
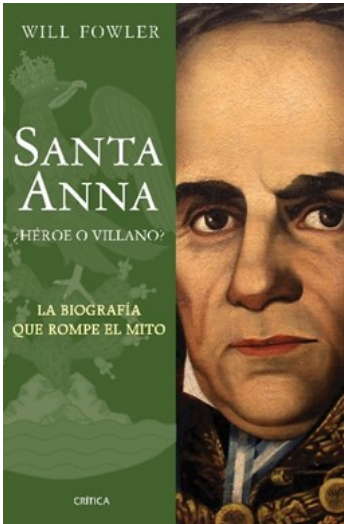


<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> University of St Andrews		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Changing the Public Perception of Six-times Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna, 1794-1876		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2000 - 2006		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Will Fowler	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 01 August 1995 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 - 31 December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> Yes		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Fowler's research into Mexican officialdom's top villain and alleged traitor and tyrant, Antonio López de Santa Anna (1794-1876), has demonstrated that this former president's contribution to 19<sup>th</sup>-Century politics was not as negative as generally thought. Fowler's findings have <b>changed public opinion in present-day Mexico</b>, and led to the rehabilitation and commemoration of this historical figure in the following ways: (1) by inspiring a civic group based in Santa Anna's hometown of Xalapa to commemorate his achievements; (2) by provoking some of the country's leading broadcasters and journalists to change the view of Mexico's past as it is presented in the national media; (3) by motivating HEI teachers and students in universities from different parts of Mexico to rethink Santa Anna's historical role in courses that have incorporated Fowler's relevant publications in the syllabus, and (4) by providing the museum curator of the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City with the confidence to host an exhibition dedicated to the Gran Teatro de Santa Anna.</p> </div> </div>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Although Santa Anna had merited a number of biographical studies prior to the dissemination of Fowler's new findings, these had consistently depicted him as a traitor, a turncoat and a tyrant. He was presented as the traitor who allegedly recognized the independence of Texas in captivity (1836), lost the Mexican-U.S. War (1846-48) for a fistful of dollars, and shamelessly sold parts of Mexico to the U.S. in 1853. He was also depicted as a cynical opportunist who changed sides whenever it suited him. It was an interpretation that allowed Mexican officialdom to write off the Early Republican Period, labelling it as the "Age of Santa Anna," one unworthy of study because of the way half of the country's territory was lost to the U.S., with Santa Anna being presented as the sole culprit for everything that went wrong following independence in 1821. Santa Anna's "black legend" was embedded in Mexico's nationalist "official history," formulated initially by the liberal historians of the late nineteenth century (1867-1911) and subsequently consolidated by those of Mexico's one party post-revolutionary state (1929-2000), with its myth-ridden genealogy of antagonistic "good" and "bad" Mexicans: the ones belonging to a patriotic line of progressive independence-seeking insurgents, liberal constitutionalists, and revolutionaries, the others to a line of reactionary royalists, retrograde conservatives, traitors, and elitist authoritarians. It was an interpretation that did not recognize that not all of Mexico's heroes were faultless nor that its</p>		

villains were not always villainous. Fowler's *Santa Anna of Mexico* (2007; 501pp) [R1], and subsequent translations into Spanish of the work [R2 & R3], dramatically revised this view, by offering a complex interpretation of Santa Anna's agency and of the period in which he rose to power on six separate occasions. By undertaking research in regional and national archives in Mexico, as well as in Britain, Spain, and the United States, Fowler was able to prove that Santa Anna's politics evolved over time, and that his regional activities as the main landowner in Veracruz paired with his military prowess were transformative in making him such a popular leader in his day. Fowler also demonstrated that the accusations whereby Santa Anna recognized the independence of Texas or lost the Mexican-U.S. War on purpose are inaccurate and misleading. Fowler's biography is part of a new historiographical wave concerned with revising the simplistic vision of the country's past projected by Mexican officialdom. Its importance lies in the way that it revises our understanding of Santa Anna's role, stamping out the perception of Santa Anna as the individual responsible for all the calamities that befell early republican Mexico.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

The underpinning research was initially published by a peer-reviewed academic press. The reviews *Santa Anna of Mexico* received in the leading academic journals in the field have consistently stressed the importance of this study, praising its originality, significance, and rigour. R1 was submitted to REF2014.

R1. 2007 *Santa Anna of Mexico*, Fowler, W., Lincoln, NE & London: University of Nebraska Press, pp. xv + 501 [ISBN: 978-0-80232-1120-9 (hbk)/978-0-8032-2638-8 (pbk)].

R2. 2010 *Santa Anna*. (Translation of *Santa Anna of Mexico*), Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana. pp. 534 [ISBN: 978-607-502-001-3].

R3. 2018 *Santa Anna. ¿Héroe o villano? La biografía que rompe el mito* (2nd Translation of *Santa Anna of Mexico*), Mexico City: Crítica [Planeta], pp. 606 [ISBN: 978-607-747-521-7].

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words).

Fowler's research has **altered public opinion of Antonio López de Santa Anna (1794-1876) in present-day Mexico**. It has **shaped public attitudes, contributed to processes of commemoration and memorialisation, challenged established modes of thought** and resulted in **changes to education**. Whilst the first 2010 translation into Spanish of *Santa Anna* by the scholarly Universidad Veracruzana press [R2], illuminated and challenged cultural values and social assumptions in the public domain, the publication of the second translation in 2018 resulted in Fowler's interpretation of Santa Anna reaching a much wider and varied audience. In 2017, commercial publisher Planeta acquired the translation rights of *Santa Anna*, and commissioned a new and more easily accessible translation, convinced that Fowler's findings deserved to reach beyond the confines of academia, adding the punchy subtitle *Hero or Villain? The Biography that Smashes the Myth* [R3]. Given Planeta's distribution capacity, *Santa Anna ¿Héroe o villano? La biografía que rompe el mito* went on sale in 2018 in all main high street bookshops, selling out, resulting in further reprints being published [S1]. Backed by Planeta's publicity team, Fowler participated in 12 presentations and public talks to audiences that ranged between 80 to 150 people, across Mexico both in 2018 and in 2020. These took place in bookshops, historical buildings such as the Palacio de Minería, the Anthropological Museum of Xalapa, and the Alhóndiga de Granaditas in Guanajuato, state archives like that of San Luis Potosí, and university venues in Mexico City, Puebla, Xalapa, Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, Guadalajara, and Guanajuato, as well as more recently online.

On the back of the publication of the two translations and the attention they received in the press, Fowler's research has (1) inspired a civic group to commemorate Santa Anna's achievements; (2) provoked influential broadcasters to reassess the view they present of Mexico's past in the media; (3) motivated HEI teachers and students from different parts of Mexico to rethink the way Santa Anna, and, by default, Mexico's past more broadly, has been taught until now, adopting Fowler's biography as a set text; and (4) prompted the museum curator of the Palacio de Bellas Artes' decision to host an exhibition dedicated to one of Santa Anna's cultural projects – the Gran Teatro de Santa Anna. Fowler's interpretation of Santa Anna

has thus **impacted upon the public debate over Mexico's "official history"** and informed new understandings both of Santa Anna's historical legacy and the way that history has obscured our understanding of the complexity of Mexico's past.

#### **4.1 A local civic group has been inspired to commemorate Santa Anna's achievements**

Following the 2010 publication of *Santa Anna* [R2], a group of approximately 40 people (professionals: teachers, lawyers), a number of whom play a prominent role in the cultural scene of Santa Anna's hometown of Xalapa, constituted a Civic Group in 2014, the Unión Cívica de Xalapa, with the aim of using Fowler's research to promote a positive understanding of the former president's historical legacy [S2]. They set about promoting awareness of how Mexico's "official history" had misrepresented him. Since the group's formation, they have annually commemorated the anniversary of Santa Anna's death, presenting a wreath before the house where he was born. They also host public events in Mexico City, such as one attended by a descendant of Santa Anna's, in which a copy of Fowler's *Santa Anna* was given as a raffle prize at the end (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRMG3b70q9U>) [S3], and recently have gone on to commemorate the battle of Cerro Gordo of 1847, helping the population of Xalapa, in the proud words of one their founding members, to "*recover the civic commemoration*" of the "*Liberator of Veracruz*," "*thanks to Fowler's research*" [S2].

#### **4.2 Influential broadcasters have changed the view of Mexico's past that they present.**



Fowler was also interviewed on television by two highly acclaimed broadcasters. On 2 May 2018, he was interviewed by the TV Azteca and Radio Fórmula commentator who went on to chair the presidential electoral debate of 12 June 2018, and on 11 March 2020 by Fórmula's leading award-winning Mexican-U.S. investigative journalist and anchor. The latter recognised that he now saw Santa Anna from a different perspective, thanks to Fowler's research (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0la8OtHLcA>) [S4].

Two leading journalists published detailed pieces, moreover, highlighting the importance of Fowler's findings in national newspapers *El Financiero* and *El Excelsior*, with daily paper runs of over 90,000 and 120,000 copies, respectively. The one stressed how they have served to refute the accusation that this former president was a traitor, highlighting how Fowler "*separates myth from reality*" [S5]. The other claimed they allow us to affirm that Santa Anna "*was neither a deceitful politician nor a traitor*," making a point of noting how Fowler does not vindicate him, as such, but shows how he was "*in all his tonalities*" [S6].

#### **4.3 HEI teachers have been motivated to change the way they teach – and their students learn – the history and interpretation of Santa Anna**

On the back of these activities, Fowler's *Santa Anna* in 2018 became **compulsory reading in twelve Mexican HEIs**, with Fowler having been invited to lead five different Santa Anna-focused student-centred workshops in 2018, 2019, and 2020 (the latest taking place via Zoom & Google Meet) which included over 500 people (undergraduate and postgraduate students). HEIs that study Fowler's work on Santa Anna as part of their syllabi are the Mexico City-based Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (both the Azcapotzalco and Iztapalapa campuses) [S7], the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas [CIDE], the Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, as well as the following universities from across the Republic: the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de San Luis Potosí [UASLP] [S8], the Colegio de San Luis [San Luis Potosí], the Colegio de Jalisco [Guadalajara], the Universidad de Guanajuato, the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, the Universidad de San Nicolás de Hidalgo [Morelia], the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla [BUAP], and the Universidad Veracruzana, influencing the way students view their country's past [S9]. As noted by one lecturer who has been using Fowler's *Santa Anna* for the last three years (since 2018) as a set-text in her 3<sup>rd</sup> Year undergraduate (UG) module on



Nineteenth-Century Mexican history and her postgraduate (PG) course on Selected Historical Themes, “Fowler’s book allows me to explore with my UG, PGT and PGR students the complexity of history, and the need to understand the past paying close attention to the context, without allowing the perennial official vision that there were good and bad Mexicans [...] to distort our interpretation of Mexico’s past” [S7]. Representative of the reach Fowler’s research has had on a new generation of students is the review two of them published in a popular Mexico City-university-based open access online journal claiming he has provided Mexicans with “a vision that accepts the light and darkness of [our] history, breaking with simplistic, bipolar interpretations, introducing [us to] the complexities and contradictions of [our] historical experience” [S9].



#### 4.4. The curator of the Palacio de Bellas Artes felt confident hosting an exhibition on the Gran Teatro de Santa Anna

The 2018 translation also served to justify Mexico City’s Palacio de Bellas Artes to host an exhibition between October 2019 and April 2020 “*Estampas de un Teatro del México del siglo XIX*” dedicated to the Gran Teatro de Santa Anna [S10]. For the curator, thanks to Fowler’s research, her interpretation of Mexican heritage had changed; she knew the Palacio de Bellas Artes, which averages in a typical year over 1,000,000 people (visitors), was not “indirectly commemorating a villain” by holding the exhibition, “but rather disseminating knowledge of some of the positive contributions he made to Mexico in his time”. The exhibition, which lasted from October 2019 until the coronavirus pandemic forced it to close in April 2020, served to actively rehabilitate Santa Anna in the public sphere by highlighting how Santa Anna’s 1841-44 governments actively promoted the arts, with Fowler giving a public lecture about Santa Anna’s cultural projects in February 2020 as part of the programme to an audience of over 150 people.



#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of ten references)

[S1] History Commissioning Editor/Publisher of Commercial Publishing House Planeta, Corroborative statement, Mexico City, 6 August 2020.

[S2]. Founder of Popular University of Veracruz and Member of the Unión Cívica de Xalapa, Corroborative statement, Xalapa, 13 March 2020.

[S3] Recording of “Primera tertulia santanista,” (1:54:40 mins) organised in Mexico City on 9 May 2014, by Santanista civic group inspired by Fowler’s biography (in which a copy of the book was given at the end as a prize [1:51:31 min.]) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRMG3b70q9U>.

[S4] Clip of Fórmula TV Interview, 10 March 2020. See opening minutes 0:10-1:15 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0la8OtHLcA>).

[S5] “En defensa de Santa Anna. En su nuevo libro, el investigador británico desmiente el perfil de traidor con que el ex presidente pasó a la historia,” *El Financiero*, 7 May 2018, p. 26 (<https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/culturas/santa-anna-no-fue-un-traidor-y-el-explica-por-que>) (*El Financiero* has a daily run of 91,890 newspapers [<https://pnmi.segob.gob.mx/reporte>]).

[S6] “Antonio López de Santa Anna, acusado de todo. De acuerdo con el historiador Will Fowler, el expresidente Antonio López de Santa Anna (1795-1876) no fue ni embustero ni un dictador vendepatrias,” *El Excelsior*, 13 May 2018 (<https://www.excelsior.com.mx/expresiones/antonio-lopez-de-santa-anna-acusado-de-todo/1238607>) (*El Excelsior* has a daily run of 120,540 newspapers [<https://pnmi.segob.gob.mx/reporte>]).

[S7] Corroborative statements of Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Mexico City) academics, 3 August 2020 (Iztapalapa Campus) and, 30 July 2020 (Azcapotzalco Campus).

[S8] Corroborative statement of Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí and course syllabus.

[S9] [UG Students] review of the book with interview, “Claroscuros de la historia. Una entrevista a Will Fowler,” *Revista Fuentes Humanísticas*, Vol. 30, Núm. 57 (2018), pp. 91-103. [http://fuenteshumanisticas.azc.uam.mx/index.php/rfh/article/view/875?fbclid=IwAR1r\\_H7An5cZZvvsVJH-1\\_qatyFw8Nqe8mN7f2PUMAoYkazVOVkPtKu8myk](http://fuenteshumanisticas.azc.uam.mx/index.php/rfh/article/view/875?fbclid=IwAR1r_H7An5cZZvvsVJH-1_qatyFw8Nqe8mN7f2PUMAoYkazVOVkPtKu8myk).

[S10] Corroborative statement of Exhibitions Coordinator of the Historical Archive of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, (Mexico City), Curator of the 2019-20 Exhibition on the Gran Teatro de Santa Anna. For figures of visitors see <https://inba.gob.mx/transparencia/estadisticas>.