which Zapata, the reputed Attila of the South, belongs. Both of these figures came from remarkably similar socio-economic backgrounds, although Zapata came from a more prosperous family.[161] Also, they avidly advocated for the progress of different areas of Mexico—one of the south, one of the north—and cried for more or less the same social injustices, primarily land and an end to subjugating forces.

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[160] *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 337-339. "[E]l triunfo militar del movimiento armado trae aparejado el triunfo de la justicia y es el precursor del imperio de la ley, como base que debe sustentar el funcionamiento regular de un Gobierno institucional."

[161] Villa, on the other hand, grew up in a *hacienda*, where his parents worked for *hacienda* administrators.

Finally, yes, there also exists that unforgettable photograph, a landmark 1914 snapshot of the Revolution, in which Zapata and Villa sit next to each other on the presidential throne in the *Palacio Nacional*, appearing defiant but also triumphant and silently exultant. The picture symbolizes the amalgamation of the south with the north, and vice versa, a blissful encounter. All of Mexico is represented, and that is exactly the sentiment that the picture elicits.

On the other hand, the picture fails to convey just how dichotomous Zapata and Villa found themselves, even during that victorious gathering, during which time the climactic ousting of Huerta on July 15, 1914, took place at the hands of these insurgents. They did not find themselves at odds with each other precisely; however, one cannot view these figures as one and the same. Each brought his own beliefs and each brought his own aspirations. These differences in perception could not be clearer than in the relationship each carried with Carranza.

In contrast to Zapata, Villa presented Carranza with complications that reached beyond the scope of Villa's northern community. Villa became an active, energetic political force that Carranza and even his biographers today could not easily understand. Perhaps too much went on in his life. Ultimately, he presents students of Mexican history with a cornucopia of problems; yet, at the same time, as frustrating as it may be, his story remains intriguing enough to keep our undivided attention.

In the history of the Revolution, Villa deserves to be remembered as a man of passionate ambiguity. In the words of one scholar, "[t]he truth about Villa lay somewhere between villain and hero. Nevertheless, he caused problems for himself by placing the Constitutionalists and the Wilson administration in awkward political and diplomatic

situations."[162] Similar to Zapata, Villa had his beginnings as an outlaw and no matter how much one might want to erase that fact from the pages of history, erasure cannot be implemented. Accordingly, we are left to acknowledge, accept, and work with this aspect of Villa's life.

In addition, we are left to treat this aspect as a factor crucial in the development of the hypothesis of this thesis because with some frequency, the works of scholars who concentrate on developing and analyzing Villa link him exclusively to notions and thematic treatments of banditry and the disruption of order during the Revolution.[163]

The result of the process of making and unmaking order has been, for Paul J. Vanderwood, the incipience of cultural heroes, both good and bad. In *Disorder and Progress*, Vanderwood observes: "People of all ethnicities and social groups seem to have their cherished bandit heroes and villains, and some of them cut across national and cultural boundaries."[164] He continues: "Many of these bandits may have actually lived and others been invented, but it makes no difference, for all are designed and periodically reshaped to fit the needs and imagination of the users."[165]

As is often the case, "[m]ost of these images are imbued with so much ambiguity and so many contradictions (which make them just that much more human) that they can

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[162] Mark E. Benbow, "Leading them to the Promised Land: Woodrow Wilson, Covenant Theology, and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1915," PhD diss. (Ohio University, 2000).

[163] One author who refrains from engaging in this kind of work, Paul J. Vanderwood, examines the history, process, and formulation of a so-called culture of authority in Mexico and specifically finds captivating two subcultures within the culture of authority: the Mexican police and Mexican bandits. Vanderwood believes that these two subcultures comprised the kinetic motion machines, making and remaking, constructing and deconstructing order in Mexico. In his mind, these two subcultures simultaneously maintained and destroyed order and disorder.

[164] Paul J. Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1992) xix.

[165] Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress* xix.

be interpreted to symbolize almost anything."[166] The ambiguity that surrounds the narrative of Villa can, therefore, be seen as normal, since "[t]here is nothing strange about such looseness," according to Vanderwood.[167]

In contrast to Vanderwood, other studies written on the narrative of Villa use the topics of banditry and disorder as the sole or at least most important ways of linking the narrative of Villa to the Revolution. These studies take the narrative of Villa to argue for the existence of banditry and disorder in Mexico in ways dissimilar to Vanderwood, who takes the topics of banditry and disorder to shed light on certain specific aspects of bandits and revolutionaries including specifically, but not exclusively, Villa.

Alongside Vanderwood, Friedrich Katz, a well-respected scholar of Mexican history, also treats the narrative of Villa using a more holistic approach, as he utilized the narrative of Villa to illuminate various aspects of the Revolution. Instead of studying Villa through a study of the Revolution, he does the opposite, studying the Revolution through a study of Villa.[168] The difference between these two approaches may not at first seem apparent and might seem alike; however, the key in ascertaining the difference lies in detecting the difference between process and aim.[169]

Villa's life represented a living paradox because he embodied an oxymoron: he represented at once a brigand and a spokesperson for justice, a revolutionary and a

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[166] Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress* xix.

[167] Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress* xix.

[168] One can see the same approach applied to the narrative of Zapata in the masterful work of Womack, in *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*.

[169] In our analysis, Villa will not be characterized in terms of his life as a fugitive criminal. The actions taken by Zapata were not evaluated in such terms and neither will those taken by Villa. The historical records of Zapata and Villa as felons will be acknowledged but will not be elevated to create awe and an aura of mystery and adventure.

national leader, a local representative and an international force. The ghost of Villa continues to creak, his bones cracking under the heft of Mexican history. Despite the knotty tangle that myth and history have summarily created, Villa's narrative stands as a stimulating and informative lesson in a variety of topics of historical worth. His narrative is informative of U.S.-Mexican relations in such areas as border politics, northern Mexican politics, and relationships of power during the Revolution.

Historians only recently have begun to comprehend the contradictory nature of Villa's political life. For various reasons, his decisions and actions at times occasionally appeared to have been direct and thoughtful provocations of controversy and debate, but when factors such as territoriality and Mexican politics are taken into consideration, it can be understood that contextually the political life of Villa was itself complex and not simply affected by social and economic factors.

In Zapata's case, "a relative unknown in Washington,"[170] his southern agrarian location impacted the way in which he viewed the world and the way in which he defined the Revolution. The socio-economic state of Mexico's southern poor gave Zapata the impetus to approach his struggle unilaterally. His coalition was stymied in such a way, because it practically experienced no interaction with the Wilson administration, relations that could have served him as confirmation as to the vastness and complicated nature of Mexico's problems.

Particular to the narrative of Villa, "a rash revolutionary willing to listen to American advice,"[171] is the remark that he exhibited an awareness of forces such as imperialism, globalization, and foreign relations, even though he would not have

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[170] Benbow 266.

[171] Benbow 267.

identified these forces by the proper nomenclature designated by the social scientific community. After all, as one scholar puts it: “No one demonstrated the complicated relationship between Mexican factional leaders and the United States better than Villa.”[172] He seemed to have been aware of all of the ramifications of his actions in the greater context of foreign relations, making for a character that needs to be understood in a more historically linear context, even though it might be impossible to interpret him in linear terms. An investigation of the narrative of Villa might instead reveal an asymptotic function with multiple swerves and interstices. Katz can surely attest to that.[173]

The existing written history makes it appear as though the Carranza-Zapata relationship suffered more complications than that of Carranza and Villa, but the analysis that follows tends to argue otherwise. The Carranza-Villa relationship, taxing in various ways, produced a discouraging temperament in Mexico and gave rise to unfulfilled expectations and deep disappointments. For instance, when the fight against Huerta had initially begun in 1913, the Constitutionalist Army consisted of the military units of Carranza, Villa, Zapata, and Obregón.

At one point during 1913, these major leaders joined forces for one common cause, but after 1913, they could not find common ground when it came to determining how the Revolution should proceed and what kinds of political directives needed to be given priority and therefore preference. Soon thereafter, in 1914, Villa refused to acknowledge Carranza as the *Primer Jefe*. On September 22, 1914, he did not hesitate

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[172] Rachel C. St. John, “Line in the Sand: The Desert Border between the United States and Mexico, 1848-1934,” PhD diss. (Stanford University, 2005) 211.

[173] In the opening sections of arguably his most distinguished work, Katz tells his readers that he spent ten years of his life researching for and writing this mammoth publication, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*.

and wrote to him: "I announce to you that this Division [of the North] will not concur with the [Constitutionalist] Convention that you have convened, and once again I manifest my refusal to acknowledge you as the Primer Jefe of the Republic, leaving you with the freedom to proceed as you wish."[174]

Although it seemed more understandable when Zapata turned against Carranza, the same cannot have been said of Villa and his decision to turn against Carranza, as "[t]he major difference between Carranza and Villa was not in their goals for the revolution" but differences in intensity and technique.[175] They both wanted to exact enormous changes to the Mexican political system; however, each wanted to accomplish these feats in dangerously dissimilar ways and, therefore, they fissured longitudinally.

One of the earliest open expressions of Villa's turning against Carranza occurred in late 1914. On November 14, 1914, Villa wrote Zapata a message, which noted his discontent with Carranza and his plans to interrupt Carranza's military movements. Villa wrote to Zapata:

> Since it appears that the most powerful nucleus of rival forces can be found in the State of Puebla, I recommend to you that, upon receiving this, you will become disposed to situate the highest number possible of forces under your command between Mexico [City] and Puebla, with the aim of intercepting the path that the forces of Carranza will take to the capital of the Republic. I trust that you will be able to put forth all of your activity and determination in realizing this movement of troops as soon as possible, as your help and cooperation are very important to the outcome of the military operations that I will undertake at the capital. [176]

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[174] *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*. Vol. 15, Parte 3. "Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista," editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana, bajo la dirección de Isidro Fabela (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968) 179. "[L]e participo que esta División no concurrirá a la Convención que ha convocado, y desde luego le manifiesto su desconocimiento como Primer Jefe de la Republica, quedando usted en libertad de proceder como le convenga."

[175] Benbow 269.

[176] *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 391. "Como según parece, el núcleo más poderoso de fuerzas enemigas se encontrará en el Estado de Puebla, le recomiendo que al recibo de la presente se sirva usted

In this way, Villa began to work alongside Zapata in attempt to upset and counter Carranza and the movement of his troops. By this time, Villa no longer voiced his opposition to Carranza but actively worked against him, even going as far as soliciting and utilizing the forces of Zapata.

It is true that Carranza and Villa had a more open relationship than Carranza and Zapata, because the Carranza-Villa lines of communication remained relatively active throughout the Revolution, and it therefore seems that Villa, in comparison to Zapata, was more receptive and amenable. In this sense, credit must be given to Villa for showing more sensitivity in his communications with Carranza.

To put it in somewhat facetious terms, "General Álvaro Obregón…called the political split between Villa and Carranza 'a lover's quarrel' caused by a difference of feelings rather than ideology."[177] This remark further accentuates the observation that Carranza and Villa carried a less restrictive relationship. The two were forced into a relationship or, as Obregón would phrase it, into a querulous marriage of convenience.

Nevertheless, Villa's communicative nature appears unusual and more extraordinary if one compares it to Carranza and Zapata. The roles these three individuals took during the Revolution were not set in stone as they tiptoed back and forth unexpectedly from one role to another, from one function to the next, and oftentimes juggled with multiple roles. Nothing was certain, and indeterminacy soon became the dominant trait of the Revolution.

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disponer que el mayor número posible de las fuerzas de su mando se sitúen entre México y Puebla, a fin de interceptar el paso de fuerzas que Carranza tratará de enviar a la capital de la República. Confió en que pondrá usted toda su actividad y empeño en realizar este movimiento de tropas a la mayor brevedad posible, pues es muy importante su ayuda y cooperación para el mejor resultado de las operaciones militares que yo emprenderé sobre la capital."

[177] Benbow 268.

The viewpoints of James W. Hurst will help illuminate the roles and relationships that defined the Revolution under the direction of these three men with three points being kept in mind: first, Carranza played the role of a legitimate member of government; second, Zapata, although driven by political motivations, cannot be considered a legitimate member of government but instead as a leader and representative of the agrarian community.[178] Finally, Villa had so much influence in both Mexican national politics and foreign relations, that his role can tentatively be considered as a revolutionary-politician.

Despite these variances in role, two things remain clear: at one time or another, all three were governors and all three clung to uncompromising dogma. According to Hurst in *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing*: "Neither Venustiano Carranza (First Chief) nor Alvaro Obregón was interested in land reform. For Emiliano Zapata the land question *was* the Revolution; for Villa the *political* future of Mexico was of primary importance."[179]

Although Hurst claims that Carranza took no interest in land reform, it is beyond doubt that Carranza did not ignore it. Because Carranza advanced his ideas concerning this topic after breaking all contact with Zapata and Villa, closer attention to his relationship with land reform will be provided in a subsequent chapter that focuses on

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[178] Even though Zapata officially became a part of the government by taking the position of governor of his town, he used this position as a way to further his agrarian program. Assuming the role of governor, as opposed to simply taking a non-official role as a town leader, was part of his greater revolutionary plot to control the gearshift of his agrarian community. Among historians, Zapata has invited a great deal of heated debate about his role during the Revolution. This analysis settles on the notion that Zapata was not a part of the national government and, thus, his position as governor of his hometown cannot be used as a sufficient reason to regard Zapata as a representative of the government or as a legal authority figure in Mexico. Not only did Zapata detach himself from national politics and held back from partaking in any substantive role within the national government, his vision and philosophies of the Revolution were also indicative of this detachment.

[179] James W. Hurst, *Pancho Villa and Black Jack Pershing: The Punitive Expedition in Mexico* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008) xxi.

that period. In this Carranza-Zapata-Villa triangle, a great deal remains ambiguous, mainly because the three men virtually could not agree on anything. Thus, their discords plagued the Revolution.

In spite of uncertainty and apparent erratic movement in the Revolution, it is impossible to make observations and determinations based on the political tendencies, affinities, and inclinations of the three. For instance, on a spectrum, Carranza would be on one extreme end, Zapata on the other, and Villa near but not exactly in the middle, creeping to one side or the other at various times.

These vacillations must be examined in order to understand what he and *Villismo* wanted to accomplish, and it may be helpful to identify the roles of Carranza, Zapata, and Villa in a qualifying manner. Understanding the political roles taken upon by leaders of the Revolution seems essential in the study of *Villismo*. We need to understand Villa's multiple roles in the Revolution, how he managed to engage in various functions during the Revolution, and how these roles affected his relationship with Carranza.

As was the case with Zapata, myths also have defined Villa but in different ways. In contrast to Zapata, the narrative of Villa does not suffer from a lack of understanding of Villa the individual but rather from a lack of understanding of *Villismo*. In the previous section of this chapter, the construction of a solid understanding of Zapata, the individual, resulted in a demanding effort and similarly, in order to build a narrative predicated on Villa's movement, *Villismo*, the analysis will struggle to achieve clear understanding.[180]

[180] Legend and myth have percolated through the body of knowledge devoted to Villa—not only in an attempt to aggrandize him but also to understand *Villismo* on a more personal level. Here, the attempt has been to experience *Villismo* vicariously through a study of Villa with a simultaneous attempt to pull these two entities apart and extract *Villismo* from Villa.

Villa and *Villismo* must be separated lest the study of *Villismo* should become a study of Villa, this being the reason why the existing body of research of *Villismo* sits almost entirely on the narrative of Villa. In the preface of his *magnum opus*, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, a one-thousand-plus-page tome concentrating on Villa within the context of the Revolution, Katz says: "There are legends of Villa the Robin Hood, Villa the Napoleon of Mexico, Villa the ruthless killer, Villa the womanizer, and Villa as the only foreigner who has attacked the mainland of the United States since the war of 1812 and gotten away with it."[181] Katz also worries "[w]hether correct or incorrect, exaggerated or true to life, these legends have resulted in Pancho Villa the leader obscuring his movement, and the myths obscuring the leader."[182]

In addition, Katz, fearing the worst, openly tells his readers: "[M]uch attention has focused on Villa himself that the characteristics of his movement that in many respects make it unique in Latin America, and in some ways among twentieth-century revolutions, have either been forgotten or neglected."[183] Accordingly, here we will attempt at once to understand *Villismo* and also understand how *Villismo* induced Villa to embark on a brittle, dangerous relationship with Carranza.

To understand Villa's rapidly changing relationship with Carranza, one has to understand also the opposition that others felt toward Villa. It is important to acknowledge that resistance against Villa came not only from Carranza but also from other important figures. Take, for instance, Álvaro Obregón. Days after Villa sent Zapata

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[181] Katz, *Life and Times* xv.

[182] Katz, *Life and Times* xv.

[183] Katz, *Life and Times* xv.

a message requesting his help to obstruct Carranza's military march into the capital, Obregón released a statement to the nation. Obregón alerted Mexicans:

> The monster of betrayal and crime, incarnated as Francisco Villa, stands to threaten to devastate the fruit of the Revolution, which has cost much blood and many deaths to our poor nation. The efforts of all of those honest men to establish peace in the Republic have been declared impotent before the perversity of the wicked trinity formed by Ángeles, Villa and Maytorena….The nation, in her anguish, like mothers who fire glances at their own when taking a deep breath, do so to make certain that all of her children stand on her side, agonizes, and also fires a glance over at her Mexicans to see how many of them remain loyal to her….Over there is Francisco Villa, with his hands filled with [American] dollars, over there is Francisco Villa proclaiming patriotism and spilling venom for those eyes that hypocritically want to demonstrate that these are tears of patriotism; there he is, and I repeat, wasting gold and corrupting all of those men who are susceptible of becoming corrupted with all of those flattering temptations.[184]

This statement strikes against Villa and all that he represents and at the same time stokes nationalist sentiment. We bring into focus Obregón's point of view, since the ultimate goal here is to examine the split in the Carranza-Villa relationship, in the greater context of other relationships, to discover why these men did not end on good terms, and this seemingly simple and straightforward issue will produce intricate answers that require several levels of analysis.

Because Villa engaged in a complicated relationship with Washington, finding the reason or reasons for the break will involve focusing on the research devoted to U.S.-Mexican foreign policy. Villa carried a close relationship with the United States, and

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[184] *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 396. "El monstruo de la traición y el crimen, encarnado en Francisco Villa, se yergue amagando devastar el fruto de la Revolución que tanta sangre y tantas vidas ha costado a nuestro pobre pueblo. El esfuerzo de todos los hombres honrados por establecer la paz en la Republica acaba de declararse impotente ante la perversidad de la trinidad maldita que forman Ángeles, Villa y Maytorena….La patria en su agonía, como las madres que al expirar lanzan una mirada en torno suyo, para cerciorarse de si están todos sus hijos a sus lado, agoniza, lanza también una mirada sobre los mexicanos para ver cuántos hijos tiene dignos de ella….Allá esta Francisco Villa, con las manos llenas de dólares, allá esta Francisco Villa pregonando el patriotismo y vertiendo veneno por los ojos que hipócritamente quieren demonstrar que son lágrimas de patriotismo; allá esta, os repito derrochando el oro y corrompiendo a todos los hombres que son susceptibles de corromperse ante esas halagadoras tentaciones."

similar to Zapata, it will become clear that the Carranza-Villa relationship officially and publicly shattered in the wake of two specific events: Villa's defeat in the Battle of Celaya of 1915 and the Punitive Expedition of 1916 to 1917.

In many ways, the background behind the Carranza-Zapata relationship appears more graspable than that of the Carranza-Villa relationship. For example, these men, Carranza and Zapata, had followed starkly and observably different paths to the Revolution, so their viewpoints were not only the products of differences of opinion but also the products of differences of passion, which posed even more danger and complications. In addition, Zapata and *Zapatismo* represented regional forces with clearly identifiable regional objectives, whereas Carranza and his movement, which included a national military unit, constituted a national force invested in profound national challenges.

Again, the split in the Carranza-Zapata relationship may appear easier to understand than the Carranza-Villa split, and the differences between the Carranza-Zapata and the Carranza-Villa relationships necessitate an examination of the background of the latter. The Carranza-Villa relationship appeared sometimes obvious and sometimes not, sometimes symbiotic and sometimes not. Nevertheless, Wilson certainly made the situation appear clear for Mexicans. As Benbow relates, Wilson largely ostracized Zapata and embraced Carranza and Villa. In his words: "For a brief time in February in 1915 there were four declared Mexican governments, each seeking American recognition. However, as 1915 began, Wilson remained focused on Carranza and Villa as the most likely choices for American support."[185]

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[185] Benbow 345.

As attention is moved away from discussions on the Villa myth, and instead focused on *Villismo* and Villa's philosophies, the reasons behind the split in the Carranza-Villa relationship will become more and more apparent and the analysis will lead to the conclusion that Villa ardently opposed Carranza's political program even before the oft-disputed Pershing Expedition took place. By the time the U.S. officially had recognized Carranza as the president of Mexico, provoking Villa's attack on American soil, he had already developed a fiery antagonism toward Carranza, and while this attitude might not have been entirely evident, a difference of political perspectives invigorated the antagonism.

Is it possible to understand Villa's political philosophies while not knowing the truth about his origins and upbringing?[186] The answer is yes, but is it possible to extract the individual from the cultural hero without understanding his origins?

Consider, for example, one common piece of information about Villa's early life, the observation that he was born an illegitimate son. To understand how this myth gained traction, in *The Paradox of Pancho Villa*, Haldeen Braddy explains how "the formula for heroes" functions:[187] "Villa's alleged illegitimacy fits the formula for heroes. In ancient

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[186] The beautiful state of Chihuahua gave rise to and nurtured Villa, who would play multiple roles in the Revolution and the story of his origin and the path for his future stand as two crucial concepts in the successful creation of both national and personal narratives. The Villa narrative, while oriented both forward and backward in time, wants to look forward and embed itself in the historical body of research. Little is known about Villa's early days. Both primary and secondary sources tell small fragments about his upbringing that reveal little, but the narrative of Villa's early life, as it flows from secondary sources, tends to be based on flawed assumptions and explanations derived directly from myths.

[187] Haldeen Braddy, *The Paradox of Pancho Villa* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1978) 3.

history it was a common practice to explain a hero's phenomenal exploits by shrouding his origin in mystery and doubt."[188]

There must be movement away from myth and mystery. Moving away from Villa's origin would be akin to moving away from the myth, so, as Braddy forcefully and convincingly states: "The fact is that…Villa sprang from a peon family, one of mixed Indian extraction. The strong Indian strain in his blood, inspiring him as it did with stubbornness and with deep-set rancor against the hacendados, drove him in his youth to run away from home and seek his fortunes as a fugitive in the wild Sierra Madre."[189]

There also needs to be movement away from Villa the bandit. Jim Tuck agrees, and states the following in *Pancho Villa and John Reed*: "A bandit—and nothing more—is too simplistic an explanation. Villa was a bandit, to be sure, but he was also a sharecropper, a butcher, a horse trader, a keeper of accounts, and, according to one source, an unwilling military conscript."[190]

In order to understand Villa's engagements with foreign affairs, aside from the physical proximity with the U.S. border, three aspects of Villa's personal life can be studied, which include his ability to read and write; his discomfort with an unjust social system; and his refusal to conform to the machismo of *Porfirian* Mexico. These three aspects influenced his cordial attitudes toward the U.S., since, well before the Wilson administration gave its formal recognition to Carranza as the head of the state in Mexico in 1916, Villa trusted and welcomed American advice and interaction. This sentiment

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[188] Braddy 3.

[189] Braddy 3.

[190] Jim Tuck, *Pancho Villa and John Reed: Two Faces of Romantic Revolution* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984) 26.

was obvious in his continuous correspondence with Zapata. In 1914 letter, he told Zapata: "[T]his North Division under my leadership can no longer tolerate the antipatriotic conduct of Venustiano Carranza who has in his plans to disunite us, plan the ruin of the country and inspire distrust for the foreigner."[191]

We begin by noting Villa's experience along the border, as one cannot disregard the fact that Villa "networked" in northern parts of Mexico, often trudging along the U.S.-Mexican border, where U.S. and Mexican interaction was at its most concentrated. This fact alone can explain why Villa became engaged with foreign affairs, especially during the Wilson administration.

Recall that, as Rachel St. John is quick to point out, before Wilson gave his acknowledgment of Carranza as the president, "a diverse range of American interests, ranging from liberals and radicals to big business and the Wilson administration, favored Villa as the future president and potential savior of Mexico. Access to American markets and the friendship of American investors contributed significantly to Villa's rise to power."[192]

Proximity certainly helped Villa achieve a certain kind of global perspective and American acceptance; however, the three aspects of Villa's personal life enumerated above worked as stimuli that allowed him to take advantage of his location and relationship with the U.S.

Villa's literacy helped him achieve a heightened awareness of the importance of literacy's relevance in a world increasingly becoming connected by the power of the

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[191] *Documentos Históricos*, 1: 353. "No pudiendo ya esta División del Norte que es mi mando tolerar por más tiempo la conducta antipatriótica de Venustiano Carranza que tiende por todos conceptos a desunirnos, a sembrar la ruina en el país y a inspirar la desconfianza en el extranjero."

[192] St. John 211.

written word. The evolution of history, the continuation of traditions and cultures, and even revolutions themselves by and large depend, aside from oral history, on the written word. The written word has the power to accurately express and record feeling and thought. Historically, driven societies seek change and without written expression, action becomes impossible.

The power of the written word was everywhere perceived in Mexico, especially in the north. It was seen as an outlet for anger, discontent, and rage, the instrument used to wage wars, verbalize political messages, and compose constitutions and national declarations. In the context of Villa's northern location, the written word irrevocably became even more important and ubiquitous, because the U.S., a modern and industrialized country, used the written word for virtually every political and social endeavor. Dissemination of the written word turned into a social activity in which the U.S. wanted to engage on a global scale, an example of globalization in action. Whether this is to say that the U.S. wanted to spread literacy as one means of spreading its self-centered policies rests entirely on the reader, however.

Along the border, the written word became a staple of society, a principal ingredient in a society that relied on expression, and Americans used the written word to promote the growth and maturity of American society.

Without the written word, intended actions became mute, weak, and futile. The twentieth-century, multilingual Russian novelist, Vladimir Nabokov, once said about the joys and fears of a blank and unwritten page: "The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to

become visible."[193] This Western outlook took hold of Mexicans during the early twentieth century, a paradigm that actually began to crystallize and found acceptance in Mexico well before the Revolution, harkening back to its founding days.

Few sources willingly admit that Villa was literate and possessed decent Spanish reading and writing skills. This position makes sense because to acknowledge a reasonably literate Villa would upset the compartmentalized depiction of Villa as a mythic, illiterate hero. In order to reach and sustain mythic status, the Villa narrative had to depict a national hero, an illiterate individual who did not know how to read, much less write, and whose sole concern was the attainment of justice through whatever means necessary. At the same time, it is important to understand that Villa's ability to read and write not be overstated. He was not a part of the Mexican literati and was not even an educated person.

In spite of Villa's educational shortcomings, and for reasons unknown, he remained open to the idea of education and to the power of the written word. According to Tuck, "he was a diligent worker at a number of 'square' jobs, a teetotaler and nonsmoker, and his affinity for education amounted to obsession. ('Let's put a school here,' was his most frequent directive when he was civil governor of Chihuahua.)."[194] Education appeared to be the only human right upon which Carranza and Villa both agreed.

Villa became a proud proponent of reading and writing during his political movement, and at various times, he publicly stated his support for learning. It must be

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[193] Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers, with introduction by John Updike (Orlando, FL: Mariner Books, 2002) 379.

[194] Tuck 26.

reiterated here that certain historians and chroniclers of Villa's life tend to downplay this aspect of his life, since it does not complete or support the narrative of Villa's myth but even so, the bottom line seems clear: "During his confinement he wrote letters which were corrected and recopied by the court clerk….There are also evidences of his writing in 1910, the year he joined the Revolution."[195] Yet, as Tuck continues to observe, "foreign admirers were enchanted by the spectacle of an *analfabeto* ex-bandit learning to read and write…it is likely that [he] was at least marginally literate as far back as his teens."[196]

Villa's ability to read and write motivated him to become engaged with foreign policy. These skills, especially when viewed in the context of his meager beginnings in Chihuahua, stand as two titanic achievements. A weak, almost non-existent educational system in Mexico during the early twentieth century made it very difficult for most people to learn to read and write, but in order for Villa to swim in the sea with big sharks, he needed to attain the skills and once having mastered these, he empowered himself to enter the political arena with, if nothing else, more confidence.

Villa's sense of confidence enabled him to participate in activity regarding U.S.-Mexico negotiations that would be crucial to the spread of *Villismo*, for instance becoming involved with the American media, which actually helped put funds into Villa's pocket in exchange for stories, interviews, and even a movie deal. In fact, these negotiations provided *Villismo* with a foundation that allowed it to widen its sphere of influence. Therefore, it can be said that the forces of globalization not only helped Villa

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[195] Tuck 27.

[196] Tuck 27.

broadcast *Villismo* on a grand scale, but his ability to read and write became also of great service.

Another crucial aspect of Villa's personal life was his loathing of the existing social system, which, he thought, was flawed and detrimental to development. This Mexican social system in the early twentieth century impacted Villa's life in various and significant ways. For instance, he felt that the social system in Mexico forced him to abandon honorable professions throughout his life. This displacement left Villa wandering aimlessly, feeling lost and inconsequential in society and, in time, this sense of displacement led him to banditry. The social system forced Villa and many others to turn to less respectful, less honest means of earning a living.[197]

Banditry or other illegal professions were practiced by those who found themselves most severely impacted by the social system, and for Villa in his early days, banditry became a means of earning a living without having to face the malevolent representatives and linchpins of this oppressive social system.[198]

A final connection of Villa with foreign affairs was his opposition to machismo. It seems counterintuitive to think that Villa, the Mexican revolutionary and tiger of the

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[197] Villa previously held various respectable jobs but due to a variety of pressures and situations, he was forced out of them. "Through the haze of legend, contradiction, and unconfirmed reports, there emerges a discernable behavior pattern. It is one of Villa seeking the path of honest work but, for one reason or another, repeatedly having to revert to banditry. In Tejame he starts a tanning business but has to flee from pursuing police. In San Juan del Río he makes a promising start as a butcher, selling twenty-five head of cattle to his old employer Pablo Valenzuela. Then, riding through the field of a local newspaper, he is ordered off the property and savagely threatened by one of the rancher's hands. The dispute leads to drawn pistols and Villa has to flee after killing his assailant. In Parral he performs so competently as a mason that his employer, Señor Santos Vega, sets him up in his own business. But police come around and start asking Santos Vega questions. The master mason tips off Villa and—again!—that familiar trip to the sierra. He goes to work in a Santa Eulalia mine, but the work is so hard and low-paid that he again rides off into the bush." Tuck 28-29.

[198] Villa, however, was not proud of his history as a bandit. Tuck reminds us: "Throughout the *Memorias* [a published collection of some of Villa's writing in memoir form], Villa consistently played down the bandit part of his career." Tuck 27.

North, opposed machismo. Tuck, perhaps the sole student and writer of Mexican history who entertains the possibility, believes that Villa changed his thinking pattern after learning that one of his two sisters had been sexually harassed repeatedly. Tuck makes a judicious and fair comparison when he writes: "In the rough, semi-feudal, male-dominated world of Porfirian Mexico, daughters and sisters of peons were as fair game as black slave girls in the antebellum South."[199]

Villa became severely impatient with individuals who posed danger to his family in any way, and his obvious opposition to machismo and sexual harassment reached a pinnacle when Villa himself administered a beating to his sister's attacker, López Negrete. Although the point may have been overstated, the fact remains that Villa did, indeed, at the very least reject "mindless machismo."[200]

The implications behind this attitude of Villa leads to a discussion of globalization in its most powerful form, that is, the global spread of ideas, and even though there is a shortage of available evidence to make a cohesive argument, the proposition can be put forth that American ideals of men and masculinity influenced Villa, if not directly, then at least indirectly. We bring to light this aspect of Villa, because the point must be made that elements beyond his control, such as globalization and cultural imperialism, affected his mentality and, by extension, *Villismo*.

Villa's *Villismo* differentiates itself from other political programs in the sense that it tried to walk the thin line between national politics and foreign policy. The precisely defined space between the two was often stepped over, ignored, or not seen at all by various revolutionaries and representatives of the Revolution, and perhaps that was the

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[199] Tuck 26.

[200] Tuck 26.

problem in the first place, because the divide came to be seen as a simple gap. It was not seen as a primordial connection between two very important and central organs in the body system.

Members of society rarely intoned matters of national politics and foreign policy as a dual theme, especially to the level articulated by Carranza. Very few seemed to have been interested in concentrating his time or strength on either one of these elements, much less in both at the same time, because, after all, what purpose would be served? The focus was constantly and always the attainment of order via disorder, that which was the ultimate passion of the Revolution, so that *Villismo* and its desire to engage in foreign politics became a critical digression from the norm.

Among the minor rebellions that led up to Carranza's appointment to the presidency in 1917, the one orchestrated by Villa and his supporters in the north stood out as the most enthusiastic, having been interrelated directly and overtly with American imperialism and globalization. It was enthusiastic because of its multidimensional program, as *Villismo* took on problems with a semi-realistic, semi-idealistic attitude.

On the one hand, *Villismo* included a concrete or realistic plan to establish a relationship with the U.S., Mexico's northern neighbor. Given their geographical location, *Villismo* and its leaders obviously became susceptible to encounters and interaction with the Americans. This condition appeared obvious since *Villismo* had originated and matured in an environment where interaction with a powerful foreign country, the U.S., became a daily reality.

Proximity to and interaction with the U.S. forced *Villismo* to take on an international perspective, and in this northern environment, Villa experienced the

changing face of foreign policy as encountered by very few. In his 1968 dissertation, Eugene Harold Holcombe emphasis this point: "Carranza had…proven very proud and stubborn in his relations with the United States, and Wilson must have been influenced by the fact that 'Villa would apparently welcome American guidance in the political and economic reconstruction of Mexico and…Carranza obviously would not.'"[201] And that was precisely one of the crucial differences between Carranza and Villa.

Akin to the state of affairs that would exist in the twenty-first century, the inhabitants of this northern Mexican territory had learned to identify and respect the indivisible border that separated Mexico from its Yankee neighbor. St. John begins her 2005 dissertation on the topic of border politics in the following way:

> The marking and meaning of the boundary line between the United States and Mexico has been constant during its century and a half history. What began as a "sterile waste, utterly worthless for any purpose than to constitute a barrier or natural line of demarcation between two neighboring nations" gradually became a productive and frequently traveled terrain of trans-national exchange and interaction. The once open landscape became an increasingly complex space in which government agents, regulations, and physical barriers channeled and restricted trans-border movement. Space and movement created the context in which participants in a vibrant trans-border economy and society came to think of themselves as Mexicans and Americans. This is a history of that spatial transformation and what it reveals about the priorities and power of the United States, Mexico, and the people who lived along their western boundary line.[202]

Over the long term, border politics has been a vibrant topic and continues to be studied by social scientists of varied persuasions, because of its focus on one zone, typically encompassing two countries, but sometimes three or four.

The theme of border politics, however, does not concern itself exclusively with physical attributes such as checkpoints and members of border control. Much more takes

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[201] Harold Eugene Holcombe, "United States Arms Control and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1924," PhD diss. (University of Alabama, 1968) 95.

[202] St. John 1.

place in these areas of crossing, in these areas of in-between—take the Great Wall of China, for instance, or the Berlin Wall, or the Spain-Portugal border, or the Italy-Switzerland border. Although irrelevant to the discussion, these historical borders have been the cause of much debate and analysis as in the case of the U.S. and Mexico, wherein border politics during the early twentieth century engendered a contradictory and ironic character, one characterized by both disharmony and cooperation.

The border, running roughly two-thousand miles, stood at the time as the longest international border that divided a First World country from a Third World nation, and the history behind this enormous division has been, for Mexico, both optimistic and pessimistic. On the one hand, Mexico has engaged closely with the politics of the U.S., helping Mexican policymakers to remain on good terms with the neighbors to the north. On the other hand, Mexico has dealt with substantial manipulation and exploitation by the U.S. on various levels.

In light of the previous *Porfiriato*, border politics in Mexico were laced through with interactions defined by capitalist forces, and if the introduction, interaction, and effects of globalization and imperialism can be accurately detailed, events in northern Mexico during the early twentieth century would demonstrate these points. Indeed, Villa's southern community, Chihuahua in particular, demonstrated that in some ways globalization can sometimes equal or closely resemble imperialism.

This argument can be substantiated by the observation that, as in the case of Villa's army of the north, Villa began to adopt Western tactics and perhaps even Western ideologies in order to promote his political design. The relationship was a mutual one. To understand this in other terms, the late literary theorist, Edward Said, commented

indirectly on the equalization of globalization and imperialism: "A visitor from another world would surely be perplexed were he to overhear a so-called critic calling the new critics dangerous. What, this visitor, would ask, are they dangers to? The state? The mind? Authority?"[203]

Besides offering numerous implications within literary theory, Said's passage also says one important thing about imperialism and globalization. It conveys the message that when imperialist activity, especially economic and social imperialist activity, from an outside nation takes place in a subordinate country, the subordinate country eventually begins to change its modes of thought, so that in time it develops the ability to retaliate, speak back, and become dangerous. It can become dangerous to the state, to the mind, and to the authority. It can become dangerous not only to the outside nation but also to its own nation, to its own self.[204]

A changing paradigm such as this one occurs, more often than not, when imperialism and globalization balance each other; when they reach a kind of symmetry or equilibrium that often runs the risk of going undetected.

The historical trajectory of Villa's life exemplifies the argument that imperialism and globalization resulted in the same effect, produced similar applications, and were thus close to being equivalents. Gigantic and apocalyptic, globalization must be moderated and placed into more understandable, time-specific terms. In the context of Villa, globalization took the form of communications, such as the dissemination of

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[203] Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983) 160.

[204] Of course, by the use of the adjective "dangerous," the intent is not to have this term connote solely negative aspects. On the contrary, the adjective "dangerous" is used to connote both negative and positive aspects.

newspapers, telegrams, radio, and any other ways in which communication was made possible.[205]

Villa's narrative fits neatly in the history of globalization, because he did not resist it but instead used it to his benefit. Globalization created Villa and helped him and his political program reach levels of foreign interaction that no one else got to enjoy or, contrastingly, suffer from. Imperialism aligned itself with globalization in the way that it functioned along the U.S.-Mexican border, taking the form of alternating arms buildup and arms control, for example. The U.S. exercised tremendous leverage as it could determine whether it would supply the number of weapons it provided to Mexico's armies abundantly or instead curtail them significantly.

For *Villismo*, the northern location provided countless military benefits as Villa's Chihuahua community encountered new acts or forms of globalization and imperialism before the rest of the country. Villa's location was at once advantageous and unfavorable.

Whereas similarities did exist between the manifestations of globalization and imperialism in Mexico, the two did not always dance in synchrony. Synchronism lasted for a time but when relationships of power became burdensome and problematic, new emotions created new impetuses, and these, then, created new directions. For example, recognition of Carranza as president, which was an act of imperialism on the part of the

[205] Determining the roles of imperialism and globalization in Zapata's southern territory is a bit tricky. A tentative hypothesis would be to suggest that, in the case of Zapata, imperialism did not necessarily equal globalization. These two forces did have various effects on Zapata's community; however, they manifested themselves in dissimilar and distinguishable ways. Before going into detail, first one has to consider a few observations. Zapata was politically independent during the greater part of the Revolution; whereas, Villa was not politically independent. This difference has a great impact in the way one can differentiate and understand imperialism and globalism in the context of northern Mexico. Recall that Zapata's fight in the Revolution was against globalization—Zapata did not want his community to be forced to conform to capitalist paradigms and lifestyles. Imperialism, as distinct from globalization, manifested itself in Zapata's community in the way that land had been unjustly distributed to *haciendas*, which were imperialist kingdoms. The proximity of Villa's community to the U.S., on the other hand, helped blur the line between globalization and imperialism.

U.S., helped accelerate Villa's dissatisfaction with the American government. When the scales were tipped by the Wilson administration, Villa slanted his agenda.

When the U.S. recognized Carranza as president of Mexico, Villa retaliated by carrying out a raid on the town of Columbus, New Mexico. Imperialism and globalization go together in harmony as long as internal factors, such as relationships of power, do not cause a stir.

Analyzing Villa and the trajectory of *Villismo* is no different from analyzing U.S.-Mexican border politics and acceptance of this observation eases the understanding of Villa's philosophies. Border politics during Villa's journey in the Revolution can be characterized in a few words: intense, zestful, rigorous, and in many ways devious. Engaging in border politics for Villa turned out to be one of the most beneficial and lucrative activities in which he involved himself.

In contrast to the example of Villa, there is no evidence that Zapata specifically or deliberately exploited the Revolution in order to get his own political messages across. In those times when he can be seen to have taken unfair advantage of the Revolution for his personal motives, he must be excused, since it had taken control of the whole of politics, rhetoric, and propaganda, so Zapata lacked control over it and the cyclone of the Revolution, with all the media glamour, violence, and scandal, simply swept him away.

On the other hand, with Villa and *Villismo*, plenty of exploitation occurred. He, for one, exploited border politics, in general, and the mass media, in particular. Specifically, the American media helped Villa launch his opinions on foreign policy and the Revolution with ferocious speed. The story of Villa was one of a media campaign. He

and his generals proved to be great campaigners and more than anything else, Villa used the American media in order to penetrate the minds of Mexicans and Americans alike.

"Villa's primary foreign policy goal," argues Mark Cronlund Anderson in *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines*, "consisted of nurturing cordial relations with the United States in an effort to gain American support and, ultimately, United States diplomatic recognition."[206] In addition, in an attempt to sidetrack negative Mexican criticism for having a seemingly pro-American attitude, "Villa also promoted himself in American and Mexican media as a Mexican nationalist. To accomplish these aims, Villa and his lieutenants implemented a comprehensive and nuanced propaganda effort to promote Villa's image in positive ways both in the United States and Mexico."[207]

Overall, Villa's experience in the Revolution became one of rapid movement, always appearing to incite public outrage in one way or another. While causing all this indignation, he turned against the individual who posed the greatest threat to him—not Zapata, but Carranza. Once having done this, he began a feud that would last nearly the entire duration of the Revolution. He was a man who, unlike Zapata, constantly flip-flopped politically: He sided with the U.S. at first, and then opposed it; he sided with Carranza initially, and then opposed him. He was clearly a whimsical character who acted purely out of impulse, emotion, and, to a certain extent, convenience.

After he felt betrayed by the U.S. for its support of Carranza, he reacted with violence, jeopardized social stability in Mexico, and risked sparking a war with the U.S. He ultimately marked his decline when de decided to attack Columbus, and shortly

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[206] Mark Cronlund Anderson, *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000) 3.

[207] Anderson, Cronlund 3.

thereafter, the terrain became clear for Carranza to ascend in power as the next great leader Mexico ever produced.

The Zapata-Villa Effect

By mid-1916, an air of serenity finally began to settle. This feeling of tranquility could not be witnessed or proven in the number of deaths and injuries or in the mounting problems with the international community or in any serendipitous event that would finally mark the end of the Revolution. This sense of peace, while hard to explain, could only be made clear in the way relationships of power stood at the time—that is, in a relative state of transparency.

During this time, rivalry among factions became clearer than ever before. On the ground, rumors dulled in intensity, political hearsay reached its limits, and for the most part, everyone knew who opposed whom and to what extent.[208] Paradoxically, although aggression and belligerence continued and burgeoned, the clarity of knowing who stood on whose side granted top Mexican leaders with an opportunity to seize this favorable moment. Finally, indeterminacy had been mitigated.

Against the familiar backdrop of violence and economic decline, political relationships began to appear understandable. Zapata remained closeted in his southern community and openly opposed Carranza as well as virtually anything having to deal with the push for constitutional order, since he believed nothing productive would come as a result of such a move. Villa, after having been persecuted by the American government for his attack on Columbus, remained hidden but also explicitly countered

[208] Benbow agrees. He notes that "the Mexican Revolution itself had changed by 1916. In the earlier period, 1913-1915, it was marked by the existence of numerous factions, each making a plausible claim on national leadership." Benbow 31.

Carranza, seeing him as a traitor and as a threat to the country, though ostensibly out of jealousy. Finally, Carranza, after having received opposition from practically every direction possible, continued to follow his insight and prepared to incite massive changes.

In terms of their philosophies, they always remained at variance. Villa welcomed foreign interaction and guidance with open arms and was willing to allow the U.S. to help directly in the reconstruction of the Mexican political order.[209] Zapata, on the other hand, admitted no one into his political program, not Carranza, not the U.S., not anybody; his program, in essence, became self-destructive in the long-run. Carranza, unlike the extreme cases presented by Villa and Zapata, strode somewhere in the middle. He knew that in order for a rejuvenation of the political order to occur, the U.S. had to be factored into the equation; however, he kept the U.S. largely at bay and throughout remained doubtful of this next-door imperial neighbor. Unsurprisingly, these differing philosophies mirrored the ebb and flow of the relationships Carranza maintained with Zapata and Villa.

As we have seen in this chapter, during the time that transpired between mid-1913 to mid-1916, Carranza's relationships with Zapata and Villa worsened, since Zapata and Villa, as part of a group effort, attempted to winnow out Carranza from their political activities with great success. Zapata and Villa triumphed at placing Carranza in a questionable category of his own. Politically, they cornered Carranza, hoping that without a major and popular agrarian on his side, not many would dare to invest their faith in this man. Thus, we have the Zapata-Villa effect in action.

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[209] At least up to the point when the Wilson administration recognized Carranza as the official leader of the state.

However, Zapata and Villa underestimated Carranza. They failed to recognize the value of Carranza's philosophy and the urgency with which Mexicans needed to embrace Carranza's trademark of constitutionality. In the three crucial years that this chapter covers, Carranza underwent a great deal of changes, both personally and politically. For example, his relationships with Zapata and Villa afforded him with two important and unique perspectives of the Revolution.

These outlooks, albeit contrasting ones, not only challenged Carranza to rethink his program, but also compelled him to consider that Mexico represented a diverse landscape of cultures and economies. To show this broadened perspectives, Carranza undertook a project, the making of the Constitution of 1917, which required him to pool an assortment of political minds and activists, of varied socio-economic statuses, from all over Mexico in order to direct, and not sabotage, the voice and will of the people.

This realization brought upon exigencies that, unlike uninviting relationships, he simply could not overturn, much less dismiss. These exigencies brought to bear a nation that waited for a revival of a nationalistic sentiment fueled by social and political directives, ones that could be put into place only, but only, if a robust constitutional foundation existed. And that is precisely what Mexico lacked—a muscular constitutional institution. Reforms of any kind could only be entertained, but not fully, legally, and comprehensively implemented.

For that reason, to demand land reform was to demand constitutionality. Here we have an argument that few, if any, understood during the Revolution. Certainly Zapata and Villa failed to grasp the notion that in order for land reform to situate itself atop a legal and thus legitimate basis, constitutional order needed to be achieved, and only

Carranza seemed to entirely understand this line of reasoning. Without a constitutional institution, one that included a strong and inclusive constitution, law and dictates represented nothing more than scattered utterances.

Carranza became the only vocal proponent of constitutionality. As we followed him during the first phase of the Revolution in Chapter 1 and then into the second one in the present chapter, his rhetoric changed slightly, as it accommodated itself to new situations. Perhaps nothing and no one challenged Carranza with such potency as did Zapata and Villa. They challenged, subverted, defied, and put into question his position in power as well as his beliefs.

Carranza used the guiding principle of land reform to the extent that it would help him assuage heated and dangerous situations. During his first developmental phase, from 1910 to mid-1913, Carranza also used the powerful rhetoric of land politics in order to persuade and introduce himself to Mexicans; for there was hardly any other way to do so. He penetrated their minds by utilizing the kind of speech that appealed most to them. Advocating land programs in later years,[210] which were begun by his Agrarian Council, became the only way Carranza enabled himself to infiltrate the minds of Mexicans. And it turned out to be a complete success.

To be sure, it was not deception. From a birds-eye view, it would seem as though Carranza launched a misleading, deceptive rhetorical campaign. However, upon deeper inspection, it becomes clear that, whether directly or indirectly, he at all times remained conscious of the importance of focusing on land reform. The fight for land—against both local and foreign enemies—was the Revolution's moral truth, for it concretized the

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[210] The Council represented an enormous step in returning huge portions of lands to their owners; however, the efforts advanced by the Council have been criticized for proceeding at a slow pace.

abstraction of a people's love for land. But again, campaigning for constitutionality was, in essence, equivalent to supporting land reform at the national level.

After mid-1913, when he became the *Primer Jefe* of the Constitutionalist Army, Carranza realized the power that his title carried. Whereas during the first phase of the Revolution he used land reform as a part of his political rhetoric, during the second phase of the Revolution pressure from relationships of power, most notably from Zapata and Villa, altered his program, both in theory and in practice. After cementing his name in the national political memory as an agent of the Revolution, his rhetoric became less suggestive of an ardent desire for land reform; however, and to reiterate, this is not to say that his concern for it diminished. During the second phase of his developmental stage, his call for land reform lessened in intensity, a sure sign that bifurcated relationships influenced his political bloc as well as the kinds of aspects it diffused publicly.

However, one feature never changed. And that was his never-changing thrust toward constitutionality. This characteristic gave energy to his struggle and gave vitality to his efforts to convince all those in disbelief, all those in defiance of him, and all those who were dogged continuously by peripheral issues.

To show how this feature persisted through the years, we may hearken back to late 1913. On September 24, 1913, three years before he would embark on a scandal-ridden journey with Zapata and Villa, Carranza addressed the Mexican citizenry with a historic speech. He told them:

> Once the armed struggle called for by the Program of Guadalupe is completed, México will have to embark upon the formidable and majestic task of the social struggle—the class struggle, whether we ourselves like it or not—and oppose the forces who oppose it. New social ideas will have to gain the respect of our masses….The country has been living in illusion, starved and luckless, with a handful of laws that are of no help to it; we have to plough it all up, drain it and

then truly construct.[211]

He was right. Mexico did, in fact, "embark upon the formidable and majestic task of the social struggle" and "oppose[d] the forces who oppose[d] it" in a rather violent fashion, needless to say. He was also right in supposing that the country had but "a handful of laws that [were] of no help to it."

In the summer of 1916, Carranza still believed that "new social ideas [needed] to gain the respect of our masses," if the country wanted to stand solidly on a legal basis that would ensure a lawful configuration of law and order. Without this foundation, the principles and aspirations of the Revolution, as incarnated by the people, became nothing more than lies and empty desires. Soon, in a didactic approach, Carranza would show how goals without plans are nothing more than deceptive reveries or, as he would call them, "illusion[s]."

In the final months that engrossed the year 1916, Carranza took charge and managed to reorient the future of the Revolution in extraordinary ways. As the next chapter will show, Carranza did not abandon concerns for land reform, since he wanted first to establish a constitutional platform that would allow land reform to gain a firm foothold. Like a relentless crusader, he was ready "to plough it all up, drain it, and then truly construct." It is to this vigorous transformation that we now turn our attention.

[211] Quoted in Krauze 343.

Chapter IV

Revolución sin sangre:

Real Revolution and Change through the Written Word[212]

> As time passed, all of Don Jesús's children would learn the history of Benito Juárez, that austere Zapotec in a black Prince Albert coat who carried the *patria* like a tabernacle in his carriage. But one of the children in particular enshrined the example of Juárez within his memory….Many who knew him commented on Carranza's particular interest in history and its lessons….His golden age was the period of Reform; his most beloved figure, Benito Juárez….He wanted to be another Juárez, to command like Don Porfirio, and to avoid the errors of Madero….No one in Mexican history lived the transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as fully as Carranza. He was a man who was a bridge. Like the Liberals of Reform, Madero had desired the pure empire of *the law*. Before and after Madero, militarism had meant and would mean an almost pure empire of *the act*. Carranza lived the tension between acts and laws: old and new acts, old and new laws.
>
> —Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Mexico*[213]

In September of 1916, the state of affairs in Mexico once again changed the compass of the Revolution. Mexicans, alongside Carranza, entered a new phase in the Revolution. The previous period of crisis had ended, and history ushered in the next phase, the culminating stage, a time of action. As a catalyst, Carranza accelerated the coming of this next stage, since he gave an impressive impetus to exact change in the republic. During this stage of the Revolution, from mid-1916 to mid-1917, we will

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[212] "Revolución sin sangre" in the chapter title translates to "bloodless revolution."

[213] Krauze 335, 339, 341.

observe how Carranza reached the height of political power and the pinnacle of personal success.

During this time, Carranza derived benefit from total control of the relationships of power that had previously antagonized his administration. On the one hand, Zapata remained an insubstantial force and failed to prove to the nation that he possessed the willingness and fortitude to take his project to the next level. Zapata, thus, remained on the fringes of the Revolution, especially during this phase of the Revolution, when everyone took as common knowledge that he and Carranza had long ago been declared enemies.

In addition to Zapata, we have Villa, about whom Carranza had not the slightest reason to feel apprehensive, because Villa had rapidly induced his own fall, since after Villa's attack on American soil, the unsuccessful Punitive Expedition that ensued for well over a year forced him into hiding. In order to avoid detainment and possibly even death by American forces, Villa left the spotlight of national attention for good. Overall, in these two ways, with Zapata's self-alienating program and Villa's self-destructive behavior, the prospects for Carranza became all the more optimistic, limitless, and momentous. A new door had swung wide open.

Carranza finally brought all of his concerns and aspirations to the forefront of Mexican politics. His insatiable desire to erect a truly sovereign state became his signature conviction, one that stood behind in defense of his actions during this one-year period, the culminating stage. This thesis refers to it as the culminating stage, not because it signaled the end of an era or the end of the Revolution, but instead because this one-

year period marshaled in the highest point of activity—not physical but politically intellectual activity—during the Revolution.

In mid-1916, the political landscape gave Carranza the upper hand, since two of his most powerful opponents found themselves bound by forces beyond anyone's control, and, therefore, the social *zeitgeist* allowed him to influence the thought process of the nation. In this way, Carranza can be credited for inciting a new national mentality and sparking a national conversation about innovative possibilities. History handed Carranza and the Constitutionalists a golden opportunity, and as will become clear, this favorable condition did not go to waste.

Carranza's inexhaustible fight for constitutionality finally found itself on the verge of triumph, and a turning point in history would rapidly turn the tide of the conflict. "In September of 1916," Krauze tells us, "Carranza sounded the political clarion call for that decade and many more to come. He convoked (as he had said he would in Hermosillo) a Constitutional Convention (*Congresso Constituyente*) to be held at Querétaro in the Bajio north of Mexico City."[214]

From the beginning, Carranza always expressed a deep penchant for law, order, constitutionality, and Juárez's Laws of the Reform. Certain aspects of his political rhetoric shifted from time to time and remained always in constant flux in order to meet the demands of the time; however, constitutionality became the one aspect that he truly never abandoned, not in thought and now not in action.

Ultimately, constitutionality became the cornerstone of his political faith, an ideology that would carve out the future of the country. Loyalty to this political code helped Carranza escort Mexico to a twenty-first century existence, and very few

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[214] Krauze 357.

understood the need for constitutionality and continuity as Carranza. No one quite captures the fundamental nature of his philosophy as Enrique Krauze, one of Mexico's foremost living historians. With a critical eye for interpretation, Krauze relates: His "concern was legitimacy and continuity, just as the Constitution of 1857 had maintained a continuity with the federal Constitution of 1824. He expected that he…would develop the charter for a strong and balanced state, with a much stronger and more efficient power (but one that would not yield dictatorial temptation)."[215]

When Carranza called for the Constitutionalist Convention, he crossed the finely demarcated line between thought and action. He no longer aspired, but actively sought to realize his aims, and one of these included the revamping of a constitution. A return to yesteryear's accomplishments found its way into Carranza's decision-making, of course, as he used Mexican historical examples or precursors to move forward, a mark of a fine student of history.

We once again revert back to the discussion about the power of the written word—a recurring theme in this thesis—and its ability to change the course of history. In Mexico, nothing moved forward without the use of written words. The previous fully fledged Mexican constitutions (all three of them), Madero's *Plan of San Luis Potosí*, Zapata's *Plan of Ayala*, and Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe* all stand as testaments. For Carranza and, indeed, for all Mexicans, the written word came to be viewed as the motivating source of society.

In realizing the potentialities of a constitution, Carranza called for a Constitutional Convention, for which he had for its review a draft of a newly designed constitution. He and a group of his closest comrades worked in secrecy and diligently on the drafting of a

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[215] Krauze 357.

constitution for several months. These were months of effortful writing and rewriting by the Constitutionalists, but cause and purpose kept them going. At the completion of a draft, Carranza welcomed debate and discussion, since to Carranza the constitution would be the result of a group effort and not the result of some partisan attempt at political manipulation. Here we can see Carranza's true colors shining through with vivid and comforting lucidity.

This chapter focuses on two important aspects of Carranza's development as leader of the Revolution during this formative year of the conflict. First, this chapter delves into the Convention orchestrated by Carranza and takes into consideration such aspects as the draft proposal by Carranza, the selection process of delegates, and the actual proceedings and major debates that took place at these meetings. The purpose behind having this discussion concerns understanding and scrutinizing Carranza while in action. The Convention became his first attempt at such a grand scale to move forward with a national project aimed at transforming the social and political basis of the country—by writing revolutionary ideas into fundamental law, the great Mexican experiment in Mexican modern history.

After devoting analysis to the Constitutional Convention, this chapter goes on to investigate and question the Constitution of 1917, which constitutes our second subject of study. In early 1917, when the Constitutional Convention concluded its legal proceedings and a new and updated constitution had emerged, Mexicans woke up to a new day in Mexican history, a new era in Mexican leadership, law, and order. As Carranza organized and placed an elected body of delegates, the result of several months of formulating the constitution came to be seen as a blessing from the heavens. After thirty-plus years of

oppressive dictatorship, Mexico embraced and delighted in the changes that, once fully implemented, the constitution would inspire.

By carefully following the eventful year between mid-1916 to mid-1917, one can come to understand Carranza and the cadence of his politics more fully. During this time, this leader, the *Primer Jefe*, acted as never before, as he took decisions without the consent or acknowledgment of those who either stood on his side or were openly against him. Armed with a motivation to prevent the country from falling into the abyss of another dictatorship with its eyes closed—for, indeed, dictatorships had become somewhat of a tradition—Carranza planned to follow a democratic path to solve the nation's most pressing problems.

On September 15, 1916, in a *New York Times* article, an unknown writer agreed with Carranza's design. He or she observed the following: "The First Chief always intended to carry out this program, and to that end adopted various measures to provide government of and for the people, to improve the economic situation on the working classes and to insure a correct application of republican principles as embodied in the Constitution."[216]

Towards the end of the article, the unidentified journalist got to the heart of the matter: "The enemies of the Constitutionalists…have imputed to him motives which he never entertained. Accordingly he determined to forestall attacks by a frank and sincere declaration that the reforms projected are not intended to lead to the establishment of a dictatorship."[217] But instead: "the Government to be established will be of such form as

[216] "Carranza Defends Decree: Denies Constitutional Convention Is to Promote Dictatorship." *New York Times* (September 16, 1915) par. 3.

[217] "Carranza Defends" par. 4.

to demonstrate categorically that sovereignty resides within the people, by whom it should be exercised for the public benefit."[218]

It may be argued that the true Revolution took place between the months of October 1916 and February 1917. During this crucial period of the conflict, blood was not spattered on the walls of the Iturbide Theater, the meeting place for the convention.[219] Instead, waves of ideas, opinions, arguments, as well as instances of agony, frustration, and victory splashed against each other in tempestuous moments of rage and sentimentality. A bloodless Revolution, indeed, and all this madness transpired until, finally, in February 1917, Carranza, standing victorious as never before, held in his hands the answer Mexicans had been waiting for an unspeakable amount of years.

This chapter, ultimately, argues that Carranza realized all of his goals during this phase of the Revolution and that he realized them by exercising, whenever possible, a willingness to compromise, by upholding democratic values, and by remaining open-minded. Above all, he realized them due to his love, devotion, and respect toward constitutional democracy, a clear reflection of eighteenth-century ideals of the Enlightenment movement in Europe. In effect, he highlighted the need for a system of constitutionality or, in other words, for a system of government that would allow the incorporation of different viewpoints and concerns, a truly inclusive project. He wanted to link the empty space between law and order, between law and action, and between law and the citizenry.

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[218] "Carranza Defends" par. 4.

[219] All of the legal proceedings during the Constitutional Convention took place in this theater, which is located in Querétaro. It has since been renamed to Theater of the Republic.

The first part of this chapter emphasizes the arrangements and selection process of the Convention under the direction of Carranza. E. V. Niemeyer's *Revolution at Querétaro: The Mexican Constitutional Convention of 1916-1917* continues to be the most complete study of the convention, and, therefore, this chapter will use his analysis and build upon it in order to understand Carranza as a leader in action. The second part of this chapter calls attention to the Constitution of 1917 and interprets it as both a social doctrine and a political constitution. The purpose behind this part of the chapter is to compare the two latest constitutions in Mexico, the Constitution of 1917 and the Constitution of 1857. Exegetical analyses, in the form of comparisons, over these two constitutions will yield information concerning the path on which Carranza placed Mexico in 1917. This chapter stresses what this thesis has been arguing all along: that Carranza stood behind the idea of constitutionality and believed so fiercely in it that he changed the fundamental character of Mexican law and society using the operating program of this ideology of constitutionality.

A Rendezvous with Constitutionality

A breakthrough in the Revolution occurred on June 12, 1916, when Carranza called for elections at the municipal level, after which time the next obvious step would be to call upon elections at the level of Congress.[220] At first, this seemingly simple step caused little to move in the direction of constitutionality; but, as Carranza kept moving forward, taking new and successive steps, every step, however small, became essential in the transformation of the country.

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[220] E. V. Niemeyer, *Revolution at Querétaro: The Mexican Constitutional Convention of 1916-1917* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974) 26.

Now that Carranza no longer saw Zapata and Villa as major threats, the road to constitutionality would be less bloody, or otherwise less dramatic. It would certainly be a complicated road upon which to tread, but the human cost would decrease considerably, and it did. So shortly after his call for municipal elections, elections at the level of Congress became the next step, a step that needed to be pursued if Carranza wanted to pave a way to constitutionality for Mexico. As a great tactician, Carranza became successful at stirring a national conversation about a new constitution. He had set the wheels in motion.

But presenting justificatory reasons for a new constitution was no easy task. Despite not having to worry about Zapata and Villa, the obvious opponents of the Constitutionalists, others in the administration became dubious of Carranza's plan for constitutionality. Here one must remember that, even as late as 1916, the Mexican political landscape had yet to be fully purged of the Díaz system, since Díaz representatives, both Díaz zealots and even those less fanatic of him, remained in administrative positions well into the Revolution. These individuals, along with those on the conservative side, challenged Carranza at every possible turn.

The situation compelled Carranza to appeal to figures of authority by accentuating, as Niemeyer calls it, a "national will."[221] Here, Niemeyer refers to a widespread call for nationalism, an emotion that Mexicans struggled to ascertain. Inclusivity, achieved only by appealing to national sentiments shared by the greatest majority, became the solution. A lack of a vigorous nationalistic attitude complicated matters, especially in light of a visibly bruised national identity. And herein lies the

[221] Niemeyer 28.

problem: Calling for a "national will" presented Carranza with problems, given that Mexicans new nothing, or little, of a cohesive national outlook.

A "national will" would encompass strong feelings of a tightly knit nation whose sense of self, a collective self, could be defined by shared ideals such as a respect and love for the nation, an honor for political and economic independence, and an appeal to state identity via a healthy relationship between the government and its citizens. Mexicans satisfied the first criterion, but unfortunately not the last two, and thus Carranza set out to fulfill these.

In order to begin to crystallize a national identity, Carranza began by utilizing a fundamental tool: the Constitution of 1857, which became his most powerful armament in launching a national campaign on the essentialness of constitutionality. He appealed to articles in this constitution, which, in effect, gave the Mexican population in general and figures of authority in particular an immediate legal voice in the process. Resorting to a previous constitution became the only way that Carranza enabled himself to use a kind of rhetoric that sounded and, indeed, felt patriotic at its core, since truly what can be more patriotic than using the language and ideas proposed by a document that carries such historical weight?

As Niemeyer tells us, Carranza drew inspiration from Article 39 of the Constitution of 1857 in order to motivate the masses and thereby ignite support for the construction of a new constitution. Article 39 told Mexicans: "The national sovereignty is vested essentially and originally in the people. All public power emanates from the people, and is instituted for their benefit. The people have at all times the inalienable

right to alter or modify the form of their government."[222] Carranza used Article 39 literally in speech and as an emblem for democracy, a powerful combination, in order to introduce his idea of a need for a constitution.

Progressively, people became receptive to the arguments presented by Carranza, even though persuading those who needed to be won over continued to stand as a barrier. As time wore on, his call for a constitutional convention only became taken seriously after he used the Constitution of 1857 to substantiate his standpoint. Amassing credence for his cause became all the more complicated, as there still lingered a bitter emotion about the possibility of being, once again, deceived. With Díaz and Huerta as two immediate historical disasters—ones that left wounds that had not at the time been cicatrized—, Mexicans would do everything in their power to prevent dictatorial forces from perverting democracy and tainting justice.

Unlike previous national conflicts, the Revolution that triggered in 1910 stood out as one without precedent in that, as compared to previous times of social struggle, Mexicans had gained better judgment through years and years of oppression. The history of Mexico had already been reasonably long and, therefore, fully able to provide powerful lessons. For example, the very fact that leaders, Carranza in particular, began to use examples from times past in order to advance ahead and in order to form solid, well-reasoned convictions became a clear illustration that Mexico finally possessed a rich political history, which functioned as the backbone to society. That arguably made the Revolution different from previous ones, and that arguably made the Revolution historically momentous.

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[222] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 29.

With the help of a usable history, Mexicans thus would no longer tolerate the emergence of another oppressive element or would at least try to prevent this from occurring. Due to this new sense of awareness, the ten-year conflict inevitability spawned vulnerabilities as well as certainties, as Mexicans felt both powerless and powerful. They felt powerless, because the conflict seemed only to move forward with inevitable violence and a great deal of tension generated by unstable relationships; yet they felt powerful, because the future of the country, nevertheless, rested on the hands of the people, as even Carranza could not forge ahead without the approval of municipal leaders across Mexico. It was an ironic situation, indeed.

Further thickening the plot was the fact that, in this great struggle, Carranza worked against not only leaders, but also national sentiments. Within his circle of Constitutionalists, opposition was actually not too intense; however, outside of this clique, leaders of other factions and municipal leaders expressed uncertainty, since they were largely left unconvinced about the urgency to reawaken a new constitution. Simply put, there lacked an impetus to pursue Carranza's bold plan of action. With the steady passage of time, Carranza became vexed about not being able to convince people, but by September 1916, he redirected his argument to reflect the responses he had hitherto been receiving.

Fortunately, "tradition was on Carranza's side,"[223] as Niemeyer exclaims; "[t]he 'right of revolution' implied right of the victorious faction to express its ideals in the national constitution."[224] Carranza made a final appeal to allow for a democratically organized convention, an assembly wherein the voices of the majority as well as the

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[223] Niemeyer 29.

[224] Niemeyer 29.

minority would be heard. In this way, Carranza managed to remove himself from the entire operation, which in the end benefited his program. Mexicans wanted to believe in constitutionality, the notion, but not in the proponent, the individual, who stood behind this idea—basically, a belief in politics, not in the politician. A fear for dictatorship, the concept, translated into a fear for a dictator, the person.

But "[w]ith approximately 80 percent of Mexico under his control,"[225] on September 14, 1916, Carranza officially called for a constitutional convention. The wheels that he had set in motion were finally taking him places. And to move forward with this decree, he placed some rules that would help to accelerate, formalize, and legitimatize the process. In order to give shape and character to this process, Carranza established a set of regulations or, in other words, rules of the game.

Some of these rules came directly from the protocol used by the convention that completed the Constitution of 1857. For example, one rule ordered that for every sixty-thousand citizens, or for any number greater than twenty-thousand, one main delegate and one substitute delegate were to be sent from every town, municipality, and the Federal District in Mexico City.[226] In theory, but perhaps not necessarily in practice, this rule was meant to allow for representation of the Mexican populace at the convention.

Unfortunately for some, Carranza barred from the convention anyone or any group that refused to subscribe to the constitutionalist cause and that claimed political commitment to any other school of political thought.[227] In the words of Carranza: "those who have aided with arms or who have served as public employees of the governments

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[225] Niemeyer 31.

[226] Niemeyer 31.

[227] Niemeyer 32.

hostile to the Constitutionalist Cause may not be elected [to the Constitutional Convention]."[228]

Moreover, Carranza continued to say that "the Government in my charge, as a consequence [of the nature of the revolution], would consider it impolitic and inopportune in these moments, after a great popular revolution, to restrict the suffrage."[229] The rule of inclusion directed at those who espoused anti-Constitutionalist philosophies did not exist at the convention that took place in 1857, and in this way, Carranza continued to alienate opposing ideas and opposing political and military groups, especially the *Zapatistas* and *Villistas*.

The rule of exclusion could be interpreted in a number of ways, two of which come readily to mind. On the one hand, this move proved to all that Carranza still believed faithfully and unconditionally in his plan for constitutionality, even if this meant continuing to wager a battle against rival forces by excluding them from the upcoming constitutional events. On the other, this rule also highlighted to everyone that Mexico still stood divided—that Carranza, despite having had eighty percent of Mexico under his control, as Niemeyer points out, nevertheless faced widespread disagreement. As we will see later on, these very same prevailing forces of disagreement snuck themselves inside the Iturbide Theater, since the Constitutional Convention was not without a little bit of theatrics.

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[228] Quoted in and translated by Charles C. Cumberland, *Mexican Revolution: The Constitutionalist Years*, with an introduction and additional material by David C. Bailey (Austin: University of Texas, 1972) 272.

[229] *Diario de los Debates del Congreso Constituyente, 1916-1917*, ediciones de la Comisión Nacional para la Celebración del Sesquicentenario de la Proclamación de la Independencia Nacional y del Cincuentenario de la Revolución Mexicana, vol. 1 (México City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1960) 261.

The drama that would engulf countless municipalities, towns, and cities throughout Mexico began on September 14, 1916, when Carranza sent out the first of two official decrees declaring October 22, 1916, the day of elections for delegates. "In spite of Palavicini's press campaign of 1915," Niemeyer observes, "and talk in Constitutionalist circles of a 'new constitution,' the decrees of September 14 and 19 took the people by surprise."[230]

In response to the delegate elections announcement, opposition groups made several attempts at countering the reality brought upon by Carranza. Although largely unsuccessful and although they helped select delegates for elections, the Opposition Constitutional party and the Liberal National party became the greatest and most vocal dissenting groups.[231]

Campaigning for these elections turned out to be more eventful and complicated than anticipated by Carranza. The reactions on the part of the campaigners make perfect sense, however, since the Constitutionalist Convention soon came to be viewed as a political laboratory where the delegates—who played the role of scientists, to continue with the metaphor—would finally be able to contribute directly, forcefully, actively, and permanently in legitimizing all of the ideals, and not just one, of the Revolution. Aspiring delegates, therefore, fought voraciously to become nominated as delegates at the Constitutional Convention, as this would provide them with a substantial role in the revival of Mexico's Fundamental Law—in the production of Mexico's twentieth-century Organic Law.

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[230] Niemeyer 33.

[231] Niemeyer 33.

Of the two hundred and forty-four (244) of the nation's electoral districts, two-hundred and sixteen (216) of these had selected primary and alternative delegates, an impressive eighty-eight percent (88%) of Mexico achieved representation.[232] The states with the highest representation included "Guanajuato (all 18 districts represented), Jalisco (19 out of 20), Veracruz (17 out of 19), Michoacán (16 out of 17), and Puebla (16 out of 18)."[233] It is interesting to note that, surprisingly, despite the turmoil and confusion, Mexicans responded rather satisfactorily.

As the attentive media publicized the results, people all over responded with both negativity and positivity, but mainly the former. Few expressed approval of the results for a variety of reasons. At one end of the spectrum, some believed that the delegate selection process, including the "open" elections, was the result of deliberate political leanings. This reaction came as no surprise to Carranza, since he realized that his project would be well and closely monitored, especially by representatives of Zapata and Villa, as well as conservatives and reactionaries who had ardently doubted his agenda from the beginning.

To understand the kind of opposition that these delegate elections garnered, two commentators, L. Melgarejo Randolf and J. Fernández Rojas, commented the following: "[The elections were held] without enthusiasm, without any interest whatsoever; contained by the frigidity of a tomb, as though we still had found ourselves under the

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[232] Niemeyer 34.

[233] Niemeyer 35.

influence of Porfirian terror, and as one sour attestation that we are still far away from awakening to a life of democracy."[234]

At the other end of the spectrum, some believed that the process had been riddled with conspiracy and that it merely became a matter of critical examination in order to unearth the trickery and wrongdoing. One individual raged at the elections and at Carranza by retaliating in the following fashion:

> [T]he *carrancista* mobs, and they alone, organized under the directions of generals…manufactured the lists of representatives and obtained credentials for those in fraudulent elections, availing themselves of the public forces managed by the Secretaries of War, Foreign Affairs, and Gobernación, by the military commanders acting as governors of the states, and the heads of garrisons and military posts.[235]

Dispelling popular fears soon became a futile attempt, and so Carranza and his administration instead decided not to make any such effort, lest the focus, time, and energy would be wasted on the wrong aspects of the situation. Instead, Carranza continued to advocate for a "one-party gathering"[236] at the convention, because this would allow, in theory at least, for the most harmonious gathering possible. In other words, Carranza wanted to avoid a repetition of the previous phase of the revolution, the stage of physical action, when revolutionary regimes went up in arms and caused endless violence and social pandemonium.

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[234] L. Melgario Randolf and J. Fernández Rojas, *El Congreso Constituyente de 1916 y 1917* (México City: Departamento de Talleres Gráficos de la Secretaría de Fomento, Colonización e Industria, 1917) 136. "[Las elecciones se tomaron acabo] sin entusiasmos, sin interés alguno; dentro de una frialdad de tumba, como si aun nos hubiéramos hallado bajo la influencia del terror porfiriano, y como una amarga comprobación de que aun estamos lejos todavía de habernos despertado a la vida de la democracia."

[235] Jorge Vera-Estañol, *Carranza and His Bolshevik Regime* (Los Angeles: Wayside Press, 1920) 21-22.

[236] Niemeyer 36.

To further understand Carranza's plan of a "one-party gathering," it may serve to point out that this was one way in which he wanted to continue to plead his case about constitutionality. By "constitutionalizing" the convention, in essence, he invited everyone to investigate and analyze his constitutional stance. Anyone who aspired to be present during the events at the convention and play a decisive role, but remained faithful to other political dogmas became forced to reconsider his convictions. Part of his campaign, it is important to recall, aimed at trying to change the mentalities of disbelievers and naysayers, and this became one way of achieving this end.

Resistance and hostility toward the delegate selection process became of little consequence once December approached, however, as during this crucial month, on the first day, the great inauguration would take place. For many, indeed for Carranza, the day of inauguration became a jubilant, fulfilling day. At this point, no matter what would later transpire inside the Iturbide Theater, one thing appeared terribly clear: the dawn of a constitution had finally arrived, and nothing would stand in the way.

Much to Carranza's dismay, who wished for nothing more than a somewhat peaceful convention, he soon found that the convention did not pale in comparison to the truculent, cantankerous, and combative nature of the early stages of the Revolution. Niemeyer explains: "[T]he Convention of 1916-1917 would prove to be neither a mere formality nor a harmonious gathering. Rather, it reflected the spirit of the times: conflict, unrest, and demand for social, economic, and political reform."[237] For that reason, the Constitutional Convention in many ways represented and can be viewed as a microcosm of the Revolution.

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[237] Niemeyer 37.

Before delving into any analysis concerning the most contentious articles presented in Carranza's draft, it may help to understand the composition of the group of selected delegates. Who were they? What were their backgrounds? What were their persuasions and eccentricities? What occupations did they hold back home? These questions are posed in order to inspire interest in the group of men who fashioned the third major constitution in the history of Mexico. It is, therefore, a matter of necessity, if not curiosity, that one becomes acquainted with some of these individuals and their personalities.

To begin, it may help to know what kinds of professions and religions were represented at the convention. According to Niemeyer, 62 were lawyers, 22 military officers of senior rank, 19 farmers, 18 teachers, 16 engineers, 16 physicians, 14 journalists, 7 accountants, 5 labor leaders, 4 miners, 3 railroad workers, 2 pharmacists, 1 actor, and 31 represented other occupations, ranging from artisans to merchants to simply being self-employed.[238] Some were *criollos*, mestizos, and Indians, one a mulatto.[239] A handful identified loyally with Catholicism, others less intensely.[240] As some articles of the final constitution would no doubt indicate, the great majority removed themselves from Catholicism and identified with other religious affiliations, though a good bunch self-identified as secular minds.

To what extent were these delegates learned men? In answer to this question, investigation into this topic will be a compelling exercise. An exploration of the knowledge acquired by some of the delegates will be crucial, since this will give us

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[238] Niemeyer 39.

[239] Niemeyer 39.

[240] Niemeyer 39.

insight into the kinds of scholarly pursuits towards that they were drawn to. It is definitely worth quoting Niemeyer at length on this question, as he also highlights some of the ways in which some delegates appeared to be ill-equipped or unqualified professionally for this constitutionalist undertaking.

Of course, the issue concerning whether these delegates possessed the sufficient qualifications or not rests entirely on the reader, since this question can be considered to be relative to some, though perhaps not to others. Niemeyer takes a stance on the issue and explains the following:

> While the delegates were more familiar with Mexican history, especially contemporary, discussions during the sessions indicate that they were also acquainted with the history of Rome, Christianity, and the French Revolution and its principal figures. They referred to or quoted from the French novelists Victor Hugo, Tristan Bernard, and Emile Zola. The lawyers, of course, were well versed in Roman law, and several showed they had read Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, and Herbert Spencer's books. Lic. Hilario Medina (Guanajuato) was familiar with the works of the leading sociologists of the later nineteenth century. José Natividad Macías had read Karl Marx. The works of the Russian revolutionary, anarchist, and author, Peter Kropotkin, were also known. Not surprisingly, a number of delegates were familiar with American political history and the American constitution. Among them were Macías, Lic. Rafael Martínez de Escobar (Tabasco), Monzón, Lic. Paulino Machorro y Narváez (Jalisco), Lic. Zeferino Fajardo (Tamaulipas), and Palavicini. Nevertheless, most of the delegates did not have the necessary background or training. During the acrimonious debates on Article 3, Lic. Luis Manuel Rojas, the convention's presiding officer, lamented that "a good part of this assembly does not have sufficient juridical preparation…the majority…has not known or has not sufficiently understood what the section on individuals rights [*garantías*] means"…As Bojórquez put it during the afternoon session of January 16, "I can say, and many of my fellow delegates will agree with me, that not only do we lack that preparation in economics but neither do we have it in constitutional law nor in any of the other fields of law; therefore…we decide these highly important matters after hearing the pros and cons because when we vote, it is our revolutionary instinct that guides us rather than our understanding." Many Mexicans better qualified by training and experience in government or public administration were barred because they had been in different political camps.[241]

[241] Niemeyer 42-43.

After quarrelsome disputes and discords over qualifications, representation, and others kinds of organizational issues, the revolution at the Iturbide Theater or, as in the words of Niemeyer, "the revolution at Querétaro" would at long last begin. On December 1, 1917, the brief but laborious and litigious battle of words and ideas began at Querétaro.

When everyone had settled into the theater, introductions, instructions, and other formalities took the spotlight for a handful of hours, after which time Carranza and other moderators presented everyone with a draft of the constitution. After receiving this draft, the next couple of days were spent reading the draft, analyzing it, and jotting down notes to be brought up during discussion. After carefully reading the draft, three of the most popular and compelling issues that were raised by the delegates included church-state separation, labor law, and vested interests.

Attention may now be turned to the church-state separation debate. The delegates began this discussion early on, which signifies the urgency behind this touchy subject. Starting our analysis over Carranza's draft with the church-state separation debate serves as a great example of the impact that American constitutionalism and 18th-century Enlightenment notions had on delegates who were present at the convention. The separation of church and state topic became vehemently though swiftly proposed by delegates, since most of these delegates openly regarded themselves as reformers, even to the level that Carranza had not yet reached. Therefore, separation of church and state became a matter of pressing business, and, unsurprisingly enough, the delegates first dealt with anticlerical articles, and they disputed and promptly settled these as early as mid-December.[242]

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[242]Niemeyer 62.

To understand the role of the Church in late nineteenth-century, early twentieth-century Mexico is to understand the economic, social, and political configuration of Mexican society, as well as various aspects of the oppressive *Porfiriato*. The Church wielded an impressive amount of power in Mexican society—a macrocosm, in some ways, of the *hacienda* system.

The Church, in particular, exercised its power in the educational sector and took over the whole of educational instruction. At the convention, the subject of education turned into a heated discussion, since these leaders truly wanted to move society forward with the help of education. In general, the delegates wanted to democratize education and liberate it from the forces of this system, the Church, which encroached on civil liberties, such as the freedom to learn about the arts and sciences without restraint. Favoring and thus endeavoring to divorce the Church from Mexico's institution of education resulted in the first alteration of Carranza's initial draft.

In the 1857 version of the constitution, Article 3 stated that education would be free, and in response, Carranza augmented this article by secularizing education; however, a handful of delegates suggested other changes. At the proposition that the article be more specific, so as to avoid misunderstanding, the article changed drastically. In the original draft, Carranza stated, "There shall be complete liberty in education, but that given in official establishments of education will be secular, and primary and elementary education will be free."[243] The delegates favored specificity and proposed the following:

> There shall be freedom in education, but that given in official establishments of education will be secular, and the same will apply to primary and superior

[243] *Diario de los Debates*, 1: 503. "Habrá plena libertad de enseñanza; pero será laica la que se dé en los establecimientos oficiales de educación, y gratuita la enseñanza primaria superior y elemental."

> education provided in particular (special) establishments. No religious corporation, ministry of any cult, or person belonging to any such (religious) association will be able to establish or lead primary schools of instruction or personally impart education in any college (*colegio*). Primary schools will be the only ones able to become established subject to the vigilance of the Government. Primary instruction will be obligatory for all Mexicans and will be provided for free in official establishments.[244]

The change did not particularly please Carranza, though it did not cause him to object.

Within the members of the Committee on the Constitution,[245] anticlericalism became an ardent passion, and no one such as Francisco Múgica, the president of the committee, defended this principle with such dynamism, as though it was a personal matter to him. And perhaps it was. Consider that Múgica stood out as the most brazen of the radical reformers at the convention, and he, according to Niemeyer, perhaps can be regarded to be the most prepared and qualified of all the delegates, since he possessed the "intellectual stature lacking in most of the delegates."[246] While attending preparatory school in a seminary in Zamora, Michoacán, Múgica studied an impressive array of subjects, including the classics, chemistry, physics, history, and philosophy.[247]

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[244] *Diario de los Debates*, 1: 543. "Habrá libertad de enseñanza; pero será laica la que se dé en los establecimientos oficiales de educación, lo mismo que la enseñanza primaria elemental y superior que se imparta en los establecimientos particulares. Ninguna corporación religiosa, ministro de algún culto o persona perteneciente a alguna asociación semejante, podrá establecer o dirigir escuelas de instrucción primaria, ni impartir enseñanza personalmente en ningún colegio. Las escuelas primarias particulares sólo podrán establecerse sujetándose a la vigilancia del Gobierno. La enseñanza primaria será obligatoria para todos los mexicanos y en los establecimientos oficiales será impartida gratuitamente."

[245] Carranza formed the Committee on the Constitution, a five-member committee that gave the final word on the wording of the constitution based on the debates and discussions on the floor. Chosen by all of the convention delegates via secret ballots, the committee included Enrique Colunga, a practicing lawyer from Coahuila of thirty-nine years of age; Enrique Recio, a law school dropout of thirty-two years of age who wrote for radical newspapers; Alberto Román, a leftist medical doctor from Veracruz; Luis Monzón, a primary school teacher of forty-four years of age who was a firm believer in class struggle; and Francisco Múgica, a native of Michoacán who at thirty-two years of age became the most vocal radical reformer at the convention.

[246] Niemeyer 65.

[247] Niemeyer 65.

Most importantly, the result of his studies induced him to turn against religious studies, and from this acquired sentiment grew an uncompromising resentment toward clericalism and the Church. Most of his life soon became devoted to fostering rebellious feelings, and he continued to harbor anarchist ideologies, which can become evident in the ways he explicitly attacked Díaz's administration, supported Madero's rising, signed Carranza's *Plan of Guadalupe*, and followed the anarchistic movement of the Mexican Liberal Party.[248]

It, therefore, comes as little surprise that Múgica took the leading role on the Committee of the Constitution, since perhaps no other individual, besides Carranza, had come to the pivotal recognition that Mexico had been hard-pressed to move away from the grasp of the Church and finally begin the separation of state and church. In this way, then, Múgica, the convention's "floor leader and spokesperson for the radical reformers,"[249] personified Mexico's transition from clericalism to anti-clericalism, from traditionalism to modernity, a transition that was not new to Mexico. It is important to point out that anti-clericalism had also been central to the liberal reforms led by Juárez in the mid-19th century.

Múgica did not stand alone in chanting the lyrics of anticlericalism, however, since many other delegates shared this conviction. Joining him in one trend or another, others likewise generally believed that the Church deliberately abused its powers. The education sector became an easy target for the Church, and so it conquered this part of society with facility.

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[248] Niemeyer 66.

[249] Niemeyer 66.

Delegates expressed discontentment at the way religious instruction, like mystic cults, brainwashed the minds of youth and turned them into robotic fanatics of religion, unable to think for themselves independently and unable to function in society without the added baggage of religious bias. An almighty Church stunted the growth of society, and to express their concerns, in an informational supplement to Article 3, the delegates observed:

> In the history of the nation, studied impartially, the clergy appears as the cruelest and most stubborn enemy of our liberties; its doctrine has been and is: the interests of the Church, before the interests of the nation. When the clergy was once disarmed as a result of the Laws of the Reform, it had later the opportunity, under the tolerance of the dictatorship, to begin patiently a mission directed at reestablishing its power over civil authority. Well-known is how it has managed to recover the benefits of which it was [previously] deprived; well-known too are the measures that it has utilized to once again seize the consciences [of the masses]; to absorb the [whole of] education; to declare itself a propagandist of the science to best prevent its diffusion; to put lights on its exterior [as a way] to conserve obscurantism [on the] inside.[250]

The delegates widely believed that the State needed to hold the power of education, especially when forces, such as the Church, became a detriment to this extremely fundamental sector of society. Thus, the delegates pursued to separate the state from the church, a detachment that affected the fate of other articles as well.[251]

Given the Church's connections to dictatorships and oppressive pressure groups or elements in society, the delegates tried to destabilize it, and they did, indeed, stroke at

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[250] *Diario de los Debates*, 1: 542. "En la historia patria, estudiada imparcialmente, el clero aparece como el enemigo más cruel y tenaz de nuestras libertades; su doctrina ha sido y es: los intereses de la Iglesia, antes que los intereses de la patria. Desarmado el clero a consecuencia de las Leyes de Reforma, tuvo oportunidad después, bajo la tolerancia de la dictadura, de emprender pacientemente una labor dirigida a restablecer su poderío pos encima de la autoridad civil. Bien sabido es cómo ha logrado rehacerse de los bienes de que fue privado; bien conocidos son también los medios de que se ha servido para volver a apoderarse de las conciencias; absorber la enseñanza; declararse propagandista de la ciencia para impedir mejor su difusión; poner luces en el exterior para conservar dentro el obscurantismo."

[251] On January 27, 1917, for example, Article 24 endured the same kind of controversy and resulted in similar changes, with the delegates diminishing the role of the Church at significant levels. This article deals with the religious practices of individuals and its governmental regulations. Articles 5, 27, 33, 55, 59, 82, 123, 129, among others, suffered similar fates.

the foundations of the clergy by prohibiting the presence of the Church in public centers of education, thereby restoring individual freedoms, such as those expressed by Múgica. A proponent of a secular liberal arts approach in education, one that was free from the domination of the Church, Múgica, expressing impatience and irritation, gave a speech about his views on the Church. He opened up a dialogue that shaped the tempo of the convention, at least insofar as the interrelated relationship between the State and Church was concerned.

On December 13, 1916, Múgica expressed how infuriated the Church made him over the years and went as far as describing the Church as "the most disastrous and perverse enemy of the country."[252] Preying on their vulnerabilities as naïve targets, the Church taught youth as well as country men and women "[t]he most absurd ideas, the most tremendous hatred toward democratic institutions, the most fervent hatred for those principles of equity, equality, and brotherhood, preached by the greatest apostle…of all time, whose name was Jesus Christ."[253]

And, he continued, "[i]f we allow the clergy to participate in the freedom of absolute education with its rancid and retrospective ideas, we will not form new generations of intellectual and sensitive men, but our following [generations] will receive from us the inheritance of fanaticism, of insane principles."[254]

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[252] *Diario de los Debates*, 1:642. "[E]l mas funesto y más perverso, enemigo de la patria."

[253] *Diario de los Debates*, 1: 642. "Las ideas más absurdas, el odio mas tremendo par a las instituciones democráticas, el odio mas acérrimo para aquellos principios de equidad, igualdad y fraternidad, predicados por el mas grande apóstol...de los tiempos, que se llamo Jesucristo."

[254] *Diario de los Debates*, 1: 643. "[S]i dejamos la libertad de enseñanza absoluta para que tome participación en ella el clero con sus ideas rancias y retrospectivas, no formaremos generaciones nuevas de hombres intelectuales y sensatos, sino que nuestros pósteros recibirán de nosotros la herencia del fanatismo, de principios insanos."

His speech ignited a marked split between the moderate rightists (classical liberals) and the leftists, and henceforth disputations that highlighted the debate over the "rights of the individual" versus "rights in the interests of society"[255] became abundant during discussions about other articles. The rightists championed the rights of the individual over those of society, whereas, by contrast, the leftists, such as Múgica, embraced the rights of society over those of the individual.

The leftists believed that because "Mexican life [was] jeopardized by the social and political influence of the Church and its clergy, [they] were determined to destroy this influence as completely as possible. Their thinking reflected antireligious as well as anticlerical views."[256] With this conviction, the delegates voted for article 3, which read:

> Instruction is free; that given in public institutions of learning shall be secular. Primary instruction, whether higher or lower, given in private institutions shall likewise be secular. No religious corporation nor (sic) minister of any creed shall establish or direct schools of primary instruction. Private primary schools may be established only subject to official supervision. Primary instruction in public institutions shall be gratuitous.[257]

After Article 3 had been voted for by the delegates, the convention then proceeded to the next order of business, the topic concerning labor programs. Labor rights became an impassioned theme, especially if one considers that Mexico at this time began to emerge slowly into as a capitalist, industrialist society. In this post-Industrial Revolution world, the workplace needed to be defined, regulated, and observed legally. Until the Constitutional Convention convened, Mexican employers and employees lacked

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[255] Niemeyer 73-74.

[256] Niemeyer 74.

[257] *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857*, trans. and arranged by H. N. Branch, LL.B., with foreword by L. S. Rowe (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1917) 2.

a legal base from which to institute and follow rules in order for an honorable, sanitary, and fair exchange of work and compensation.

Similar to the ways in which the revisions applied to Article 3 reflected a turn away from traditional worldviews, ones that acted as detriments to the advancement of society, likewise the revisions made to Article 5 also underscored, as suggested by the delegates, highly developed political convictions that echoed non-traditional, twentieth-century American ideals; however, before embracing American ideals, the delegates arrived at numerous realizations. For example, if Mexicans desired to live, work, and thus function in a twentieth-century society on the verge of becoming fully industrialized and capitalist, then the delegates urgently needed to institute immediate reforms in the workforce. In order for laborers to reach the pinnacle of productivity as well as some level of contentment or personal fulfillment, then they needed to have laws that protected a specified number of human rights.

Carranza's draft included minimal efforts to establish a strong labor program within reasonable legal limitations. Only four articles in the original draft contained legal information about labor programs, and although the absence of labor laws in the draft may indicate that this issue mattered little to Carranza, the opposite may actually be true. When Carranza drafted the constitution, he made the most significant changes to those articles about which he knew the most. As for the others, such as labor law, he left these entirely up to the delegates who represented a variety of professions and thus were best equipped at providing substantial input in the realm of labor law.

To show how Carranza allowed delegates, with all of their different viewpoints, to decide upon more sensible alterations to labor law, it will be imperative to hone in on the

debates over Article 5. This article was the subject of a great deal of debate, since the convention included many champions of labor, each, of course, bearing a different take. Also, Article 5 invited much consideration, because it encompassed a long list of stipulations and provisions that attempted to protect laborers in a multitude of ways, and many of these legal specifications could only be best understood with the help of context.

Providing context for these provisions became troublesome, since delegates could not agree on reasonable contexts. For this reason, some delegates argued that it would be best if the Committee on the Constitution simply left certain provisions up to the jurisdiction of Congress. While a number of delegates believed that Congress would be well suited to deliberate on any gaps in the law, especially those that could not be understood cooperatively at the convention, a good number of delegates believed the issues should have been solved at once and without further unnecessary delay.[258]

Three of the chief proponents of immediate change included General Aguilar, Jara, and Victorio E. Góngora, all of whom believed that changes to the article under discussion needed to be made at the convention. Given that these were deep-seated sympathizers of labor law and its evolution, their ideas for change in this area of society illustrated modern social views. For instance, the aforementioned individuals "petitioned the committee to include provisions on equal pay for equal work by both sexes,

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[258] There even existed disagreement about whether or not to leave any part of the constitution up to Congress. The young Frolán Manjarrez ardently spoke up about this attitude: "I think our Magna Carta ought to be more explicit on this point…who will guarantee us the new Congress will be composed of revolutionaries? Who will guarantee us that…the government…will not tend towards conservatism? Who will guarantee us that the General Congress must expedite [laws]…in accordance with our ideas?...what is important is that we pay due attention to…those men who fought in the armed struggle and who are the ones who merit our efforts to bring about their well-being." Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 108.

workmen's compensation in certain industrial jobs, the settlement of conflicts between capital and labor by committees of conciliation and arbitration, and the right to strike."[259]

Jara, in particular, argued passionately for an eight-hour workday, which he believed would help end the rampant exploitation of labor, an argument that clearly went beyond traditional norms. Putting a limitation on the number of hours that men and women could legally work implied a drastic change in the Mexican way of life. Not only did this change promise to redefine the lifestyle of an entire working people, but further it would change the ways in which society viewed life and work—since no longer would the working class live to work, but instead work to live. Perhaps more important, Jara argued that "these measures were urgently needed to save the race from certain degeneration,"[260] a potent and valid argument indeed.

After the convention finished presenting different opinions concerning the eight-hour workday, the next great debate concerning labor law involved wages. The touchy subject about wages generated various responses, ranging from those who believed that laws on wages needed time-consuming deliberation on the part of the delegates, to those who believed that immediate deliberation became a matter of necessity.

Those of the latter argument held that Mexican society had been sinking into a quicksand of destitution and poverty. If raising the standard of living became at all a supreme concern for these lawmakers, then placing laws on wages—that is, decent, fair, and humane wages—only seemed an obvious step to take. Their argument quickly became curtailed, however, by the realization that one state's view of fair wages did not

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[259] Niemeyer 105.

[260] Niemeyer 106.

necessarily coincide with the views of the rest of the country and thus this argument emphasized the diversity of Mexico's economic landscape.

Ultimately, because defining "just compensation," "full consent," or setting "a minimum wage" could be so arbitrary and dependent on any number of circumstances, the delegates decided that state legislatures would be held responsible for passing laws on wages. This decision would minimize opposition at the convention and encourage, in theory, definitions of "just compensation" on a case-by-case or rather state-by-state basis. In this manner, discussions about Article 5 thus culminated: The delegates finally decided on a revised draft of it, and soon the Committee on the Constitution gave its signature of approval.[261]

The finale of Article 5 sparked the overture of Article 123, a prudent and perhaps necessary move to acknowledge and define the rights of man. The theme of the rights of man rested on nearly every disputation held at the convention, since discussion about the rights of man brought out the philosophical undercurrent of the constitution, and this powerful underflow fortified the basis of each finalized article. It legitimized the notion that the constitution would benefit from careful examination of the individual and his

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[261] The text of the 1917 version of Article 5 reads: "Art. 5. No one shall be compelled to render personal services without due compensation and without his full consent, excepting labor imposed as a penalty by judicial decree, *which shall conform to the provisions of clauses I and II of Article 125*. Only the following public services shall be obligatory, subject to the conditions set forth in the respective laws: military service, *jury service, service in municipal and other public elective office, whether this election be direct or indirect*, and service in connection with elections, which shall be obligatory and without compensation. The State shall not permit any contract, covenant or agreement to be carried out having for its object the abridgment, loss or irrevocable sacrifice of the liberty of man, whether by reason of labor, education or religious vows. The law, therefore, does not permit the establishment of monastic orders, of whatever denomination, or for whatever purpose contemplated. Nor shall any person legally agree to his own proscription or exile, *or to the temporary or permanent renunciation of the exercise of any profession or industrial or commercial pursuit. A contract for labor shall only be binding to render the services agreed upon for the time fixed by law and shall not exceed one year to the prejudice of the party rendering the service; nor shall it in any case whatsoever embrace the waiver, loss or abridgement of any political or civil right. In the event of a breach of such contract on the part of the party pledging himself to render the service, the said party shall only be liable civilly for damages arising from such breach, and in no event shall coercion against his person be employed* [italics in the original]." *Mexican Constitution Compared* 4.

personal needs, desires, and especially rights. As the great philosophical thinker John Locke would agree, society needed to respect certain inalienable rights of man, such as life, health, liberty, and possessions.

From this perspective, the delegates proposed and finalized Article 123, which called for government intervention in extreme cases of possible neglect of workers' rights, and it claimed the death of peonage.[262] Article 123 ensured that workers could rely on labor laws that protected them in a variety of situations, such as in the following nine forms of assistance: sanitary conditions in the workplace, just wages, one day of rest during the workweek, workmen's compensation, medical centers that provided care for the sick, help for those who were crippled, assistance for the elderly, help for the unemployed, and protection for abandoned children.[263] The powerbase that underpinned these provisions came directly from the *Lockean* discussion on the rights of man and from fashionable views about how the government, with its newly established power to enact a set of beneficent laws, could move forward by extending a helping hand to its people.

The motif of the rights of man surfaced during the discussion of nearly every article, because the pursuit of the welfare of society did not always mean the pursuit of the welfare of the individual. The difference here presented itself as vast and clear. During discussions over Article 3, for example, when the delegates limited the role of the

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[262] To elaborate on the important abolishment of peonage, which was an injurious system of debt that workers acquired with their employers, it should be pointed out that the delegates decided to put Article 13 into place. This article specifically outlawed peonage.

[263] The text of the 1917 version of Article 123 reads: "Title VI: Of Labor and Social Welfare. Art. 123. *The Congress and the State Legislatures shall make laws relative to labor with due regard for the needs of each region of the Republic, and in conformity with the following principles, and these principles and laws shall govern the labor of skilled and unskilled workmen, employees, domestic servants and artisans and in general every contract of labor* [italics in the original]." After this paragraph, thirty (30) specific provisions are listed. *Mexican Constitution Compared* 94.

Church and denounced the infiltration of religious systems of belief in education, these policymakers also, in essence, limited the opportunities for individuals to pursue and embrace religion as they desired. The delegates certainly used Locke's notion carefully, almost discriminately, but at the same time with a clear purpose—to subdue the malignant force that had become the Catholic Church. Still, the delegates managed to utilize Locke's ideas cautiously.

For example, by simply stating that religious instruction would only be legally permissible in private, not public, institutions of learning, the delegates merely tried to outwit the situation, since their objective to destroy the power of the Church and diminish the accessibility of religion, Catholicism in particular, manifested itself conspicuously in the writing of Article 3. Overall, whereas the *Lockean* attitude of the rights of man helped secure a favorable outcome in Article 123 by helping to assist the underrepresented—the proletariat—, it appears that, on the other hand, the delegates did not apply this very same outlook to Article 3. A disregard of Locke's thesis in the construction of Article 3 suggests, if nothing else, just how opposed the delegates had become towards the political involvement of the Church in society, and so this article stands as an exception.

Yet anti-clericalism by no means became the central attitude shared among the delegates, since there ascended a more powerful mindset that took over the Constitutional Convention, and that was nationalism. Many of the concerns that the delegates brought to the convention dealt specifically with the aspect of nationalism—or, to be more precise, a lack thereof. Mexicans, as has been observed previously, struggled to acquire a sense of nationalism that united them all in hope, patriotism, and brotherhood. A lack of national cohesion shackled them and impeded them from moving forward, even amidst a social

conflict whose various dictums attempted to vivify Mexican nationalism. It would help to remember that the Constitutional Convention not only brought to life constitutionality, but also Mexican nationalism.

No other articled elicited profound feelings of nationalism as Article 27, and through the systematic formation of this article, Carranza and other key delegates attested their veritable concern for land reform, a provision that banded together so many of the Revolution's frustrations, so many of the Revolution's resentments, and so many of the Revolution's hopes. Article 27 at once helped salvage and rekindled Mexican nationalism by detonating a bomb whose echoes and continuing effects would be felt well into the twenty-first century. With the help of Carranza and like-minded delegates, Article 27 stimulated nationalism from within the ruins of a polarized nation by striking against vested interests, interests that drove instances of exploitation and unjust seizures of land.

Article 27 stands as a symbolic *objet d'art* of the constitution, as it epitomized all that was wrong with Mexico and, more importantly, all that could be right. Landowners—whose exasperation became the tipping point for the great struggle—finally came under assistance with Article 27.

Accentuating the rights of landowners and the sanctity of land immediately evokes the image of a fellow known all too well in the history of the Revolution, Zapata. In a way, Article 27 could be seen as Carranza's way of giving Zapata a valid voice at the convention. All those who thought that Carranza's program made no strides in the direction of land programs were terribly wrong, since the ideologies and principles of the southern communities where Zapata lived and roamed found expression in Article 27, and no one could deny that.

Article 27, an article that specifically focused on land reform, also became a way for the delegates to allow for the initial dissemination and legitimization of nationalism. Consider that land and nationalism had been interlocked in a double helix, the product of knotty conflicts precipitated by a browbeaten people who demanded certain humanitarian conditions. Because land had always been viewed as the fulcrum of the Revolution, since every other aspect of the Revolution depended on it, the Constitutional Convention served to provide a support for land reforms.

Given the passion and enthusiasm devoted to the restoration and protection of land, land politics became appended to the greater concept of nationalism. The question regarding whether Carranza realized the inextricable interlocking of land politics and nationalism becomes of little importance, since the important aspect to bear in mind concerns his role in allowing for a democratically open convention to allow the consolidation of land reform and nationalism. And that has precisely been one of the prime intents of this chapter; to show how Carranza followed a democratic path to constitutionality.

Carranza comes under attack in a few studies that examine the group of delegates that discussed Article 27. His input has been questioned, yet prevalent theories about Carranza's role in the creation of this article offer scant commentary about his "true" desires to institute comprehensive land reforms. Niemeyer, for example, believes that Carranza explicitly overlooked land reform, as evident during Carranza's introductory speeches about this article, when he allegedly offered virtually no promises to strategize land reforms with a clear legal outlook.

Furthermore, Niemeyer offers an inadequate amount of information to suggest that Carranza did not actively seek to establish sweeping changes in land politics, and yet he argues this case. Niemeyer cites no evidence for this thesis, and paints an unlikely scenario. He poses the following argument, which lacks a factual base to support it fully: "In reality, [Carranza] opposed the writing of detailed reforms into the constitution. A group of determined revolutionaries in the convention, however, did not. Rejecting the First Chief's draft as incomplete and forceless, a betrayal of the national interests, they proceeded to write a new article which 'saved the Revolution.'"[264]

Not only does Niemeyer present an unfounded argument, but also fails to capture the possibility that Carranza could have been far more predisposed than is commonly believed to the idea of having the group of delegates decide upon the fate of the entire constitution. Had Carranza preferred otherwise, he would not have resorted to an enormous coming together of delegates from all over Mexico. He would have instead opted for less diplomatic alternatives or even for dictatorial options, as many leaders before him have. But he chose otherwise and did not.

Due to a dearth of evidence in facing this question, it may perhaps be more sensible to imply that, generally speaking, Carranza worked with the delegates as political partners and as co-creators of the constitution. Although Carranza wore many, many hats at the convention, he primarily played a two-part role: he played the role of an event organizer and the role of a draft compiler. In his role as a draft compiler, Carranza knew all too well that his draft would be subject to innumerable changes—and to think otherwise would appear almost absurd.

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[264] Niemeyer 136.

Again, it cannot be overly stressed that, as acknowledged by most or all of the delegates, the initial draft of the constitution, as presented by Carranza and his closest aides, was expected to undergo substantial changes. That was the expectation, and that was the purpose behind having a full-blown convention in the first place.[265] While there has not been found a statement that indicates that he had hoped the Convention to address issues such as land reform, the inference can nevertheless be made that he at least had that expectation coming into the project.

Regardless of how one would like to interpret the argument challenged above, it will be more advantageous to move on and pay more attention to the actual proceedings during the finalization of Article 27, which will confirm the democratic nature of the convention. Thus, attention can be now turned to Article 27 and the proceedings that led to its completion.

With Article 27, land ownership and social rights in the handling of land became the two most contested topics. Delegates believed that the exploitation or abuse of private property undermined land ownership and social rights, and this stance can be evident in the preface to Article 27, which the delegates decided upon during the first draft of this article. The preface read:

> Turning to the subject of civil legislation, as we have already mentioned, [civil legislation] does not know anything more perfect than private property; in the civil codes of the Republic, there is hardly any disposition for the corporations of full private property permitted by the constitutional laws: in none of them is there a sole disposition that will allow it to govern neither the existence, nor the functionality, nor the growth of that entire world of communities that becomes embittered in the depths of our social constitution: the laws ignore the reality there are *condueñazgos*, *rancherías*, *pueblos*, *congregaciones*, *tribus*, etc.; and it

[265] Of course, this is not to say that Carranza did not become upset at times or even felt a little bit of disappointment when the delegates tore apart a couple of his articles and completely altered others. These were normal behaviors, since who would find joy in having his written work turned upside down viciously?

> is true that, when dealing with any other issue pertaining to the previously mentioned communities, applicable laws in the complexities of the colonial epoch must be sought, laws for which five lawyers in the entire Republic do not know well [italics mine].[266]

After the delegates finished composing the preface, Article 27 began to be disputed, and when the Committee on the Constitution read it, numerous philosophical questions surfaced, many of which were left unanswered. For example, Niemeyer notes that three of these included: "[I]f property must be considered a natural right, what is the extent of that right? Who has the right to acquire real property? What are the bases for the solution of the agrarian problem?"[267]

These three questions, which were not merely philosophical abstractions, threw the delegates into deep contemplation and debate about natural rights, the extent of natural rights, what constitutes as "real" property, and the foundations for the agrarian problem. By surveying these questions even perfunctorily, the reader may begin to understand the philosophical depth behind Article 27. With time clearly not on their side, the delegates decided to devote as little time as possible to philosophical reflections, since these would quite literally never bring them to agreement.

Instead, the delegates compromised and agreed to devote their energy on a couple of debatable and thus hopefully solvable subjects, one of them being the destruction of

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[266] *Diario de los Debates del Congreso Constituyente, 1916-1917*, ediciones de la Comisión Nacional para la Celebración del Sesquicentenario de la Proclamación de la Independencia Nacional y del Cincuentenario de la Revolución Mexicana, Vol. 2 (México City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1960) 1225. "Volviendo a la legislación civil, como ya dijimos, [la legislación civil] no conoce más que la propiedad privada perfecta; en los códigos civiles de la República, apenas hay una que otra disposición para las corporaciones de plena propiedad privada permitidas por las leyes constitucionales: en ninguna hay una sola disposición que pueda regir ni la existencia, ni el funcionamiento, ni el desarrollo de todo ese mundo de comunidades que se agrita en el fondo de nuestra constitución social: las leyes ignoran que hay condueñazgos, rancherías, pueblos, congregaciones, tribus, etcétera; y es verdaderamente que, cuando se trata de algún asunto referente a las comunidades mencionadas, se tienen que buscar las leyes aplicables en las complicaciones de la época colonial, que no hay cinco abogados en toda la República que conozcan bien."

[267] Niemeyer 141.

huge estates or *haciendas*, since these monopolies controlled a great portion of the land and dominated a significant segment of the population. The radical delegates called for a complete cessation of these tyrannical kingdoms and opted for "measures aimed at 'reducing the power of the *latifundistas* and [thus] raising the economic, intellectual, and moral level of the workers.'"[268]

In addition, these delegates also appealed for the "breaking up [of] 'the *latifundistas* through expropriation, but with respect for the rights of the owners.' They did not fear burdening the country with a heavy debt, since the expropriated land 'will be paid for by the same ones who acquire it, [thus] reducing the role of the State to that of a simple guarantor.'"[269]

Within hours, the delegates began to channel their views about *latifundistas* and the land problem in Mexico. Without fear but with favor to certain nationalistic inclinations, the delegates drafted and redrafted a particular clause that turned out to be of particular controversy, the clause regarding the foreigner and the laws he needed to obey whilst in Mexico. It may help to remember that, originally, some of the clauses in Article 27 generally aimed at diminishing the power of the foreigner, which itself became a nationalistic attitude that would eventually wade its way into the writing of other clauses and, of course, other articles.

Finding middle ground became a complicated task that caused further delay, since the delegates found it difficult to realize that the constitution needed to be as much about compromises as about wrangling. Many factors needed to be accounted, especially if the delegates wanted to find a peaceful equilibrium, and Article 27 called for equilibrium:

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[268] Niemeyer 142.

[269] Niemeyer 142.

equilibrium of opinions and equilibrium of strategies. For instance, in trying to find balance, the delegates faced myriad pressing questions. What kinds of laws would Mexican leadership subject foreigners when these outsiders wanted to own land? To what extent would foreign diplomats be allowed to influence Mexican politics? And how would Mexican law welcome foreign capital, but reduce economic manipulation from the outside?

It is unlikely that anyone ever managed to supply reasonable answers to these fundamental questions; however, the delegates at the convention decided that it would be advantageous to Mexico if land would be protected yet not completely shielded from foreign elements. They decided that the economy could well utilize foreign capital generated by the inflow of foreigners who would promote mutually beneficial economic exchange with Mexicans.

On the other hand, in order to lessen instances of exploitation by foreign elements, the delegates made sure that foreigners, too, respected and honored the Mexican constitutional code. In addition to a 1915 decree by Carranza, which forced foreigners to surrender all ambassadorial assistance of their home countries as a part of a legal stipulation for land purchases, Article 27 required foreigners to become Mexican nationals before acquiring any land. "Rather than having to renounce the protection of their governments, they were simply not to invoke it,"[270] observes Niemeyer. Foreigners needed to formally declare themselves Mexican nationals before the Ministry of Foreign Relations.

In general, highlighting a nationalistic attitude and upholding the interests of the state, the convention deliberated with a firm approach to maintain an amicable

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[270] Niemeyer 149.

relationship with its Yankee neighbor and simultaneously strove to regulate the reach and scope of foreign interaction in Mexico. "Fearful of foreign intervention, but recognizing the necessity of foreign capital," notes Niemeyer, "the convention had decided that the foreigner would be welcome to invest in Mexico, but on Mexican terms, not his."[271]

After a tumultuous outpouring of arguments, counterarguments, and rebuttals, the delegates decided on a final version of Article 27 with seven provisions, most of which were lengthy. Because this article in particular helped frame nationalism, it is certainly crucial to provide a fragment of it. To see how this article informed budding conceptions of nationalism, consider the first six paragraphs:

> *The ownership of lands and waters comprise within the limits of the national territory is vested originally in the Nation, which has had, and has, the right to transmit title thereof to private persons, thereby constituting private property*.
>
> Private property shall not be *expropriated* except for reasons of public utility and by means of indemnification.
>
> *The Nation shall have at all times the right to impose on private property such limitations as the public interest may demand as well as the right to regulate the development of natural resources, which are susceptible of appropriation, in order to conserve them and equitably to distribute the public wealth. For this purpose necessary measures shall be taken to divide large landed estates; to develop small landed holdings; to establish new centers of rural population with such lands and waters as may be indispensable to them; to encourage agriculture and to prevent the destruction of natural resources, and to protect property from damage detrimental to society. Settlements, hamlets situated on private property and communes which lack lands or water or do not possess them in sufficient quantities for their needs shall have the right to be provided with them from the adjoining properties, always having due regard for small landed holdings. Wherefore, all grants of lands made up to the present time under the decree of January 6, 1915, are confirmed. Private property acquired for the said purposes shall be considered as taken for public utility.*
>
> *In the Nation is vested direct ownership of all minerals or substances which in veins, layers, masses, or beds constitute deposits whose nature is different from the components of the land, such as minerals from which metals and metaloids* [sick] *used for industrial purposes are extracted; beds of precious stones, rock salt and salt lakes formed directly by marine waters, products derived from the decomposition of rocks, when their exploitation requires*

[271] Niemeyer 150.

> *underground work; phosphates which may be used for fertilizers; solid mineral fuels; petroleum and all hydrocarbons—solid, liquid or gaseous.*
>
> *In the Nation is likewise vested the ownership of the waters of territorial seas to the extent and in the terms fixed by the law of nations; those of lakes and inless* [sic] *of bays; those of interior lakes of natural formation which are directly connected with flowing waters; those of principal rivers or tributaries from the points at which there is a permanent current of water in their beds to their mouths, whether they flow to the sea or cross two or more States; those of intermittent streams which traverse two or more States in their main body; the waters of rivers, streams, or ravines, when they bound the national territory or that of the States; waters extracted from mines; and the beds and banks of the lakes and streams hereinbefore mentioned, to the extent fixed by law. Any other stream of water not compromised within the foregoing enumeration shall be considered as an integral part of the private property through which it flows; but the development of the waters when they pass from one landed property to another shall be considered of public utility and shall be subject to the provisions by the States.*
>
> *In the cases to which the two foregoing paragraphs refer, the ownership of the Nation is inalienable and may not be lost by prescription; concessions shall be granted by the Federal Government to private parties or civil or commercial corporations organized under the laws of Mexico, only on condition that said resources be regularly developed, and on the further condition that the legal provisions be observed* [italics in the original].[272]

The rhetoric and language used in this article appear rather patriotic; not pompous or domineering, but confident, detailed, even gracefully poetic, especially the paragraphs that express recognition of natural resources as the Nation's possessions. The article gives the Nation all the power to decide upon matters of ownership, a Nation that will no longer be subjected to usurpations. This article clearly defines ownership, stating that not only land, but also many of the Nation's natural assets, such as minerals, chemical substances, land masses, metals, streams, rivers, etc., will also become legitimate objects of ownership.

Perhaps the most important line in the article—"the ownership of the Nation is inalienable and may not be lost by prescription"—marks a striking change in direction. To conclude, and to add to this observation, Niemeyer makes the following judicious

[272] *Mexican Constitution Compared* 15-18.

comment about the importance behind this transformative article. He strongly believes that "[m]ore than any other article of the new constitution, this article represented the break with the Porfirian past, embodied the cry for economic independence, proclaimed the destruction of vested interests, and gave people hope of a better future to the rural masses. In short, it was the convention's most singular achievement."[273]

Overall, up to this point, this chapter has been discussing three important articles, Articles 3, 5, and 27, and the legal proceedings that brought them to successful completion at the Constitutional Convention. The creation of these articles sheds light on Carranza's skills as a moderator and as the organizer who placed the future of the nation before his own personal beliefs. He presented the framers of the constitution with a working draft and allowed them to decide upon the most beneficial ways to assemble a legal basis for the country, one that would support and promote law, order, and democracy.

The purpose of this chapter thus far has been to track Carranza's footsteps as he allowed the formation of a constitution, and it has shown that he fostered a lively environment of debate, discussion, and compromise. A delegate, Luis Fernández Martínez, described the delegates' and Carranza's participation at the convention in a revealing manner: "The independent spirit of this Convention has been a surprise to those who intended to manage it according to their wishes. Such a manifestation of independent strength is a hope for the country."[274]

On February 5, 1917, when the final draft of the constitution had already been completed and ready to be made public, Carranza prided himself in having accomplished

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[273] Niemeyer 165.

[274] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 222.

the feat of organizing a consortium of some of the country's greatest legal minds as well as distinguished and representative members of society. Recognizing that their input would prove indispensible, Carranza, despite having suffered countless blows to his initial draft, merely contradicted, but never refused differing lines of reasoning.

The year 1917 brought Mexicans a new political and social moment in time. When Carranza and his band of Constitutionalists announced the Constitution of 1917 on the fifth day of February, the Constitutionalist Cause had won a triumph like no other. The three articles heretofore discussed each heightened Mexico's move away from a past that was filled with repression and exploitation: Article 3 endeavored to protect the rights of society and thus of man by secularizing or "liberating" education; Article 5 attempted to protect the workforce through labor programs in a post-Industrial Revolution world; and Article 27 tried to protect land from local and foreign exploiters.

Besides these three crucial articles—which together epitomize radical paradigm changes in Mexican political thought and philosophy—other aspects remain to be questioned and studied. For example, what made the Constitution of 1917 truly different and unique from the previous constitution created in 1857? After the changes had been made, what thematic changes and promises did the new Constitution impart? These questions are imperative to pose and pursue, because they compel one to determine whether Carranza continued on the same political course on which he promised to remain during the previous phases of the Revolution. We, therefore, now turn our attention to these questions.

A Constitution in Comparison

Under a chapter entitled "Of the Individual Guarantees," the first article in the Constitution of 1917 states: "Every person in the United States of Mexico shall enjoy all guarantees granted by this Constitution; these shall neither be abridged nor suspended except in such cases and under such conditions as are herein provided."[275] Although in practice the Constitution of 1917 did not eliminate foreign intrusion or local abuse completely,[276] in theory it did offer Mexicans a sense of security, a gesture of patriotism at the very least and assured Mexicans that their motherland could once again aspire to reach a state of true sovereignty, Carranza's main goal.

The Constitution of 1917 highlighted Carranza's drive to defend Mexico against the external world. When he broadcasted the idea behind a new constitution and actually supervised the creation of Mexico's Constitution of 1917, history had finally given Mexicans an advocate and a protector. The creation of this constitution not only illustrates Carranza's political abilities, but also his aptitude at working on a philosophical level, since the construction of a constitution not only represents an act of politics, but a philosophical accomplishment. Through this constitution, one can observe Carranza's faculty for political philosophy, and although many historians acknowledge Carranza for the creation of the Constitution of 1917, praise and deep interpretation rarely, if ever, follow this fact-based acknowledgment.

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[275] *Mexican Constitution Compared* 2.

[276] Mark T. Gilderhus examines the first instance when the Constitution of 1917 was put to the test. He says, "[t]hrough the use of threats, blandishments, and obstruction, the United States successfully blocked Carranza's efforts to compel acceptance of Article Twenty-Seven….Thus ended the first round in the controversy over the Mexican Constitution of 1917. The dispute ended dragged on tediously for two decades until 1938, when President Lázaro Cárdenas vindicated Article Twenty-Seven once and for all by expropriating foreign-owned petroleum lands in Mexico," in "The United States and Carranza, 1917: The Question of De Jure Recognition," *The Americas* 29, no. 2 (October 1972): 231.

Now that analysis covering the Constitutional Convention allowed one to view Carranza and his program in action, one can now turn to analyze the Constitution of 1917 and take a step back in order to understand its groundwork. As it will become evident, Carranza's plan of action served as the outline that fashioned the constitution's foundation. The foundation, a synthesized amalgam of politics and philosophy, echoes the revolutionary spirit of Carranza and further reflects his vision of the Revolution in its totality.

It is of paramount importance to begin an exegetical analysis of the Constitution of 1917 by first situating the concept of revolution, a constitution's twin concomitant. Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, a longtime Mexicanist, explores with profundity the concept of revolution and several of its implications in the twentieth-century Mexican tradition. Philosophically questioning the concept of a revolution, Ruiz begins his book-length study on the Revolution entitled *The Great Rebellion* by opening up his discussion at the starting point of the subject.

"What is Revolution?"[277] In response, Ruiz muses that a revolution, in the early twentieth-century model, acquired the obligation to change the social, political, and economic characteristics of a nation. A twentieth-century revolution did not just change one of these aspects, but all three. In this way, Ruiz points indirectly to Carranza as the only *caudillo* who managed to actually spark manifold change with the help of the Revolution.

Ruiz reaches a focal point when he makes the following claim:

> Yet a "Revolution," if indeed more than a mere change of rulers, heralds the dawn of a new age, in an economic and social as well as a political sense. It is

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[277] Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *The Great Rebellion: Mexico*, *1905-1924* (New York: Norton, 1980) 3.

> not just a change of rulers, not simply a matter of throwing the rascals out, but a transformation of the basic structure of society. *A Revolution…is a social catharsis* [emphasis mine] that, among its other accomplishments, dramatically alters the prevailing economic system, and transforms the class structure as well as the patterns of wealth and income distribution. Moreover, in the twentieth century, a Revolution must modify the nature of a nation's economic dependency on the outside world.[278]

Perhaps more important is the argument Ruiz makes about violence and revolution: that a revolution is not always connected to violent behavior as can be common among popular representations of rebellions and *coup d'états*. "One must not confuse violence with Revolution; the two are not always the same,"[279] Ruiz reminds us.

He concludes his first chapter by kindling the argument that Carranza, in fact, became the only one who embraced the Revolution in ways his adversaries and critics had yet to understand. This belief urges him to say the following:

> While social and economic principles might have occasionally been at stake, the armed clashes were actually factions of the rebel family pitted against one against another. Undoubtedly, Zapata, conferred with the title of "Attila of the South" by his rivals, stood for social change. Measured by the standards of Lenin and his disciples, his contemporaries in Russia, he falls woefully short of being a revolutionary. Zapata's coreligionists at the Convención de Aguascalientes, who on occasion spoke for social change, fit into a similar category. No scholar, however, has verified the revolutionary credentials of Francisco Villa, the ally of Zapata and the major enemy of the Constitutionalists, who were the ultimate victors. At best, the evidence contradicts the view of Villa as a revolutionary. Venustiano Carranza, the First Chief of the Constitutionalists, by his own admission, had no use for revolutionaries or radicals. Violence in Mexico, in summary, did not necessarily signify Revolution. [280]

Whereas Ruiz questions the concept of a revolution and defines it in the Mexican context, the present analysis puts into question the concept of a constitution. What is a

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[278] Ruiz 4.

[279] Ruiz 7.

[280] Ruiz 8.

constitution? This question forms the basis of the last part of the chapter, because it tries to understand the role of a constitution in Mexico during the early twentieth century.

The argument will be made here that a constitution in the early twentieth century did not necessarily mean an abrupt change in the *status quo*, because many forces would not allow for rapid change. On the other hand, it did signal and demanded a reconfiguration of the political system. In realizing this situation, Carranza attempted to set the legal basis of the nation, so that one day—in the near future—change, without the need for a violent human rebellion, would become achievable. If one thing should become clear to students of Mexican history, it is that change in Mexico during this time was a slow-moving process. Similarly, it should also be clear that in response to this prolongation of change, it can be argued that Carranza nevertheless accelerated, albeit modestly, the pace of change by organizing a Constitutional Convention and authorizing a constitution.

As is obvious in the Mexican situation, revolutions and constitutions seem to always carry a symbiotic relationship, since they mutually benefit one another in various ways. To speak of a revolution without reference to a constitution may seem bizarre and in Mexico, revolutionary struggles became sealed by the mighty force of constitutions or other similar declarations of principles. The force behind constitutions, which are powerfully devoted to ideals, can be attributed to those few who spur them into action.

In February 1917, Carranza unveiled a reformed version of the Constitution of 1857. It is important to note that even though a group of elected delegates framed the constitution, the reality must not be overlooked that the Constitution of 1917 nevertheless had its conceptual origins with Carranza. From conception to completion, the

Constitution of 1917 could be fully attributed to Carranza, since he was the moving force behind it, and therefore any meaningful discussion about the Constitution of 1917 would surely benefit from a discussion on Carranza's plan for the political future of Mexico.

The following questions must be asked at this point: If one considers the Constitution of 1917 to be a direct reflection of Carranza's vision, in what ways did the constitution reveal alterations, if any, in his project? Are there any indications in the Constitution of 1917 that show, in comparison to the previously studied stages of the Revolution, whether Carranza remained on the same or similar path?

The answer to the second question is neither completely yes nor completely no. On the one hand, Carranza valued continuity, and continuity at the Constitutional Convention took various forms, for instance the Constitution of 1917 carefully followed the Constitution of 1857 and made sure that certain principles and characteristics would be upheld and not abandoned. It was important for Carranza to follow the footsteps left behind by the Constitution of 1857, since these ultimately helped lead to the development of an updated civil and legal code. In this sense, Carranza respected continuity and allowed for previous men of history, that is, giants of Mexican history, to have a direct effect on the future of Mexico.

On the other hand, Carranza and the delegates left much space for discontinuity, especially Carranza, since some of his original ideals were bent to the rhythm of the convention. The Constitution of 1917 tried to follow the tempo of the Constitution of 1857; however, in the face of contemporary issues, Carranza realized that the Constitution of 1857 needed to undergo enormous changes, ones that reflected the socio-political state of affairs in the early twentieth century, not in the mid-nineteenth century.

The creation of the Constitution of 1917 was, first and foremost, a project of reformation, and after it had been fully completed by the convention, it illustrated Carranza's commitment to constitutionality or, more specifically, to constitutional democracy. Although the word "democracy" had seldom been tossed around at the Constitutional Convention, or utilized frequently or freely by Carranza during his verbal exchanges with the delegates, the Constitution of 1917 sought to institutionalize the concept of democracy. More specifically, the Constitution of 1917 introduced the idea of constitutional democracy; the idea that society could forge ahead productively, civically, and by favoring social equality only if its citizens would abide by the terms of the provisions and principles contained therein.

Municipal reform stands as one of the prime examples that can be given of Carranza's impelling force to incorporate constitutional democracy. Reform at the municipal level would ensure that social equality would be achieved if municipalities would be granted the power to declare and exercise certain laws that would reflect the unique set of issues plaguing each municipality. Of course, municipal laws, in much the same way as the articles in the constitution, would be developed by representative individuals in society, such as delegates, diplomats, lawyers, and other important men of society. In accordance with the definition of "constitutional democracy," all the provisions in municipal laws would flow from the convictions and better judgment of the framers, whose task would be to write law that was relevant to the pressing issues of the time and location.

One can focus on Article 115 in the Constitution of 1917 to make a case about how Carranza always insisted on constitutional democracy at the municipal level by

defining the relationship between municipalities and the national government. Before finalizing Article 115 in the constitution, Carranza had made a declaration on December 25, 1914, when he called for a decree that would begin to link local progress with national progress. In this decree, Carranza declared that the independent municipality would be the source of all progress: "the independent municipality," stated Carranza, "is the base of the political liberty of the people."[281]

For Carranza, constitutional democracy went beyond instituting a constitution, but also establishing a constitutional code that would help to define and sharpen the voice of the people. He achieved this feat by characterizing a unique political system, and unlike the American version of federalism, which united the political governing bodies more closely, Carranza's version tried to draw clear lines of separation between them. In doing so, he managed to give power to municipalities, power that allowed them to protect those for whom it served more directly.

In his 1914 decree, Carranza began to define what he meant by a *municipio* and its freedoms. He defended the autonomy of the municipality, not only because the Constitution of 1857 failed to empower it, but because Carranza truly believed that the only way of giving power to the people was by creating *municipios libres*, or free townships as in the American case, which were subdivisions of counties that would have leaders elected by the people. These municipal leaders or *ayuntamientos* would ensure that local law would be carried out and respected by all. In this way, Carranza tried to loosen the grip of the national government on a municipality and at the same time, by obliging municipal leaders to be openly elected by the people, he also tried to include everyone in the process of enforcing law, order, and justice.

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[281] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 167.

The political reform of an autonomous municipality became a significant change that Carranza put into place, and it is one worth discussing, because, as Niemeyer powerfully notes, "efforts to broaden the concept of the *municipio libre* indicated faith in the principles of local self-government and grass-roots democracy."[282] With the introduction of this form of federalism, in which municipalities have authority to govern and the national government has a limited influence upon municipalities, Carranza gave the country a political organization that was republican and democratic in nature—the birth of municipal life.

Let us examine a portion of the draft of Article 115, which caused disagreement among the delegates. It is worth examining this article, because one can begin to see the kinds of changes that the delegates proposed and the level of debate that it sparked. Although Carranza had set things in motion during the 1914 decree, the fate of this decree lay in the hands of the delegates at the convention. The committee at the convention recommended the following article for inclusion in the constitution:

> The States shall adopt their internal government the popular, representative, republican form which shall have the free [self-governing] municipality as the basis of its territorial division and its political and administrative organization in accordance with the three following principles:
>
> I. Each municipality shall be administered by a council chosen by direct, popular vote and there shall be no intermediate authority between the latter and the state government.
>
> II. The municipalities shall freely administer their finances, shall collect all the taxes, and shall contribute to the public spending by the State in the proportion and according to the terms which the local legislature shall determine. The executives shall name inspectors to receive the States' share and to watch over the bookkeeping in each municipality. Financial conflicts arising between the municipality and the branches of a state government shall be settled by the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation in accordance with the provisions of the law.

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[282] Niemeyer 167.

> III. The municipalities shall be invested with juridical personality for all legal purposes.[283]

The third paragraph, which covers the second principle, caused the greatest amount of debate, especially among five individuals, José Rodríguez Gonzáles, Martínez de Escobar, Reynoso, Cepeda Medrano, and Calderón.[284] Principle II triggered ambivalent responses, because it dealt with the financial dimension of a municipality's obligations. From the financial perspective, many questions come to mind about how municipalities ought to be treated in the greater fiscal composition of the country. The delegates mentioned above, for the most part, objected to the proposed article, because they believed that financially independent municipalities would cause an imbalance of resources across society.

Unfortunately, many of the delegates lacked or had limited experience in the fields of finance, banking, economics, as well as in general administrative knowledge, and thus the reason why many of the counter-arguments that were hurled across the floor were fueled by personal anger and sentimentality. On the other hand, the arguments posed by the figures named above served to prove that the country's transformation into a federalist nation was not going to be an easy one. This transformation was destined to encounter many setbacks and hence forced to move forward gradually and not at the fast pace many of the delegates wished.

After hours upon hours of deliberation, those who did not prefer financially independent municipalities eventually won, although they had to settle on compromises in terms of the wording and meaning of the article. It may help to compare Article 115 in

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[283] *Diario de los Debates*, 1: 695.

[284] Niemeyer 169.

the 1917 version with the 1857 version, as this comparison will show to the reader the sharp emphasis that Carranza placed on this article.

> *Of the States of the Federation* [1857 version]
> Art. 109 [coincides with Article 115 in the 1917 version]. The State shall adopt for their internal government the popular, representative, republican form of government. The term of office in the case of Governors shall not exceed six years. The prohibitions on the President, Vice President and President ad interim, referred to in Article 76, shall be applicable to State Governors and functionaries acting in their stead.
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> *Of the States of the Federation* [1917 version]
> Art. 115. The States shall adopt for their internal government the popular, representative, republican form of government; *they shall have as the basis of their territorial division and political and administrative organization the free municipality, in accordance with the following provisions:*
> *I. Each municipality shall be administered by a town council chosen by direct vote of the people, and no authority shall intervene between the municipality and the State Government.*
> *II. The municipalities shall freely administer their own revenues which shall be derived from the taxes fixed by the State Legislatures which shall at all times be sufficient to meet their needs.*
> *III. The municipalities shall be regarded as enjoying corporate existence for all legal purposes.*
> *The Federal Executive and the State Governors shall have command over all public forces of the municipalities wherein they may permanently or temporarily reside.*
> Constitutional State Governors shall not be re-elected, nor shall their term of office exceed four years.
> *The prohibitions of Article 85 are applicable to substitute or ad interim governors.*
> *The number of Representatives in the State Legislatures shall be in proportion to the inhabitants of each State, but in no case shall the number of representatives in any State Legislature be less than fifteen.*
> *Each electoral district of the States shall choose a Representative and an alternate to the State Legislature.*
> *Every State Governor shall be a Mexican citizen by birth and a native thereof, or resident therein not less than five years immediately prior to the day of election* [emphasis in the original].[285]

One first notices the lengthiness of the 1917 version of Article 115 as compared with the 1857 version, which suggests its level of significance. This in part may be due to

[285] *Mexican Constitution Compared* 89-91.

the fact that the framers of the 1857 Constitution focused less on defining the relationship between the national government and its small governing bodies. The framers in the mid-nineteenth century failed to realize the need to strengthen the relationship between the national government and municipalities, and instead concentrated all the power in the national government. The centralization of power at the hands of the national government perhaps was the reason why the Díaz dictatorship endured for so long. In 1917, however, changing attitudes opened up new corridors of opportunities and thus began a critical process of state building. With the help of Article 115, Carranza helped reshape the relationship between the central government and provinces, and attempted to equalize the power held by each.

In this state-building process, many issues, especially fiscal ones, resulted in disagreements between those fighting for the complete autonomy of the municipality and those struggling to grant the national government more power. As Niemeyer relates to his readers: "Municipal autonomists were forced to settle for a measure granting free administration of local finances, but within limits set by the legislature…[those] who longed to establish a free-functioning unit of local government, a showcase of democracy governed by its own legislative, executive, and judicial authorities…were defeated."[286]

In Sergio Francisco de la Garza's book-length study on the subject, entitled *El Municipio, Historia, Naturaleza y Gobierno*,[287] he argues that both camps won the war that was sparked by Article 115, since the final composition of the article allowed for an autonomous municipality, but one that would have to abide by certain rules set by a

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[286] Niemeyer 180.

[287] Sergio Francisco de la Garza, *El Municipio, Historia, Naturaleza, y Gobierno* (México City: Editorial Jus, 1947).

national governing body. In this way, there would be some balance between the central governing body and its constituent political units.

A sense of balance became a crucial aspect in the management of power and in the act of exercising it democratically; thus, in essence, it was the beginning of a system of checks and balances. On the other hand, as de la Garza is quick to point out, Carranza's belief of a truly autonomous municipality, even with its fixed responsibilities to a national legislature, became nothing more than a plan for the future, since it took a great amount of time before the rise of the free municipality would ever transpire.[288]

Regardless of the fact that it took many years before the provisions of Article 115 would take its full effect, the message that it immediately arose and confirmed must not go unacknowledged. Creating and conveying the right message constituted the first step in building a sovereign state, and Carranza certainly fulfilled this first and fundamental step. Carranza marshaled in a new age and fashioned a new political mentality; he gave birth to an Organic Law of the land, hoping that, as he said in his own words, this would "lead [them] to live the tranquil life of free peoples, through respect for liberty and the rights of each other."[289] At the completion of that great Mexican experiment supervised by "the spiritual father of the constitution,"[290] Carranza, how the ensuing chapters in Mexican history would play out was left entirely up to the leaders in Mexico, and not up to Carranza, since his job was done.

The immediate outcome of the convention was the rebirth of nationalism by way of constitutional democracy, which the constitution highlighted in nearly all of its

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[288] de la Garza 202.

[289] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 214.

[290] Niemeyer 215.

articles. It should be pointed out that, even though the Constitutional Convention was divided into two groups, the leftists, or the *liberal Carrancistas*, and the rightists, or the Jacobin *Obregonistas*, the split between these two camps could be defined not so much in terms of substance as in intensity. In reality, these two cohorts saw a similar picture of the political future of Mexico, save for each saw slightly different contours and shades.

Overall, everyone at the convention, both leftists and the rightists, both those who were for and against Carranza, both educated and uneducated, and both radicals and conservatives felt the wave of freedom that consumed their souls as a result of the Constitution of 1917. Some chanted exclamatory statements of collective triumph at the top of their lungs, while others favored the silence of peaceful and almost spiritual contemplation.

But verbal responses were by far more noticeable and abundant: Rafael Márquez stated, "The laws of given by the Constitutional Convention will be the salvation of our country"[291]; Román Rosas y Reyes stated that the Constitution of 1917 "restored faith to our homes and made a Fatherland, bringing dignity to our children…making them men and women"[292]; Pedro Chapa stated that the constitution stood as "the basis for the building of a free and sovereign nation whose strength and vigor will be exemplary"[293]; and Santiago Ocampo stated, "in the cruelest winter of our life as a nation, the Convention has forged the Constitution that will maintain our Mexican Republic in continuous spring."[294]

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[291] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 226.

[292] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 226.

[293] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 226.

[294] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 226.

With these joyous responses, the Constitutional Convention culminated and, as this chapter has been attempting to claim, Carranza's immutable treatise of constitutional democracy and nationalism could be seen to reach its zenith during and especially at the conclusion of the convention. Thus far, this chapter accomplished two important things.

The first part of this chapter showed how Carranza used all of his energies and talents to gather a Constitutional Convention in the name of the Revolution, and gave the openly elected delegates the opportunity to challenge and decide upon all the articles in the Constitution of 1917 as they saw fit.

Second, the last part of this chapter made a major comparison between the Constitution of 1857 and the Constitution of 1917 and noted that Article 115, which leveled out the power held by the national government and municipalities, highlighted a stark change in vision. This article fortified the relationship between these two entities and ultimately gave the people a valid and direct voice in local and even national politics, and that was precisely what the constitution accomplished in its moment of truth.

Because of the constitution's power to move and encourage, a cathartic feeling and great inspiration for the betterment of society overcame many of the delegates. Rafael Martínez Mendoza, one individual who was particularly affected by this emotion, stated, "If we, the individuals who dictated the Constitution of 17 (sic), do not keep on fighting to maintain unharmed the principles of liberty and justice proclaimed in it, our work as delegates will be null and despicable, since it means nothing to give good laws to a people if one does not fight for their application and preservation."[295]

This chapter closes by reminding readers, once again, that constitutions have striking patriotic qualities, since they are often written out of passion, out of enthusiasm

[295] Quoted in and translated by Niemeyer 230.

over one's country and one's people, often serving as searchlights for autonomy. Once written, constitutions, with the sense of hope that it inevitably emanates, make everything appear benign, if only momentarily, and despite destitute social and political realities. They provide a sense of optimism, anticipation, and pride, because they afford a people with an opportunity to aspire for a better immediate future, and most of the time, they derive their vigor from past struggles and from the deeds of ancestors.[296]

By creating a constitution, Carranza helped build a Mexican character defined by a renewed sense of confidence. He shook the system, tore it apart, and allowed for new horizons to stretch freely across a new-fangled political firmament. Upon both causing and witnessing the fall of an old and oppressive system, he leapt into action and—with the air full of fugitive strains of old *corridos*—Carranza ventured to provide Mexicans with a constitution that held intact a Mexican spirit of brotherhood and a devotion to the Mexican land.

Constitutions have been part of Mexico's political history, and even though for the past two centuries Mexicans witnessed the induction of seven constitutions, three of these have been comprehensive, official, and internationally recognized. Those endorsed and enacted in 1824, 1857, and 1917 served as fully authorized, legal constitutions of Mexico. Each time that Mexican leadership created a constitution, there was always a

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[296] To use an American example, over two hundred years ago, for example, Samuel Adams, an American Founding Father, once said about the American constitution: "The liberties of our country, the freedoms of our civil Constitution are worth defending at all hazards; it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors." Adams continued to affirm: "They purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood. It will bring a mark of everlasting infamy on the present generation—enlightened as it is—if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of designing men." Bernard Smith, *The Democratic Spirit: A Collection of American Writings from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* 2nd ed. revised (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1943) 63.

deep reflection upon the merits and demerits of the previous constitution, since progress has always been the purpose.

A constitution without concerns for progress or without meaningful regards for how to move forward in better, more productive ways would result in futile attempts for change. In the Mexican context, constitutions also tended to connect leaders with the public and served as links between leadership by the political minority and popular interests held by the majority. Constitutions exemplified a collective will and, with human action and human consciousness, these provoked action through mass participation. Not to mention that they also intrinsically embodied nationalism and fostered egalitarian and communitarian values, as Carranza's Constitution of 1917 so clearly shows.

Chapter V

Los tropiezos y la declinación política de un líder mexicano:

Revisiting Mexican Constitutionality and Nationalism[297]

Democracy…cannot be anything other than the government of noble, profound and serene Reason…Democracy…must not seek the majority in partisan compromises of whatever origin or shielded under whatever name but in the representation of all classes and all legitimate interests.
—Venustiano Carranza[298]

Mounting problems were afoot in Mexico after the Constitution of 1917 had been promulgated and put into place. By no means did the completion of the constitution put an end to the Revolution, as so many problems required immediate attention and so many relationships of power continued to shift. By now it should be clear that at every stage of the Revolution, relationships of power constantly reallocated to address new socio-political arrangements, and this time, in May 1917, the political situation created by the Constitutional Convention turned the direction drastically once again. Not only had the entire Mexican political system undergone a complete reformation, with the constitution reflecting and epitomizing this enormous change, but Carranza walked away from

[297] "Los tropiezos y la declinación política de un líder mexicano" in the chapter title translates to "The missteps and political decline of a Mexican leader."

[298] Quoted in Krauze 366.

Querétaro as Mexico's president under the new constitution, as the Revolution's first president.[299]

Becoming the president of Mexico so abruptly accelerated the demise of Carranza, although it was not the only factor. In May of 1917, when Carranza had been declared Mexico's president, Mexicans seemed to lack complete faith in this man, or they at least began to lose belief in him henceforth. They struggled to accept individuals who held leadership roles for too long, and they preferred to "test" out new leaders, ones who stayed in power temporarily, the rationale of which was to see which men in power proved to truly take the nation into favorable places.

Even after amending the Constitution of 1857 and giving rise to the Constitution of 1917, Mexicans found themselves far from having arrived at a closing stage of the Revolution, since the new constitution opened up long discussions and heated arguments about how to best implement the country's new set of laws. In the midst of these discussions, Carranza came under attack and his time in power was to be fleeting.

The title of this chapter is a work of irony. Carranza found himself on a steady decline between May of 1917 and May of 1920, whereas, during this same time, nationalism and other similar national outlooks began to rise and increase in intensity. By instinct, one would expect both Carranza's popularity and national feelings of autonomy to go on the rise in synchrony; however, a different outcome occurred, since Carranza could not move the Revolution into the next stage.

It is rather ironic that Carranza's reputation fell at an exponential rate whilst nationalism rose rapidly, since much of this rise in collective feelings of nationalism could be attributed to the work undertaken by this man. Alas, the two were critically

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[299] Madero and Huerta became presidents during, but not as a result of, the Revolution.

divorced, and instead of being seen as two icebergs that shared a fundamental base, the two became irrevocably separated in a rather hasty operation.

Nevertheless, even though Carranza suffered tremendous blows and new rivals singled him out as an enemy of the state, nationalism continued to escalate in recognition and esteem. One could follow the rise of Mexican nationalism by locating and tracking the public responses garnered by the Constitution of 1917. As the prime work of Carranza, the Constitution of 1917 brought together feelings of national identity that attempted to seal, once and for all, a name and honor that would define a sovereign nation.

These feelings of a national identity only began to solidify after the Constitution of 1917 had been signed and officially instituted, since it was during this time that the legal framework of the country had begun to take shape. Alternatively, abiding by this new legal system turned out to be problematic, given that the Constitution of 1917 presented Mexican society with a system of rule that had never before existed, and this again emphasizes the experimental nature of both the Constitutional Convention and the Constitution of 1917. Therefore, because everything appeared new and thus perhaps dubious, Carranza stood as the obvious man at fault.

In this uncertain background, Carranza attempted to set the example when he became the president of Mexico in May of 1917. He took on a great responsibility and ultimately led an experiment whose vital outcome, the Constitution of 1917, began to be in motion almost immediately; he also became determined to set the pace of the constitution, and ensured that it would replace the previous legal code of the country and that all governors understood its implications. Carranza had the critical task of leading the

country amidst a new political system, and in this new system, he no longer represented a revolutionary or a *caudillo* or a constitutionalist or even the *Primer Jefe*. No; this time he was the president.

In Chapter 33 of *Fire & Blood*, T. F. Fehrenbach professes that Carranza was part of a new wave of leaders who emerged from the "democratization"[300] process that took place at the Constitutional Convention. This group of leaders differentiated themselves from previous ones in that, to them, the Revolution did not only signify agrarian reform, an implication that would be "a complete distortion"[301] of the Revolution, but a more inclusive kind of reform that encompassed wide-ranging alterations in society, covering politics, economics, law, even psychology.

In many ways, coming out of this "democratization" process placed a great amount of responsibility on Carranza, since Mexicans expected him to take on all of the problems that society faced. A "democratization" process is all-inclusive, in theory at least, as it attempts to reinvent society, as turned out to be the case here with Mexico.

Broadly speaking, the Revolution, in the stage following the creation of the Constitution of 1917, produced something noteworthy, according to Fehrenbach: "Mexicans finally [began] to derive institutions and laws from their own experience and culture rather than importing ideals and aspirations wholesale from alien societies."[302] In

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[300] T. F. Fehrenbach, *Fire & Blood: A History of Mexico* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995) 529.

[301] Fehrenbach 529.

[302] Fehrenbach 529.

this process of state building of the Revolution, the "most effective men of the revolution were neither peasants nor agrarian reformers."[303]

In many ways, Carranza, the new head of the government, felt the pressure the moment he became the president, since in this role he needed to bring his aspirations and philosophies to a full circle. The presidency was supposed to give Carranza the opportunity to showcase to Mexicans his skills as a leader and as a serious proponent of the law. It also became the perfect time for him to be able to win over the masses and demonstrate that he, without a doubt, stood on their side regarding various key issues.

During the three-year period between May of 1917 and May of 1920, which could be considered as the culminating stage for Carranza, the Revolution finally came to be understood for the goals that it had hitherto achieved. After the Constitutional Convention ended, the Revolution redirected its focus from guns, fights, and blood to progress, social order, and civic duty.

Yet, one cannot dismiss the reality that "the bloody phase of the revolution was necessary, judging from the failures in the same century in the Hispanic world from Spain to Argentina."[304] By any estimation, Carranza and his consortium at the Constitutional Convention redirected the conflict and redefined the concept of the Revolution, as they gave the Revolution a new quality, one characterized by constitutionality, democracy, and sovereignty.[305]

The argument could be made that the Constitutional Convention, of all the other things that it managed to accomplish, succeeded also at proving to all that Mexico stood

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[303] Fehrenbach 529.

[304] Fehrenbach 530.

[305] Even though, to be sure, the word "democracy" took little part in his rhetoric.

as a nation of resilient people who could pick themselves up and carve out a new political future. After the brutal years that led to the Constitutional Convention, the nation had suffered from extraordinary violence, affliction, and squalor. Mexicans proved also, above all, that they had the ability to survive and endure in the face of seemingly unending hardship. The Constitutional Convention and the Constitution of 1917, therefore, represented two powerful symbols of courage, endurance, and nationalism.

This chapter studies the period that followed the Constitutional Convention, from May of 1917 to May of 1920, the culminating stage for Carranza, a time of decline for Carranza, but also of intensification for nationalism. The first part of this chapter concentrates on following Carranza during this three-year period, points out changes in his political rhetoric, and provides explanations concerning why he could not hold the Revolution during his presidency and why, ultimately, death sealed his fate.

In unpacking these important issues in the first part of this chapter, Charles C. Cumberland's *Mexican Revolution: The Constitutionalist Years* will be of particular help, since the last chapter in this study offers one of the few accounts that focuses solely on Carranza's presidency. Cumberland has devoted an entire book and various articles to understanding the Revolution from the vantage point of Carranza and the Constitutionalists.

Finally, the second part of this study examines the emergence, role, and fate of Mexican nationalism and ties this theme with the influence that Carranza had on the direction of nationalism in Mexico after the Constitution of 1917 had been introduced. Douglas W. Richmond's *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920*, probably the only study that specifically links Mexican nationalism to Carranza, will shed

light on many aspects of Mexican nationalism in the context of Carranza's efforts in the Revolution.

Overall, this chapter continues with the argument of this thesis that Carranza never abandoned or weakened his stance on constitutionality, but strengthened it by becoming an advocate of Mexican nationalism, which, as it were, developed a partnership with constitutionality during the Revolution. This claim will be become evident to the reader as analysis is devoted both to Carranza's brief three-year presidency and to the changing status of Mexican nationalism during this time.

So Soon a Death

In May 1917, Carranza took a drastic turn. Becoming the president did not work in his favor, but actually worked against him. The decision to come out of the Constitutional Convention as the next president turned out to be perhaps the worst one he took during the Revolution. After the Constitution of 1917, Mexicans expected the administration to begin to espouse the values that the document promised to uphold, such as "democracy" through open elections.

Although many Mexicans did not liken Carranza's self-placement in the presidential seat of power to an all-out dictatorship, the decision produced negative effects. Primarily, it served to show Mexicans that this man may have been hungry for power, even though he originally wanted to demonstrate his unbending loyalty to the newly formed constitutional framework of the country.

Carranza attempted to begin a new chapter in Mexican history, not only by helping to create it, but also by trying to center himself at the axis of power. Like the

dramatic structure of any fine work of drama in literature, the trajectory of Carranza's narrative had reached a climax in May of 1917, when the Constitutional Convention had finished its painstaking assignment—since what followed was not an uninterrupted rise in power, glory, or fame, but a bitter decline, the falling action of his story.

Feeling overconfident, Carranza thought the political pot had simmered, when in fact it had only begun to reach torrid temperatures. After the Constitutional Convention officially came to an end, he relocated back to his presidential quarters from Querétaro , only to be confronted with a number of dilemmas that challenged his administration. Perhaps more serious became the disagreements that were aimed directly and personally at Carranza, and not at his entire administration.

These personal attacks opened up new conflicts that soon began to sketch a dismal future for Carranza, and from this point forth, Carranza no longer stood as the *caudillo* or *Primer Jefe* who wanted to valiantly "constitutionalize," in a manner of speaking, the Mexican system of law. Due to various oppositions that he now confronted, Carranza had no other choice than to deal with them and try to placate them as best as possible, a feat that proved disastrous, even lethal.

One of the earliest major oppositions Carranza faced occurred when a famous and respected political newspaper, *El Gladiator*, began to publish essays and opinion pieces attacking him. Many political figures turned to this newspaper in order to sharply criticize Carranza, and among those who used this medium included such figures as Jesús Acuña, Jesús Urueta, Rafael Zubarán Capmany, and Dr. Atl. The criticisms flung by the latter, Dr. Atl, came as a surprise to many, indeed to Carranza, since Dr. Atl had been a strong

supporter of his back when the Coahuilan leader had been proclaimed as the *Primer Jefe* of the Constitutionalist Army.

Dr. Atl had once been Carranza's main investigation agent along the border, and the two got along rather well and even carried somewhat of a friendship at one point. Of course, they maintained a close relationship mainly because of the nature of Dr. Atl's work along the border, since there he collaborated with intelligence units and acted as Carranza's chief man of intelligence. His job was clearly one of great magnitude and consequence, as Carranza turned to Dr. Atl for critical information about border politics and other matters tied to the Wilson administration. Therefore, to have Dr. Atl oppose the *Primer Jefe* so publicly and with such intensity definitely speaks to the route Carranza had chosen to take in mid-1917.

To make matters worse, soon after learning about the string of public denunciations that were swung his way and after all the public humiliation transmitted nationally via the newspaper mentioned above, in early 1917 Carranza ordered the immediate censorship of this paper.[306] The decision to terminate the dissemination of this newspaper not only appears to be an act of rebellion on the part of Carranza, but it also seems like a clear act of authoritarianism that may have elicited the wrong message.

For instance, this act of suppression may have left the impression that Carranza led an administration with dictatorial tendencies, a social notion that did not serve him well, not in the short run, and certainly not in the long run. Even if the suppression of the political magazine could not be considered a dictatorial act, nevertheless the act came at a time when Carranza needed to show openness and tolerance, not insularity and fickleness.

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[306] Cumberland C. 361.

The second questionable step that Carranza took in 1917 occurred when the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista[307] turned against him, causing him to place sanctions on the outreach and influence of this network. It seems important to point out that the groups and individuals who first turned against Carranza were those who previously had been close to him in one way or another.

A pattern emerges when studying these oppositions, since most of these presumably unexpected antagonisms were launched by members of the Revolution who pledged respect for constitutionality. Many of these individuals had been those who once believed—and probably still did at the time of their oppositions—in Carranza's fight for constitutionality. Some of these individuals had participated at the Constitutional Convention, themselves eager to bring to the system the kind of constitutional reform that Carranza had campaigned and diligently sought for years. So when many members of Carranza's PLC responded to this man with fierce disagreement, the obvious reaction by Carranza was to strike back with equal or greater force.

And that was exactly what he did. After learning that the PLC had largely turned against him, Carranza retorted in a similar way as in the case of *El Gladiator*. He saw to it that the PLC had minimal amount of pull in states across the country. According to Cumberland, Carranza went as far as contacting his governors and instructed them to minimize the presence of PLC in their territories of influence.

Furthermore, in an attempt to curtail the information-gathering system that was organized by PLC, Carranza "took the position that political parties in the various states should function 'completely independently, without leagues from state to state.' Despite

[307] The PLC, or in English, the Liberal Constitutionalist Party.

his efforts, an embryonic national party of opposition had formed by the time the convention delegates took their leave."[308]

Carranza not only met with hostility at his door, but he also witnessed states across the nation explode in tempestuous controversies over governorships. After the signing of the Constitution of 1917, the system of federalism that it ascribed to the states and to Congress sparked a reshuffling of senator, legislator, and governor positions. The heated movement created by the constitution incited disputations and arrangements that prevented Carranza from entering the new political order smoothly.

If one takes into consideration the troubled route that state politics pursued after the proposed changes written in the constitution, then one must, therefore, question to what extent could one hold Carranza responsible for all the political aggression that he encountered after the convention? The answer to this question necessitates an understanding of the number and the degree of problems that state politics produced as a result of the changes introduced by the constitution and not necessarily by Carranza.

Cumberland cites countless instances of the rampant politicking that transpired after the Constitutional Convention. The new constitution did not call for a hasty and complete alteration of the system; however, it did require immediate changes at the state and local levels, and these changes could be best viewed in the politics surrounding governorships all through the nation. Cumberland tells us that "[s]erious quarrels began almost immediately, with each candidate accusing the other of making insulting remarks and of using tactics more suitable to bandits than serious politicians."[309] He continues to note that, "[a]s the campaign dragged on through the summer months [of 1917] the

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[308] Cumberland C. 362.

[309] Cumberland C. 367.

clashes became more frequent and the charges more scurrilous,"[310] thereby suggesting that post-Constitutional Convention times were marked, not only by serious political machinations and maneuverings, but also by excitement and, to a certain degree, drama.

Cumberland talks about the cases of Gustavo Espinosa Mireles, General B. Neira, and Luis Gutiérrez, all of whom engaged in a great deal of "outright rebellion"[311] and political plotting in Coahuila with the intent of winning over the governorship. After bickering and imposing on each other, the situation reached the point where even "military movements"[312] were planned. "Carranza," Cumberland points out, "may not have had the power he enjoyed in the previous year, but at the same time few people were willing to risk a renewed revolution in the name of democracy, when it was clear that all parties had been equally guilty."[313]

To mitigate, once again, the accusation that Carranza stood at the center of all of these problems, it will help to explain the brand of Mexican federalism that the new constitution unveiled. Discussion over the topic of Mexican federalism, as proposed by the Constitution of 1917, will expose the kind of complexities with which the states were left to deal and resolve. These were issues relating to governorships, the management of state budgets, and the restructuring of state political bodies, and yet arguably the most contentious predicament faced by the states was electing new governors who would act as state executives, since these executives or governors wielded the most amount of power in the states. This was primarily because they were held responsible for interacting

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[310] Cumberland C. 367.

[311] Cumberland C. 366.

[312] Cumberland C. 366.

[313] Cumberland C. 366.

with Congress on various fiscal and legal matters. To fully understand, however, the breadth and depth of Mexican federalism and how the changing essence of this political framework affected the states, one would have to place it in its proper historical context and make note of its evolutionary nature.

In May of 1917, in the foreword to *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857*, L. S. Rowe, a scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, made several observations about the changing spirit of Mexican federalism, a system of country rule that has its roots in the Constitution of 1857. In mid-19th-century Mexico, Mexican federalism found itself in stark contrast to the American model of federalism and changed radically with Carranza's reform program in 1917.

To understand the revolutionary nature of the Constitution of 1917, L. S. Rowe pointed out this comparison: "The development of Federalism in Mexico stands in marked contrast with the political evolution of the [U.S.]. In Mexico, federalism meant that sub-division of what had been, under Spanish rule, a centralized, unified system; in the United States, the establishment of a federal system signified a closer union between separated political units."[314] He continued to observe the following: "In spite of the adoption of a federal system by Mexico by 1857, the highly centralized traditions of Spanish rule perpetuated themselves and finally resulted, under the Diaz administration, in the complete subordination of the individual states to the national government."[315]

In the fight against the *Porfiriato*, the insurrectionary movement that swept Mexico sought to redefine Mexican federalism, albeit not initially, a change that

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[314] L. S. Rowe in *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857*. Trans. and arranged by H. N. Branch, LL.B., with foreword by L. S. Rowe (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1917) iii.

[315] Rowe iv.

eventually could be seen to be reflected in the new ways in which states and the federal government would share power. The shift turned out to be a clear win for states, since no longer would all the power be concentrated at the state capital.

But with this new-found power at their disposal, the states also had enormous responsibilities, and these had to be honored immediately, but not without first confronting complicated situations that required negotiation and cooperation. Unfortunately, little compromise took place, and some governor nominations and elections were either manipulated in some way or completely rigged. Ironically, the years that followed the Constitution of 1917 were times of social certainty, but of political uncertainty.

In other words, whereas society had finally been given a reason to believe that, with the help of the Constitution of 1917, the march toward democracy and toward a free society would continue with this document on its side, intricacies plagued the realm of politics, where politicians could not come to a consensus as to how to move forward with the new constitutional proposals and dictates. The effects of these constitutional proposals, to be sure, were most evident on the political scene, where the state of affairs appeared anything but certain.

The outcome of the revolutionary movement instantaneously appeared months after the Constitution of 1917 gave a new character to the relationship between the state and the federal government, and, as Rowe believes, redefining this relationship stood in direct response to the old, repressive system. "The leaders of the revolutionary movement…were convinced that the Constitution of 1857 had been used by self-seeking politicians for personal ends and that its provisions had contributed toward the

domination of the country by a self constituted oligarchy."[316] Furthermore, as Rowe continues to say: "The revolutionary leaders, headed by Carranza, hold that the avowed purposes of the revolutionary movement, namely to secure for the masses of the Mexican people better economic and social conditions, must be incorporated into the organic law and it is their hope that thereby the country will be protected against a possible reactionary movement."[317]

However, instead of "protecting against a possible reactionary movement," it actually helped inspire many. Perhaps that was the Revolution's natural course; although, as some would argue, perhaps it was not. What can be stated for sure is that, after the establishment of constitutionality and the new kind of Mexican federalism that emerged from it, new conflicts or new "revolutions" began to sprout with unnerving frequency. One may want to fault Carranza for the dangerous situation that took hold of various sates as a result of his stubborn ways, since indeed he had taken the reins of power by becoming the Revolution's first president and by coldly repressing dissidence.

Cumberland describes the situation in this way: already, as early as "January, 1918, conditions degenerated into the situation of the year before: armed clashes in Tampico, Ciudad Victoria, Villagrán, and other places; military pressures throughout the state; frequent denials by municipal authorities of the right to make speeches; and, finally, terrorizing at the ballot boxes."[318] With all of these problems, one is left with the question that continues to hover in midair: To what extent could one attribute the tumultuous world of post-Constitutional Convention times to Carranza? One has to be

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[316] Rowe iv.

[317] Rowe iv.

[318] Cumberland C. 369.

careful with attribution here, since never could one individual or one group or even one political system be faulted for the failure of society or for the destruction of order.

The most important lesson that Carranza could have benefited from can be worded in the following manner: Creating a constitutional government is not the same as running one. This lesson leads to another judicious observation, the comment that Carranza failed his political doctrine, not for believing in it and becoming an integral part of it, but for employing less than practical and acceptable tactics in order to uphold it. It must be underscored that he did not fall in love with power, but instead fell in love with a system he helped build from the ground up. The constitutional system of law and order that he helped write into the constitution brought new rhythms into society; however, given that he so ardently and fiercely believed in the "democratic" process he had begun and engineered, many of his actions began to follow a destructive path.

Overall, a balanced and sensible assessment of the political environment in 1917 would be to observe that, for the most part, there are two main elements that helped bring Mexican leaders into disagreement, and these were the new and perhaps esoteric political system introduced by the Constitution of 1917 and Carranza's ravenous and blinding passion for constitutional democracy. The latter, Carranza's mad decisions, moves the analysis into a dangerous territory, however—into the territory of psychological assessment, which will be avoided.

Still, one has to bring to the surface those instances when Carranza appeared to have been driven, not by rationality, and not by irrationality, but perhaps by a decline in his mental health or, as Richmond calls it, "[a] strange loss of energy."[319] To be sure, and

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[319] Richmond, *Carranza's Nationalist* xx.

in addition, these instances will show that Carranza had not become a lunatic, but a man spellbound and exhausted by his very own passions.

For instance, to see Carranza's voracious loyalty to his program, Cumberland provides his readers with a list of the new governors who had been elected as a result of the new political order for which the constitution called. From Aguascalientes, to Campeche, to Colima, to Guanajuato, to Hidalgo, to Jalisco, to Puebla, to Sinaloa, to Nayarit, Carranza heavily influenced the elections of the men he would fully support for the governorships of these states.

Along these lines, Cumberland admits to the reader that during Carranza's various attempts "to put trusted men into the governorships he was considerably more successful than in his congressional efforts; of the nineteen governors elected before the end of the year, fourteen were close allies, while only three—Calles of Sonora, Enrique Estrada of Zacatecas, and Silvestre G. Mariscal of Guerrero—could be considered oppositionist."[320]

It seems important to point out also that not all leaders and would-be leaders and governors believed in the kind of constitutionality that was proposed by the Constitution of 1917. To them, it simply did not symbolize a divine blessing or some perfect form of political rule. The aspirations and goals presented by the constitution make it seem as though constitutionality may have been viewed collectively by everyone as the only desirable path for Mexicans to take. On the contrary, opposition in Mexico during this time existed on various levels, the two most important of which were opposition to constitutionality by those who believed in other political systems and opposition to Carranza by those who opposed him for a variety of reasons.

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[320] Cumberland C. 371.

Democracy was no easy doctrine to sell to Mexicans, especially in 1917, when the principle of democracy in Mexico had been taking shape and few, if any, understood what it truly meant. In fact, in the political language used in the revolutionary movement, the word itself was not used with the frequency that one may expect or wish, and perhaps because of this reason, as a twenty-first-century student, one may be inclined to assess the rhetoric used in 1917 as a familiar one. The reality, however, is another one.

Yet, the definition of democracy in 1917 did not match that ascribed by modern-day American society. For example, modern American society has become accustomed to its American form of federalism, a system that divides the power between states and the federal government. In the Mexican context in 1917, this system was not always welcomed and was viewed by some as questionable, sometimes even dangerous. It is important never to dismiss the idea that American antagonism had become one of the banners held high by leaders of the Revolution, and with this sentiment still intense in the hearts of many Mexicans, accepting American forms and systems of government with open arms was not going to happen anytime soon.

The triumph of the Constitution of 1917 brought national debates to the fore, and one of these included an expressed anger toward the importation of American ideals. Fury against American ideals could be seen as an extension of Mexicans' distrust of physical American presence in Mexico. The importation of foreign ideas—be they English ideals of gender equality brought upon by the Enlightenment or early twentieth-century American ideals concerning economic and political management at the state and federal levels—in Mexico marked the continuation of growing suspicions about the

international community, and this apprehension made it extremely difficult for effective international relations.

In fact, Mexican skepticism and even aggression against its northern neighbor may have been one of the reasons that drove Mexico into German arms, especially during the bloody stage of the Revolution, between 1913 and 1916. The imposition of ideals, however productive and good these may appear to the provider, almost always results in discontent and rivalry, and the present Mexican case serves as a fine testament. Furthermore, even though "[t]he delegates to the Constitutional Convention had written into the charter a magnificent set of democratic principles that guaranteed complete freedom of political participation and a set of civil rights protection even more generous than those in the U.S. Constitution and laws,"[321] some Mexicans felt as though they were being coerced into a doctrinal system of American political philosophy.

And yet one continues to confront the topic of the all-familiar yet seemingly indefinable concept of democracy, and how it played a decisive role in Carranza's controversial decisions during his presidency. "Democracy," in the words of Cumberland, "in any real sense of the word simply did not exist in Mexico in late 1917, but the wonder is not that Carranza skirted the constitution, but that he was not more overt in behalf of his own power and that of his friends."[322] In the absence of a clearly identifiable and understandable conception of democracy, Carranza adopted a rhetoric charged by this and other political philosophical notions, albeit loosely, in order to herald an institution of law that would later become known for its "democratic" appeal. The

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[321]Cumberland C. 372.

[322] Cumberland C. 372.

problem, however, was that during his presidency he became lost in his words, ideas, and notions of the kind of Mexico he wanted to craft and present to the world.

There exists a telling case when Carranza showed no deference to the competing ideas of others, inevitably inviting others to follow suit. Cumberland describes an instance when, in early January of 1918, the governor of Sonora, Calles, petitioned for an end to individual rights that had spun out of control, with individuals attempting to take advantage of the political situation for individual reasons and personal gain. After bringing the issue to Carranza, Calles felt ignored, since the former dismissed his request. Carranza would only grant the appeals that pleased him the most, and oftentimes, those went in line with his political reasoning. That was the pattern in his decision-making, and in this way, Carranza could be viewed as an opportunist, and many indications exist that he turned into somewhat of an opportunist, again putting into question the mental stability of this man.

But perhaps we may be overstating the observation that, based only on the fact that he appeared to be favoring certain individuals over others, Carranza had found himself on a decline in mental health, since which president or figure in power would not do the same? The bigger, more important question here, however, has nothing to do with the state of his mental health, but with the issue regarding his success or failure as a president.

Immediately, a chain of questions comes to mind, an important one of which may be the following: What were his duties and how did he manage the country, especially now that the political system had changed considerably? The answer is not simple and clear, and, after reviewing the literature and evidence presented thus far, a fair conclusion

follows that Carranza was more of a political theorist and visionary, not an active interpreter of the law, especially law that fell within the sphere of land reform.

Part of acknowledging Carranza's strengths lies in recognizing his weaknesses, as the two went hand in hand. The objective here is not to defend his name and honor, but to provide an example that suggests that Carranza lacked the skills, and not necessarily the interest or concern, to fully understand the agrarian problem and give it its due legal interpretation and application. Cumberland reminds us of the time when Carranza wrote a draft proposal on the subject of the agrarian problem, in which Carranza exposed his knowledge and opinion of it.

Even though Cumberland believes that "Carranza himself was never particularly entranced with the possibility of effecting an agrarian revolution through the medium of [for example] the *ejido* [emphasis in the original],"[323] he misses the mark by not acknowledging that Carranza knew very little about the concept of community landownership in the first place, since after all, as Cumberland does admit, Carranza "was [indeed] a medium-sized landowner."[324]

Carranza made three main assertions in the proposal. In mid-1918, Carranza ordered the Minister of Fomento Pastor Rouaix on an exploratory excursion of the countryside all over Mexico, the purpose of which was to bring back crucial assessments about the nature, level, and depth of the land issue.[325] As Cumberland relates, the proposal included the following elements, which he refers to as "assumptions." He states: "The draft proposal was based on the assumption that the ultimate aim of agrarian reform

[323] Cumberland C. 383.

[324] Cumberland C. 383.

[325] Cumberland C. 383.

was the creation of small landholders who owned their own properties, not on the restoration of the community-property concept; a further assumption was that the nation would make no free gifts of land." The third and final affirmation included the following observation: "According to the bill, all lands acquired by villages under the 1915 decree were to be divided into equal parcels for distribution among the villagers. After the costs to the government for the expropriation had been determined, each of the parcels would be given a proportionate value."[326]

The bottom line seems clear enough: Carranza failed to understand the difference between communal and individual land ownership, a fine distinction to be made and understood if land reforms were expected to function productively. Another pitfall in Carranza's decision-making was his underestimating of the financial power of the majority, since many could not afford to pay the "proportionate value" of these parcels. In this way, Carranza managed to show how poorly he was prepared to lead the way in land reform, and thus his administration underperformed in this legislative area and failed the people, despite showing sincere concern in trying to ameliorate the situation.

Of course, the present analysis would be incomplete without acknowledging the bigger picture, that is, the international community, which brought pressures and perturbed Carranza as he navigated these other important national issues. From the pressures brought upon by foreign economic interests, to those brought upon by the World War I, the entire international community, and not merely the U.S., influenced nationalistic economic policy in Mexico.

It was a reality that could not be ignored, since, as Cumberland shares with his readers concerning the many pressures placed on Mexico: "More potent as a deterrent to

[326] Cumberland C. 383.

legislation was foreign pressure. By the time Carranza took the oath of office as constitutional president, World War I was reaching its most critical stage for the allies, and it was generally assumed that neither the United States nor Great Britain would allow any disruption of the flow of oil so necessary to the two navies."[327] Not surprisingly, "[t]he United States had persisted in objecting to the decrees issued in 1915 and 1916 and periodically requested a clarification of the status of foreign companies operating in Mexico; the possibility of a retroactive application of article 27 made both the companies and their governments somewhat nervous."[328]

Moreover, Carranza's administration felt that its freedoms were being restricted, and believed it had been coerced into an economic and political straitjacket, since "the Carranza government could ill afford to challenge the British and U.S. interest directly; the stakes were too high and the chances of failure too great."[329] Overall, the unwanted presence of the international community—or, in other terms, the burden of economic imperialism—constitutes a dynamic and relevant topic to delve into, because many of Carranza's decisions during his presidency were affected by imperialism of this kind.

A rigorous examination of this topic, however, rests within the ken of another study of comparable scope. It is brought up merely to ensure that the reader understands the political backdrop in which Carranza worked. He was not just working in an orderly and well-designed political framework, because, although constitutionality had finally begun to have an acknowledged place in Mexico, little was done to reinforce it nationally, and much was done to delay it.

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[327] Cumberland C. 391.

[328] Cumberland C. 391-392.

[329] Cumberland C. 392.

One of the most important ways in which Carranza managed to retaliate against foreign countries, especially foreign exploiters, occurred when he sent out a major decree on February 27, 1918. The decree was a part of an effort to place sanctions on foreign exploiters of Mexico's natural resources. The team who wrote, signed, and delivered the decree into law included Carranza, the constitutional president; A. Madrazo, who carried the title of "El Oficial Mayor de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Encargado del Despacho," or in English, the Main Official of Properties and Public Credit, in charge of the Office; Manuel Aguirre Berlanga, Esq., who held the title of "Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Gobernación," or in English, the Secretary of State and of the Office of Government.[330]

The decree placed heavy sanctions on owners of oil-bearing land who had owned land before May of 1917. The decree consisted of twenty articles, and began with the all-important Article 1, which read the following way: "A tax is established for the oil-bearing terrains and petroleum contracts that have been put into place prior to the first day of May of 1917 and that have been taken with the objective of leasing the land for the exploitation hydrogenated carbons or consenting to make this a onerous deed."[331]

Importantly, as a historical subject, the entire decree stands as a prime example of the kind of rhetoric and constitutional work that Carranza supported all along. This is the kind of example that shows his concern for constitutional democracy and nationalism,

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[330] *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, vol. 20, parte 2, "Las Relaciones Internacionales en la Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista y la Cuestión Petrolera, 1913-1916," editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana, bajo la dirección de Isidro Fabela (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968) 299.

[331] *Documentos Históricos*, vol. 20, parte 2, 296. "Art. 1o. Se establece un impuesto sobre los terrenos petroleros, que se hayan celebrado con anterioridad al día 1o. de mayo de 1917 y que tengan por objecto el arrendamiento de terrenos para la explotación de carburos hidrógeno, o el permiso para hace está por un título oneroso."

two fundamental aspects of his state building. One of the best ways to view constitutionality and nationalism and how they functioned during Carranza's presidency is to use the metaphor of the engine: Constitutionality served as the engine, nationalism as the fuel, and neither could function properly without the other. It was not until Carranza injected the Mexican political structure with constitutionality and federalism, that the Revolution truly began to produce observable results and forge ahead.

Although he was largely a disappointment to many as a president, his achievements and conquered feats place him today in a fascinating category among Mexican giants of history. Carranza at once was a leader and a trailblazer, a combination that benefitted Mexican society in the long run. It may be stated that Mexicans desperately needed a political theorist who could catapult them into the twentieth century, and a visionary who, with courage and tenacity, could go against anything and anyone who stood in opposition.

He was no "revolutionary" in the usual, popular sense of the word, but a man who held firm attitudes and pursued firm plans to radicalize the country, and at this he succeeded. Despite his not being able to please everyone, especially during his presidency when he appeared to have gone off track by failing to fully understand land reform, Carranza left a deep-sunk footprint in the history of his people and nation.

The present chapter has placed and continues to place little emphasis on Carranza's tragic death, the details of which seem meaningless in the great picture of his life, because his contributions to Mexican society and to Mexican politics continue to reverberate to this day, and they continue to shape Mexican national and foreign policy. Even though the chronological pace of the present analysis calls for a revival of that brief

and painful episode, we simply will have to abstain, if only to state that death, in the context of Carranza, did not signal the end of his work or the termination of his memory.

Corporeal death only marked a moment in his life when he had completed all of his ambitions and objectives, a heraldic sign that he had reached a peak in self-fulfillment, at which point he could not go any further; therefore, death was another form of success and did not signify the closing stage of his efforts, since the influence of his work continues to ring even today. The spiraling of Mexican nationalism, the topic we now turn to, was among one of the most important contributions that Carranza left in a continued state of development in Mexico.

The Progression of Nationalism

When discussing constitutionalism and nationalism, one may want to designate a creator or a group of creators that brought to life any one of these two overarching forces. To be sure, Carranza was not the engineer behind, for example, nationalism or any national sentiments that were assigned to it; however, his role in the Revolution allowed him to become a compelling and crucial agent that influenced not only its trajectory but also its fate. Part of the reason why Carranza embodied such dominant ideologies such as nationalism revolved around the fact that he always championed the constitution and the rights of the individual, two interrelated fundamentals that helped direct the priorities of the Revolution and served as alimentation for an eager political system that waited to be restructured.

In many ways, to understand his deference to the sanctity of the right of the individual, a topic that divided state and national politics completely, is to understand one

of the reasons why Carranza failed miserably and could not then carry the state into the next stage of the revolutionary process. The reason may not appear clear, as Carranza functioned in a political environment that, first, did not fully grasp, much less accept, the concept of the rights of the individual and, second, did not include nationalism as a part of its major goals for the Revolution.

One may begin here by noting that neither Carranza nor anyone else in Mexico during this time understood or even acknowledged the concept of nationalism. To be sure, a lack of recognition about such an important, nation-wide project was perhaps normal, if not expected, because nationalism, by any definitional standard, can only be understood fully and profoundly in hindsight, with the wisdom brought upon by the passage of time. Still, there was something about Carranza—something about how he carried himself and envisioned the constitution—that provokes students in the field to investigate the matter further.

When considering the views of such scholars as Douglas W. Richmond and Luis Barron, both of whom agree on the hypothesis that Carranza served as a link in the Revolution that connected the past to the present, one must acknowledge the place of Carranza in the greater landscape of History. In one important chapter of Richmond's *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920*, one entitled "Politics and the Nationalist State," Richmond opens with a telling sentence: "Envisioning himself as the representative of the national will, Carranza acted as a patron for multiple class demands and executed Mexico's historic change from an oligarchic regime to a nationalist state."[332] Richmond then goes on to explain Carranza's ideologies and the various

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[332] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 136.

manifestations of these, arguing that Carranza embodied nationalist sentiments; that he was a "nationalist executive,"[333] a unique role within the Revolution.

As a "national executive," Carranza, according to Richmond, urged Mexicans to believe in the importance of national concerns over those relating to local issues, although Carranza never diminished the urgency of the latter. Richmond is quick to point out at the outset of this chapter that Carranza spread a "nationalist mentality," as Richmond calls it, by virtue of a series of "legitimate interests,"[334] as Carranza called them: that is, maintaining national sovereignty, ensuring economic development as well as other freedoms.[335] With this "nationalist mentality," Carranza hoped that Mexicans would develop economically and eventually mature into an integrated society of citizens who not only identified with nationalism but also with a representative government that sought to restore civil liberties.

However, Carranza was neither fully a part of the previous oligarchic political structure nor fully a part of the changing political rhythm that overtook Mexico during the Revolution. In the words of Mexican historian Barron, Carranza was a "Porfirian reformist," thereby emphasizing Carranza's multifaceted role in the Revolution. Carranza was at once a *Porfirian* and a reformer, and, as revealed in an e-mail message to the author on September 6, 2010, "he was a Porfirian because he was, in fact, a product of the nineteenth century, but he was a reformer because, as opposed to the typical

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[333] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 137.

[334] As quoted in Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 137.

[335] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 137.

Porfirians, he thought that the State had to play a much more active role in a completely new context as that of the beginning of the twentieth century."[336]

Before delving into Carranza's role as a "Porfirian reformist," a few aspects must be said about nationalism and Carranza's fight for a nationalist state. Richmond, for example, examines the progression of nationalism by noting that part of the basis that underpinned the Revolution dealt with propelling Mexico onto the international scene not only with confidence, but also with imperatives in place, such as a legion of military combatants, which it lacked; a cohesive administration and leadership, which it lacked; and, as mentioned previously, economic means, which it also lacked. In order to address these deficiencies, "the political culture that took shape during these years had nationalist characteristics on the state level,"[337] and these were aimed at strengthening the state economically, politically, and socially.

As an example of the kind of state building that took place and of which Carranza was a part, it would be helpful to point out the development of streets throughout Mexico. Although it may seem like a relatively minor point, one must consider the fact that during the last, few years of the Revolution, the major focus was construction with a capital C. The abovementioned example of street building refers to the actual construction of streets. As Richmond tells us: "In accord with Carranza's call for national development, many governors initiated promising public works programs which reflected the policies and priorities of a changing class structure."[338]

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[336] Luis Barron, e-mail message to author, September 6, 2010. See Appendix for more of Barron's response to the author.

[337] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 143.

[338] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 145-146.

One may well use the following comparison: Street-building was no less important to significant movement in the Revolution and economic progress to Mexicans as was the construction of the railroad system during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The two developments stood as symbols of a nation that had undergone massive changes and of a nation continuing to undergo enormous changes with its infrastructure.

All of this became part of the bold state building that came about as a result of the Revolution and the pressures that it tried to address time and time again. Streets, like railroads, represented links that connected the entire nation and made movement not only possible but also easier. Overall, street building could be considered as a form of Mexico's nationalist state building, since it created jobs, ignited relationship-building among municipal presidents across the nation, and brought the state capital closer to the masses, if only symbolically.

Aside from infrastructural development in Mexico, groups such as labor unions and the like, and not political groups, as common perception may have had it, also helped cement nationalism. "The quest for nationalism, along with traditional personalism," argues Richmond, "emphasized leadership from local clubs, labor unions, and the army rather than political parties. And although it was free to do much, the national legislature was not a catalyst for national sentiments."[339] It seems rather remarkable that Carranza affiliated himself with no political party, but worked instead to placate the political climate by actually advising against participation in political parties, which, he believed, only created turmoil and further disagreement.

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[339] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 148.

Many generals and leaders largely agreed with Carranza's decision to discourage political party involvement, because they, too, believed that the nation needed to become more socially stable. In other words, because few believed that Mexico had achieved a superior level of nationalism, "political organization was, [therefore], 'premature' and 'improper.'"[340]

The case of Carranza's election as the Revolution's first president provides an example that shows how nationalism had begun to be given a place in Mexican politics. Nationalism, if defined as the product of a nation's economic, military, and political strength, was highlighted concretely for perhaps one of the first times, if not the very first time, in the twentieth century when Carranza won the presidential elections of 1917. Richmond presents it to his readers this way: "Carranza's own election to the presidency, which saw the highest number of votes cast in the nation's history, took place amid great interest but little surprise as to the outcome."[341] The fact that the elections were held in a "democratic" fashion—in the form of free elections, that is—speaks to the level of change that was beginning to take place, and although the results shocked practically no one, a small step in the right direction had been taken nevertheless.

Almost immediately after Carranza had been elected into office, he began to turn the wheels of his program and quickly presented it to Congress. His program involved different aspects, one of which, to continue with a previous point, included the railroad and other systems that were imperative for economic activity. Carranza always emphasized the need to open new markets, and he realized that this feat could be accomplished if Mexico began to sprout metropolitan cities that connected, via railroads

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[340] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 148.

[341] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 150.

and streets, to other thriving centers of high economic activity. To further magnify the situation, according to Richmond, Carranza's "popularity increased to the point that he received 162 affirmative votes and no negative tallies when he requested extraordinary power to tax foreign commerce, to revise the tariff along protectionist lines, and to maintain Mexican neutrality during World War One."[342]

The very fact that Carranza managed and exercised his power to place Mexico in a state of neutrality in the world war says a great deal about Mexico's growing voice in international politics. Declaring neutrality meant that the international community saw Mexico as politically important enough in order to be taken into consideration in the first place. Also, this declaration signified that Mexican leadership closely followed the world war, and, in fact, there exist various documented instances when Mexican leadership became directly involved with the world war, sometimes openly and sometimes allegedly in stealth.

In any case, Mexico's decision not to join World War I diminishes in importance to another issue, that of the Mexican military. Earlier it was noted that a part of the nationalist project included strengthening Mexico's military power, since without a military group of experienced professionals at the core of a national military organization who are able to train recruits and develop the operations of the unit, Mexican leadership would remain unable to defend its own sovereignty and voice or those of other nations during world conflicts.

Although Mexico did have a military unit, usually it was politically polarized. A national military with no unity and little agreement to Mexican leadership only weakened its own stance, thus weakening the nation as a whole. Much to his fortune, however, in

[342] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 152.

Richmond's words, "[t]he major ties between Carranza and the army were a mixture of nationalism and expediency. Forged into a powerful establishment, the military appreciated the president's patronage and obeyed him until 1920."[343]

Richmond also points out that one reason why Carranza managed to remain on such good terms with the military had to do with the tempo of his foreign policy, which appealed to the chiefs and generals of Mexico's military. This fact serves as an important slice of our argument that Carranza's stance reflected Mexico's nationalist agenda, since a foreign policy of independence represented one of many aspects of Carranza's leadership that never changed, because, to him, Mexicans urgently required a major political renaissance and the carving out of their own new space in the international order. As Richmond says, for this vision, "Carranza received strong support for his opposition to U.S. intervention as well as his nonbelligerent stance during the European war. Constitutionalist standard-bearers bristled at the thought of helping foreigners, who, according to López de Lara, 'have always worked against the legal cause.'"[344]

An important part of the nationalist project included curving xenophobic sentiments against outsiders, since this mindset impeded Mexican leadership from working productively with the international community and overall came in the way of employing diplomatic approaches. To function as a sensitive and tactful nation of Mexican leaders, these men in power in particular and all Mexicans in general needed to purge themselves of "barbarism," which plagued many of the relationships that Mexican leaders carried with the international community. The military especially fostered strong

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[343] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 154.

[344] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 155.

feelings against the outside world—the U.S. in particular—since Mexicans had historically been repeated victims of American aggression.

Overall, the military represented one way in which Mexican leadership could show its growing nationalist mentality; yet, with the military, it also became forced to grapple with issues such as xenophobia, which ran rampant not only within the military but also in society in general. Further, Mexican leadership arrived at the realization that nationalism did not equal hatred toward foreigners, since nationalism was not an agent of blind fanaticism over one's nation or a weapon against possible "attacks" from the outside.

Instead, nationalism stood as a powerful outlook and carried on as a productive and positive force that sought to unify all social classes and that sought to solidify a sense of brotherhood that would emanate confidence, resilience, and vitality inside and outside the borders of the nation. Richmond gives us a satisfying definition of the kind of nationalism that sprang during Carranza's time. Richmond believes that nationalism represented the protection of the nation's political and economic interests by balancing the often-opposing interests of Mexico's different social and economic groups.

Richmond explains it to his readers in this way:

> The effect of Carranza's social reforms was generally beneficial. Carranza's attempts to alleviate social ills reflected his use of nationalism as a means of unifying diverse social groups. By implementing changes in such institutions as the church, education, and government services, Carranza and his followers were able to achieve modest gains that aided many. Those members of the middle class who were willing to support Carranza found new employment opportunities open to them. The result was a resurgence of Mexican culture that attested to the country's growing self-confidence. Carranza also ended a wave of clerical persecution in order to secure a working accommodation with the church. All things considered, the years from 1915 to 1920 were dynamic and progressive. There was no substantial cultural depression or dislocation as a result of

Carranza's rule.[345]

Overall, one of the prime foci of this chapter, nationalism, gives us insight into Carranza in so many ways, and vice versa. In the story of the Revolution, striking a balance between opposing forces was hardly ever achieved, and in the case of Carranza, not striking a balance between his ambitions and those of others caused him to lose a grip on the Revolution. Thus, Carranza quickly found himself on a steady decline in power.

In perhaps a final attempt to save himself from absolute disapproval from the pages of History, Carranza led a massive initiative that included many countries in Central America and South America in order to strengthen the voice of Latin America and counter American imperialism. This initially clandestine yet eventually overt campaign, which was begun solely under the auspices of Carranza's administration, served to display Latin American frustration against imperial activity. During his campaign, Carranza tried to bolster support from and fortify partnership with most of the countries in the Latin American bloc, and never became disillusioned or fatigued, even when, for example, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay were reluctant to join and oftentimes expressed doubts and concerns.

Although in theory the movement sought to reinforce a "nationalist" alliance among Latin American nations, the all-too-ambitious campaign was not without its faults. For instance, the campaign, which was exclusively centered on Carranza's vision, suffered from a limited mindset, since the campaign clearly exemplified Carranza's nationalist thinking and only sought after an assemblage of Latin American leaders who would cosign Carranza's political credo.

[345] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist* 166.

The campaign elicited scores of risks to the leaders and the people of the participating countries. These risks can be best articulated by posing the following two questions: How did the campaign make American leaders think about the then-defiant Mexican leadership? And, what changes in international relations with Mexico and other Latin American countries did Carranza's campaign incite? Although a quest for the answers to these questions calls for a separate research project, these questions are presented to underscore the potential and true dangers of this Latin American undertaking that Carranza so valiantly led.

However, one of Carranza's greatest faults goes back to his slowly becoming a blind nationalist, one who became unable to see that Mexicans needed a leader who was reliable and fair. He failed Mexicans and disappointed them, and soon, by 1919, his decision-making became rather erratic, even senseless at times. Public opinion showed the discontent of the people, and this social displeasure manifested itself in the failing educational system, in the escalating number of worker strikes, in the ever-growing dissatisfaction in the realm of land reform, and in the push-and-pull relationship that Carranza had developed with Obregón, one of the greatest military leaders and revolutionaries of the Revolution.

When Obregón began to challenge Carranza, in much the same way as Carranza had once defied Huerta nearly a decade earlier, the colors of a leader, Carranza, who had gone off beam, began to show. The time for Carranza to walk away arrived soon enough when Obregón began to actively seek for Carranza's departure. This was especially true when Carranza began to actively and purposefully resist Obregón and have him excluded from the elections.

Obregón's decision to counter Carranza did not come as an enormous surprise, since various clues that portended the rupture of this relationship were laid out consistently throughout the ten-year struggle. It was simply a matter of time before Obregón would show, like Carranza once did back in the eventful years of 1909 and 1910, that he, too, had what it took in order to accept the baton of the Revolution.

With a familiar kind of audacity, Obregón replaced Carranza, became the new locomotive of change, and caused a seismic shift in the politics of the Revolution. Obregón felt Carranza going on a decline and, to avoid this nation of Mexicans from falling victims to Carranza's demise, Obregón accepted the challenge and took action. Shortly after Carranza prevented Obregón from winning the 1919 presidential elections, Mexicans, along with Obregón, arrived at their tipping point with the great Coahuilan leader.

Perhaps much worse than death, Carranza suffered a calamitous decline in popularity, and it reached the point where he had a depressingly low number of supporters. Oftentimes, when Carranza arrived at pivotal junctures throughout the country for political motivations, he would have to cancel last minute to avoid ridicule, as his following was nearly nonexistent. That became his reality and that became his fate.

However, the threat posed by Obregón represented an important, but not the principal, reason regarding why Carranza experienced such a hasty and disastrous decline in power, as another major motive included Carranza's anti-imperialist proclivities. Anti-imperialism, as was stressed before, did have an important place in Mexican society and this could not have been truer than in the role that it played in the development of nationalism.

To be sure, nationalism was not synonymous with anti-imperialism, especially not in theory; however, because of the nature of the Revolution, in practice, Mexican leaders, Carranza in particular, displayed a tendency for blurring the line that separated nationalism and anti-imperialism. The danger posed by this misunderstanding caused a great deal of political harm to him, especially in the long run, since he seemed to have a propensity for blaming American leadership for many, if not all, of Mexico's socioeconomic dilemmas.

The problem with this situation seems critical: Mexicans, who represented a hodgepodge of social classes and cultures, could not understand Carranza's seemingly abstract perspective. To them, imperialism—American, British, Spanish—was not a concrete concept and was not a sufficient enough reason to blame for their societal and socioeconomic maladies. And that is exactly where Carranza failed: He missed the mark by not satisfying the various interests that marked the struggle. Further, he failed to articulate such concepts as nationalism and anti-imperialism in understandable terms, and the outcome was a reluctant and angered people who could not fully trust this leader.

Despite this shortcoming, Carranza's contribution to the Revolution shall remain imbedded in Mexican history, memory, and even myth. Although he did not know quite how to satisfy the demands of the masses uniformly, he always espoused genuine, forward-thinking objectives that were never meant to betray his people; and although he did not know quite how to channel his frustrations and articulate them clearly, his ambitions and vision were always in the right place. He was an imperfect leader who made mistakes and for that, he will continue to be scrutinized and criticized but also analytically evaluated.

Without doubt, much can be learned from the example represented by Carranza as a Mexican leader in general and as an "ambassador" of the Revolution in particular. Let us recall that he joined the Revolution with a set of motives that distinguished him from the rest of the "revolutionaries," "reactionaries," and "rebels." He began as, and always was, a Coahuilan politician at heart whose ambitions took him farther than most.

In the words of Barron, this Coahuilan leader, this "Porfirian reformist," symbolized a bridge between the old regime and the new, between the old set of values and visions and those of the emerging ones. According to Richmond, this leader symbolized a force that ultimately brought the concept of nationalism into constant motion. Finally, in the words of Cumberland, Carranza, above all, "established the principle that Mexico as a sovereign nation had a right to determine its own fate without interference from other nations singly or in combination…his greatest single contribution to Mexican freedom."[346]

In confronting such a complex and sweeping concept as Mexican nationalism, in the end one has to be careful not to underline the name of only one individual, in our case Carranza, who gave rise to it. The reason is all too clear: Rarely are national sentiments begun by one and only one person. On the contrary, national sentiments represent emotions and attitudes, of historical proportion, that become institutionalized in order to create a sense of national unification. As Barron expresses it, in the context of the Revolution, "[n]ationalism meant projecting a certain kind of image of Mexico to the rest

[346] Cumberland C. 319-320.

of the world: the mestizo Mexico, the Mexican of the murals and of the monuments after the Revolution."[347]

This chapter has tried to describe a major outcome of Carranza's state building, and this was not the creation but the acceleration and redefining of two interconnected elements, constitutionality and nationalism. Yet, in this respect lies one of the biggest flaws of Carranza, and one that hastened his fall, politically, socially, and, yes, even physically. At his own whim, he attempted to redefine something, Mexican nationalism, which did not belong only to him, and that was the cardinal sin he committed.

In addition, to exacerbate the severity of the situation, the revolutionary movement itself had been all along creating its own image of nationalism. Sure, "the State should be powerful enough to subdue foreign landlords and capitalists,"[348] as Carranza's project emphasized in its attempt to shape Mexican nationalism, but the Revolution also had to produce a new cultural Mexico. Recall that nearly two million people died in Mexico as a result of the Mexican Revolution, and these deaths would not go in vain; these deaths would be accounted for, honored, and venerated.

To worship death is to worship life itself. This Mexican tradition of death as a cultural function of the nation-state dates back to the 16th century, and although a comprehensive exploration of this fascinating phenomenon cannot be completed here,[349] it is emphasized in order to understand the brand of nationalism that the Revolutionary

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[347] Luis Barron, e-mail message to author, September 6, 2010.

[348] Luis Barron, e-mail message to author, September 6, 2010.

[349] For a complete and fascinating excursion into the topic, see Claudio Lomnitz's *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (New York: Zone Books, 2005).

movement aspired to erect and embrace. This kind of nationalism differed vastly from the one supported by our titular character, both in spirit and in meaning.

Clearly, the Coahuilan leader, drowning in the very essence of his vision, quickly strode down the wrong road, on a hasty decline in power, and thus culminated the last chapter of the life of this man. Simply put, revolutionary Mexico and progressive Carranza disagreed fundamentally on many key issues, and yet this was not the only reason behind the fall of this leader, since what we have here is a man who took on a pace that was simply not fast enough for the speedy velocity of the Revolution. And for that, he will pay a high price. Indeed, he has been for close to a century now.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Carranza is undoubtedly a personality with a passionate profile that is able to provoke controversy, discussion, and above all research. His circumstance, the period that he got to live, the whirlwind events in which the rupture of friends and colleagues caused him difficult moments; the confrontation with the institutions of which he was an important collaborator and the lack of practical wisdom in the actions that mark the path of a nation in crisis, turn him into a multifaceted personality, one essential in the revolutionary struggle at the beginning of the [twentieth] century in our country. Those motives must provide us with the sensibility needed to analyze him in moderation, tranquility, and profundity; but above all, to employ the best methodological and informative tools that we are capable of using, with the aim of obtaining results closer to the reality that he lived, and of which we want to extract significant experiences for use in our present, which is also in crisis and in search of more stable pathways.
—"Presentación," in *Avances Historiográficos en el Estudio de Venustiano Carranza* [350]

The literature devoted to understanding the Revolution in its totality without missing its myriad particularities has grown immensely since the closing years of the conflict. Mexican, American, and even German scholars of history have nurtured the dynamic field into something noteworthy: From placing the great Madero in his proper context, to positioning Zapata in a clear light, to situating Villa in a recognizable place in Mexican history, much has been told and retold about this great epoch in Mexican

[350] "Presentación," in *Avances Historiográficos en el Estudio de Venustiano Carranza* (Coahuila, México: Fondo Editorial Coahuilense, 1996) 12. "Carranza es sin duda un personaje con apasionante perfil para provocar la polémica, la discusión y sobre todo la investigación. Su circunstancia, el período que le tocó vivir, los remolineantes [sic] acontecimientos donde la ruptura con amigos y compañeros le provocan momentos difíciles; el enfrentamiento con las instituciones de las cuales ha sido colaborador importante y la falta de cordura en las acciones que marcan rumbo para un país en crisis y en el cual se tiene que actuar, lo vuelven un personaje multifacético esencial en la lucha revolucionaria de principios de siglo en nuestro país. Esos motivos deben darnos la sensibilidad para analizar con mesura, tranquilidad y profundidad; pero sobre todo, ocupando las mejores herramientas metodológicas e informativas de que seamos capaces, a fin de obtener resultados más cercanos a la realidad que vivió, y de la cual queremos extraer experiencias significativas para nuestro presente, también en crisis y en búsqueda de caminos más firmes."

history. And the same could be said about other subjects of the Revolution, such as Díaz, Huerta, and Obregón.

However, only in the academic coverage on Carranza does one notice something peculiar. After Carranza died, the collective attitude of historians concerning the merits and demerits of this great Mexican leader shifted from time to time. During or shortly after the Revolution, there came a period, nearly two decades, of anti-Carranza scholarship. Then, after an intense period of going against Carranza, a decade or two passed, and in the 1940s and 1950s, a period of sensible veneration for Carranza took place. And in between these two periods, short-lived instances of fanatical outbursts surfaced in literature and historical studies on Carranza, but these only signified frustrations with the trajectory of the history of an important figure of the Revolution.

Thus, it may be argued that every age created its own Carranza. For every decade or couple of decades, there always appeared to be some revisionist account of the "standard" argument or narrative about this leader; his image reinvented at every possible opportunity for reasons that remain unknown still. These dramatic changes of thought continued to change the perception not only about Carranza and his still-questionable role in the struggle but also about the Revolution. It further put into question a national narrative that struggled to be fully defined, even as the field of study drew dozens upon dozens of serious scholars.

While this research project comes to a close, not much "closure" or "consensus" could be found as a result of, or maybe in spite of, the findings in the chapters. One is left to recapitulate; that is, to review and reevaluate the leading research questions,

hypothesis, and key findings from the historical literature as they were presented throughout this research assignment.

In summary, Chapter Two focused on following Carranza's path to revolutionary politics during the first decade of the twentieth century, and it was found that a deep belief in constitutionality and the abolishment of autocracy in Mexico initially drew this once-*Porfirian* leader to the Revolution. From mid-1910 to mid-1913, Carranza experienced a time of reflection, as he scrambled to understand the profundity of Mexico's problems, the complexity of political partnerships, and his own place within the greater vision of the Revolution. Chapter Two narrated the story of how Carranza joined the movement and how he added a unique dimension to it, since his motivations differed from those of his revolutionary counterparts. The chapter found that Carranza's motivation focused on the construction of a nation-state that was fully able to connect and interact with international economies in beneficial ways, since this would allow Mexico to grow internally strong. Social order, thus, was the focus of his objectives during the beginning years of the Revolution.

Chapter Three explores Carranza during mid-1913 to mid-1916. During this time, Carranza experienced an incredible amount of problems, most of which Zapata and Villa caused, since these two key revolutionaries championed political agendas that differed fundamentally from the ideologies espoused by Carranza. The chapter found that, when placing the ideologies of Carranza, Zapata, and Villa side to side, Carranza's project might seem less passionate and less humble, mainly because Carranza came equipped with a telling and singular past in politics.

Alternatively, Chapter Three also found that the resistance offered by Zapata and Villa was eventually overcome as a result of the political and military might of Carranza's regime, and thus Carranza persisted ever stronger on his mission to turn the Mexican political system into one that would be defined by constitutionalism, nationalism, and the rights of the individual.

Chapter Four then focused on Carranza's signature achievement, the writing of the Constitution of 1917, which held in tact many of the aspirations and triumphs of the Revolution. From mid-1916 to mid-1917, Carranza was at work organizing the Constitutional Convention, a momentous event that redirected the path of the Revolution, since it gave a brief pause to the conflict with the purpose of coming to a consensus regarding law and order. The chapter found that, although Carranza acted as the puppeteer of the event, his greatest influence was not on the outcome of the Convention but on its commencement.

On the other hand, Chapter Four found that Carranza could be credited with the egalitarian and democratic character of the Constitution of 1917, because despite the evidence showing that he controlled certain aspects of the process, he nevertheless allowed for the congregation of diverse political minds who utilized their realities and struggles to inform the nature and utility of the constitution. He offered his blessings to the delegates and took a rather minor role at the Convention, for he instead provided direction and voiced his opinions during periodic yet few moments in the constitution-making process.

Finally, Chapter Five followed the fall of this great leader and showed how he continued to defend constitutionality. During his presidency under the new constitution,

Carranza began to express the importance of using the Constitution of 1917 as a tool to help the Mexican government become more nationalistic, more autonomous, and more intent on respecting the freedoms and rights of the individual. The chapter showed that Carranza spoke too much and did too little, unfortunately, for his words were seldom matched by actions. Mexicans became disillusioned with Carranza as he demonstrated what appeared to be a determination to cling to power, which made his professions of constitutionality appear somewhat empty or insincere.

In Chapter Five, his voice became lost not only due to the absence of reliable primary sources, but also because Carranza rapidly began to go on a decline in power. As the chapter argued, the forces of another revolutionary regime did away with Carranza but certainly not with constitutional democracy and nationalism—which continue to represent two affiliated forces that are in constant development in Mexico today. Needless to day, the process of transformation of a new and free Mexico has yet to come to an end.

In the end, Carranza both won and lost. This thesis comes to the conclusion that Carranza led and suffered a lifetime of ironies: He was a *Porfirian* at first and then an anti-*Porfirian*, he was one of the oldest politicians in Mexico with some of the freshest perceptions of change, and he rose to power with the same speed with which he fell. The reason for the demise of this leader was not in that he lacked the vision or outward appeal of a "revolutionary," but he simply arrived at a place in his career in which he did not know how to best move forward. His circle of friends diminished rapidly, and his enemies saw this as an opportunity to corner him in a final, lethal encounter. Overall, he

let Mexico slip from his fingers, and the downward spiral effect began to take its disastrous course.

One of the most significant deficiencies of this thesis is the lack of existing primary sources by and about Carranza. All of the chapters in this thesis could be fortified by the use of more primary sources; however, as it stands, the history devoted to the life of Carranza suffers from a poverty of research. It is the aim of the author that this fact shall induce professional scholars to revisit the Revolution with a concern for unearthing the voice of Carranza, since it is still largely silent.

In fact, during an enlightening encounter with Mexican history scholar John Mraz, he gave the author the advice that one avenue for further research into the political life of Carranza could be in analyzing the photographs and other visual arts generated during the Revolution. The discussion between the two took place at the University of California at Berkeley in October 22 and October 23, 2010, during a special symposium that the author attended on the movements of 1810 and 1910 in Mexican history. The event was appropriately titled "1810, 1910, 2010: Unfinished Revolutions," and featured lectures and essays orally delivered by such respectable scholars as John Mraz (Benemerita Universidad de Puebla), Emilio H. Kouri (University of Chicago), Adolfo Gilly (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico), among many, many others.

John Mraz suggested that one could also benefit from delving into the largely ignored Mexican newspaper, *Revista Mexicana*, which had strong links to Carranza and his political entourage during the conflict. The conversation between John Mraz and the author ended by noting that out of the sixteen hour-long presentations delivered by scholars of Mexican history at the symposium mentioned above, sadly not one uttered the

words "Venustiano Carranza." This lack of attention, coupled with an insufficient amount of conclusions delivered by this thesis, makes the study of Carranza appear bleak.

Certainly, it is unfortunate and problematical not having the ability to make grand and full conclusions at the end of a project in the study of history and not being able to walk away from a research undertaking that fulfilled all or most curiosities, concerns, and questions surrounding the hypothesis. But that is not the case here, at all; since instead, the narrative of Carranza has once again proven to us that it necessitates further research and further action. His story refuses to be released to the world as some "matter-of-fact" or "rough-and-ready" account of the rise and fall of a leader.

It may help to consider two succinct, if pithy, examples of scholarly writing that show discordant characterizations of Carranza. These examples will show one such change of thought in regards to the narrative of Carranza.

We begin with the appraisal penned by Professor Percy Alvin Martin, a Stanford scholar in the early twentieth century, who wrote extensively on the political matters involving Latin America. In the writing sample that follows, one could see the antipathy that engulfed American scholarship regarding Carranza. Writing in the year 1925, Professor Martin stated:

> Any appraisal of the administration of Sr. Carranza (1915-1920) must take into account the psychology of the president. Knowing no language but Spanish, unfitted by training to grapple with world politics and problems, he was provincial in outlook and his mental horizon never extended beyond Mexico, or at the most Latin America. He has been credited with the virtues of sincerity and honesty. To these qualities should be added others, far less admirable. He was vain, egotistical, and abnormally sensitive to criticism. He was greedy for power and authority. Possibly his most marked characteristic was a stubbornness which led him to persevere in a course of action long after its disadvantages were obvious to everyone except himself. With only a slender intellectual equipment and with few of the attributes of higher statesmanship he contrived to keep himself in power for over five years largely by appealing to the extreme

> nationalistic and radical elements of the country and by cleverly balancing his opponents against each other.
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> It is obvious that President Carranza's attitude towards the United States would be one of the determining factors in Mexico's relation to the war. Unhappily his dealings with the Washington government were characterized by truculence and want of confidence. As has just been intimated his maintenance in power was due in the last analysis to the sympathy and indirect assistance he received from the United States and more specifically from the administration of President Wilson. But the generosity and forebearance [sic] of the United States, even under extreme provocation, evoked no sentiment of gratitude; rather were they acid to his egotism. His intransigent attitude appears in a number of ways. At a time when an uninterrupted flow of oil from the great fields in Tampico was essential to the Allies and to the United States he took steps to resume on behalf of the nation proprietary rights in subsoil products of which, of course, the most important was petroleum. Edicts issued to this effect were in pursuance of Article XXVII of the Constitution of 1917 which gave direct dominion over such subsoil products to the nation, but were in violation of Article XIV of the Constitution which prohibits retroactive laws. The oil companies, both British and American, which under Díaz had secured full ownership of their lands with all subsoil privileges, quite properly protested and their claims were taken up by government. On several occasions this oil controversy brought relations between the Mexican administration and these foreign governments almost to the breaking point. In surveying the whole field of Mexican-United States relations at this period one might easily reach the conclusion that President Carranza capitalized for his partizan [sic] ends that the ever latent hostility to the suspicion of the "Colossus of the North."[351]

Then, of course, on the other side of the spectrum, we have the quixotic expressions of Fernando Cuen, who writing for the Mexican newspaper, *El Universal*, on May 21, 1934, portrayed Carranza in the following fashion, stating that he was:

> Of tranquil and majestic features….[By] the constant and extreme tension in his nerve cords his soul's profound and concentrated work is perceived….He has lofty commanding quality of Michelangelo's "Moses"…the rectitude of the caudillo, in whose spirit resonates the imperious forces that triumphs and subjugates….His public life is severe and august. His attitude always dignified, noble….All his ideas, concise, luminous, and exact, exude loftiness and greatness. His private life is exemplary, of spartan simplicity….[Carranza] inspired and personifies…the insurrectional movement. At…his voice, armies spring forth from the earth. He is the numen of the revolution…overwhelming the enemy with

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[351] Percy Alvin Martin, *Latin America and the War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1925): 521-522.

> fearlessness, audacity and energy, he gallops across the plains of the North,…with impressive courage he crosses over the fields.[352]

In the 1940s and 1950s, historians, newspaper commentators, and writers who covered Carranza offered their opinions with a little more balance, avoiding the sharpness of Professor Percy and the melodramatic strokes of Cuen. These systematic shifts in thinking about Carranza bring to light an interesting observation about the parallels between the narrative of Carranza and the history of Mexico. As Enrique Krauze agrees, the history of Carranza continues to have the distinction of being the most complex and enigmatic one of the Revolution, but it is also one that, much like the history of twentieth-century Mexico, follows a non-linear mathematical function that will continue to compel further study.

Social scientists no doubt will continue to remain intrigued, since the life of Carranza often appears like a lifetime of contradictions, and it was, as many times he stood at odds with leaders and movements and changed impulsively or whenever he deemed it reasonable. However, no different from the ironic history of Mexico, which is drenched in blood yet saturated at the same time with splendor and jollity, the rise and fall of Carranza continue to leave some students of history baffled at the need for answers and explanations but flattered by the unique role he played in the Revolution.

Through the lens of Carranza, students of Mexican history have been able to experience the Revolution and Mexico as never before, since in Carranza, one finds a Mexican who made mistakes, but who never, not once, doubted his position or his political proclivities. He was a man on a mission or, to put it metaphorically, a godfather looking out after his godchild at all times, and he never lost sight of the end. Perhaps

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[352] Quoted in O'Malley 81-82.

more politically relevant in our times, Carranza represents a sign of democracy, of a kind of democracy that had a significantly high human cost and that made a number of other sacrifices that altered the course of Mexican history.

Democracy; perhaps it all goes back to this goal to transform nations, to turn them into "democratic" existences. What was democracy anyway for Mexicans a century ago? Or two centuries ago? In the countless battles for "democracy" or whatever one may want to call it, the objective has been and will always be the attainment of a good life. That has been the timeless struggle: We all want to live well, to live in a safe world, to live in a place we can call our own. But agents of hate or greed have come in the way, a reality that Mexicans have been fighting against for well over two centuries and with no end sight. Whether it begins as a clash of ideals between tradition and modernity, or whether it begins as a physical altercation between Mexicans and outsiders, those who care the most, the stakeholders, Mexicans themselves, suffer the most.

After great misery and the trend seems to be that sorrow, revolts, risings, and revolutions follow, and these upset the social, political, and economic temperaments in the country even further. Yet, as Krauze wrote recently in a *New York Times* article on September 14, 2010: "Every 100 years, Mexico seems to have a rendezvous with violence."[353] This is true, especially as one follows, if even cursorily, the narrative of Mexico; one will immediately confront a pattern: a major conflict every century, tied in one way or another to democracy. Students of Mexican history will be quick to point to the years 1810, 1910, and 1994 as turning points in history and as times in Mexican history when turmoil and dissidence reigned.

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[353] Enrique Krauze, "In Mexico, a War Every Century," *New York Times* 14 Sept. 2010: par. 1.

What is beautiful and uplifting is that "nonetheless, on Wednesday night [September 15, 2010], as we have on every Sept. 15 for 200 years, Mexicans will gather together in the central squares of our cities and towns, even in the smallest and most remote villages. At midnight, we will hear a local governing official re-enact the grito uttered by Miguel Hidalgo, the 'father of the fatherland.'"[354]

With the example set by Carranza, students of Mexican history may now rely on the story of a leader who, like a suspension bridge in a mountainous setting, connected two worlds: As he entered the dicey politics of the Revolution, he both challenged and represented the *Porfirian* political system and way of life, and that is what defined his identity as a person and as a politician. He never fully epitomized the *Porfiriato*, despite his long political history in that world, and yet at the same time he never fully embodied the revolutionary movement as many others did. He was a part of both worlds yet he never really solely belonged to either, an idiosyncratic facet that was not understood and accepted by many.

During this pivotal point in Mexican history, Carranza did not vacillate or find himself unable to strike out on his own, rather he kept certain aspects of his *Porfirian* identity and developed and even reinvented himself during the Revolution, two signs that showed this was a man who played the game of revolutionary politics judiciously and with character. He failed, yes, but not because he did not offer enough to the struggle and certainly not because his political identity stood in disagreement with the passions and attitudes espoused by the majority of the leaders of the Revolution.

Instead, something different occurred. As the chapters of this thesis have signaled, Mexicans were not ready for a leader with a multifaceted political identity. Let us recall

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[354] Krauze, "In Mexico" par. 19.

that these were the subjugated masses of Mexico that had come to their tipping point and that, by that same token, distrusted those in power who in their eyes brought "too much" change.

During the Revolution, the life of Carranza had the fine distinction, as compared to those of his counterparts, of having followed the five-act story paradigm: His story includes the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. In many ways, the chapters in this thesis each focused on one or two of these "acts." Each one told a slightly different story, as it concentrated on unpacking a different event in the overall development of the life as a leader of this man.

In so doing, something remarkable yet familiar occurred, something about which history has little to say, since perhaps the answer instead rests at the hands of literature. The voice of literature, not history, gives us a part of the answer this time; it gives us the suggestion that makes Carranza less enigmatic, and more transparent, more pursuable, despite of his unpredictable and trifling place in Mexican myth and memory. But that is what Mexican history is all about: Unpredictability—the point at which hope and hopelessness become one and the same, the point at which war and peace become indistinguishable and synonymous with one another.

With Carranza as a historical subject of the Revolution, Mexican history once again reminded us that the revolutionary movement produced a war of contradictory voices that did not halt but, in fact, helped advance history. To sum it all with the help of literature, here we offer a fragment of a work of literary genius; that of the great 1990 Nobel Prize winner in literature, Octavio Paz, who, with unnerving vitality, wrote in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*:

> The Revolution was a sudden immersion of Mexico in her own being, from which she brought back up, almost blindly, the essentials of a new kind of state. In addition, it was a return to the past, a reuniting of the ties broken by the Reform and the Diaz dictatorship, a search for our own selves, and a return to the maternal womb. Therefore it was also a fiesta: "the fiesta of the bullets," to use the phrase by Martín Luis Guzmán. Like our popular fiestas, the Revolution was an excess and a squandering, a going to the extremes, an explosion of joy and hopelessness, a shout of orphanhood and jubilation, of suicide and life, all of them mingled together. Our Revolution is the other face of Mexico, ignored by the Reform and humbled by the dictatorship. It is not the face of courtesy, of dissimulation, of form imposed by means of lies and mutilations; it is the brutal, resplendent face of death and fiestas, of gossip and gunfire, of celebration and love (which is rape and pistol shots). The Revolution has hardly any ideas. It is an explosion of reality: a return and a communion, an upsetting of old institutions, a releasing of many ferocious, tender and noble feelings that had been hidden by our fear of being. And with whom does Mexico commune in this bloody fiesta? With herself, with her own being. Mexico dares to exist, to be. The revolutionary explosion is a prodigious fiesta in which the Mexican, drunk in his own self, is aware at last, in a mortal embrace, of his fellow Mexican.[355]

With Carranza, Mexicans can look back at their history in search, not of a hero, not of a revolutionary, and certainly not of a saint, but of an uncommon leader who made common mistakes. If the Revolution represents, above all else, an act of rediscovery, as Paz seems to blatantly argue, then one could observe in the life of Carranza one strand of this titanic act of rediscovery. Carranza, as research has suggested and will continue to indicate, typifies the renaissance that struck Mexican society in the early twentieth century. He was the bridge, as it were, between two different Mexican existences and between two different Mexican identities. Carranza swayed back and forth, one hand grasping the previous nineteenth-century reality, the other trying to find the twentieth-century one.

He failed, unfortunately, to maintain equilibrium, since the bridge he represented collapsed. Nevertheless, although his journey resulted in an abrupt end to his leadership

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[355] Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*, translated from the Spanish by Lysander Kemp, Yara Milos, and Rachel Phillips Belash (New York: Grove Press, 1985) 148-149.

role, he walked away victorious, for he will always be remembered as the father of the Revolution's constitution. And he will always be remembered for acquiring yet another paternal role in the Revolution, as he also became metaphorically its godfather, one who cultivated, even after his death, a kind of Mexico that only visionaries, such as himself, could envisage. He gave rise to a Mexican nation that, despite today being dangerously threaded in a web of problems, stands a chance at truly becoming an economically self-sufficient, internationally competent, and politically stable nation-state. Mexico yearns no longer to be "drunk in her own self"—she wants to be sober. But she must first prove herself.

Appendix

A facsimile of a portion of an email exchange between Dr. Luis Barron and the author

The author posed the following two questions to Dr. Barron:

"First, in your recent 2009 publication, *El ultimo reformista porfiriano*, you talk about Carranza as a 'Porfirian reformist.' Could you please elaborate a little more and explain how Carranza may not just be considered a 'Porfirian' or just a 'reformist,' but both a 'Porfirian reformist.' Second, do you believe that 'constitutionalism' and 'nationalism' were two major pillars that Carranza helped put into place during the Revolution? Do you believe that Carranza played a role in advocating for constitutionalism and nationalism?"

Dr. Barron replied the following to the author:

"I use 'Porfirian reformer' because of two reasons: first, I think that, towards the end of the Porfiriato, you could easily identify three political groups: The group that thought that nothing should change because nothing could change. The reeleccionistas thought that Mexico was not ready to substitute Porfirio Díaz, and that if he died someone had to make sure Mexico would continue down the same path until the majority of Mexicans were ready for a democratic change. The second group thought that everything had to change, socially and politically at least. These were the so-called radicales or jacobinos, the ones ready to take up arms and overthrow Porfirio Díaz. Among these, of course, were the Flores Magón brothers, for example, the catarinistas and other groups like these. And then you had the reyistas, for example, that thought that some changes were needed, but without losing the essence of what Porfirio Díaz had built. Other groups were a mix of these, and were much more difficult to distinguish, and they varied from region to region.

"In part, Madero failed because he failed to see that Mexico had to change much more deeply. I think, in my terminology, he could even be called only a Porfirian, without the 'reformer,' because he thought that it was just a matter of having free elections to ensure that justice (in every sense) would return to Mexico. If you consider this carefully, you will understand why Madero did not think that the 1857 constitution had to be reformed in any serious way.

"If you take a look at the political and revolutionary plans from the jacobinos o radicales, you will see that it was basically impossible to govern Mexico with the 1857 constitution if they succeeded. Even though many of them also called themselves constitucionalistas or tried to argue that the 1857 constitution was sacred, it would have been impossible to

keep it and change Mexico as they thought it had to change. I think the zapatistas are a good example of this.

“Carranza was for me, obviously, part of the other group: the reformistas and, thus, I call him a Porfirian reformer. He was a Porfirian because he though that, in essence, liberal capitalist development should be kept as a project for Mexico, although giving the State the force to lead the project of development and to make the capitalist and the landlords comply with the constitution. Carranza knew that Mexico had changed, just like the rest of the world was changing but, in essence, he never ceased to be a nineteenth century liberal. In that, he very much remained a Porfirian all his life; ideologically, he was not part of the twentieth century, although he knew that the State had to be strengthened to promote social change and avoid a revolution. And precisely because of that, he WAS a reformer.

“If you take a careful look at his constitutional proposal, it is a typical liberal one, and there is nothing that would make us believe that he was thinking about ‘social rights’ or any other kind of ‘nonsense’ like that. He simply did not understand how you could have social justice if you did not protect the individual. And that is also why it ‘appears’ that he did not want to apply the 1917 constitution. He did want to apply it, but he wanted to make sure that individual liberty be protected at all times, which was incompatible, for instance, with a radical agrarian reform.

“I don't know if I am explaining myself: he was a Porfirian because he was, in fact, a product of the nineteenth century, but he was a reformer because, as opposed to the typical Porfirians, he thought that the State had to play a much more active role in a completely new context as that of the beginning of the twentieth century.

“Now, about the second question, I agree with you, like I said before, that neither ‘constitutionalism’ nor ‘nationalism’ were new, and that Carranza certainly was trying to use both of those concepts as pillars of his program. Nevertheless, I think that, when Carranza talked about ‘constitutionalism’ he was thinking of the concept as typical liberalism used it during the nineteenth century: That is, the constitution is there precisely to establish the limit of state power. I think he said it very clear when he gave his speech before Congress December 1, 1916: The main and only object of the State is to protect individual freedom. And as opposed to that, many other revolutionaries thought that ‘constitutionalism’ was a concept ultimately tied to another one: ‘social justice.’

“Take a look at the debates of the Constitutional Assembly, and you will see that immediately. That is why, I think, the Constituyentes modified Carranza's project the way they did, and also why Carranza did not understand what the radical articles of the constitution really meant. Pastor Rouaix, for example, said many times that Carranza was an exceptional leader, a good and honest man, but that he did not understand why the constitution had to include the so-called social provisions. Rouaix recognizes, for example, that the agrarian Law of 6 de enero (written by Luis Cabrera, another liberal like Carranza) was a very good first step, but that article 27 had to go far beyond that. I invite you to read carefully the original article 27, and I think you will find that, although everyone said that the Law of 6 de enero was vital in the process of writing article 27, the

spirit in both is completely different. Many years later, Cabrera said that he did not even understand what the Constituyentes had done.

"With nationalism happens something similar (but I have a lot less to say). During the Porfiriato, nationalism meant, I think, that the Mexican state was strong enough to defend the country in case of another foreign attack, to bring the necessary stability to make investments come and to preserve internal peace. During the Mexican Revolution, that concept began to change. I think you are right in identifying Carranza with some of the changes: nationalism meant that the State should be powerful enough to subdue foreign landlords and capitalists; but Carranza did not understand nationalism the way the post-revolutionary leaders understood it. Nationalism meant projecting a certain image of Mexico in the rest of the world: the mestizo Mexico, the Mexico of the murals and of the monuments after the Revolution. The revolutionary state did not identify, for example, Mexico with democracy, and that idea of nationalism came from the Revolution, but not from Carranza.

"So, in short, I think what I am trying to say is that Carranza represented a certain kind of change compared to the Porfiriato, but that he did not change fast or far enough to keep control of the revolutionary process. And that is, in part, why he lost in the end."

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