

**The Decline of the Model Republic: Images of Mexico in U.S. Public
Discourse, 1860–1883**

Alys Dyson Beverton
University College London
Doctor of Philosophy in History

I, Alys Dyson Beverton confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that it has been indicated in the thesis.

Signature:.....

Abstract

Mexico had a fixed place in the antebellum American imagination. It was, most agreed, a failed republic whose chronic political turbulence proved the United States' exceptional stability. The Civil War, however, shattered the notion that the United States was immune to the forces of internal dissension which had plagued Mexicans for decades. This realisation destabilised Mexico's place in U.S. public discourse. During the 1860s, an awareness of their own fallibility caused some Americans to sympathise with their sister republic. As political factionalism persisted in the United States into the 1870s, however, a growing number of them invoked images of Mexican anarchy as portents of their own nation's future. It was not until the early 1880s, as Americans extended their commercial reach south of the Rio Grande, that they viewed Mexico as their nation's protégé and therefore a reflection of its resilience and strength.

By tracing of images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse between 1860 and 1883, this dissertation uncovers a current of anxiety regarding what some Americans saw as a dangerous spirit of factionalism in U.S. politics during this period. Historians often view concerns about the condition of the nation's political culture as a conservative force that fuelled opposition to the innovations of the Civil War era. This study, however, demonstrates that fears of factionalism transcended party and sectional lines. Moreover, it reveals that actors in public discourse used images of Mexico to harness these anxieties behind a range of policies - emancipation, Radical Reconstruction, and even commercial expansion were all presented to Americans as programmes to harmonise national politics and so restore the United States to its proper standing as the exceptional New World republic. This dissertation argues that Americans could embrace some revolutionary measures, so long as they believed they could bring them lasting domestic peace.

Contents

Acknowledgments	5
Introduction	6
Chapter One	
The Continental Union Cause: Solidarity with Mexico in Northern Public Discourse, 1862-1865	31
Chapter Two	
The Slaveholding Republic's Continental Destiny: Confederates Respond to the French Intervention in Mexico, 1862-1865	64
Chapter Three	
Reconstructing the Model Republic: The Debate Over Mexican Policy, 1865-1867	98
Chapter Four	
Factionalism in the Model Republic: Fears of Mexicanization in U.S. Public Discourse, 1876-1881	130
Chapter Five	
The Search for Reconciliation: Americans Reimagine the U.S.-Mexican Relationship, 1876-1881	162
Conclusion	198
Bibliography	206

Acknowledgements

For all that writing a PhD can be a solitary experience, it is impossible to do it alone. Too many people have helped me through this process to give all of them the thanks that they deserve here. However, there are some I must mention by name. When I first arrived at UCL I was convinced I had only been admitted due to an administrative error. My supervisor Dr Adam Smith has spent the last four years convincing me otherwise. Adam has given me the benefit of his experience and intellect while allowing me the room to make mistakes and develop as an independent researcher. His unfailing faith in my abilities has been of more value to me than I can say. My good fortune in having Adam as my primary supervisor was matched by having Dr David Sim as my second. His questions would percolate in my mind for days before I could come up with answers and pushed me to think about my research in new ways. Both Adam and David are more than supervisors to their students – they are also their advocates and friends. I am incredibly grateful that I am lucky enough to have been counted among them.

Throughout my studies I have been fortunate to receive financial assistance from various bodies. Funding from the Association of British American Nineteenth Century Historians allowed me to visit the New York Public Library, while a grant from the British Association for American Studies took me to the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. The Royal Historical Society provided additional funding that underwrote both these trips. Without this assistance I would not have been able to visit these archives – stimulating and useful experiences in themselves. Moreover, it gave me the opportunity to experience more of the country which I spend so much of my time only reading about.

Finally, thanks need to go to my family and friends. To Cat, Misha, Eilish, and Marjolein who started this PhD with me and who have read chapters throughout. To my fellow postgraduate Americanists David, Mark, Matt, Andrew, and Gareth – Birkbeck Bar will always have a special place in my heart because of them. To Alison and Heather, for reminding me that there is more to life than a PhD and for being a constant source of support throughout. To my parents Alan and Sue, who always encourage their children to do what makes them happy. I cannot list the many ways they have helped me through this process, nor can I adequately put into words how grateful I am to them – suffice it to say I would not have started, let alone finished this PhD without them. Finally, to Nathan. He has put up with tears, panics, and anti-social working hours for four years with an understanding and patience that is astounding. I am immensely thankful for his love and reassurance. Although he should also thank me for every U.S. history question he gets right on University Challenge.

Introduction

On 8th October 1868, the Union Republican Presidential Campaign Club held a rally at the Cooper Institute, New York, in support of their party's candidate Ulysses S. Grant. Dozens of the state's highest-ranking Republican officials were in attendance along with hundreds of members of the public. The first speaker of the evening, New York senator Edwin D. Morgan, began by issuing a warning to his audience. "You realize," he told the crowded hall, "that a crisis is upon us."¹ The crisis Morgan had in mind was the fractious condition of the United States' current political climate. Over recent months, he explained, Democrats had conducted their presidential campaign with a "rancor before unknown to our politics," filling the air with incendiary accusations that Republicans were bloodthirsty tyrants who wished to impose a regime of "negro rule" on the former Confederate states.² Their violent rhetoric had whipped white Southerners into a frenzy, and "threats of violence" should Grant win the presidency issued from that section daily.³ According to Morgan, the divided state of the nation's public sphere was reminiscent of what it had been during the Secession Crisis 1860-1861, when slaveholders had filled Southerners' ears with lies about the rapacious designs of then President-elect Abraham Lincoln to convince them to join their scheme to tear down the "Southern pillars of the beautiful temple of the Union."⁴ Four years of bloody warfare and three years of peace had apparently done little to teach Americans the danger of falling prey to this kind of demagoguery. In fact, Morgan worried that the experience of civil war had inculcated in his countrymen a habit for excessive factionalism. Once, he recalled, the United States had been the model of stable self-government in the Western Hemisphere. Now the country was about to follow "unfortunate ... Mexico" down a spiral of internal dissensions which would see it "degenerate into warring factions."⁵ For Morgan, the loss of harmony from its political culture was an existential threat to the integrity of the exemplary U.S. republic.

Morgan was not alone in his fears. This dissertation examines how, between 1860 and 1883, politicians, newspapermen, and other contributors to U.S. public discourse used images of Mexico to voice their concerns regarding what they saw as a dangerous spirit of factionalism in American politics during this period. Before the Civil War, Mexico had a relatively fixed place

¹ "The National Faith. Speeches of the New York Senators at Cooper Institute Last Evening," *New York Tribune*, 9 October 1868, 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

in the American imagination. It was, most agreed, a failed republic, beset by a seemingly endless cycle of internecine conflicts, uprisings, and military coups. For antebellum Americans, disorder south of the border threw the resilience of their own political institutions into sharper relief and buttressed their claims that the United States was the New World's exceptional republic. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, however, confronted them with the reality that their nation was not immune to the internal dissensions that had plagued Mexicans for decades. This unsettling realisation destabilised Mexico's place in U.S. public discourse. During the 1860s, an awareness of their own fallibility led some Americans to look upon Mexico with a newfound sense of sympathy and solidarity. Persistent political discord in the 1870s, however, caused many of them to worry that the Civil War had marked the beginning of the United States' protracted descent into permanent internal factionalism. As their pessimism grew, Americans invoked images of the anarchic Mexican republic as ominous portents of their own future. It was not until the early 1880s, when efforts to extend their commercial reach south of the border provided Americans with a renewed sense of common purpose, that they once again used representations of Mexico as reflections of their own nation's strength and unity. Mexico's image underwent several incarnations in U.S. public discourse throughout this period. What united them, however, was the uneasy sense that political disharmony had undermined their nation's claim to be the world's model republic. Between 1860 and 1883, as they compared the condition of their political culture to that of their southern neighbour, Americans measured how far they still had to go to regain that lost standing.

Tracing images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse during this period reveals not only Americans' anxieties about the imperiled condition of their republic, but the different ways they explained this apparent decline. Antebellum Americans often attributed the prevalence of internal discord south of the Rio Grande to some innate deficiency in the Mexican character. This argument had allowed them to believe that, whether by virtue of its citizens' race, religion, or culture, the United States was immune to these deleterious forces. The Civil War shattered this illusion. Throughout the conflict and the years that followed it, Americans therefore reexamined the causes of political factionalism in Mexico in order to understand better its emergence in their own society. During the Civil War, for example, Unionist leaders and publications advanced the theory that since its inception, Mexico's republican experiment had been undermined by the machinations of a cabal of Catholic priests. This faction, they argued, was analogous to the Southern Slave Power, a similarly anti-democratic faction which had sowed discord and conflict in the antebellum Union. Confederate organs, meanwhile, compared the Mexican Juarists with Northern abolitionists, casting each as a radical cabal that propagated

doctrines such as universal democracy and miscegenation designed to foment political and social anarchy. During the 1870s, a growing number of U.S. politicians and publications became concerned by the apparent rise of office-seekers in their nation's political system. They found the spoilsman's counterpart in the Mexican *caudillos* which similarly fed off popular divisions to lever themselves into office. Between 1860 and 1883, in short, various groups in U.S. public discourse deployed images of Mexico to emphasise to the American people their interpretation of which pollutant had infected the U.S. body politic and precipitated the rise of factionalism in their so-called exceptional republic.

This dissertation argues that it is important to appreciate the depth of Americans' anxieties regarding political factionalism in order to understand how they came to accept some of the revolutionary changes of the Civil War era. Between 1860 and 1883, different voices in U.S. public discourse sought to harness these popular insecurities behind a range of agendas by framing them as measures to harmonise the nation's political sphere. Doing so, they argued, would reverse the United States' recent decline and return it to its rightful place as the New World's model republic. During the Secession Crisis 1860-61, for example, disunionists insisted that the Southern states must withdraw from the Union in order to protect themselves from the abolitionists' scheme to plunge the region into the kind of political chaos typically found south of the Rio Grande. In the postwar era, these same separatists joined with a growing number of Northern Democratic voices to similarly denounce Radical Reconstruction as a plot to condemn the South to a condition of Mexican-like anarchy. However, quest for political harmony also drove Americans in radical directions. The exponents of emancipation and, later, black civil and political rights presented these unprecedented policies as efforts to eradicate the disruptive Slave Power from the body politic. By the late 1870s, publications of all partisan stripes were calling on their countrymen to pursue commercial expansion overseas as a means to unify the discordant elements of their society. While framed as efforts to reclaim the United States' exceptional status, these proposals were underpinned by the promise of harmony in the public sphere and, by extension, stability in all other areas of national life. Examining images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse between 1860 and 1883 therefore demonstrates that Americans could embrace some extraordinary measures, so long as they believed they would guarantee their nation lasting domestic peace.

Nineteenth-Century U.S. History in a Hemispheric Perspective

By tracing the evolution of images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse between 1860 and 1883, this study contributes to a growing body of scholarship which seeks to uncover the hemispheric dimensions of the nineteenth-century United States. One of the pioneers of this approach was the historian Herbert Bolton, a student of Frederick Jackson Turner, who in 1933 proposed an interpretive framework for the study of U.S. history which he called “Greater America.”⁶ Bolton based this approach on the notion that the nations gathered within the Western Hemisphere had been shaped by similar internal and external forces. Most, for example, were former European colonies which had taken a revolutionary path to republican self-governance. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, moreover, many of these countries had grappled with similar issues, including emancipation, relations with aboriginal populations, mass immigration, and industrialisation. Bolton proposed that these common experiences meant the diverse nations of the region could be profitably studied in comparison to or in conjunction with one another. For a long time, his call went largely unheeded by U.S. historians.⁷ In recent years, however, with transnational methodologies now more common, a growing number of scholars have sought to uncover the connections which have historically bound the United States to the wider hemisphere.

Studies which apply a hemispheric perspective to the study of nineteenth-century U.S. history can, in most cases, fit into one of three broad and overlapping categories. The first consists of comparative analyses that examine historical phenomena which occurred in the United States and other hemispheric countries. Scholars have compared, for example, how emancipation unfolded in the United States, Cuba, and Brazil over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸ A second group of historians trace the movement of people, ideas, and goods across national borders within the hemisphere. Patrick Kelly adopts a broad

⁶ Herbert E. Bolton, “The Epic of Greater America,” *American Historical Review* 38, no. 3 (April 1933), 448-74.

⁷ Latin Americanists, by contrast, have engaged with Bolton’s theory. See, for example, Lewis Hanke, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common History? A Critique of the Bolton Theory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964). Included in this volume is a 1939 essay by Mexican historian Edmundo O’Gorman which took Bolton to task for glossing over religious and cultural differences between Latin American nations, and between these nations and the United States. O’Gorman denounced Bolton’s approach as a form of academic imperialism, an intellectual dimension of President Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy (O’Gorman, “Do the Americas have a Common History?” in *Do the Americas Have a Common History?*, 102-9).

⁸ Carl N. Degler, “Slavery in the United States and Brazil: An Essay in Comparative History,” *American Historical Association* 75, no. 4 (April 1970), 1004-28; Richard Graham, “Slavery and Economic Development: Brazil and the U.S. in the 19th Century,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (October 1981), 620-55; Celia Azevedo, *Abolitionism in the United States and Brazil: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: Garland, 1995); Laird W. Bergad, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

continental perspective to argue that the 1860s constituted a period of “crisis” in North America.⁹ The Civil War in the United States, the French invasion of Mexico 1862-67, and Canadian Confederation in 1867 prompted leaders in each of these countries to engage in conversations with one another regarding issues of national sovereignty, federalism, and democracy. Other scholars narrow the parameters of their research to study networks which existed in regions within and across national borders in the hemisphere. For example, Andres Resendez traces the evolution of debt peonage, a form of labour with roots in the Spanish colonial era, in the U.S. southwest and northern Mexico during the 1860s.¹⁰ Matthew Guterl, meanwhile, argues that a community of interests and ideas connected slaveholders in the antebellum U.S. South with other planters throughout the circum-Caribbean.¹¹ Together, these two bodies of scholarship demonstrate that throughout the nineteenth century, the geographic, economic, and intellectual boundaries which separated the United States from its neighbours were constantly shifting and remarkably porous. The United States was therefore deeply embedded in the wider hemisphere and cannot fully be understood outside of this context.

This dissertation builds on a third body of work which investigates the different ways in which nineteenth-century Americans constructed images of the peoples, cultures, and environs of the hemisphere around them. This method has been especially popular among historians of U.S. diplomacy and imperialism.¹² They have found that Americans were particularly fascinated with the southern portions of the hemisphere, including the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America, which were the chief focus of their territorial and commercial ambitions during

⁹ Patrick J. Kelly, “The North American Crisis of the 1860s” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2, no. 3 (September 2012), 337-68. For a summary of how Canadian historians have debated whether the U.S. Civil War precipitated Canadian Confederation in 1867, see Philip Buckner, “British North America and a Continent in Dissolution: The American Civil War in the Making of Canadian Confederation,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017), 512-40. For studies which use a continental perspective to study U.S. expansionism during the nineteenth century, see Jack P. Greene, “Comparing Early Modern American Worlds: Some Reflections on the Promise of a Hemispheric Perspective,” *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (January 2003), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1478-0542.026/abstract> (accessed 8 February 2018) ; Paul D. Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017).

¹⁰ Andres Resendez, “North American Peonage,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017), 597-619.

¹¹ Matthew Pratt Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). The U.S.-Mexican borderlands is another sub-national region which has received scholarly attention. See, for example, Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006); Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexican Border* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

¹² While I have outlined three broad approaches here, historians often use some blend of all three. For a collection of studies which combine comparative and transnational approaches to reexamine various aspects of U.S. history within a hemispheric context, see Caroline F. Lavender and Robert S. Levine, eds., *Hemispheric American Studies* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

this period. Ricardo D. Salvatore, for example, argues that throughout the nineteenth century, Americans embarked on an “enterprise of knowledge” in South America which saw U.S. engineers, traders, investors, and tourists journey southward in a quest to familiarise themselves with the region’s exotic landscapes and strange cultures.¹³ These Americans used various practices to gather information, including mapping, narrating, collecting, and photographing. They produced their findings in a similarly diverse range of forms, from statistical data and scientific essays to historical analyses and works of art. Salvatore argues that these various “representations and interpretations” of South America were both highly subjective and often somewhat simplified impressions designed to make South America’s peculiarities “more ‘legible’” to audiences in the United States.¹⁴ By reading a book or studying a painting, in short, Americans could believe they understood a distant part of the world they had never themselves visited.

Historians have found that the images which nineteenth-century Americans constructed of the southern portions of the Western Hemisphere typically contained at least one of two components. The first was the region’s rich abundance of natural resources. As J. Valerie Fifer notes, throughout this period, U.S. land surveyors, tourists, and other travelers produced books and visual images which depicted Central and South America as “exotic worlds” filled with lumber, tropical fruits, and untapped minerals.¹⁵ The second component focused on the culture and character of the hemisphere’s inhabitants. As Frederick B. Pike notes, most Americans who narrated their encounters with the non-white peoples south of their border presented them as “capricious, irresponsible,” lazy, and of a low intelligence.¹⁶ They also offered a range of

¹³ Ricardo D. Salvatore, “The Enterprise of Knowledge: Representational Machines of Informal Empire,” in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. Legrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 71. Amy Kaplan argues that while Americans constructed images of foreign others, interactions abroad also shaped aspects of American identity at home (Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002)). See also Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Salvatore, “The Enterprise of Knowledge,” 71. The term “legible” has its roots in the field of political science. In 1998, James C. Scott argued that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, western European governments implemented various measures to codify social arrangements among their respective populations in order to gather and quantify information about their citizens. According to Scott, rendering their populations “legible” helped these governments formulate policies and facilitated forms of state-sponsored social control. See, Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁵ J. Valerie Fifer, *United States Perceptions of Latin America, 1850-1930: A “New West” South of Capricorn?* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1991), 183.

¹⁶ Frederick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilization and Nature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 64.

theories to explain the apparent prevalence of such unfortunate qualities among these populations. Reginald Horsman notes that, over the course of the nineteenth century, notions of scientific racism and polygenesis which posited that humankind was separated by “innate racial differences” became increasingly popular in U.S. society.¹⁷ Americans applied these teachings to their perceptions of the non-white peoples of the Western Hemisphere, most of whom possessed some blend of European, African, and Native ancestry. They postulated that racial mixing was a degenerative practice which had rendered these “mongrel” people “lazy, ignorant ... vicious and dishonest.”¹⁸ Other hypotheses also abounded, from the enervating effects of tropical climates to the dulling influence of the Catholic Church.¹⁹ Whatever the explanation, by the antebellum period, most Americans had come to agree that the hemisphere’s non-white occupants were credulous primitives lacking in self-restraint and incapable of high intellect.

Several scholars have argued that rendering the hemisphere’s environs and peoples “legible” in this way facilitated the evolution of U.S. imperialism during the nineteenth century. Caitlin Fitz and Paul D. Naish note that in the 1810s and 1820s, many Americans welcomed the wave of independence movements sweeping across Spanish America and proudly proclaimed that they had been inspired by their own uprising against the British in 1776.²⁰ There was, however, a cynical motive behind their professed support for the Latin American revolutionaries.²¹ Americans were eager to displace the European imperial nations as the chief

¹⁷ Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 212.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ For more on how some Americans argued that Latin Americans’ supposed incapacity for self-government was a product of climate, see Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 59. For a study which examines how some Americans blamed the stultifying effects of Catholicism, see John C. Pinheiro, *Missionaries of Republicanism: A Religious History of the Mexican-American War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). Others contended that Latin Americans’ apparent predilection for political violence was a legacy of Spanish colonialism. This notion was influenced by the myth of the Black Legend, formed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in northern Europe, which posited that the Spanish colonial system was particularly cruel in comparison to those of the other European empires. For more, see Charles Gibson, ed., *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

²⁰ Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2016); Paul D. Naish, *Silence and Slavery: Latin America and the U.S. Slave Debate* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

²¹ The notion of “Latin America” is a historical construct which has been defined differently over time. It derives from the concept of a “Latin race,” popularised by French intellectuals, politicians, and diplomats during the first half of the nineteenth century. During the French invasion of Mexico 1862-1867, French leaders used the idea that there was a “Latin America” to justify their imperialist plans in the Western Hemisphere. However, Michel Gobat has pointed out that the term was already in use by the 1850s in Central and South America to refer to an imagined community of self-identified white elites in the region united by their race, religion, culture, and democratic institutions. This version of Latin America excluded both Haiti (because it was a black republic) and Brazil (because it was not a republic at all). Gobat notes

commercial power in the hemisphere, but lacked the mercantile and financial capabilities to do so. They therefore declared a kind of ideological hegemony over the new Latin American republics which challenged the Europeans' influence in the region, at least on moral grounds. As the century progressed, the Old World powers gradually retreated from the Western Hemisphere while the United States grew in strength. Americans therefore began to devise plans for territorial and commercial expansion beyond their southern border. However, they were anxious to justify their predatory designs on their sister republics in a way that did not undermine their own self-claimed dedication to the principle of national sovereignty. When Americans constructed images of Latin Americans as vicious, reckless, and mentally inferior, they sought to convince themselves that the republican governments which these populations had created were unstable, corrupt, and therefore illegitimate. As Reginald Horsman notes, during the U.S.-Mexican War 1846-1848, the notion that the government in Mexico City was filled with avaricious strongmen and grasping clerics assuaged Americans' qualms about making war on their southern neighbour. After all, they assured one another, to "take lands from inferior barbarians was no crime."²² According to these scholars, then, Americans' view of the republican experiment in Latin America was largely a product of their own shifting foreign policy interests in the region.

The notion that the Latin American republics were uniformly corrupt and unstable served another purpose beyond facilitating U.S. overseas ambitions. Transnational historian Ian Tyrrell posits that members of a nation often cultivate a sense of collective identity by defining themselves against other peoples and cultures. Making these comparisons helps individuals delineate the values, ideals, and aspirations that define them as members of a distinct community, a process which Tyrrell calls the "transnational production of the nation."²³ Historians have found that during the nineteenth century, Americans derived a sense of unity from the idea that their republic was somehow different from and superior to the others of the New World. The precise phrase "American exceptionalism" was not coined until the twentieth century.²⁴ The notion that there was something special in the American character, however,

that by 1857, the term was in use in the United States (Michel Gobat, "The Invention of Latin America: A Transnational History of Anti-Imperialism, Democracy, and Race," *American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December 2013), 1345-75). This researcher found that during the Civil War era, Americans who used the term "Latin America" did not make a distinction between "white" and "non-white" Latin Americans and instead used the term to refer to those republics which had once been part of the Spanish empire.

²² Ibid. 211.

²³ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 6.

²⁴ Ian Tyrrell notes that the term "American exceptionalism" was first coined by Marxists in the 1920s who sought to explain why in the United States alone among the Western powers there had been no

predates the United States itself. Historically, Americans have measured their self-claimed exceptionalism in different ways, from their society's apparent lack of class distinctions to its ability to assimilate large numbers of immigrants.²⁵ During the nineteenth century, when they looked across their southern border, what struck many Americans was the remarkable stability of their system of government in comparison to those of their neighbours. Since independence, many of the Latin American republics had been rocked by domestic uprisings, separatist movements, and civil wars. The chaos that seemed to reign south of the Rio Grande may have troubled Americans of the Revolutionary generation who, influenced by the universalism of the Enlightenment, had anticipated that the republican institutions they had created were destined to spread throughout the world. As Naish explains, however, by the antebellum era, most Americans agreed that chronic instability in the Latin American republics was evidence of their populations' incapacity for self-government. As their definition of what constituted true republicanism "became more limited," he argues, Americans' belief in the "exceptionalism ... of U.S. nationalism became more pronounced."²⁶ By the mid-century, therefore, images of the Latin American republics functioned in the United States as a counterpoint to U.S. nationality and proof that white Americans alone possessed the requisite skills to sustain a stable republican government.

The existing scholarship on U.S. perceptions of the southern portions of the hemisphere has made valuable contributions to our understanding of the evolution of both American foreign policy and national identity over the course of the nineteenth century. It is, however, limited in certain respects. The studies outlined above focus almost exclusively on those images Americans constructed that were intended to justify their plans for territorial and commercial expansion into Latin America. Greg Grandin suggests that scholars' tendency to analyse U.S.-Latin American relations solely within the context of the former's foreign policy ambitions leads them to assume that, for contemporaries in the United States, this relationship operated within a fixed dynamic of strong versus weak, superior versus inferior. Grandin argues that throughout the nineteenth century, politicians and intellectuals in the United States and Latin America were

serious socialist or Marxist movements. For more on this, see Ian Tyrrell, "What is American Exceptionalism?" [iantyrrell.wordpress.com](https://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/papers-and-comments/) <https://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/papers-and-comments/> (accessed 9 December 2017).

²⁵ For more on the relationship between ideas about American exceptionalism and the frontier, see Jonathon A. Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety: Wages, Competition, and Degraded Labor in the Antebellum United States* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002); and, David M. Wrobel, *Global West, American Frontier: Travel, Empire, and Exceptionalism from Manifest Destiny to the Great Depression* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

²⁶ Naish, *Silence and Slavery*, 63.

in fact locked in an ongoing competition to “define a set of nominally shared but actually contested ideas and political forms,” including “Christianity, republicanism, liberalism, sovereignty, rights, and above all the very idea of America.”²⁷ Grandin’s argument is unlikely to generate any shockwaves amongst scholars of Latin American history, several of whom have demonstrated that throughout the nineteenth century, leaders in the region often insisted on the superiority of their own political values, institutions, and cultures in comparison to those of the northern colossus.²⁸ Historians of the United States, however, have been less attuned to the possibility that their U.S. citizens could view Latin American republicanism as competition or even a viable alternative to their own system of government. There are, however, some exceptions. Ronnie C. Taylor, for example, notes that Mexico’s “liberal tradition,” which combined free labour with a relatively fluid racial structure, made the country an appealing place for refugee slaves in the antebellum U.S. southwest.²⁹ Matthew J. Clavin similarly highlights Haiti’s importance as a symbol of black emancipation and self-governance among U.S. abolitionists and African Americans.³⁰ For the disempowered and dispossessed in the nineteenth century United States, these scholars suggest, Latin America offered ideologies, values, and histories which they could draw on to create that sense of purpose and belonging which had been denied them in their own country.

Historians such as Taylor and Clavin primarily focus on marginalised groups within U.S. society. However, there were times during the nineteenth century when white Americans also used images of the Latin American republics, not so much to question the superiority of the United States’ institutions as to draw attention to their fallibility. Typically, this happened at periods of acute anxiety when these Americans felt that the foundations of their so-called exceptional republic were somehow in jeopardy. Alfred N. Hunt notes that in the antebellum South, proslavery advocates conjured up images of Haiti to defend their peculiar institution

²⁷ Greg Grandin, “The Liberal Traditions in the Americas: Rights, Sovereignty, and the Origins of Liberal Multi-Lateralism,” *American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (February 2012), 69.

²⁸ James E. Sanders, “Atlantic Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century Colombia: Spanish America’s Challenge to the Contours of Atlantic History,” *Journal of World History* 20, no. 1 (March 2009), 131-50; Axel Körner, Nicola Miller, and Adam I. P. Smith, eds., *America Imagined: Images of the United States in Nineteenth-Century Europe and Latin America* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Gobat, “Invention of Latin America,”; James E. Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

²⁹ Ronnie C. Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” *Journal of Negro History* 57, no. 1 (January 1972), 2.

³⁰ Matthew J. Clavin, “American Toussaints: Symbols, Subversion, and the Black Atlantic Tradition in the American Civil War,” *Slavery & Abolition* 28, no. 1 (May 2007), 89. See also Matthew J. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

against the criticisms of Northern abolitionists. Slaveholders pointed to the “example of blacks lapsing into savagery when restraints were lifted” during the Haitian Revolution, he explains, to warn of the chaos that would ensue should emancipation come to pass in the United States.³¹ In one sense, these images emphasised the unique order and tranquillity of the South’s slaveholding republican society. But they also revealed these proslavery Southerners’ sense that the barriers which separated the United States from the black republic were not impervious and would disintegrate after abolition. Scholars have found a similar phenomenon taking place at other moments of social or political uncertainty in the nineteenth-century United States. For instance, Gregory P. Downs finds that during the fallout of the contested 1876 presidential election, the notion that the United States’ electoral system had become “Mexicanized” emerged in U.S. political discourse. The fraught and highly polarised political climate which surrounded the election, Downs argues, caused some Americans to worry that the “line between violence and politics” in their society “might evaporate completely” and condemn the United States to the kind of anarchy typically found south of the Rio Grande.³² During moments of self-doubt, therefore, Americans’ images of Latin America took on a menacing aspect and became uncomfortable reminders that whatever bedrocks their model republic rested upon could in fact be undermined.

This dissertation asks whether Americans looked southward during another period of intense uncertainty in the United States – the Civil War and postwar era. Scholars have shown that, by the mid-nineteenth century, most Americans viewed domestic strife and political violence as phenomena which only occurred in republics south of the Rio Grande. How, then, did they reconcile this belief with Southern secession 1860-61 and the Union’s subsequent descent into civil war? Downs finds that fears of “Mexicanization” emerged in U.S. political discourse during the tumultuous aftermath of the 1876 presidential election. This electoral crisis, however, had been preceded by decades of intense political upheaval in the post-Civil War United States, particularly in the Reconstruction South where vigilante violence and contested

³¹ Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti’s Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 129. For more on images of Haiti in the antebellum South, see Donald R. Hickey, “America’s Response to the Slave Revolt in Haiti, 1791-1806,” *Journal of the Early Republic* no. 4, 2 (Winter 1982), 362-79; J. Michael Dash, *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and Literary Imagination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Robert Alderson, “Charleston’s Rumoured Slave Revolt of 1793,” in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David P. Geggus, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 93-111; Ashi White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); and Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan, 2012).

³² Gregory P. Downs, “The Mexicanization of American Politics: The United States’ Transnational Path from Civil War to Stabilization,” *American Historical Review* 117, no. 2 (April 2012), 387.

elections were commonplace. Did this prolonged period of political instability raise doubts among Americans about the integrity of their republic? And if so, were these concerns evident in the ways in which they spoke about their supposedly inferior republican neighbours? In the past, Americans had used images of the Latin American republics to delineate those social, cultural, and racial attributes which they believed defined their so-called exceptional republic. Might it be possible, therefore, that during the Civil War era, they used these same images to draw attention to what they perceived to be weaknesses within their nation that had caused their internecine contest and the political turmoil which followed it? Finally, was it possible that Americans used images of Latin America not only to diagnose what ailed their republic but to rally others around possible methods to remedy these ills? By examining if and how Americans invoked images of the Latin American republics during the Civil War era, in short, could we perhaps gain a better understanding of how they navigated the bewildering experience of national disunion and reunion?

The Meaning and Uses of Images in Public Discourse

This study focusses specifically on Americans' perceptions of Mexico during the Civil War era. There are several reasons for this. Among the most important is that, as historians Peter Duigan and Lewis H. Gann note, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Mexican republic had become a "byword for political instability" in the American lexicon.³³ To be sure, since independence Mexico had experienced its share of civil unrest, violent coups, and autocratic leaders. But the country was arguably no less plagued by political turmoil than, say, the republics of Nicaragua or New Granada, both of which experienced violent civil wars during the 1840s and 1850s. Nevertheless, antebellum Americans tended to collapse the entire hemisphere into a single homogeneous unit. When they used phrases such as the "Mexican republican style" to characterise all the self-governing nations beyond their southern border this was simply because most Americans at the time were more familiar with Mexico than any other Latin American republic. In part, this was a consequence of geography: when U.S. tourists, travel writers, and explorers travelled southward by land, Mexico was the first country they encountered.³⁴ The

³³ Peter J. Duigan and Lewis H. Gann, *The Spanish Speakers in the United States: A History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 6.

³⁴ For more on the writings of antebellum U.S. travelers, tourists, and scientists on both Mexico and the hemisphere more broadly, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Miguel A. Cabanas, *The Cultural "Other" in Nineteenth-Century Travel Narratives: How the United States and Latin America Described Each Other* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008). William H. Prescott's *The Conquest of Mexico* was one of the

Texas Revolution 1835-1836 and the U.S.-Mexican War 1846-1848, moreover, drew American journalists south of the Rio Grande who reported not only on events on the battlefield, but the inner workings of Mexican politics.³⁵ Throughout the 1850s, the U.S.-Mexican border provided another forum for interaction between citizens of the two countries, as well as a source of tension between their respective governments. By the eve of the Civil War, in short, many Americans had heard and read more about Mexico than perhaps any other Latin American republic, and the notion that the country was a hotbed of political volatility was firmly ingrained on their collective mind. As David J. Weber notes, the “relative uniformity” with which antebellum Americans described Mexicans as “lazy, ignorant ... cruel, sinister, cowardly half-breeds” suggested that most of them regarded these stereotypes as indisputable facts.³⁶ Given this, it seemed plausible that during the Civil War era, Americans might be compelled reconcile their assumptions about their southern neighbour with their own nation’s descent into domestic strife.

Events which took place south of the Rio Grande during the 1860s and 1870s also suggested that examining Americans’ perceptions of Mexico during this period might yield interesting results. In 1857, a civil war broke out between Conservative and Liberal forces in Mexico. The Liberals were a heterogenous group united by a determination to curtail the political influence of both the Catholic Church and the military. Conservatives, meanwhile, generally favoured a centrist form of government and wished to see these institutions retain the privileges they had received from the state since the colonial era. In December 1860, Conservative troops surrendered and Liberal president Benito Juárez resumed control of the federal government. Defeated but not deterred, Conservative leaders dispatched emissaries to Europe, tasked with enlisting one of the imperial powers in their plans to depose President Juárez. French emperor Louis-Napoléon III, who harboured dreams of re-establishing the glory of the French American empire, listened to their entreaties with interest.³⁷ When in July 1861

most popular histories of the nineteenth-century which, despite its efforts at objectivity, presented Mexico as a country with a noble past currently languishing under the mismanagement of a series of inept governments (John C. Pinheiro, *Missionaries of Republicanism: A Religious History of the Mexican-American War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 45-46).

³⁵ Michael Scott Van Wagenen, *Remembering the Forgotten War: The Enduring Legacies of the U.S.-Mexican War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 16.

³⁶ David J. Weber, ““Scarce More Than Apes”: Historical Roots of Anglo-American Stereotypes of Mexicans,” in *Myth and the History of the Hispanic Southwest: Essays by David J. Weber* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 159.

³⁷ For more on Louis-Napoléon’s imperial ambitions, particularly with regard to the Americas, see Guy P. C. Thompson and David G. LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999);

President Juárez declared national bankruptcy and suspended payments on his country's foreign loans, Louis-Napoléon saw an opportunity to make his imperial fantasies a reality. In October, Mexico's principal foreign creditors, Great Britain, Spain, and France, participated in a joint military expedition to pressure the Juárez administration to honour its international obligations. Allied troops arrived in Vera Cruz in early 1862. After negotiations with representatives of the Juárez government, Britain and Spain withdrew their forces. Louis-Napoléon, however, claimed he could not trust promises made by the notoriously unreliable government in Mexico City. Instead, French officials made contact with Conservative leaders and prominent members of the Mexican clergy. In 1862, these elements launched a coordinated assault against the Juárez government. The conflict that followed – part foreign invasion, part civil war – lasted from 1862 to 1867. Mexico, then, descended into another episode of domestic conflict at almost the same moment as did the United States, a parallel which it seemed possible would not have been lost on Americans at the time.

In the Civil War era, Americans discussed Mexico in a range of contexts and for a variety of reasons - scientists, land surveyors, diplomats, and novelists all took an interest in their country's southern neighbour during this period. Images of Mexico therefore circulated within U.S. society in different forms, from books and maps to poems and theatrical performances. This study, however, asks whether Americans thought about Mexico specifically in relation to their own experience of national disunion and reunion. Many of the issues that surrounded this process, including secession, reconstruction, and reconciliation, were highly (though not exclusively) political in nature. This dissertation therefore focusses on those forms of public discourse in which these topical issues were regularly discussed, namely newspapers and journals. It supplements these sources with other forms of published material, including literature distributed by party organisations and speeches by politicians printed in the *Congressional Globe*, the *Congressional Record*, or the national press. Occasionally, this study makes use of the publications of notionally non-political actors (Union Leagues in the Civil War North, for example) when they engaged in discussions taking place in wider public discourse at the time.

The sources included in this study were also chosen because they were intended for a national audience. Smaller publications that circulated within specific regions or groups in the United States tended to construct images of Mexico that were influenced by the particular interests of their intended audience, especially if those audiences had economic, professional, or

and, Maïke Thier, "The View from Paris: 'Latinity,' 'Anglo-Saxonism,' and the Americas, as discussed in the *Revue des Races Latines*, 1857-64," *International History Review* 33, no.4 (December 2011), 627-44.

social connections south of the border. However, this study seeks to establish whether Mexico had any relevance for Americans who had no direct interests in that country, financial, personal, or otherwise. While it occasionally makes use of some regional publications, therefore, it does so in conjunction with more widely-read materials. While aimed at the general public, the sources analysed here were produced by individuals and organisations with different socio-economic and political affiliations and enjoyed different types and levels of readership. By making these distinctions clear, this dissertation not only outlines the broad contours of U.S. public discourse in the Civil War era, but some of the fissures that existed within it. Finally, the sources included in this dissertation were selected because they used images of Mexico to frame, inform, or otherwise shape their discussions about disunion and reunion in the United States. Of course, Americans discussed these topics without thinking about Mexico or their country's relationship with it. By exploring why some did, however, this dissertation seeks to gain insight into how these Americans experienced the tumult of the Civil War era which would not have been apparent otherwise.

The newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and speeches that inform this study offer insight into some of the broadly-shared values, ambitions, and interests in American society during the Civil War era. For example, during this period, newspapers were the principal means by which most Americans received their news. To examine them is therefore to understand how many contemporaries would have been informed about conversations taking place across the country regarding issues of national concern. The viewpoints of politicians, editors, and journalists are not the same as public opinion. When they wrote their columns and delivered their speeches, however, it was necessary for these individuals to address topics that they believed their audiences cared about and in terms that they could understand. Political scientist Young C. Kim argues that newspapers and other forms of mass media create what he describes as a “social reality” in which public matters are presented, interpreted, and debated.³⁸ According to Kim, this “social reality” is informed by commonly-held societal values, beliefs, and objectives which those who produce different forms of mass media draw on to frame how they present issues to their audiences. Examining the contents of newspapers, pamphlets, and other published materials not only illuminates the values and interests of those who created them, therefore, but those creators' interpretation of the values and interests of their readers as well. More than this, most of the sources analysed in this study were produced by politicians or partisan organs who sought to advance various ideological or policy agendas. While they drew on commonly-held

³⁸ Young C. Kim, “The Concept of Political Culture in Comparative Politics,” *Journal of Politics* 26, no. 2 (1964), 335.

beliefs and objectives, therefore, they did so in order to shape public opinion. These sources therefore illuminate how actors in U.S. public discourse attempted to manipulate what they perceived to be their countrymen's ideals, aspirations, and concerns in order to promote different political and policy agendas.

Examining when and how images of Mexico appeared in these publications is a means of navigating the broad spectrum of Civil War-era public discourse to identify certain sets of values and interests that were of particular importance during this period, at least according to those who invoked them. Axel Körner posits that images of foreign nations that circulate within societies are often "subjective constructions."³⁹ An image of this kind either "confirms, reproduces, questions, or modifies social and political realities" for their creators.⁴⁰ Such images are not necessarily intended as accurate representations of their subjects, in short, but rather are designed to serve certain functions for those who construct and invoke them. Images of foreign nations can, for example, be used as representations of values, beliefs, or attributes against which members of a community can define themselves with or against in order to cultivate a sense of common identity. Körner argues that the subjective nature of such representations increases their value as materials for historical analysis because they provide a "key to the mentalities" of their creators.⁴¹ Examining the discursive contexts in which images appear, furthermore, sheds light on the motives of those who use them. Images of other nations are rarely invoked at random, Körner explains, but are instead deployed in specific contexts and in ways intended to impel those who receive them towards certain courses of action. They can, for example, be presented as either roadmaps for their audiences to follow or as warnings of what to avoid. This dissertation, therefore, explores the contents of images of Mexico that appeared in U.S. newspapers, pamphlets, and other printed materials as a means to learn more about the values of those who invoked them. It examines the contexts in which these images appeared, furthermore, to gain an understanding of their creators' objectives and how they attempted to rally their fellow countrymen behind them.

Fears of Factionalism in U.S. Public Discourse during the Civil War Era

Between 1860 and 1883, the images of Mexico which appeared in U.S. public discourse usually depicted a country wracked by political dissensions and upheavals. In this respect, they did not

³⁹ Körner, "Introduction," in *America Imagined*, 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

differ from those that had circulated in the United States prior to the Civil War. Indeed, events which occurred south of the Rio Grande during the 1860s and 1870s provided Americans with fresh evidence to support their long-held perceptions of Mexico as a hotbed of political volatility. In June 1863, French troops drove President Juárez out of Mexico City. For the remainder of the French invasion, Juárez maintained a government-in-exile which administered those parts of the country still under its control while moving continuously through Mexico's northern provinces. Even after the fall of the French-backed Maximilian regime in 1867, Mexican society remained deeply divided and a near-constant series of low-level rebellions between 1867 and 1871 compelled Juárez to make liberal use of his executive powers. When in 1876 Juárez's successor Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada interfered in the presidential election to secure himself a second term, he was deposed by a military uprising headed by prominent general Porfirio Díaz. The publications examined in this study were well-placed to be informed about these tumultuous events. Newspapers such as the *New York Tribune*, the *New York Herald*, and the *Chicago Tribune* were large enough to send their own reporters into Mexico. Others either paid for articles written by freelance American journalists stationed south of the border, or else reprinted reports issued by the Associated Press. Mexicans themselves also provided some of the information which entered U.S. public discourse during this period. While living in Washington D.C. between 1861 and 1867, for example, Mexican minister Matias Romero cultivated close ties with several prominent newspaper editors and regularly furnished them with summaries of events taking place in his country. Throughout this period, moreover, various political exiles from Mexico took refuge in either California or Texas and were often eager to give the U.S. press their version of happenings south of the Rio Grande. Civil War era Americans were, in short, given ample evidence to support their well-established stereotypes about the chaotic Mexican republic.

What distinguished images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse during the Civil War era, however, was the way in which those who used them interpreted the causes of political turmoil south of the Rio Grande. Antebellum Americans usually attributed the difficulties which had beset the Mexican republican experiment to a deficiency of race or culture. Some innate defect in their character, they conjectured, rendered Mexicans unsuited to the demands of democratic citizenship and made their leaders either bloodthirsty and tyrannical or hopelessly inept. After the outbreak of the Civil War, however, it became difficult for Americans to maintain that the biological composition of its population alone determined the degree of stability in a republic. While they by no means abandoned the notion that Mexicans were inferior, during the Civil War era many newspapers, politicians, and other actors in public discourse advanced new theories to

explain the chaos which seemed to reign south of the border. For example, some asserted that since independence, Mexico had been constantly harassed by the machinations of the Catholic priesthood which periodically riled up its congregants into rebellion in order to undermine the federal government. Others blamed the Mexican Liberals and argued that their extreme doctrines of universal democracy and anti-clericalism had fomented conflict between different sectors of Mexican society. Still other Americans attributed instability in Mexico to the partisan cliques and demagogues who exacerbated divisions within the population in order to ride the waves of domestic antipathies into office. While their precise theories differed, therefore, during the Civil War era, many voices in U.S. public discourse agreed that some disruptive cabal was at work in Mexican society which sought to undermine the republic from within.

Between 1860 and 1883, various actors in U.S. public discourse used these theories to explain to the public what they claimed had caused the rise of internal divisions and instability in their own republic during this period. During the Civil War, for example, Unionist organs often compared the Mexican priesthood to the slaveholders at the head of the Southern rebellion. Both these groups, they argued, had their roots in the colonial era and shared their European forbears' aristocratic worldview and therefore disrupted electoral processes and defied federal authority in order to undermine democracy in their respective republics. Confederate publications, meanwhile, compared Mexican Liberals to abolitionists in the United States and blamed the Civil War on the latter's efforts to turn Northerners against their Southern countrymen during the antebellum period. These same voices continued to draw these parallels after the Civil War, arguing that the Radical Republicans' Reconstruction agenda was designed to plunge the former Confederate states into a condition of Mexican-like anarchy. During the 1870s, many leading publications blamed the persistence of factionalism and periodic violence in American politics on the rise of a class of unscrupulous office-seekers who, much like their *caudillo* counterparts south of the border, exacerbated sectional tensions among the electorate in order to shore up their bases of popular support. Americans had once used Mexico as a point of contrast against which they identified those attributes that they claimed made their republic uniquely strong and successful. During the Civil War and the years which followed it, however, they frequently used images of Mexico as reflections of their own society which highlighted its internal weaknesses.

The notion instability in the Civil War era United States was caused by the intrigues of some insidious cabal within the body politic echoed the teachings of republican ideology that had a long history in U.S. political thought. Republicanism is a historically-contingent ideology that is perhaps best understood as a set of values and ideas rather than an exact formula for

governance. Generally, however, republicanism posits that the best form of government is one that promotes the collective good of society. It also places a great deal of importance on the moral character of individuals. Specifically, republicanism teaches that a spirit of self-sacrifice and concern for the public good is essential among leaders of a republic in order to ensure the maintenance of a stable, democratic system of government. It therefore teaches its adherents to be on constant lookout for external forces that can corrupt individual virtue – wealth, luxury, access to inordinate power can all turn selflessness into self-interest and men into tyrants. While republicanism concedes that a degree of division and debate in a democracy is inevitable, it stresses that it is essential that the factions that form around particular interests are temporary and dissipate once opposing sides of any given issue reach a solution that serves the greater public good. When factions become entrenched and their leaders consumed by self-interest, compromise becomes impossible. What follows is a breakdown of the political system as politicians and citizens alike resort to extra-legal and even violent means to settle their disputes.

Most scholars agree that by the mid-nineteenth century, republicanism had lost much of its force as a coherent political doctrine in the United States.⁴² Between 1860 and 1883, however, when U.S. politicians, editors, and others in public discourse reflected on the sequence of events that had led to the Civil War, many of them were reminded of the warnings of Montesquieu and the other classical republican theorists about the dangers that excessive factionalism posed to the survival of a republic. A distaste for partisanship had long been part of the American creed.⁴³ The experience of the Civil War, however, intensified some Americans’

⁴² Historians have attributed republicanism’s declining influence over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century to the fact that it was an essentially agrarian ideology unsuited to the needs of an industrialising United States. Despite this, several historians argue that elements of republicanism retained influence among certain sectors of U.S. society throughout the century, albeit usually as fragmented clusters of values and beliefs rather than a coherent ideological doctrine. Jean Baker, for example, traces the persistence of republican-inspired concepts and rhetoric among mid-century Northern Democrats. See Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1983). For historians who have identified aspects of republican thought in the antebellum South, see Robert E. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline: Pastoral Republican* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980); Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). For more on the influence of republican ideology during the Revolutionary and Early Republic eras, see Gordon S. Wood, “Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution,” *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 66, no. 1 (April 1990); Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1975); and, Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967). For a somewhat outdated but still useful overview of the concept of republicanism in the historiography of U.S. nineteenth-century history, see Daniel T. Rogers, “Republicanism: The Career of a Concept,” *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992), 11-38.

⁴³ For more on antipartyism in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century U.S. political culture, see Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York:

esteem for the traditional republican virtues of consensus, harmony, and a spirit of civic duty in the public sphere. “A broad-minded statesmanship and care for the common good,” the *Cincinnati Enquirer* asserted in July 1863, had been the “genius of our leaders of past generations,” and had blessed Americans with tranquillity and peace while “the other nations of this hemisphere were in a constant state of unrest.”⁴⁴ Somewhere along the way, however, their leaders had lost their talent for selfless compromise. Factionalism in public life had grown, and with that instability, conflict, and violence throughout society. As the *Enquirer* concluded, while the United States had once been the model that the lesser American republics aspired to, since the “disease of self-interest and faction” had infected its politics, “our country is no better than the worst of them.”⁴⁵ As this dissertation will show, many Americans used this theory to explain not only their civil war, but the unsettled and divided state of their political realm during the years that followed it.

Some historians have noted that Civil War era Americans worried over the apparent loss of traditional republican values from their nation’s political culture. They usually characterise these anxieties as a reactionary force marshalled by certain groups to generate popular opposition to some of the transformations taking place in American society during the period. Jean Baker, for example, argues that, during the Civil War, Northern Democrats were concerned that the extraordinary circumstances of wartime had unleashed “passions normally restrained by the structure of their government” and encouraged tyrannical predilections among Republicans in Washington.⁴⁶ Marc Kruman similarly argues that the series of unprecedented measures passed by the Lincoln administration during the war - the suspension of habeas corpus, the draft, the Emancipation Proclamation – reawakened Northern Democrats’ republican-inspired fears of “government centralization and tyranny.”⁴⁷ Throughout the conflict, these Democrats issued these warnings to rally popular opposition to the government’s “innovations.”⁴⁸ By doing so they successfully hindered the administration’s efforts to take a more direct role in the management of the U.S. economy and delayed its decision to include emancipation as an official Union war aim. Andrew Slap makes a similar point in his study of the Liberal Republican

Oxford University Press, 1983); Joel Silbey, *The American Political Nation, 1838-1898* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Mark Voss-Hubbard, *Beyond Party: Cultures of Antipartisanship in Northern Politics before the Civil War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

⁴⁴ “Our Republic,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 9 July 1863, 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Baker, *Affairs of Party*, 149.

⁴⁷ Marc Kruman, “The Second Party System in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1992), 535.

⁴⁸ Baker, *Affairs of Party*, 152.

movement of the early 1870s. He points out that, immediately after the Civil War, many conservative Republicans supported Radical policies to use federal power to protect the newly-gained rights of Southern freedpeople. By the late 1860s, however, their “traditional republican fears” of “tyranny and corruption” caused these erstwhile Republicans to withdraw their support from Reconstruction and therefore strike a fatal blow to the government’s effort to rework the Southern political order on the basis of racial equality.⁴⁹ According to these scholars, then, the Civil War reignited a conspiratorial and fearful strand of republican ideology among certain sectors of U.S. society which fuelled their opposition to, and ultimately helped to limit the scope of, some of the revolutionary changes of the Civil War era.

Certainly, some Civil War era Americans were concerned about what they perceived to be the rise of despotic tendencies in their nation’s politicians. This dissertation, however, demonstrates that many were also deeply worried about the prevalence of other vices in their public sphere during this period, specifically an excessive spirit of factionalism. It also challenges these historians’ argument that anxieties about the apparent loss of traditional republican values from their nation’s political culture exclusively functioned as a conservative force in American society. By tracing how images of Mexico were used in U.S. public discourse between 1860 and 1883, it reveals how different groups attempted to harness what they understood to be widespread concerns regarding the loss of harmony and consensus in American politics in support of a range of policy agendas, some of them conservative, others revolutionary. As we have seen, throughout this period, different U.S. political leaders and publications made comparisons between the United States and Mexico in order to highlight those insidious elements which they claimed had infected the nation’s body politic. They did more than simply voice their despair over the condition of their republic, however. The chapters outlined below explain how, between 1860 and 1883, groups in public discourse presented various plans to the American people which they argued would purge the United States of its internal pollutants and thereby save the nation from sharing with Mexico a future of interminable domestic instability. By framing their plans as crusades to restore the United States to its providential place as the New World’s exceptional republic, these Americans attempted to encourage their countrymen to support some extraordinary and transformative agendas.

⁴⁹ Andrew L. Slap, *The Doom of Reconstruction: The Liberal Republicans in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), xxi. See also Andrew F. Lang, “Republicanism, Race, and Reconstruction: The Ethos of Military Occupation in Civil War America,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 4 (December 2014), 559-89. Mark Wahlgren Summers also argues that concerns about corruption and the abuse of power in national politics eroded popular support for Reconstruction over the course of the 1870s (Summers, *The Ordeal of Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 279).

Chapter one examines how Unionist organs used images of Mexico to promote emancipation to the Northern public during the Civil War. After the start of the French invasion of Mexico in 1862, politicians, newspapers, and other advocates of the Union cause urged loyal Americans to feel a sense of solidarity with the Mexican Juarists. The Southern slavocracy was, they argued, an aristocratic faction within the body politic which had conspired to disrupt the U.S. republic from within, much like the priesthood had done in Mexico. Some went further and claimed that the Slave Power, the Mexican clergy, and the French imperialists were co-conspirators in a scheme to bring down republicanism on the North American continent. By drawing these connections, Unionists aimed not only to explain to Northerners the causes of their internecine conflict, but point them towards a pathway out of it. While they professed their sympathy with the Juarists, these Unionists were deeply troubled that their so-called exceptional republic had succumbed to the kind of internal dissensions they had once believed only possible south of the Rio Grande. After President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, they urged Northerners to support the measure as essential to the destruction of the Slave Power and thereby the removal of all sources of disruption and division from their body politic. Only by doing this, they argued, could Americans restore harmony to their republic and so return it to its proper position as the foremost republic of the New World.

Chapter two explores how Confederate publications also made use of images of Mexico, albeit in support of the cause of Southern independence. In contrast to their Northern counterparts, most Confederate organs welcomed the French intervention south of the Rio Grande. True republicanism in a multi-racial society, they argued, could only exist when based upon the institution of slavery - Mexico, therefore, did not constitute a legitimate republic. Politicians and newspapers used this same argument to sustain popular support for the cause of Southern independence. Abolitionists in the United States and the Liberals in Mexico were, they claimed, extremist factions which sought to impose their radical doctrines of emancipation, colour-blind democracy, and miscegenation on their respective populations. In Mexico, the Liberals had succeeded in eradicating racial boundaries and so throwing the different races of that country into conflict with one another, thus creating a state of chronic turmoil which had undermined stable governance in that country. With the abolitionist Republicans in control of the government in Washington, a similar fate now awaited the United States. Southern publications therefore used their discussions of Mexican policy to present secession as an effort to save what remained of the exceptional American republican tradition from abolitionist subversion and claim it for the Confederacy.

Chapter three moves into the immediate post-Civil War era to explore how images of Mexico were deployed in public discourse to both oppose and advance Radical Reconstruction. Throughout this period, ex-Confederate and a growing number of Northern Democratic organs continually invoked the spectre of Mexican anarchy to warn Americans of the ruinous consequences of the Republicans' plans for Southern Reconstruction. Yet even former Unionist publications worried that Union victory had not rid their nation of those internal pollutants that had first dragged it into civil war. President Andrew Johnson's lenient programme for national reunification had allowed many former secessionist politicians to regain their offices in state and local governments in the South. Many other ex-Confederate leaders, meanwhile, had taken refuge under Maximilian's regime in Mexico. Northern politicians and publications pointed to these facts as evidence that the Slave Power was not defeated and was in fact conspiring to relaunch a second rebellion, possibly with the aid of the French. A more exacting programme of Reconstruction which included military occupation of the South and federal protection for the civil rights of freedpeople was, they argued, necessary to break the power of the slavocracy once and for all. Advocates of Radical Reconstruction added that, once their postwar programme was implemented, the United States would resume its influence as the New World's model republic. Its symbolic power would then be felt across the Rio Grande and turn the tide of the ongoing Franco-Mexican conflict in the Juarists' favour.

Chapter four focuses on how concerns about political factionalism in the United States persisted into the late 1870s and helped to erode support for Radical Reconstruction. During this period, images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse took on a different form. Previously, many Northern leaders and publications had praised Mexicans as allies in the quest to defend republicanism on the continent. During this time, many of them had been optimistic that the eradication of the Slave Power would restore the United States to its traditional exemplary standing in the region. Over the course of the 1870s, the notion that the Slave Power still posed a threat to the republic lost some of its credibility. And yet division and conflict continued to plague American politics. As their pessimism grew, many of these Americans began to view Mexico not as a noble ally, but a worrying omen of the kind of chronic disorder towards which their own society was descending. True to form, these Americans not only used comparisons with Mexico to voice their concerns about the condition of their nation's public sphere, but to highlight insidious forces working within it. Specifically, they argued that a class of spoilsmen had infected American politics and, much like the *caudillos* and demagogues of Mexico, were exacerbating divisions within society to lever themselves into office. During the 1870s, a growing number of prominent Republican voices argued that these malignant elements found

the Reconstruction question a particularly effective tool in perpetuating sectional tensions among Americans. Only by bringing an end to the programme, therefore, could their countrymen reverse what these organs called the process of Mexicanization and thereby have any hope of regaining their title as the model American republic.

Chapter five considers how between 1876-1883, newspapers and leaders from across the U.S. political spectrum used images of Mexico to encourage their countrymen to embark on a united effort to extend their nation's commercial reach south of the Rio Grande. By this time, most of these organs agreed that Reconstruction exacerbated the problem of factionalism in American politics and were therefore on the hunt for other means to unify the discordant elements of their society. Frequently, their gaze landed on Mexico, whose vast natural wealth they anticipated could distract Americans from the issues that had divided them since the Civil War. More than this, they theorised that by underwriting Mexico's economic regeneration, Americans would help Mexicans ease the social and political divisions that had undermined their own republican experiment. Mexican president Porfirio Díaz, who assumed office in 1876, encouraged this notion by sending representatives to the United States who informed U.S. newspapers that the new administration in Mexico City was determined to follow the example Americans had set when they had used projects for national economic improvement to heal divisions in their society after the Civil War. By the early 1880s, a new image of Mexico gained prominence in U.S. public discourse which depicted it as their country's admiring protégé which, under the United States' guidance, was destined enjoy political stability and economic prosperity in the future. This final image aimed to provide Americans with the assurance they had been seeking ever since the Civil War that their nation had finally overcome its period of internal strife and had successfully reclaimed its rightful standing as the model republic of the New World.

Collectively, the chapters of this dissertation demonstrate that different groups in U.S. public discourse used images of Mexico to harness popular concerns about factionalism in American politics behind a range of agendas. That so many of them adopted this strategy indicated the depth of Americans' anxieties about their nation's political culture. Indeed, for many of them, the need to end factionalism and restore harmony to public life was not a mere matter of gentlemanly conduct among statesmen. Civil War era Americans knew only too well the potential for deadly consequences when politicians were unable to find common ground. As one *New York Times* article declared in 1871, "until that spirit of harmony is restored among our political leaders ... we can never be sure that a debate in the halls of Congress will not devolve

into ... another civil war.”⁵⁰ For Civil War era Americans, in short, disharmony in public life meant the threat of institutional instability, social discord, and violent civil strife. While they framed their agendas as crusades to return the United States to its exceptional stature as the world’s foremost republic, therefore, the individuals and publications analysed in this study articulated a deeply-felt desire for lasting domestic stability and peace. As other historians have noted, insecurities regarding the integrity of the U.S. republic led some Americans to oppose some of the innovations of the Civil War era. But the quest for political harmony could drive Americans in radical directions too; emancipation, Radical Reconstruction, even overseas commercial expansion - all were presented to the public as measures to harmonise and therefore stabilise the nation. Anxieties about the fragility of the U.S. republic were a pervasive force in Civil War era society which transcended sectional and party lines. It is therefore essential to explore the nature and depth of these anxieties in order to understand how Americans navigated the tumultuous experience of disunion and reunion and the transformations that this process entailed.

⁵⁰ “The Debates in Congress,” *New York Times*, 29 May 1871, 2.

Chapter One

The Continental Union Cause: Solidarity with the Mexican Republic in Northern Public Discourse, 1861-1865

On 26th March 1864, Mexican minister to the United States Matias Romero attended a dinner hosted by the Union League Club of New York, a private association whose membership was chiefly derived from that city's wealthy elite.¹ Romero had attended many similar events in the past. At that time, the Mexican republic was engaged in a struggle for survival against an invading French army. In his effort to garner U.S. sympathy for his government's cause, Romero had found it expedient to ingratiate himself with the upper echelons of Northern society. What made this dinner different from the others, however, was that the League members had organised it themselves to express their support – and, so they claimed, that of all loyal Americans – for the Juarist fighters in Mexico. It was an interesting decision given that the League's principal purpose was to bolster Northern morale for the ongoing Union war effort to put down the Southern rebellion. A round of after-dinner toasts revealed why these Americans had taken such an interest in the Mexican conflict. League member and president of the New York Historical Society Frederic de Peyster, for example, believed there was a natural affinity between the Mexican Juarists and Unionists in the United States. After all, he explained, the “Church Party” in Mexico had conspired with that country's French invaders and was therefore the “direct cause of the ... war there, as slavery is of the rebellion here.”² President of the Loyal Publication Society Charles King agreed.³ Throughout the continent, he proclaimed, the

¹ The New York Union League Club and its sister organisations in Boston and Philadelphia published patriotic literature, held public rallies, and orchestrated recruitment drives in support of the Union war effort. For more on their wartime activities, see Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129-31; Melinda Lawson, *Patriot Fires: Forging a New American Nationalism in the Civil War North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 88-120; and, Mark E. Neely, *The Boundaries of Political Culture in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 71-96. These elite organisations should not be confused with the Union Leagues established in the South after the Civil War. While the wartime Leagues were ostensibly non-partisan associations, most of the postwar Leagues were formed by Republican operatives in order to, among other things, encourage African Americans to vote for their party. For more on the activities of these postwar Leagues, see Michael W. Fitzgerald, *The Union League Movement in the Deep South: Politics and Agricultural Change during Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

² “Speech of Mr. de Peyster,” *Dinner to Señor Matias Romero, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Mexico, March 29, 1864* (New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864), 39.

³ The Loyal Publication Society was the effective publishing arm of the New York Union League. For more on its role in the distribution of pro-Union literature during the Civil War, see Mark E. Neely, *Lincoln and the Triumph of the Nation: Constitutional Conflict in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 280-81.

defenders of “American nationality” were doing battle against the foot-soldiers of “politico-religious hierarchy,” whether they be Mexican clergymen, French imperialists, or Southern slaveholders.⁴ According to these League members, the two conflicts which currently raged on either side of the Rio Grande were part of a single struggle to defend American republicanism from aristocratic subjugation.

These were not hollow platitudes expressed by the League members solely for the benefit of their Mexican guest. Throughout the Civil War, politicians, pamphleteers, and other advocates of the Union cause emphasised the connections they claimed linked their internecine conflict to the ongoing Franco-Mexican war. By doing so, they articulated to Northerners a particular interpretation of the causes of the Southern rebellion. During the antebellum era, they argued, slavery had cultivated a love of power and suspicion of democracy among Southern masters which had led them to disrupt electoral processes and defy federal authority whenever they had felt that the central government threatened their interests. According to this narrative, secession was a spiteful act to break apart the Union because these slaveholders’ efforts to extend their monopoly from the South across the entire country had been denied by Abraham Lincoln’s election to the presidency in 1860. The notion that Southern planters were grasping aristocrats had a long history in American public discourse, and most wartime Northerners would have been familiar with the image. The start of the French invasion in 1862, however, gave Unionist propagandists an opportunity to further push this notion in public discourse. Claims that the Confederate leadership was in league with the French, for example, gave the Southern rebellion an additional menacing edge. More than this, placing the Civil War in a continental context enabled these Unionists to emphasise the broader significance of the Northern war effort. While they proclaimed their solidarity with the Juarists, these propagandists were troubled that the United States had succumbed to the kind of internal chaos that they had once believed possible only in republics south of the Rio Grande. Throughout the Civil War, they insisted that the destruction of the Slave Power would remove all sources of dissension from the Union. Once this was done, they promised Northerners, the United States would regain its standing as the model American republic and would no longer be Mexico’s ally, but rather its inspiration and guide.

By examining how Unionists drew connections between their war cause and that of the Juarists, this chapter throws light on what drove Northerners to support the fight against the Southern rebels and embrace some of the revolutionary measures which this effort entailed.

⁴ “Speech of Charles King,” *Dinner to Señor Matias Romero*, 14-16.

Historians have pointed to different motivations at work on loyal Americans during the Civil War, from their sense of patriotic duty to their dedication to the principle of human liberty. These were certainly important factors. However, this chapter highlights a somewhat less lofty but nonetheless deeply-felt motivation – Northerners’ desire for lasting domestic peace. No doubt Unionist propagandists advanced the notion that Confederates were anti-democratic aristocrats in order to emphasise the republican values that they claimed underpinned the Northern war effort. However, they understood that ideological abstractions alone would not be enough to sustain their countrymen through years of bloody warfare against their Southern brethren. Nor could they necessarily convince them to accept abolition as a Union war aim after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863. Advocates of the Union cause therefore made it clear to Northerners the tangible effects that emancipation would have on their everyday lives. Specifically, the argument that the Slave Power had been the sole source of sectional tensions in the antebellum Union aimed to assure the public that, once this disruptive element was destroyed, harmony would return to American politics. The republic’s institutions would be safeguarded from future convulsions and stability therefore guaranteed in all other aspects of national life. Evidently this was a message that these Unionist propagandists believed would resonate with a public that knew only too well the potential deadly consequences of excessive political factionalism. The desire for lasting domestic peace was, in short, a profound force in the Civil War North, and one that Unionist spokesmen sought to utilise to advance some radical ends.

This chapter offers a corrective to a prevalent view in the scholarship which posits that much of the support for emancipation stemmed from a widespread desire among Northerners to remake Southern society. Historians have defined the specific objectives of this transformative zeal differently. In her study of Union Army volunteers, for example, Chandra Manning finds that many soldiers were “intensely ideological” and wished to purge the United States of the scourge of slavery in order to rededicate their nation’s creed to the principle of human equality.⁵

⁵ Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 18. For more on the antislavery sentiments of Union soldiers, see Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Viking, 1988); James McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994); Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and, Earl J. Hess, *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997). Collectively these works can be read as a challenge to a body of scholarship, most of which was produced in the mid-to-late twentieth century, which underplayed the ideological motivations at work on Union soldiers. See, for example, Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952); and, Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1987).

Historians Sydney E. Ahlstrom and Mark A. Noll, meanwhile, draw attention to the millennial cast which Northern religious leaders put on their reading of the Union cause. The eradication of the peculiar institution, they told their congregants, would perfect American society by ridding it of a host of social ills, from excessive materialism and alcoholism to sexual promiscuity.⁶ The promise of economic progress was also a motivating factor. Heather Cox Richardson suggests that many Republican politicians viewed emancipation primarily as a means to overhaul the Southern economy and transform the region into a “free labor society.”⁷ Melinda Lawson finds that wartime financiers such as Jay Cooke pushed a similar message as they marketed Union bonds to the public: emancipation, they promised, would unleash the forces of industrialisation, free market capitalism, and social mobility in the South that had previously been suppressed by the institution of slavery.⁸ These historians emphasise different aspects of Northerners’ visions for their post-emancipation republic. Collectively, however, they leave us with the impression that many loyal Americans anticipated that abolition would precipitate a kind of national rebirth, and that from the fires of civil war a more powerful, righteous, and prosperous United States would emerge.

Few scholars deny that these ambitions fuelled much of the popular and political support for emancipation during the Civil War. Some have suggested, however, that such transformative impulses were largely confined to certain groups in wartime Northern society, specifically abolitionists and reformers. Gary Gallagher, for example, argues that most volunteers in the Union Army cared little about remaking Southern society. In fact, a substantial portion of them were hostile to emancipation, at least on purely moral grounds. Gallagher contends that many soldiers eventually accepted the necessity of emancipation due to their desire to prevent the disintegration of the Union. Certainly, the Union meant different things to different people and some Northerners saw its preservation as essential for the achievement of higher ends, such as abolition or national economic modernisation. However, Gallagher argues

⁶ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 670-97; Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); George C. Rable, *God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

⁷ Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1. For other studies which emphasise the importance of free labour ideology in shaping Republicans’ designs for the postwar South, see James L. Huston, *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Michael S. Green, *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and his Party during the American Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004); and, Mark A. Lause, *Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of an American Working Class* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

⁸ Lawson, *Patriot Fires*, 40-64.

that many of them did not see the Union as a vehicle for societal change, but simply as the “cherished legacy of the founding generation, a democratic republic with a constitution that guaranteed political liberty.”⁹ He explains that the desire to preserve, rather than transform, the United States was not necessarily at odds with the goal of emancipation and that many Union soldiers embraced abolition as a “tool to punish slaveholders” and “weaken the Confederacy.”¹⁰ More importantly, they believed, the destruction of the rebel leadership’s system of labour would “protect the Union from future internal strife.”¹¹ Other historians have made a similar argument. As James McPherson points out, when President Lincoln explained the Emancipation Proclamation to the public, he insisted that the measure was “absolutely essential to the preservation of the Union.”¹² These scholars therefore suggest that Northerners could accept some radical measures, so long as they believed they would protect, rather than change, the original American Union.

This chapter agrees that a conservative impulse ran through the heart of the Union war effort. It also provides further evidence of how Unionist spokesmen attempted to harness this popular impulse to advance emancipation. However, this chapter builds on the existing literature by adding depth to our understanding of precisely what kind of society some Northerners were so anxious to preserve. Throughout the Civil War, Unionist politicians, pamphleteers, and editors framed their war cause as a crusade to purge the United States of an internal disruptive element. The intrigues of the antebellum Slave Power, they argued, had given rise to a dangerous degree of factionalism in American politics and so set the nation on the path to civil war. Emancipation would destroy the slavocracy and thereby restore those virtues selflessness, harmony, and consensus to national political life. This was about more than polite behaviour in the halls of Congress, however. Wartime Northerners understood that their politicians’ ability to put the common good ahead of their sectional self-interests was essential for national stability and peace. Unionist spokesmen spoke to this concern when they insisted that, until the Slave Power was destroyed, the threat of faction, conflict, and another civil war would forever plague the American people. These Unionists anticipated that by framing the Northern war effort as a quest for political harmony, they could persuade their countrymen to both support the fight against the rebellion and accept emancipation as essential to the effort’s ultimate success.

⁹ Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 83. See also, William E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 124-25, 154-80.

Associating their war cause with that of the republicans in Mexico helped these Unionists to forward this narrative to the public. Certainly, drawing parallels between the Southern leadership, the French imperialists, and the Mexican clergy highlighted the former's traitorous and aristocratic ambitions. When they made these comparisons, however, Unionist propagandists also tapped into a current of insecurity that they perceived ran through Northern society at the time. For all they professed their solidarity with the Juarists, these Americans were troubled that their republic had succumbed to the type of internal dissensions that had ruined the other republics of the New World. When they compared the Slave Power with the Mexican clergy, they attempted to explain to Northerners how their supposedly exemplary republic had degenerated into its present condition. The divisive machinations of the slavocracy, they asserted, much like the priesthood in Mexico, had fomented political factionalism in the United States and so plunged it into violent fratricidal warfare. Military defeat was not enough to extinguish this internal menace: only the eradication of the system of slavery would remove all sources of dissension from the public sphere. With harmony restored, the U.S. republic would be stabilised and able to regain its rightful standing in the New World. By placing the Civil War in a continental context, in short, these Unionists elevated the quest for political harmony into a crusade to restore the United States to its preordained position as the exceptional American republic.

Unionists Respond to the French Intervention in Mexico

The proceedings of the New York League's dinner in March 1864 was just one of the many articles, essays, and speeches published during the Civil War that encouraged Northerners to sympathise with the Juarists in Mexico. Historians have noted that representatives of the Juárez government – some official, some not – operated in Northern cities during the 1860s and produced a wealth of propaganda material in support of their government's war effort. Thomas D. Schoonover, for example, has described how Minister Romero cultivated personal ties with prominent U.S. politicians, businessmen, and editors such as James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald*.¹³ The minister used these connections to feed reports to the American press

¹³ Thomas D. Schoonover, ed. and trans., *A Mexican View of America in the 1860s: A Foreign Diplomat Describes the Civil War and Reconstruction* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1991), 183. Romero maintained a regular correspondence with his government during his time as minister to the United States 1861-1867, most of which Schoonover has translated into English. See Schoonover, ed. and trans., *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867* (Lawrence: University of Kentucky Press, 1986). For more on Romero's lobbying activities in the Civil War North, see Marvin Goldwert, "Matias Romero and Congressional Opposition to Seward's Policy toward the French Intervention in

regarding the ongoing Franco-Mexican conflict which invariably portrayed the Juarists in a positive light. Romero repeatedly emphasised the parallels he claimed existed between the contest in Mexico and the Union's war against the Confederacy. There was, he declared at an event hosted by the Mexican Legation in December 1863, a "striking similarity" between the Mexican clergy, the French imperialists, and the "pro-slavery party in the United States."¹⁴ Historians have rightly surmised that Romero pushed this message in the hope that it would inspire Americans to pressure the Lincoln administration to offer his government monetary and perhaps even military support. What they have so far failed to appreciate, however, is the extent to which many pro-Union propagandists and newspapers also advanced the notion that there was a connection between the American Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico. As we shall see, their objective in doing so was not to promote the Mexicans' cause, but rather their own.

It was by no means foreordained that so many prominent Unionist voices would become enthusiastic champions of the Juarists. Certainly, the sight of a European power attempting to overthrow a fellow republic on their southern border was anathema to Americans' long-held belief that their continent ought to be free from the intrigues of Old World imperialists. Nevertheless, when the French invasion of Mexico began in 1862, a substantial portion of the Northern press was ambivalent towards the unfolding crisis. This hesitation was due in part to the widely-held belief in mid-century American society that Mexicans were incapable of sustaining a legitimate democratic government. Historians have noted that, during the heady days of the Spanish American independence movements, many observers in the United States had been cautiously optimistic that republicanism would flourish in the southern portions of the Western Hemisphere.¹⁵ As the century progressed, however, the growing influence of scientific

Mexico," *The Americas* 22, no. 1 (July 1965), 22-40; and, Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2011), 128-50. For an overview of the propagandising activities of other Juarist agents in the Civil War North, see Robert Ryal Miller, "Arms Across the Border: United States Aid to Juárez During the French Intervention," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, no. 6 (1973), 1-68. For a less extensive but more recent study on the subject, see Teresa von Hoy, "Mexican Exiles and the Monroe Doctrine: New York and the Borderlands, 1865," *Camino Real* 7, no. 10 (2015), 39-60.

¹⁴ "Speech of the Honorable Matias Romero, Delivered in New York on 26th December 1863," in *Dinner to Señor Romero*, 48.

¹⁵ Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); Naish, *Slavery and Silence*, 29-64. This point should not be overstated. For all they welcomed the establishment of the new Latin American republics, some Americans had misgivings regarding their long-term success. For more on this, see John J. Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart: The Foundations of United States Policy Toward Latin America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); James Lewis, Jr., *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

racism and their own burgeoning expansionist ambitions eroded Americans' optimism regarding the future of self-government in Latin America. "By the 1850s," Reginald Horsman writes, "the idea had become fixed in the United States that the non-white peoples of the Americas were innately vicious, lazy, and irrational, attributes which made them wholly 'incapable of creating efficient, democratic, and prosperous governments.'"¹⁶ By the eve of the Civil War, many in the United States viewed Mexico, which had seen twenty-six different heads of state between 1824 and 1857, as the archetype of a failed Latin American republic. This notion was apparent in the way in which much of the Northern press first received the news in late 1861 that the Juárez government had announced national bankruptcy. The *New York Times*, for example, was unsurprised that the "decaying republic" on the other side of the Rio Grande, which was administered by a "succession of factions" and staffed with "insolent underlings," was unable to meet its financial obligations.¹⁷ When Mexico's principal creditors – Great Britain, Spain, and France - landed their armies at Vera Cruz between December 1861 and January 1862, the newspaper sniffed that the "fiscally irresponsible Mexican republic" had brought the situation upon itself.¹⁸ Other leading Northern organs were equally convinced that the Europeans were well within their rights to reprimand the notoriously unreliable Mexicans.

However, as the French intervention unfolded, an alternative explanation for Mexico's turbulent political history gained currency in Northern public discourse. At another New York Union League dinner in December 1863, Charles King refuted the notion that Mexicans were biologically incapable of self-government. "Spiritual bondage," he averred, was the true cause of their difficulties with their republican experiment.¹⁹ King explained that, after they had won their independence, Mexicans had modelled their new republic's constitution on that of the United States. However, they had deviated from the U.S. example by neglecting to include in it provisions for the separation of Church and state. The Catholic priesthood had therefore retained its vast estates and the various privileges it had received from the government since the colonial period. This, King pronounced, had been a fatal oversight. As he explained, over time the Church had become a powerful and repressive force in Mexican society that kept the population in a state of "superstition and ignorance" and prevented Mexicans' ability to develop that

¹⁶ Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 298. See also, Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹⁷ "Details of the Arrangement," *New York Times*, 12 October 1861, 2.

¹⁸ "The Allied Expedition," *New York Times*, 14 February 1861, 3.

¹⁹ Charles King, "Speech of Charles King," *Dinner to Señor Matias Romero, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Mexico, December 28, 1863* (New York: Union League Club of New York, 1864), 14.

independence of mind so vital in citizens of a democracy.²⁰ Moreover, clerical leaders were aware that anti-Church legislation could deprive them of their inordinate wealth and influence and therefore viewed democracy as a threat to their interests. Given this, the Church power had contrived to destabilise Mexico's political institutions by periodically riling its congregants into rebellion while undermining the country's electoral processes through bribery and other nefarious practices. King also believed that clerical intrigue lay behind the French invasion. After the Mexican Liberals had declared victory in their civil war against the Church-Conservative alliance in 1860, he explained, leaders of the priesthood dispatched envoys to the court of Napoléon III to seek his assistance in their plans to depose the "avowed and bold opponent of religious hierarchy," President Juárez.²¹ When the government in Mexico City had defaulted on the payments of its international loans in 1861, the French emperor had seized the opportunity to put this plan into action. According to King, therefore, Mexico's current crisis was not a reflection of the biological defects of its population, but of the insidious treachery of the Mexican Church.

King was no doubt disposed to give a favourable interpretation of Mexican history that evening: he was, after all, in the presence of Minister Romero when he delivered his speech.²² The notion that the machinations of the priesthood were the chief cause of Mexico's past and present political difficulties, however, was also gaining ground among substantial portions of the Northern press at the time. Anti-Catholicism had a long history in the United States and it continued to hold sway in the Civil War North.²³ "The Roman Catholic Church," the *New York Tribune* insisted in August 1863, "is not fond of, does not flourish in, a republic."²⁴ In particular, the notion that Catholics must pay their primary allegiance to the Pope was considered by many in the mid-century United States to be incompatible with democracy. During the antebellum era, Americans often claimed that the Church's dulling influence had accentuated deficiencies already present in the Mexican character. In this respect, the Church was an important but secondary cause of political instability south of the Rio Grande. During the Civil War, however,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Romero was no friend of the Mexican priesthood and it is unlikely that the anti-Catholic tenor of King's version of Mexican history would have offended him. Indeed, when the minister returned to Mexico after the fall of the Maximilian regime in 1867, he assisted U.S. missionary Henry C. Riley's efforts to establish the Protestant Mexican National Church (Deborah J. Baldwin, *Protestants and the Mexican Revolution: Missionaries, Ministers, and Social Change* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 17).

²³ Jason K. Duncan, *Citizens or Papists? The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005); Maura Janes Farrelly, *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁴ "The Propaganda in Mexico," *New York Tribune*, 21 August 1863, 4.

many major Northern newspapers insisted that Catholicism – or, more precisely, the machinations of a powerful clerical faction – was the chief cause of that country’s difficulties with self-government. In July 1863, for example, the *New York Tribune* informed its readers that for decades the “whole Church party” had been engaged in an effort to bring about the “abolition of a republican form of Government” in Mexico.²⁵ Echoing King’s logic, the newspaper also declared that the Mexican clergy was behind the French intervention. “The Church party of the Republic is generally agreed not only upon giving to the French the most vigorous support,” the newspaper charged, “but upon altogether exterminating, with their aid, the Democratic institutions of the country.”²⁶ Indeed, the priesthood had been “engaged in this work ... from the beginning,” having sent envoys “to Europe for the special end of enlisting the interest of some of the great European powers in behalf of a restoration of monarchy” in Mexico.²⁷ For newspapers such as the *Tribune*, then, in light of recent events it was clear that the clergy was to blame for the historic and ongoing turmoil south of the border.

As they advanced their reinterpretation of Mexican history, Northern newspapers encouraged their readers to reject their prejudices against that country’s non-white population. In 1861, the *New York Times* had subscribed to the view that all Mexicans were inherently vicious and disorderly. By 1863, however, the newspaper had experienced something of a change of heart. In an article published in August of that year, the *Times* observed that Mexico’s governing classes largely consisted of “priests, generals and officers,” most of whom were descendants of Spanish colonialists.²⁸ This “creole aristocracy,” the newspaper continued, had inherited its imperialist forbears’ aristocratic predilections. Meanwhile, “fifth-sixths of the Mexican nation are Indians, or mainly of Indian blood.”²⁹ This portion of the population was not burdened by Old World notions of hierarchy and privilege and had in fact demonstrated a uniquely American love of freedom and liberty. President Benito Juárez, for example, “a native Indian, and a representative of the real people of Mexico,” was currently leading his countrymen in a fight “for a real republic, and a real nationality.”³⁰ Somewhat remarkably, then, the *Times* argued that the fact that most Mexicans possessed some Indian blood made them more committed to the republican cause. Their devotion was apparently evident in the ferocity of their

²⁵ “Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 25 July 1863, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ “The Mexican Events and their Future,” *New York Times*, 3 August 1863, 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

resistance to France's effort to overhaul their democratic government.³¹ "The heroic resolution, the unity and the patriotism evinced by the Mexican people," the *New York Times* declared in another 1863 article, "must extort the respect and the praise of every nation yet preserving a love for liberty and constitutional Government."³² The *Times*' faith in Mexicans should not be overstated; a raw passion for liberty, the newspaper cautioned, did not necessarily equip a people with the skills necessary to maintain a well-ordered democracy in the long term. Nevertheless, the *Times* was hopeful that the experience of defending their republic against foreign invasion would benefit Mexicans in this respect. "Such a people may be defeated in many battles," the newspaper concluded, "but the trials they experience will only cement their love for the institutions they have adopted, and increase their devotion in their defence."³³ While they had once disparaged them as feckless and unstable, then, some Northern newspaper began to praise Mexicans as courageous defenders of the republican cause.

These newspapers' evolving perceptions of Mexico were shaped by events which had recently occurred in the United States, rather than those south of the Rio Grande. In 1863, the New York League published a speech delivered by the prominent abolitionist and Congregationalist minister Joshua Leavitt which read as a eulogy to a happier time in the United States' past. Leavitt recalled that there had been a "golden period in our political history" before "party spirit" had "eaten out the keen sense of what becomes the honor of the country."³⁴ Leavitt was referring to the 1820s, a period before the rise of partisanship and faction in public life when "we had men in the administration of our government" who were motivated by their "devotion to public interests" rather than their own narrow sectional concerns.³⁵ According to Leavitt, at this time the United States had given such a fine example of good self-government

³¹ The *New York Times*' shifting opinions here reflects the complexity of nineteenth-century Americans' views on race. Over the course of my research I have found that Americans' opinions regarding the "Mexican race," such as it was, were varied and malleable. Some insisted that Mexicans were a doomed people who were fated to extinction. Others accepted their inferiority but posited that this condition was the result of culture or habits which could be unlearned. A great many more Americans existed somewhere on a continuum between these positions and often moved between its opposite ends. Frank A. Ninkovich's study has been particularly useful in helping me think about how nineteenth-century Americans often conceived of race as some blend of biology, culture, history, and climate (Ninkovich, *Global Dawn: The Cultural Foundation of American Internationalism, 1865-1890* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 163).

³² "Mexico: Spirit of the People," *New York Times*, 29 January 1863, 4.

³³ Joshua Leavitt, "The Monroe Doctrine," *Pamphlets Issued by the Loyal Publication Society, from February 1 1863, to February 1 1864* (New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864), 16-17.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Leavitt has received relatively little attention from historians. His only biographer, Hugh Davis, focuses primarily on his antebellum career as an evangelical minister, reformer, and anti-slavery campaigner (Hugh Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

that it had inspired the subjects of the Spanish American empire to rise up against their colonial ruler and establish their own independent republics. By the end of the decade, Leavitt noted, the United States “no longer stood alone as the exponent of the American political system,” but instead “found itself at the head of a glorious sisterhood of free and independent states.”³⁶ Such was the force of the United States’ symbolic power than it had even kept at bay the monarchists of the Holy Alliance who were plotting to re-subjugate these fledgling republics. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823, Leavitt explained, had warned this imperial consortium that the United States, the “first of the American republics,” would henceforth act as both the model for and “faithful defender of American interests.”³⁷ No firepower had been necessary to deter the Alliance, only the United States’ example, which had offered such compelling proof of the blessings of republicanism that no amount of force could compel the citizens of the other American republics to tolerate any other system of government which a foreign power might seek to impose upon them.

For Unionist spokesmen such as Leavitt, the Civil War dealt a serious blow to their confidence in the United States as the “first of the American republics.” At a mass meeting organised by the New York-based Loyal National League in April 1863, for example, speaker W. J. A. Fuller reminded his audience that the United States had already managed to “safely pass” two of the tests of nationality – gaining independence and, in the War of 1812, fighting off a foreign invasion.³⁸ Antebellum Americans had wrongly believed that they would never have to face the third and most deadly trial of “domestic treason” and “national patricide.”³⁹ Speaking as the Civil War entered its third year, Fuller was far from certain that the United States would survive the test. We are, he warned his audience, on the brink of national disintegration, which could see the once mighty U.S. republic join the ranks of the other “jarring states of ... Mexico and the South American republics” that were constantly “warring upon each other, and torn with internal feuds.”⁴⁰ Many organs in the national press agreed. Washington D.C.’s *National Intelligencer*, for example, believed that, if Northerners needed proof that the United States had

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 29.

³⁸ W. J. A. Fuller, “Speech of W. J. A. Fuller, Delivered at the Sumter Anniversary, 1863,” in *Opinions of Loyalists Concerning the Great Questions of the Times: Expressed in the Speeches and Letters from Prominent Citizens of all Sections and Parties, on Occasion of the Inauguration of the Loyal National League, in Mass Meeting in Union Square, New York, 11 April 1863* (New York: C. S. Westcott & Co., 1863), 106. My efforts to find out more about W. J. A. Fuller were unsuccessful. Most likely he was well-connected, however, given that at this event he shared the stage with the prominent politicians John C. Fremont, Roscoe Conkling, and George W. Julian (*Opinions of Loyalists*, 85).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

fallen from its exceptional stature, they need look no further than the crisis currently unfolding in Mexico. “It cannot be doubted,” the newspaper asserted in November 1864, “that if there had been no civil war here ... the Mexican expedition would have been an impossibility.”⁴¹ The *New York Tribune* agreed. “The virtual degradation of Mexico into a French satrapy,” the newspaper declared in July 1863, “is a direct result of the Slaveholders’ Rebellion ... Our extremity is Napoleon’s opportunity.”⁴² No doubt the French emperor had launched his invasion because he had reasoned that the Lincoln administration would be reluctant to intervene while engaged in fighting its own civil conflict. But the *Tribune* believed that Louis-Napoléon’s assault on Mexico also reflected the declining power of the United States’ symbol, which for so many decades had exerted a “controlling influence over the deliberations of European cabinets” and kept the other American republics safe from their intrigues.⁴³ “Nobody imagines,” the newspaper lamented, “that [Napoleon’s invasion] would or could have been effected had this republic been united ... as it was ten or even five years ago.”⁴⁴ For these publications, the Mexican crisis threw their own republic’s fall from grace into painfully sharp relief.

Their concern that the Civil War had undermined the United States’ claim to be the exceptional American republic explains why these organs revised their theories regarding the causes of Mexico’s turbulent political history. Indeed, in light of their own internecine conflict, it became difficult for these Unionists to maintain that biological deficiencies were the principal cause of instability in republican societies. Another explanation was required. By revisiting the causes of Mexico’s domestic troubles, moreover, these Americans were better able to explain the causes of their own. At a public rally organised by the Loyal National League in March 1863, for example, the orator General Alexander Jackson Hamilton informed his audience that the sources of the Mexicans’ current difficulties were similar to their own. As he explained, Southern slaveholders, much like the Mexican clergy, had gained their vast wealth through the labour of others. Unearned riches and luxury had made the Southern master class “arrogant” and cultivated among them a love of power and the desire to be “lords of this country.”⁴⁵ Just as the priesthood in Mexico had dulled their congregants’ minds into a condition of superstitious credulity, so too had slaveholders sought to control ordinary Southerners by keeping them “ignorant,” blocking federal efforts to develop the region’s school systems and modernise its

⁴¹ “Our Foreign Diplomacy,” *National Intelligencer* (D.C.), 2 November 1864.

⁴² “Mexico – Monroe,” *New York Tribune*, 29 July 1863, 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Alexander J. Hamilton, “Speech of Brigadier-General A.J. Hamilton of Texas,” in *Proceedings at the Organization of the Loyal National League at the Cooper Institute, March 20, 1863* (New York: C.S. Westcott & Co., 1863), 18.

economy.⁴⁶ Unionists also pointed out that the Mexican priesthood and the Southern slavocracy were both disruptive factions which sowed political discord within their respective republics. At a public rally in May 1863, for example, president of the Philadelphia Union League Nathaniel B. Browne reminded his audience that a stable republic depended on virtuous statesmen who were able to put “country and its welfare above self, neighbourhood, section or party.”⁴⁷ Southern slaveholders were, however, “essentially selfish and jealous.”⁴⁸ Browne recalled that during the antebellum period, the Slave Power had repeatedly defied federal authority and resorted to other disruptive strategies to undermine the government whenever it had felt that its interests were threatened. The result, Browne explained, was friction in the public sphere and the emergence of “intense forms of State pride and sectional attachment” throughout the country.⁴⁹ As the nation’s politicians increasingly thought only of their regional interests, hostilities among them grew until they reached the point where they could no longer be contained within the legal apparatus of government. By comparing the United States’ recent history with that of Mexico, therefore, these Unionists sought to explain to Northerners the causes of their own civil strife.

Advocates of the Union cause in public discourse found that there were other advantages to be had from drawing these parallels. As the historian Martin Crawford notes, throughout the Civil War, Confederate leaders sought to “locate the South’s actions within the American revolutionary tradition.”⁵⁰ Southern disunionists claimed that throughout the antebellum era, Northerners had tyrannised over the South in much the same way that the British had done to the American colonists. Far from being an act of treason, therefore, secession was a patriotic movement inspired by the same principles that had guided the American Revolutionaries to revolt against King George III in 1776. By comparing the Confederate leadership to the monarchists and clerics currently laying siege to the Mexican republic, Unionists sought to expose the absurdity of these claims. “The spirit of slavery,” one 1863 Philadelphia Union League pamphlet declared, “is not an American spirit,” but rather had been brought to the New World by the European imperialists.⁵¹ Indeed, the pamphlet insisted, the

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Martin Crawford, “Davis and the Confederacy,” in *Themes of the American Civil War: The War Between the States*, eds. Susan-Mary Grant and Brian Holden Reid, (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 159.

⁵¹ Charles Gibbons, “Oration of Charles Gibbons,” *Proceedings of the Union League of Philadelphia in Commemoration of the Eighty-Seventh Anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 1863* (Philadelphia: King & Bird, 1863), 15.

Founding Fathers had been “friends of universal liberty” who detested the deplorable institution.⁵² Only their belief that slavery was destined to die a natural death had stopped them from writing provisions for abolition into the Constitution. Unfortunately, the Founders had been mistaken. As years passed, slavery had grown more powerful and malignant, a tumour of Old World aristocracy eating away at the body of the republic. In this respect, the institution of slavery in the United States was comparable to the Catholic Church in Mexico, itself a vestige of European colonialism. As the pamphlet explained, “no one can doubt” that the “anti-democratic spirit which to-day animates and controls the rebellion” is the same one that led Mexico’s clerical leaders to invite Emperor Napoleon III to launch his assault on their republic.⁵³ The *New York Tribune* agreed. As the newspaper asserted in July 1863, the Slave Power and the Mexican priesthood share a “hatred of democratic institutions” entirely at odds with principles of the American republican tradition.⁵⁴ The leaders of the rebellion were not, these Unionists insisted, heirs to the spirit of 1776. Rather, much like the Mexican clergy, they were a hangover of European colonialism, both aberrations within their republics which existed thanks only to the folly of misjudgement and oversight.

Some Unionist publications took these ideas further and insisted that the Southern rebels and the Franco-clerical alliance in Mexico were in fact co-conspirators in a plot to bring down free government in the New World. The “French Invasion and the Southern “Confederacy,”” the *Philadelphia Inquirer* declared in October 1863, “are joint evil-doers and devil-plotters against our holy cause.”⁵⁵ These accusations were not entirely baseless. Throughout the Civil War, Confederate agents lobbied the European governments to recognise Southern independence.⁵⁶

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Letter of General A. J. Hamilton to the President of the United States, 28 July 1863, *Pamphlets Issued by the Loyal Publication Society*, 16-17.

⁵⁴ “South America and the Slaveholders’ Rebellion,” *New York Tribune*, 24 July 1863, 4.

⁵⁵ “Mexico Still Resisting,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 October 1863, 4. The *Inquirer* was responding to rumours that Confederate agents had approached Louis-Napoléon with an offer to sell parts of Texas or California. While historians have found no evidence that the Davis administration ever contemplated such a proposal, it does appear that Louis-Napoléon was interested in purchasing Texas. In January 1863, Austrian minister to the United States Chevalier Huelsemann informed Secretary of State William Seward that French consuls in Galveston had found themselves in trouble with Richmond for attempting to foment a revolt in Texas in the hope of detaching the state from the Confederacy and bringing it under French occupation (Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington D.C.: Brassey’s, 1999), 223-24).

⁵⁶ For more on the activities of Confederate agents in Europe, see Fenner Gentry, “A Confederate Success in Europe: The Erlanger Loan,” *Journal of Southern History* 36 (1970), 157-88; Don H. Doyle, “Slavery or Independence: The Confederate Dilemma in Europe,” in *The U. S. South and Europe: Transatlantic Relations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed., Cornelius A. van Minnen and Manfred Berg, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 105-24. For an overview of Confederate diplomacy more broadly, see Charles M. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998).

As will be discussed in chapter two, the Richmond government was hopeful that the French emperor could be persuaded to enter into an alliance with the Confederacy in order to create a buffer between the Union and his operations south of the Rio Grande.⁵⁷ While he toyed with the idea, Louis-Napoléon ultimately was unwilling to throw his lot in with the South without a promise from the British that they would do the same. Unable to extract any such agreement from Whitehall, the French emperor declined the South's requests for recognition. Regardless, in the wartime Northern press, fragmented reports of the activities of Confederate agents in Paris were presented as evidence of a full-blown Franco-slavocratic conspiracy. The *Inquirer*, for example, informed its readers in March 1864 that before secession, Southern leaders, "ever in league with the nobility of that continent," had travelled to Europe to gain assurances from Louis-Napoléon that they could depend on his support should they pursue their plans to break up the Union.⁵⁸ An 1863 Philadelphia League pamphlet similarly claimed that secessionists had enlisted Louis-Napoléon's help in their plans to create a "great Southern Confederacy" that would encompass the "Gulf States, Cuba, St. Domingo, and other islands, Mexico, Central America."⁵⁹ The details of this alleged arrangement were murky. Nevertheless, Louis-Napoléon's intervention in Mexico made it clear to these publications that the emperor had agreed to help Confederates realise this vision.⁶⁰ Perhaps, the *Tribune* speculated, the rebels had promised that the "French should enjoy a free trade" with their projected empire and so have "precedence in gathering the first fruits of all [the] wealth" of the nations of the hemisphere without the expense of holding them as colonies.⁶¹ No doubt the Unionist organs that forwarded these accusations hoped to emphasise to Northerners the imperative of subduing the Southern rebellion by inflating it into an international conspiracy.

As they condemned the Confederate leadership as supplicants to the courts of Europe, these Unionists simultaneously impressed upon loyal Northerners that they were defenders of the American republican tradition. As one 1863 New York League pamphlet argued, the true

⁵⁷ For more on the lobbying efforts of Confederate agents in Paris specifically, see Hubbard, *Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 102-113, 156-164.

⁵⁸ "Providence, Or Love of Country," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 March 1864, 4.

⁵⁹ "The Slavery Question a Pretext to Lead the Masses on to Revolution," (Philadelphia: Union League of Philadelphia Board of Publication, 1863), 13-14.

⁶⁰ These claims were largely baseless – historians have been unable to find any evidence that Southern leaders approached Louis-Napoléon with any such plans prior to or during the Secession Crisis 1860-61. As will be discussed in chapter two, however, these accusations did contain a kernel of truth to the extent that, after the start of the French invasion, Confederate leaders considered ways they might strike up a deal with Louis-Napoléon to carve up the land, resources, and trading routes of the southern portions of the hemisphere between their two nations. They anticipated that such a deal would satisfy both Confederate and French imperial ambitions while keeping those of the Yankees at bay.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

purpose of the Union war effort was not to tyrannise the South or even liberate slaves, but to ensure that “Republican principles” would be free to “... thrive and flourish [in the United States] as our Fathers had intended.”⁶² Some went further and insisted that the fate of free government not only in the United States, but the entire Western Hemisphere depended upon Union victory. In a July 1863 article, for example, the *New York Tribune* reminded its readers that the American Revolution in 1776 had constituted the first major blow to the Europeans’ power in the New World. Their footing had further slipped during the 1810s and 1820s when a wave of independence movements had swept across Spanish America, and since that time the European monarchs had been on the lookout for opportunities to regain their American possessions. The “establishment of the Southern confederacy,” the *Tribune* concluded, was the latest in a long line of attempts by Old World imperialists to “re-introduce the European theory of government upon this Continent.”⁶³ Framing the Civil War as a continuation of the historic contest between Old and New World systems of government elevated the significance of the Union cause to continental proportions. According to the *New York Post*, for example, the outcome of the Civil War would “decide the fate of the attempt which Europe is making to subjugate parts of this continent.”⁶⁴ If the Union fell, the forces of aristocracy would quickly overrun North America and spread southward throughout the hemisphere. This being the case, the newspaper concluded “if we are defeated ... [the Latin Americans’] hopes and their freedom are imperilled.”⁶⁵ In short, the future of the experiment of self-government in the New World hung in the balance on the battlefields of the Civil War.

When the French invasion of Mexico began in 1862, Unionists in public discourse used it as an opportunity to articulate a particular version of the ideological dynamics at play in their own civil war. When they argued that the leaders of the rebellion were in league with French imperialists and the Mexican priesthood, for example, they aimed to impress upon Northerners the anti-republican ambitions which fuelled the South’s effort to break up the Union. This narrative also helped these Unionists explain to their countrymen the causes of their current internecine strife. The founders of both the U.S. and Mexican republics had failed to uproot all vestiges of European colonialism, they argued. Those elements which lingered – the slavocracy in the United States and the clergy in Mexico – over time had grown more powerful and malevolent until they had combined forces in their present effort to bring an end to free government on the North American continent. As we have seen, the notion that they were under

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ “South America and the Slaveholders’ Rebellion,” *New York Tribune*, 24 July 1863, 4.

⁶⁴ “Mexico,” *New York Post*, 30 August 1863, 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

assault by the same slavocratic-clerical conspiracy awakened among these Unionists a degree of understanding towards their Mexican neighbours. As the prominent New York lawyer Dudley Field pronounced at another League dinner in March 1864, “Americans feel a profound sympathy for the Mexican people in this their day of trial” and do not “stop to inquire whether the Mexicans have not made mistakes in the management of their affairs.”⁶⁶ After all, he concluded, “we have done so in the management of our own affairs, of which we are now reaping the bitter fruits.”⁶⁷ Beneath these professions of solidarity, however, ran a current of unease that the United States, the so-called model republic, had fallen from its position atop the hierarchy of the New World’s independent nations. As we shall see, Unionist organs sought to tap into this anxiety to persuade Northerners to embrace emancipation and therefore transform their society in a way few of them would have predicted at the start of the Civil War.

Emancipation and the Restoration of the Model Republic

Some Unionists viewed President Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on 1st January 1863 as a cause for celebration. As Andre Fleche notes, for the first two years of the Civil War, Northern agents in Europe had struggled to explain the significance of the Union cause in a way that would excite the sympathies and admiration of foreign audiences. After the Proclamation, however, they were able to cast the fight to put down the Southern rebellion as a noble struggle waged in the name of human liberty that promised “at least partial realization of the hopes and dreams of 1848.”⁶⁸ Back home, however, many Northerners were uneasy that the war to save the Union had been transformed into an abolitionist crusade.⁶⁹ Promoters of the Union cause in public discourse therefore sought to present emancipation in a way that would appeal to even the most conservative of their fellow countrymen. Placing it within the context of the narrative they had established that linked the Union and Juarist causes helped them to do this. Specifically, these Unionists stressed to the public that by eradicating the Slave Power, emancipation would rid the United States of those disruptive elements that had plagued it in the past and so return their republic to its former harmonious condition. This done, they pledged, Americans could once again claim without hesitation that their country was indeed the model of

⁶⁶ “Speech of Dudley Field,” *Dinner to Señor Matias Romero*, 29 March 1864, 11.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Andrew M. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 112.

⁶⁹ Adam Woog, *The Emancipation Proclamation: Ending Slavery in America* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 39-51.

stable self-governance. This interpretation downplayed emancipation's radical aspects and stressed instead its conservative and stabilising intent. The notion that emancipation would restore their nation to its rightful pre-eminence in the New World, moreover, cloaked the promise of domestic harmony in the mystic aura of the United States' providential destiny as the exceptional American republic.

Throughout 1863 and 1864, Unionist spokesmen and organs went to great lengths to emphasise the practical benefits that emancipation would have for the lives of their fellow countrymen. Social reformer and former Republican representative of Indiana Robert Dale Owen, for example, was not afraid to make the case for abolition on moral grounds. He did just that in a letter he wrote to Lincoln in 1862 that urged the president to incorporate emancipation as a Union war aim. "It is within your power," Owen explained, "... to restore to freedom a race of men."⁷⁰ On no other leader in world history had "God offered the privilege of bestowing on humanity a boon so vast."⁷¹ Yet when Owen addressed the public, he chose to stress emancipation's pragmatic rather than idealistic merits. In a pamphlet he wrote in 1864, for example, Owen explained to his countrymen that slavery was "fraught with mischief politically as well as morally."⁷² Throughout the antebellum period, Northern politicians had attempted to conciliate and cooperate with the Slave Power, all to no avail. Consumed by self-interest and a love of power, Southern slaveholders had continued to disrupt the smooth functioning of government in order to further their own narrow sectional ends. Owen concluded from this that no faction so consumed with the selfish spirit that slavery encouraged could "ever be expected to remain, in perpetuity, contented and happy under republican rule."⁷³ This being the case, he explained, emancipation was the "price of national unity and of peace" and the "sole condition under which we shall attain ... domestic tranquillity."⁷⁴ A similar argument was made by several major newspapers in the national press. In January 1864, for example, the *Chicago Tribune* reminded its readers that the "endless controversies and dissensions, from the Missouri question down to the civil war in Kansas," had been caused by the Slave Power's refusal to put its interests aside in the name of national peace.⁷⁵ The vices of greed and self-interest had infected

⁷⁰ Robert Dale Owen, "Letter of Robert Dale Owen to Abraham Lincoln, 17 September 1862," *The Policy of Emancipation: In Three Letters to the Secretary of War, the President of the United States, and The Secretary of the Treasury* (Philadelphia: Lippincott & Co. 1863), 126.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Robert Dale Owen, *The Wrongs of Slavery, the Right of Emancipation and the Future of the African Race in the United States* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864), 126.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 224-25.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

the minds of Southern masters, the newspaper told its readers, and as such “you can have no permanent peace while slavery lives.”⁷⁶ It was not enough, then, simply to defeat the military arm of the Confederacy: the only way for Americans to guarantee lasting “domestic tranquillity” was through the destruction of the institution of slavery.⁷⁷ These Unionists therefore emphasised the need for national stability and peace, rather than racial justice, in their efforts to convince Northerners of the necessity of emancipation.

The prospect of an end to faction and civil strife was also advanced by prominent Unionists who, prior to the Civil War, had been openly hostile to emancipation. Many wartime Democratic organs, for example, had long viewed abolitionists as dangerous radicals who wished to liberate Southern slaves in order to impose a system of Negro rule over the region. During the Civil War, many of these publications were therefore deeply suspicious of President Lincoln’s tyrannical predilections and viewed the Emancipation Proclamation as an outrageous abuse of his executive authority.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the notion that lasting peace in the United States would be impossible so long as the Slave Power lived persuaded some of these Democrats to reconcile themselves to the necessity of abolition. Democratic newspaper the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, for example, admitted to “grave reservations regarding the constitutionality of the President’s [Emancipation] Proclamation.”⁷⁹ And yet, the newspaper conceded, the country would be forever embroiled in internal dissensions until it had excised the “demon of Slavery” from its midst.⁸⁰ Representative David S. Coddington of New York made a similar point in a speech he delivered in November 1864 in which he urged his fellow Democrats to vote the Union Party ticket in the coming presidential election. The Emancipation Proclamation, he insisted, was not borne from “anti-slavery feeling,” but rather a desire to purge the public sphere of the “depraved statesmanship” of those politicians who had been “corrupted by the slave power.”⁸¹ There was no misguided philanthropy nor proselytising morality behind the president’s proclamation – only the rational calculation that the slavocracy’s disruptive machinations had rendered that faction anathema to lasting domestic peace in the United States. Once emancipation was complete, Coddington told his audience, Americans would “behold the

⁷⁶ “The Regeneration of the Nation,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 January 1864, 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ For more on Democratic opposition to the Lincoln government, see Baker, *Affairs of Party*; Mark E. Neely, *Lincoln and the Democrats: The Politics of Opposition in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁷⁹ “Resistance to Will,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 9 October 1863, 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ “The War Democracy: Speech of Hon. D. S. Coddington at the Great Mass Meeting of Cooper Institute,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1864, 8.

refreshing streams of future order, stability and peace.”⁸² The notion that emancipation was a stabilising measure, therefore, held together a diverse coalition of popular support behind the Union war effort.

Raising the stakes of emancipation even higher, some Unionist organs insisted that the destruction of slavery in the United States would guarantee the successful resolution of the ongoing crisis in Mexico. They based this argument on their almost religious faith in the symbolic power of the U.S. example. Throughout the Civil War, the Lincoln administration maintained a neutral position towards the Franco-Mexican conflict. Secretary of State William H. Seward made his disapproval of Louis-Napoléon’s Mexican venture clear and vowed to maintain diplomatic relations with the Juárez government. However, he also assured the French emperor that the Union had no intention of sending material or military aid south of the border.⁸³ Most major Northern newspapers supported their government’s position. The *New York Tribune*, for example, regretted that the Southern rebellion currently absorbed Americans’ energy and resources and so “divested us of all ability to aid our imperilled neighbour.”⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the newspaper continued, Northerners could help their Mexican brethren in other ways. As the *Tribune* explained in a separate article in September 1863, a “speedy triumph over the Rebels” would guarantee “national security and lasting peace” in the United States.⁸⁵ The newspaper averred that this would be the most effective means to compel “France to quit Mexico.”⁸⁶ An 1864 New York League pamphlet explained this logic further. The disruptive machinations of the Slave Power, the pamphlet explained, had engulfed the once mighty U.S. republic in civil strife and so emboldened Louis-Napoléon to launch his assault on Mexico. “Once freed of the scourge of slavery,” however, the United States would rid itself of all sources of internal dissension and so “resume her proper honors” and its “foremost place among the nations” of the New World.⁸⁷ The pamphlet predicted that the “sight of our republic arising from its turmoil will cause the enemies of freedom in Mexico to tremble” and the Juarist forces to “find new faith in the inevitability of their ultimate victory.”⁸⁸ These Unionists therefore framed the stabilising effects of emancipation as part of a broader process which would return the United States to its rightful standing as the model republic that could defend the cause of liberty

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ For more on the Lincoln administration’s Mexican policy, see Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 95-121, 218-38.

⁸⁴ “Mexico – Monroe,” *New York Tribune*, 29 July 1863, 4.

⁸⁵ “France in Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 8 September 1863, 4.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Joshua Leavitt, *The Monroe Doctrine* (New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864), 18.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

overseas purely by the power of its example. The “surest way to lend aid to Mexico,” the *Chicago Tribune* informed its readers in November 1864, was to “defeat the Southern rebel.”⁸⁹ The destruction of the Slave Power would preserve free government not only in the United States, therefore, but throughout the continent. Such was these Unionists’ faith in the power of the U.S. example and, by extension, the imperative of emancipation.

Some publications insisted that the restoration of the United States’ symbolic power would have ramifications in the hemisphere beyond the successful resolution of the Franco-Mexican conflict. In July 1863, the *New York Tribune* noted that, since the issuance of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, “Southern conspirators” in the federal government had undermined the United States’ image in the eyes of the other American republics.⁹⁰ “The indecent rapacity wherewith Texas was seized and Mexico invaded, and Spain bullied to surrender Cuba,” the newspaper recalled, and been “inspired and fomented by the slaveholding oligarchy of the South.”⁹¹ While in the antebellum era anti-expansionist sentiments had certainly been strongest in the Northern states, politicians and newspapers in that section had by no means been uniform on the subject of territorial growth.⁹² In wartime Northern public discourse, however, the United States’ history of territorial expansion was frequently condemned as having been fuelled by the avaricious ambitions of slaveholders. A post-emancipation United States, these Unionist organs insisted, would pursue its hemispheric ambitions through moral rather than military might. An 1863 New York League pamphlet, for example, predicted that after emancipation, “our glorious Union” will be “redeemed.”⁹³ The people of the wider hemisphere would therefore look up the United States with the “same respect and deference, which they were ready enough to pay us in the glorious days of President Monroe.”⁹⁴ The *New York Tribune* also anticipated that emancipation would pave the way for “more friendly relations between North and South America.”⁹⁵ As they learned from Americans how to stabilise their governments, moreover, the republics of Latin America would simultaneously develop their industries and commerce. Soon the hemisphere would evolve into a cohesive unit, bound by trading networks, a common spirit of republicanism, and guided by the benign influence of the United States. The “Monroe doctrine,” the newspaper asserted, would then cease to be “an object of historical research” and

⁸⁹ “Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 November 1864, 1.

⁹⁰ “Mexico-Monroe,” *New York Tribune*, 29 July 1863, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² See, for example, Howard I. Kushner, “Visions of the Northwest Coast: Gwin and Seward in the 1850s,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (July 1973), 295-306.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ “Our Trade with Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 17 December 1863, 4.

become living proof that “there are arguments more powerful than those of the sword.”⁹⁶ It should be noted that these Unionists were not proposing a precise formula for their country’s future policy in the Western Hemisphere: issues of trade, arbitration, and confederation regarding the region had long divided Americans and would continue to do so in the future.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, during wartime something approaching a consensus did emerge among them that, after emancipation, the United States’ symbolic power would be the key to its hemispheric ascendancy.

Emancipation was by any measure a radical endeavour and one that caused tremors of uncertainty throughout the wartime North. Those who defended the policy in public discourse therefore often found it expedient to highlight its patriotic origins and stabilising intent. Putting emancipation’s significance in a continental perspective helped them to do this. The Slave Power, they argued, had been the sole cause of conflict in the antebellum Union. The removal of this alien element from the body politic would therefore return U.S. public life to the ordered and tranquil condition it had enjoyed in the past. This done, the United States’ image in the eyes of the world would be redeemed. Its rejuvenated symbolic power would be a boon to the cause of republicanism, not only in Mexico but throughout the hemisphere. By promising both future domestic peace and international glory, therefore, Unionists attempted to make the prospect of emancipation palatable, even appealing to as broad a swathe of the Northern public as possible. As we shall see, however, their message failed to resonate in all sectors of the Civil War North.

Northern Democrats and the Mexican Question

From the summer of 1863 to the end of the Civil War, the Lincoln administration’s neutral position towards the Franco-Mexican conflict came under growing criticism from a faction of Northern Democrats who called for a U.S. military intervention to assist the Juarists in Mexico. Historians have attributed these Democrats’ interest in the Mexican question to partisan motivations. As Jay Sexton argues, during the Civil War, their opposition to the Lincoln administration had left Democratic leaders “open to charges of disloyalty.”⁹⁸ Criticising the president for his apparent indifference towards the Mexican republican cause helped them to

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ For more on debates in the postbellum United States regarding foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere, see Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1963); Brian Loveman, *No Higher Law: American Foreign Policy in the Western Hemisphere Since 1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 65-180; and, Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine*, 159-240.

⁹⁸ Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine*, 152.

deflect these accusations and position themselves on the patriotic high-ground. Certainly, partisanship played a role in these Democrats' calls for a U.S. intervention in Mexico. By dismissing them as being driven by pure opportunism, however, historians have overlooked the ideological influences that underpinned these plans. The Democrats who called for a Mexican invasion presented it as part of a broader plan to end the Civil War. If the North and South could agree to an armistice *without* emancipation, they argued, their armies could then march together into Mexico. The notion that reunion could be managed with slavery – and therefore the Slave Power – intact indicated that these Democrats had their own interpretation of the causes of the Southern rebellion. Contrary to the Unionists' claims, they argued that the United States' descent into internecine strife had been caused by the agitations of Northern abolitionists. During the final months of the Civil War, therefore, increased partisan politicking over the Mexican question stemmed from a deep fissure in Northern society regarding the causes of the rise of sectionalism in the United States and the best way to reunify and harmonise the nation.

Most wartime Northern Democrats rejected the notion that the Slave Power alone had caused the Civil War. Their scepticism, however, varied in degrees.⁹⁹ The *New York Herald*, one of the most widely-read Northern newspapers, was vociferous in its hatred of the “traitors of the South” and accepted that military force must be used to put down the Southern rebellion.¹⁰⁰ While no friend of abolitionism, over the course of the war the newspaper also came to agree with the Lincoln administration that emancipation was necessary if the Union was to enjoy lasting peace in the future. Yet the *Herald* also believed that Southern slaveholders had been pushed towards secession by the agitations of the “foolish and nearsighted abolitionists and negro-worshippers of our land.”¹⁰¹ The *Herald* shared this rather precarious position with many other pro-War Democrats during the Civil War. Others within the Democracy, meanwhile, were less equivocal. In July 1863, ex-president Franklin Pierce reminded delegates to the New

⁹⁹ Although wartime Republicans painted all Democrats with the brush of treason, there were many shades of loyalty within the ranks of the wartime Democracy. While Joel Silbey argues that the Democrats were a relatively cohesive minority party during the Civil War, he stresses the distinction between “legitimists” and “purists” within the organization. Various factions within the party, moreover, proposed different plans for how to end the Civil War, from acceptance of Southern independence, ceasefire followed by negotiated reunion, to continued prosecution of the Union war effort until it forced Confederate surrender. See Silbey, *A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860-1868* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977). For more on the diversity of opinion within the wartime Democracy, see Richard O. Curry, “The Union as it Was: A Critique of Recent Interpretations of the Copperheads,” *Civil War History* 13, no. 1 (March 1967), 215-38; Frank L. Klement, “Civil War Politics, Nationalism, and Postwar Myths,” *Historian* 38, no. 3 (May 1976), 419-38.

¹⁰⁰ “European Intervention in American Affairs – Its Consequences,” *New York Herald*, 11 September 1863, 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Hampshire Democratic state convention that, throughout much of its history, the United States had been a “model Republic.”¹⁰² Its stable institutions and harmonious public sphere, he recalled, had made the nation “peaceful and happy at home” and “respected abroad.”¹⁰³ Over time, however, a faction of abolitionists had emerged in the North and formed their own political organisation – the Republican Party. Pierce charged that, while the Republicans claimed to oppose slavery on humanitarian grounds, they were in fact motivated by a love of power. Jealous of the South’s influence within the Union, they had promoted their antislavery doctrines to the Northern people in order to turn them against their slaveholding countrymen (and the Democratic Party which housed them) and thereby ensure their loyalty to the Republican Party. Republicans’ “vicious intermeddling” in the South’s peculiar institution, Pierce charged, had eroded the “all-comprehensive patriotism” which had once united the republic and instead cultivated among the nation’s political leaders “passionate emotions of narrow and aggressive sectionalism.”¹⁰⁴ This interpretation of the causes of the sectional crisis was echoed by many other Peace Democrats during the Civil War who similarly believed that the abolitionists, not the Slave Power, had been the real enemies of harmony in the antebellum Union.

Many anti-war Democratic voices in public discourse insisted that Lincoln’s plan to reunify the nation by crushing the slaveholders’ rebellion and confiscating their property would only perpetuate divisions in the Union. Ohio newspaper the *Crisis*, for example, warned its readers in August 1863 that the administration’s scheme to “free the negro” was in fact designed to foment mayhem in the Southern states in order to facilitate its plan to transform the federal state into a “strong central government ... altogether at variance with that under which we have heretofore lived.”¹⁰⁵ The *Old Guard*, another Peace organ, elaborated on this accusation in January 1863 when it explained that the Republicans’ planned not only to liberate the slaves, but to give them the vote. Extending the franchise to a population so unsuited to the demands of democratic citizenship, the newspaper continued, would destabilise the South’s political systems and foment conflict between the black and white races. Once a reign of “anarchy – black anarchy” had engulfed the Southern states, Republicans would then point to this disorder as justification to impose federal military rule over the region. The *Old Guard* added that holding the defeated Confederate states under military subjugation would make future uprisings from that section more likely. As the journal explained, “an army may *crush*, but it alone can never

¹⁰² “The New Hampshire Convention,” *Crisis* (OH), 22 July 1863.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ “The French in Mexico,” *Crisis* (OH), 5 August 1863.

conquer the rebellion” because “...a people simply crushed” could not be compelled to be loyal to the nation by the “point of a bayonet.”¹⁰⁶ According to these Peace Democrats, therefore, the triumph of the Union war effort as envisioned by Republicans would see the United States spiral further towards both social anarchy and government tyranny.

These anti-war publications argued that an immediate ceasefire with the South was the only possible hope for reunion and lasting peace between the sections of the Union. Much like their Unionist opponents, they aimed to give force to their plan by presenting it as part of a broader effort to salvage the United States’ now imperilled standing as the exceptional American republic. In October 1864, for example, the *Crisis* reminded its readers that the United States had once been the envy of the world, a testament that mankind could achieve tranquillity and prosperity under a democratic system of government. The abolitionists, however, by fomenting those “local and sectional feelings” which had led to the Civil War, had dug the “grave of self-government” in the United States.¹⁰⁷ Their nation, the newspaper warned its readers, was about to “commit suicide” by falling prey to internal dissensions and so join the New World’s long list of failed republics.¹⁰⁸ The *New Hampshire and United States Gazette* agreed. The French invasion of Mexico, the newspaper argued in May 1864, was evidence of the United States’ diminished symbolic influence and “ought to teach us the imperative necessity of closing this terrible civil war and restoring the Union of our fathers.”¹⁰⁹ Without the protective shield of the United States, the other New World republics were vulnerable to the predations of the grasping European imperialists. “Every day this awful strife is continued,” the *Gazette* concluded, “we are directly giving aid and comfort to those who seek to make this continent “a great field for European intrigue and ambition.””¹¹⁰ Anti-war Democrats did not always agree what should follow a ceasefire between the North and South. Some anticipated that if the North renounced plans for emancipation, the two sections could negotiate a reunion. Others were ready to allow the Confederate states to form their own republic. Whatever their expectations of what peace would bring, Peace Democrats were adamant that continued warfare and emancipation would only perpetuate bloodshed, conflict, and misery in the U.S. republic and thereby destroy the beacon of inspiration to all other self-governing nations around the world.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ “The Civil War between the Slave and the Free States,” *Crisis* (OH), 19 October 1864.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ “Foreign Aggressions upon the American Continent,” *New Hampshire Patriot and United States Gazette*, 25 May 1864, 2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

As their references to the French intervention suggest, Peace Democrats were aware that many Northerners were sympathetic to the Juarist cause. Throughout 1863 and 1864, some of them sought to harness these sentiments to advance a plan for armistice in the United States. In February 1863, Democratic senator from California James A. McDougall presented his colleagues with a plan for peace.¹¹¹ He proposed that Union troops be ordered to cease their assault on the Confederacy and instead march across the Rio Grande to “lend all the aid required to maintain the integrity and independence of Mexico.”¹¹² This was as far as McDougall went in his references to the Juarist cause. Indeed, while many Unionist publications waxed poetical about the Mexicans’ bravery and fortitude, McDougall and many of his fellow Democrats were sceptical of their southern neighbours’ ability for self-government. McDougall instead chose to emphasise the villainy of the French imperialists, a sentiment he was sure he shared with many Confederates. “How would the truly democratic masses of the South,” he asked his colleagues, “care to band with the Emperor of the French against the United States?”¹¹³ McDougall conceded that some slaveholders had aristocratic pretensions. He was adamant, however, that most Southerners were devoted republicans who had been provoked into seceding from the Union by the aggressive posturing of antebellum abolitionists. Given this, he reasoned, the sight of Northern soldiers waging war against French monarchists would “detach from the rebellion many true republicans.”¹¹⁴ The Confederate uprising would thereby be neutralised and the path cleared for a negotiated peace between the North and South. McDougall anticipated, moreover, that a joint venture “in the maintenance of free institutions” in Mexico would encourage Northerners and Southerners to put aside their transitory differences and “once more join hand in hand” as citizens of the Union.¹¹⁵ McDougall’s was not only a plan for peace, then, but for reunion and reconciliation as well. Other Democrats also saw the potential healing effects of such a venture. In July 1864, for example, politician and newspaper editor Samuel S. Cox informed an audience in Columbus, Ohio, that should he be elected president in the upcoming election, Democratic nominee George B. McClellan planned to approach Richmond with an offer for peace on the basis of a North-South military expedition to Mexico.¹¹⁶ Cox predicted

¹¹¹ McDougall’s interest in Mexico was fuelled in part by rumours that Louis-Napoléon had designs on his home state of California. The senator admitted as much in speeches he delivered to the Senate regarding the Mexican question (“Senator McDougall and Louis Napoleon,” *New York Times*, 5 February 1863, 4).

¹¹² “French Interference in Mexico,” Speech of Hon. J.A. McDougall of California in the U.S. Senate, February 3, 1863 (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1863), 22.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹⁶ Contrary to Cox’s promises, the Democratic Party did not officially endorse the scheme. At the Democratic Convention in Chicago, August 1864, McDougall did propose that the party incorporate a

that allowing the “armies of both sections” to “unite again” would provide them with an opportunity for “renewing their old associations” and so begin the process of sectional healing.¹¹⁷ The renouncement of emancipation and an expedition to Mexico in the name of republicanism, these Democrats predicted, would purge the Union of the abolitionists, subsume sectional antipathies among the American people, and thereby ensure permanent reunion and peace.

These proposals elicited a heated response from pro-war publications, particularly those that supported the Republican Party. The *New York Tribune*, for example, decried what it claimed was the Democrats’ posturing on the Mexican question as another Copperhead scheme to undermine the Union war effort. “The great mass of the clamor in journals nominally loyal for... the maintenance and reassertion of the Monroe Doctrine,” the newspaper declared in September 1863, “is thoroughly pro-Rebel in its impulse and its object.”¹¹⁸ The *Chicago Tribune*, meanwhile, asked its readers to consider why those “who think we are too weak to put down the rebellion believe that we could more successfully fight both the rebellion and France?”¹¹⁹ This was a hole in the Democrats’ logic which Republicans exploited to its fullest extent. As the *Tribune* explained, sending an army into Mexico would deplete Union forces in the United States and so guarantee Confederate victory in the Civil War. “All rebeldom would howl with exultation,” the newspaper warned, “at such an assertion of the Monroe doctrine as [Democrats] pretend to urge.”¹²⁰ The *Tribune* even suggested that those Democrats who called for military intervention in Mexico were in league with the Franco-Confederate conspiracy. “Were these copperheads merely indifferent to the struggle in which our brave soldiers of the Union are engaged,” the newspaper reasoned, “they would strive to keep off third parties. But the copperheads are seeking to bring up France to the help of Jeff Davis, thereby driving back the Union armies in defeat and slaughter.”¹²¹ These Republican organs maintained that neutrality towards the Mexican conflict and perseverance in the fight against the rebellion were the only means to defend republicanism both at home and in Mexico.

These Unionist publications were therefore steadfast in their support of the Lincoln administration’s refusal to involve itself in the Mexican imbroglio. Throughout late 1863 and

pledge to defend the Monroe Doctrine into its platform. The motion did not pass. However, Democrats did campaign heavily on the Mexican issue during the run-up to the election in November (Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine*, 153).

¹¹⁷ “Speech of Mr. Cox, at the Court House,” *Ohio Daily Statesman*, 3 August 1865.

¹¹⁸ “France in America,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 8 September 1863, 4.

¹¹⁹ “Copperhead,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 June 1864.

¹²⁰ No Title, *Chicago Tribune*, 2 June 1864.

¹²¹ “Copperhead Zeal for the Monroe Doctrine,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 June 1864, 2.

early 1864, however, Democratic politicking on the issue did lead some Republicans to conclude that Washington ought to do more to make its ideological position on the Franco-Mexican conflict clear to both domestic and foreign audiences. In early 1864, Radical Republican Henry Winter Davis submitted a resolution to the House which declared that its members were “unwilling, by silence, to leave the nations of the world under the impression that they are indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the Republic of Mexico.”¹²² The resolution, which passed the House by a unanimous bi-partisan vote, did not call for a change of national policy towards the Mexican crisis. Rather, it reaffirmed the position already outlined by the Lincoln administration that the United States would not “acknowledge a monarchical government, erected on the ruins of any republican government in America, under the auspices of any European power.”¹²³ Nevertheless, the resolution’s forceful tone provoked a flurry of outrage in Paris, and Secretary Seward was compelled to reassure Louis-Napoléon’s government that, while the House’s statement reflected the sentiments of many Americans, it did not presage a change of policy by the Lincoln administration.¹²⁴ Yet even as he placated the French, Seward was aware that his government’s position on the Mexican question left Republicans open to charges of cowardice with regards to the French intervention, a weakness Democrats were sure to exploit in the upcoming 1864 presidential campaign. Throughout 1864, the secretary therefore adopted an increasingly forceful tone in his dispatches to France, many of which mysteriously found their way onto the pages of Northern newspapers.¹²⁵ At their convention in June, moreover, Republicans, now under the new title of the Union Party, incorporated a plank into their platform which stated that the party approved of the “position taken by the Government that the people of the United States can never regard with indifference the attempt of any European Power to overthrow . . . the institutions of any Republican Government on the Western Continent.”¹²⁶ With this careful phrasing, Republicans sought to

¹²² Jay Sexton argues that while Davis and other congressional Republicans were no doubt sincere in their sympathy for the Juarist cause, their interest in the Mexican question was primarily motivated by intra-party rivalry. At the time an internal battle was developing between the White House and certain Radical Republicans in Congress over Reconstruction policy. Sexton suggests that Davis anticipated that his resolution would draw public attention to President Lincoln’s supposed indifference to the Juarists’ plight. By undermining the administration in this way, Davis apparently hoped to strengthen the hand of these congressional Republicans in their broader effort to wrestle control over the Reconstruction process from the executive branch (Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine*, 152-53).

¹²³ “The French-Mexican Question,” *New York Times*, 5 April 1864, 1.

¹²⁴ Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 232-33.

¹²⁵ Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 314-17.

¹²⁶ “National Platform of 1864: Republican, at Baltimore, June,” quoted in Edward McPherson, *The Political History of the United States of America, During the Period of Reconstruction* (Washington D.C.: Philp & Solomons, 1871), 363.

reaffirm both their solidarity with the Juarists and their vow not to interfere in their conflict. Democrats had therefore failed to instigate a change of policy from Washington on the Mexican question. They had, however, pushed the issue higher up the national political agenda and forced Republicans to make their position on it more explicit.

The passage of the 4th April 1864 House resolution on the Mexican question by a unanimous vote constituted a remarkable moment of bi-partisan consensus in a period of bitter party conflict. This act of cross-party agreement, however, masked a vast chasm which divided Northern politicians regarding the French intervention in Mexico. Republicans insisted that defeating the Slave Power and abolishing slavery would restore the United States' symbolic power and thereby inspire the Juarists with the courage they needed to fight off their French assailants. Some Peace Democrats, meanwhile, called for a ceasefire with the Confederacy in order to pave the way for a joint North-South expedition across the Rio Grande to oust the French off the continent. These different proposals for how to settle the Mexican question, moreover, were rooted in opposing interpretations regarding the causes of civil strife in the United States. While most Unionists blamed the machinations of the Slave Power for the sectional contest, anti-war Democrats argued that it was in fact abolitionists who had sowed the seeds of discord in the antebellum Union. Yet there were also important similarities in these seemingly contradictory narratives. Specifically, both Democrats and Republicans claimed that the Civil War had been precipitated by the rise of an insidious faction within the body politic. They agreed, moreover, that the disharmony which this faction had fomented in American politics had undermined the United States' standing as the exceptional American republic. When they framed their respective plans for reunion as part of a broader effort to return the United States to its providential stature in the New World, therefore, both Republicans and Democrats were attempting to appeal to what they perceived to be the public's desire for lasting domestic peace.

Conclusion

On 19th July 1865, citizens of New York City gathered at the Cooper Institute to express their support for the Juarists in their ongoing fight against their French invaders. The event was hosted by the United Service Society, one of the many patriotic organisations formed in the North during the Civil War. Prominent orator Joshua Leavitt delivered the final speech of the day. Less than three months earlier, Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House and with emancipation now enshrined in the Thirteenth Amendment,

the Unionists' fight against the slavocracy was over. Leavitt was adamant, however, that even in their moment of triumph, Americans had not forgotten about the conflict which continued rage on the other side of the Rio Grande. After all, he explained, his countrymen understood that the slaveholders' rebellion and the French assault on Mexico had been part of "one grand conspiracy of the upholders of absolutism in Europe and the upholders of slavery in the United States."¹²⁷ While Americans had "happily escaped the blow" of this aristocratic assault, their "neighbours have felt its full weight."¹²⁸ Yet Leavitt asserted that it was not "in the nature of the American people to see this with indifference," and was certain that they would continue to watch the Franco-Mexican conflict with great concern.¹²⁹ They would not look on without hope, however. The Juarists' dedication to the republican cause was evident "in the heroism and devotion with which they have maintained this long struggle against the overwhelming power of France."¹³⁰ "We know," Leavitt concluded, "that the only stable government possible in Mexico is the Republic" and until that government was restored, Americans would continue to cheer for their Mexican brethren.¹³¹

The sentiments Leavitt expressed that day had been repeated many times in Northern public discourse during the Civil War. From the start of the French invasion of Mexico in 1862, Unionist politicians, newspapers, and other patriotic leaders had declared their support for the Juarist cause and urged Northerners to embrace Mexicans as fellow defenders of free government on the North American continent. To be sure, Louis-Napoléon's attempt to overthrow the Juárez government was anathema to Americans' long-held belief that the New World ought to be free from the intrigues of European imperialists. But there was more to these Unionists' support for the Juarists than this. As this chapter has shown, throughout the Civil War, Unionist voices in public discourse consciously associated the Northern war effort with that of the Mexicans. By doing so, they aimed to advance a particular reading of the Civil War to the public. Comparing the leaders of the Southern rebellion to Mexican clerics and French imperialists, for example, helped these Unionists to emphasise the former's supposedly undemocratic and anti-American values and ambitions. Their claim that these three elements were in fact combined in a collaborative conspiracy to bring down free government on the North American continent, moreover, cast the fight to subdue the rebellion as the latest battle in the

¹²⁷ Speech of Joshua Leavitt in *Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens of New York, to Express Sympathy and Respect for the Mexican Republican Exiles at the Cooper Institute, July 19, 1865* (New York: John A. Gray & Green, 1864), 7-8.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

ongoing contest between Old and New World theories of government. The significance of Union cause, these propagandists told their audiences, had historic and global proportions. Given this, the outcome of the war between the North and South would determine the fate of free government not only in the United States, but throughout the hemisphere.

This enthralling narrative was no doubt intended to inspire Northerners to persevere in the struggle against the rebellion. More than this, Unionist spokesmen used it to persuade their countrymen to support some of the unprecedented measures required to prosecute it, specifically emancipation. Historians have pointed to a variety of motivations which fuelled popular support for abolition during the Civil War, from Northerners' dedication to the principle of racial justice to their desire to remake the United States into a truly free labour society. This chapter, however, has demonstrated that, when they emphasised the benefits of emancipation to the public, Unionist propagandists frequently focussed on its harmonising and stabilising effects on U.S. society. The Slave Power, they insisted, was a disruptive faction within the body politic, unwilling to compromise its interests and concerned only with enhancing its own ambitions and power. Given this, should the states reunify with slavery intact, the slavocracy would continue to foment disharmony in the political realm and instability throughout all other areas of society. Unionists evidently believed that this argument would resonate with a population which knew only too well the deadly consequences of excessive sectionalism in a republic and anticipated that the popular desire for domestic peace could be used to advance some radical ends. To elevate the significance of the domestic peace even higher, however, Unionists framed it in continental terms. For all they professed their solidarity with the Juarists, the politicians, newspapers, and orators examined here were uneasy that the United States had succumbed to a condition of internal chaos analogous to that of their notoriously anarchic southern neighbour. They therefore stressed to the public that, once the Slave Power was destroyed and harmony returned to its public sphere, the United States would resume its standing as the model of stable self-governance. In this way, Unionists framed emancipation as not only the key to domestic peace, but to the resumption of the United States' providential destiny as the exceptional republic of the New World.

There was a triumphant tone to Leavitt's speech that day, and understandably so. With the slaveholders' rebellion defeated and emancipation now the law of the land, Leavitt, along with many other leading Unionists, was confident that the United States' exemplary image had been restored. No doubt the American press would soon receive reports of a string of Juarist victories over the French as their nation's symbolic power radiated across the Rio Grande. More than this, with the slavocracy gone, all sources of dissension in the United States had been

eradicated. Americans could therefore look forward to a future of untrammelled tranquillity as they worked together to reunify the sundered fragments of their Union. Leavitt's optimism would not last long, however. As the following chapters will show, the Unionists' expectation that emancipation would guarantee peace between North and South and harmony throughout the Union were quickly dashed on the rocky shores of Reconstruction. Sectionalism and political instability persisted long after the Civil War, and with them Americans' anxieties about the integrity of their so-called exceptional republic.

Chapter Two

The Slaveholding Republic's Continental Destiny: Confederates Respond to the French Intervention in Mexico, 1862-1865

On 24th July 1864 the Southern agricultural and industrial journal *De Bow's Review* published an article which reviewed the state of the Confederacy's foreign relations. The author surmised that recent events on the North American continent might bode well for the South in its ongoing war against the Union. "In Mexico there is a change of government," the article noted, "which is at this moment making great strides towards subduing the population and establishing its authority over every corner of that benighted country."¹ The author was referring to the Maximilian regime, a constitutional monarchy recently established in Mexico in the wake of the French invasion of that country and the forcible overthrow of its democratically-elected government. "Once his seat is secure," *De Bow's* predicted, "the new Mexican Emperor will no doubt seek to make an ally of us ... and grant to the Confederacy that recognition as an independent nation which, after three years of bloody warfare, it has justly earned."² The author anticipated that the great European powers would then follow Maximilian's lead – first France, then Britain, Spain, Russia – until the weight of international pressure forced the "Yankees to lay down their arms" and accept the Confederacy's entry into the family of nations.³ Confederates, in short, would gain their independence from among the ruins of self-government in Mexico.

At first glance, *De Bow's* jubilation over the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico contradicts the principle of self-determination which Confederates so proudly claimed was at the heart of their struggle for independence. In reality, however, the journal's response was consistent with a version of republicanism that held sway in Southern public discourse during the Civil War. This interpretation held that in a multi-racial society such as Mexico (or, indeed, the United States), a system of racial slavery was essential to maintain domestic political harmony. By structuring society along racial lines, the institution ensured that political rights were granted only to those members of society – namely white males – who possessed the intellectual capabilities necessary to properly exercise them. When Louis-Napoléon invaded Mexico in 1862, Confederate politicians, newspapers, and journals invoked this notion to argue that the "mongrel" Mexican nation did not constitute a legitimate republic. Some went further and suggested that Mexico's conversion into a French colonial satellite would in fact help to

¹ "Our Confederate Status: Domestic and Foreign," *De Bow's Review*, 24 July 1864, 8.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

preserve the last bastion of true republicanism in the New World - the nascent Confederacy. Should the South win its independence, they argued, the French-backed Maximilian regime would provide a counter-weight to the Union on the continent and so protect the Confederacy from Yankee incursions during the early years of its national life. The Confederacy could also make use of French capital to develop transportation networks throughout the Western Hemisphere in pursuit of what secessionists claimed was their new nation's destiny to become the chief commercial power in the region. To be sure, the alacrity with which these Confederates accommodated the Maximilian regime into their plans for hemispheric domination was partly due to the exigencies of wartime; locked in a deathly struggle with the Union, they were in no position to quarrel with France over its intrigues in Mexico. In public discourse, however, the Davis administration's response to the Franco-Mexican conflict was presented to Southerners as consistent with both the ideological values and long-term ambitions which underpinned their fledgling republic.

By examining how the Mexican question was discussed in Confederate public discourse, this chapter illuminates some of the aspirations which led Southerners to secede from the Union. Indeed, when Confederates explained why Mexico was an illegitimate republic, they drew on the same version of slaveholding republicanism which they had used to justify Southern secession from the Union. Antebellum proslavery leaders often insisted that slavery had provided for a degree of political harmony and social tranquillity in the United States unknown among the other American republics. During the Secession Crisis 1860-1861, advocates of disunion emphasised this point as they attempted to persuade their fellow Southerners to break away from the Union. Northern abolitionists, they claimed, not only wished to dismantle the peculiar institution but replace it with a programme of racial equality and miscegenation. These secessionists asserted that one need only look at the troubled history of a multi-racial emancipationist republic like Mexico to see the political chaos which would come from these measures. On the other hand, an independent Confederacy would preserve that vital link between slavery and republicanism and therefore enjoy the harmony and order which had characterised public life in the United States before the rise of abolitionism. This argument for secession was not dissimilar to the one advanced by Unionist organs during the Civil War in support of the Northern war effort. While they offered different reasons for its cause, the turmoil of antebellum sectionalism and the outbreak of civil war had left its mark on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line and the desire for political harmony was felt no less acutely by Southerners than it was among their former countrymen in the North.

This chapter contributes to a growing body of literature which argues that the bid for Confederate independence was a forward-looking enterprise fuelled by Southerners' ambition to create a modern nation at the forefront of an increasingly globalised economy. This scholarship displaces older narratives which portrayed the antebellum South as a parochial society with an agrarian economy and traditionalist political culture.⁴ In recent decades, historians such as Walter Johnson and Sven Beckert have revised this view of the antebellum South. They argue that Northern industrialisation and the expansion of slavery during the first half of the nineteenth century were not antagonistic or even distinct phenomenon but were in fact deeply embedded in one another.⁵ Southern slavery generated capital that was then channelled throughout the United States and facilitated the growth of banks, merchant establishments, trading firms, commercial shippers, and industrial manufacturers across the North. Slave-grown cotton, moreover, fuelled the growth of European textile industries, was central to global trade, and spurred developments in technological innovation and labour arrangements throughout the Western world.⁶ Scholars have also demonstrated that Southern planters were proud of their role in these developments and saw themselves as enterprising capitalists at the forefront of global trends towards economic modernisation. As historians John Majewski, Edward Baptist, and others have shown, many proslavery leaders advocated for agricultural reform and economic diversification in the South and were highly attuned to advancements in technology, labour patterns, and scientific research taking place around the world.⁷ Far from an obstacle to industrialisation in the United States, then, the peculiar institution was its indispensable facilitator.

⁴ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For studies which emphasise the traditional and elitist aspects of the antebellum South's political culture, see Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," *Journal of Southern History* 42, no. 4 (November 1976), 529-56; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Steven Elliott Tripp, *Yankee Town, Southern City: Race and Class Relations in Civil War Lynchburg* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1997), 6-84; and, Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁵ Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

⁶ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014).

⁷ Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*; John Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of a Confederate Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

This research casts new light on the motivations which drove the bid for Confederate independence. Conventional narratives portray secession as a reactionary movement to protect the agrarian South from the forces of modernity sweeping over the rest of the United States during the antebellum era. However, historians are now more apt to characterise disunionists as forward-looking capitalists who sought to establish their own dynamic and modern nation. Donald W. Livingston, for example, argues that antebellum Southerners chafed at the prohibitive tariffs Northern politicians had placed on finished goods entering the United States. The policy of protection had, they believed, “dealt a crippling blow to the Southern agricultural export trade” by encouraging the South’s European trading partners to search for staples elsewhere.⁸ Moreover, the fact that most of the United States’ international shipping lines ran from Northern port cities such as New York meant that Southern products were sent northward before they reached international markets. Livingston explains that secessionists anticipated that an independent South would be free to deal directly with its existing trading partners and develop new commercial relations with other European countries.⁹ Other historians have found that disunionists also had ambitions closer to home. Robert E. May notes that many antebellum Southern leaders resented Northerners for repeatedly thwarting their plans for territorial expansion, whether into Cuba, northern Mexico, or areas in Central and South America. They were sure, however, that their expansionist ambitions would be realised in an independent Confederacy.¹⁰ Scholars such as Matthew Karp and Kevin Waite have recently demonstrated that secessionists’ hemispheric ambitions did not centre on territorial expansion alone. They argue that disunionists in fact envisioned a diverse and integrated programme of hemispheric aggrandisement that would include gaining access to new markets for Southern goods and developing trading networks throughout the region that they could use to establish a foothold in the burgeoning markets of Asia.¹¹ These scholars therefore demonstrate that, far from a

⁸ Donald W. Livingston, “The Secession Tradition in America,” in *Secession, State, and Liberty*, ed. David Gordon (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 16.

⁹ Edwin De Leon, *Secret History of Confederate Diplomacy Abroad*, ed. William C. Davis (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 40-47; Hubbard, *Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*; Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 11-20.

¹⁰ Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973). See also, May, *Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and, Caroline Lavender, “Confederate Cuba,” *American Literature* 78, no. 4 (2006), 821-45.

¹¹ Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016); Kevin Waite, “Jefferson Davis and Proslavery Visions of Empire in the Far West,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December 2016), 536-65.

reactionary backlash against the modernising world, secession was a bold effort to sever ties with the North and propel the South to the forefront of the global economy.

This chapter agrees that Southerners' ambitions for territorial and commercial expansion into the southern portions of the Western Hemisphere were an important factor in their decision to secede from the Union. It enriches the existing scholarship, however, by drawing attention to some of the ideological values which underpinned these visions. This is an aspect of secessionists' worldview which has often been underplayed in the recent wave of scholarship on the subject. Indeed, in their effort to demonstrate that leading disunionists were enterprising capitalists, the historians mentioned above tend to focus on the pecuniary rather ideological factors which shaped their plans for the Confederacy's future in the hemisphere. When Walter Johnson's Southern planters surveyed the region, for example, they seem to have thought almost exclusively about integrating its markets and gaining access to its resources in order to maximise their own profits. Matthew Karp, meanwhile, views much of the Southern planter class as ideologically indifferent or downright apolitical. Contrary to their public professions, he argues, most slaveholders in positions of political power were not believers in states' rights or Jeffersonian small government but in fact were "practical visionaries" willing to employ any political theory or idea necessary to strengthen the peculiar institution on which their wealth depended.¹² Ideology, these scholars suggest, was at best a minor consideration in shaping these disunionists' visions of the Confederacy in the wider world.

No doubt a thirst for profit shaped many secessionists' hemispheric ambitions. When these politicians and publications presented their plans to the Southern people, however, they gave them a higher, transcendent purpose. Commercial and territorial expansion in the hemisphere was, they proclaimed, part of the destiny the Confederacy would inherit from the United States to reign over the New World as its most powerful republic. They based this claim on the notion that Northern abolitionists not only sought to free the slaves but elevate them to a level of social and political equality with white Americans. Advocates of disunion insisted that this programme would plunge the South into the sort of disorder typical of the Latin American republics and that secession was therefore necessary to safeguard the political and social harmony which had once distinguished the exceptional United States. They added that, just as the projected Confederacy was heir to the original U.S. republican tradition, so too would it take on the United States' role as the principal power in the New World. Once the Confederacy had gained independence, they explained, its citizens would be free to advance southward, clearing

¹² Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire*, 3.

native inhabitants from their path and erecting in their place slaveholding republican institutions. Coupled with the extension of commercial and infrastructure networks throughout the region, this process would bring civilization to the dark corners of the hemisphere and enhance prosperity in the existing Confederate states. As the abolitionist Union descended into chaos (as secessionists were adamant it would), the slaveholding republic would ascend to a position of hegemony in the New World and so consummate the destiny God had originally ordained for the United States. By couching their hemispheric designs in the language of the U.S. republican mission, therefore, Southern publicists and politicians further validated their ambitions in the eyes of the public by giving them the air of providential destiny.

Analysing how Southern politicians, newspapers, and other voices in public discourse responded to the French intervention in Mexico between 1862 and 1865 provides an opportunity to see how Confederates reconciled these hemispheric designs with the shifting demands of wartime. Historians usually attribute the Davis administration's approval of the French invasion of Mexico to "realpolitik strategic" considerations.¹³ The Richmond government was in desperate need of foreign allies and hoped that by supporting Louis-Napoléon's venture it could persuade the emperor to recognise the South. Patrick Kelly views the Confederate government's disregard for the fate of the Mexican republic as a "clear repudiation of the Founders' commitment to the core principle of democratic self-government" and therefore exposed the shallowness of the rebel leadership's claim to be fighting in defence of liberty and self-determination.¹⁴ No doubt the need for foreign recognition weighed heavily on the Davis administration. But Kelly's contention that the Confederates' Mexican policy reflected their lack of ideological conviction presumes that they considered the Juárez administration a legitimate republican government. As this chapter will show, in the Southern press, the Davis administration's management of the Mexican question was accepted as consistent with the principles of slaveholding republicanism at the heart of the bid for Southern independence. Throughout the Civil War, Southern organs insisted that the French intervention did not constitute a violation of the principle of self-government because the Juárez government was merely a collection of avaricious strongmen masquerading as a republic. Many Confederate publications even anticipated that, by providing a counterweight to the Union, a French presence in Mexico would in fact help to preserve the only true republic of the New World – the slaveholding Confederacy – from future Yankee aggressions. Certainly, these politicians' and newspapers' response to the Mexican question was a blend of pragmatism, ambition, and

¹³ Kelly, "The North American Crisis of the 1860s," 343.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 344.

principle. It did not, however, reflect their ideological bankruptcy. Rather it was informed by their belief that slavery was indispensable to stable republicanism, and that successful self-government was therefore impossible on the North American continent outside the borders of the Confederacy.

While it explores how Confederates applied their notions of slaveholding republicanism to the Mexican question, this chapter's broader aim is to illuminate what motivated Southerners to secede from the Union and what kind of society they expected to create from their efforts. When they discussed how their government should respond to the Franco-Mexican conflict, Southerners talked enthusiastically about their plans for their nascent republic's future on the continent and beyond. As they did so, they also described the qualities which they believed distinguished their projected nation from both the United States and the other Latin American republics, and which would therefore form the basis of its future power and prestige in the Western Hemisphere. Specifically, the journals, newspapers, and politicians examined here emphasised that at the core of their prosperous and expansive republic would be a harmonious citizenry governed by politicians who were guided by the virtues of civic duty and cooperation. The previous chapter demonstrated that proponents of the Union cause insisted that the destruction of slavery would guarantee Northerners a future of untrammelled political tranquillity and domestic peace. Disunionists made similar promises to the people of the South. At the heart of these Confederates' desire for wealth and international influence, therefore, lay a deep yearning for the kind of harmonious society which had been denied them in the fractious antebellum Union.

The Preservation of the Exceptional Republic: Disunionists Make the Case for Secession

Between 1860 and 1861, advocates of disunion in Southern public discourse made a bold case for secession. An independent South, they told the people of that section, would enjoy harmony at home and glory abroad. These secessionists argued that over recent decades, an insidious abolitionist faction had emerged in the North. Power-hungry and rapacious, these abolitionists had propagated their radical doctrines to the Northern people in order to turn them against their Southern brethren and thereby shore up popular support for the Republican Party, the political arm of the abolitionist cabal. Disunionists asserted that, with Lincoln's election to the presidency in 1860, the abolitionists now had control of the federal government and would use this power to liberate the slaves and sow discord throughout the South. Abolitionists in government could then point to this anarchy as justification to extend military rule over the

region so transform the U.S. republic into a despotism. Lincoln's presidency would, in short, see the United States degenerate into the same condition as those multi-racial republics of Latin America that veered constantly between anarchy and tyranny. Secessionists insisted that, while withdrawal from the Union would safeguard Southerners from this disastrous fate, it would also open up to them new opportunities for overseas aggrandisement. Freed from Northern fetters, an independent South could embark on a splendid career of territorial and commercial expansion throughout the hemisphere. These promises added a dose of optimism to secessionists' dire warnings of anarchy and misery. The slaveholding Confederacy, they claimed, would be the last bastion of stable republicanism in the New World, and would reap all the glories and wealth which this position entailed.

The notion that slavery was the bedrock of stable and harmonious self-government was well-established in proslavery thought by the eve of the Civil War. Mississippi planter and prominent proslavery advocate Samuel Cartwright, for example, made this argument in an article he contributed to a compendium of essays published in 1860 entitled *Cotton is King*. Cartwright stated that, to be convinced of the necessity of slavery for a well-ordered democracy, one need only compare the history of the United States to those of the Latin American republics. In the early nineteenth century, he explained, Latin Americans had revolted against their Spanish rulers. Most of these colonies were, like the United States, slaveholding societies. However, their revolutionary leaders had been possessed of the erroneous notion that "all men of all races are naturally equal to one another."¹⁵ The Latin Americans had therefore deviated from the U.S. example when they wrote provisions into their constitutions for the emancipation of the "inferior negro race."¹⁶ Another contributor to *Cotton is King*, Virginia pastor Thornton Stringfellow, argued that this "disregard for the distinctions made by nature, between the white, black, and Indian races" had proven "fatal" to these young nations.¹⁷ Abolition had been followed by racial political equality and miscegenation. The eradication of social and political barriers within these countries threw their different races into competition with one another. Stringfellow asserted that, since independence, the republics of Latin America had therefore

¹⁵ Cartwright, "The Education, Labor, and Wealth of the South," in *Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments: Comprising the Writings of Hammond, Harper, Christy, Hodges, Bledsoe, and Cartwright*, ed. E. N. Elliott (Augusta, GA: Pritchard, Abbott & Loomis, 1860), 884.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* It should be noted that emancipation in these new Latin American republics was not as immediate as Cartwright implied. Many of them, including Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, and Colombia, banned the slave trade soon after independence but opted for legislation which provided for gradual emancipation. The 1821 Plan of Iguala freed the children of slaves born in Mexico. For more on emancipation in Latin America, see Robert J. Cottrol, *The Long, Lingering Shadow: Slavery, Race, and Law in the American Hemisphere* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013).

been in an almost constant state of “insurrection, revolution, and fearful anarchy.”¹⁸ Compare this, Cartwright stated, to the experience of the United States. By maintaining the institution of slavery, the Founding Fathers had ensured that each race was confined to its “natural” societal role, and that public life was the preserve of white citizens alone.¹⁹ These arrangements had provided for political equality among white Americans. More than this, they had cultivated a sense of unity among them derived from their common racial heritage.²⁰ Finally, the subordination of African Americans to a permanent working class provided white Americans with more opportunities for social mobility and therefore precluded the formation of “artificial” class distinctions within white society.²¹ The “uncontradicted experience” of the American republics, Stringfellow concluded, proved that emancipation led to social disorder and political demoralisation, while “slavery is compatible with the freedom, stability, and the long duration of civil government.”²² According to these Southerners, then, slavery was the source of the United States’ exceptional standing among the independent nations of the New World.²³

These proslavery advocates believed, however, that over recent decades the rise of abolitionism in the Northern states had begun to undermine the unique tranquillity of the U.S. republic. They were at pains to stress that these antislavery doctrines were foreign in their origin. As Cartwright explained, after the American Revolution, the British ruling classes became jealous of their former colonies’ growing wealth and power and had determined to strike at the source of their strength - the institution of slavery. British politicians began to preach a perversion of the “democratic doctrine” which “declared all men equal to one another, *including negroes.*”²⁴ These incendiary notions migrated across the Atlantic where they were

¹⁸ Thornton Stringfellow, “Statistical View of Slavery,” in *Cotton is King*, 546.

¹⁹ Cartwright, “The Education, Labor, and Wealth of the South,” 884.

²⁰ George M. Frederickson used the concept of “herrenvolk democracy” to refer to the bond of interests among white Americans based on their shared set of assumptions about the racial inferiority of black slaves. See Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press 1987). For more recent studies which also explore how notions of racial unity and republican political culture united antebellum Southern planters with white “plain folk,” see Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and, Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*. While proslavery writers proclaimed that slavery provided for political equality among white citizens, their interpretation of republicanism often contained elitist undertones. For more on this, see Faust, *James Henry Hammond*; Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class*; Shallope, “Thomas Jefferson’s Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought,” 529-56; Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*.

²¹ Stringfellow, “Slavery in Light of Social Ethics,” in *Cotton is King*, 604-5.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ For more on how antebellum proslavery advocates used images of Latin America to warn of the perils of emancipation, see Naish, *Slavery and Silence*, 175-212.

²⁴ Cartwright, “The Education, Labor, and Wealth of the South,” 884. For more on Anglophobia in the antebellum South, see Edward B. Rugemer, “The Southern Response to British Abolitionism: The

enthusiastically taken up by ambitious politicians in the North. As the proslavery Tennessee senator Alfred O. P. Nicholson explained, while they professed to be motivated by humanitarian concerns, antislavery leaders were in fact driven by base “political ambition.”²⁵ Their abolitionist doctrines cultivated a “sentiment of hostility to slavery” among the Northern people that taught them to despise their countrymen in the South.²⁶ Exacerbating “sectional jealousies and prejudices” enabled these politicians to shore up their voter base and so keep themselves in office.²⁷ Their ambitions did not stop there, however. Nicholson warned that, if they managed to take control of the federal government, abolitionists planned to emancipate the South’s slaves and plunge that region into same condition of chronic social and political chaos as the Latin American republics. They would then point to the ensuing anarchy as justification to extend military rule over the South and so transform the U.S. republic into an effective despotism. Speaking in February 1860, Nicholson warned that this plan was already well underway. Antislavery politicians had fostered enough anti-Southern feeling in the Northern states to create the Republican Party – the country’s first purely “sectional [political] organization.”²⁸ Should that party win the upcoming presidential contest, emancipation would follow and with it the destruction of the exceptional U.S. republic.

On 6th November 1860, Lincoln was elected to the presidency and Nicholson’s dire warnings looked set to become a reality. In the following months, advocates of disunion repeated the prophecies of the anarchy and misery which awaited the South under Republican rule to rally the people of that section behind secession. As they did so, however, they also emphasised the harmony and tranquillity Southerners would enjoy as citizens of an independent slaveholding nation. “Our republic,” future Confederate secretary of state Robert M. T. Hunter declared in 1861, “will be guided by the immutable truth” that the “races must be kept separate.”²⁹ This organising principle would ensure that the Confederacy would consist of a racially “homogeneous” body politic of white men.³⁰ The consecration of slavery at the heart of this projected nation’s political and economic apparatuses would, moreover, unite its citizens with “common interests and sympathies” and therefore prevent the rise of factionalism in its

Maturation of Proslavery Apologetics,” *Journal of Southern History* 70, no. 2 (May 2004), 221-48; and, Rugemer, “Robert Monroe Harrison, British Abolition, Southern Anglophobia and Texas Annexation,” *Slavery & Abolition* 28, no. 2 (August 2007), 169-91.

²⁵ “Speech of A.O.P. Nicholson,” *Nashville Union and American*, 8 February 1860, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ R. M. T. Hunter, “The Border States – Their Position after Disunion,” *De Bow’s Review*, May 1861, 116.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

public sphere.³¹ The influential Southern journal *De Bow's Review* predicted that this spirit of unanimity would encourage Southern voters to think of the public good, rather than their own narrow concerns, when they participated in electoral processes. They would, for example, select representatives based on their moral “purity” and merit rather than their ability to appeal to local prejudices.³² *De Bow's* was confident that the “firmness, judgement and general intelligence” of the Confederacy’s statesmen would ensure that they would administer the new government in an equitable manner and devise policies to advance the greater good of the nation.³³ These secessionists, in short, insisted that the creation of an explicitly proslavery republic was Southerners’ only hope for abiding political stability and social tranquility.

While they assured them that they would have peace at home, advocates of secession also promised Southerners glory abroad. They based this claim on the notion that during the antebellum era, Northern politicians had deliberately obstructed Southern efforts for territorial and commercial expansion, even at the expense of national prosperity. Chapter one explored how many Unionists condemned the United States’ history of territorial expansion. Most prominent secessionists, by contrast, were proud of these acquisitions and the role which Southerners had played in attaining them. In November 1860, for example, (another) future Confederate secretary of state Robert Toombs reminded the Georgia legislature that Southern politicians had always devised policies “for the common benefit of the Republic.”³⁴ Their broad-minded statesmanship had been evident in their efforts to enlarge the country’s “domains of commerce by treaties with all nations” and acquire territory “larger than the whole United States at the time of the acknowledgement of their independence.”³⁵ The Louisiana Purchase, Texas annexation, the Mexican Cession – all had been overseen by Southern statesmen. Ordinary Southerners, moreover, had also played a vital role in gaining these acquisitions for the nation. “Who fought for, and gained with her best blood and treasure” the lands of the Mexican Cession, secessionist E.A. Thompson asked a North Carolina audience in February 1861.³⁶ His answer was unequivocal – Southerners. It had been “*their* blood and *their* treasure,” he averred,

³¹ Ibid.

³² “Our Domestic and Foreign Relations,” *De Bow's Review*, February 1861, 302.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Robert Toombs’s Speech to the Georgia Legislature,” *Charleston Mercury*, 20 November 1860, 1.

³⁶ “Speeches of G.V. Strong and E.A. Thompson, Reported for the Journal by W. A. H.,” *Wilmington Journal* (NC), 28 February 1861, 4. My efforts to discover more about E. A. Thompson proved unsuccessful. However, later articles in the *Journal* explain that he served as one of the delegates to the North Carolina secession convention in May 1861.

which had been spent to win that prize.³⁷ While Unionist organs often denounced the Mexican War as a shameful act of aggression by the United States against its republican neighbour, the history of the conflict received a rather more favourable treatment in the pro-secession press. According to the *Richmond Enquirer*, for example, President Polk's decision to send troops into Mexico was a just response to defend the United States' "national honor" against repeated insults by the Mexican government.³⁸ Once the conflict began, the newspaper added, Southern men had volunteered to spill their "best blood" in defence of their beloved nation.³⁹ Southern ambition, bravery, and patriotism, these secessionist voices proclaimed, had made the United States into a continental power.

Secessionists argued that, while Southerners had worked to strengthen the antebellum Union, Northerners had contrived to weaken it. Once again, they found the Mexican War a useful example to make their point. In February 1861, North Carolina newspaper the *Western Democrat* echoed the common refrain that the "Mexican War was chiefly fought by the South."⁴⁰ The Southern states had furnished 45,630 volunteers for the conflict, the newspaper explained, while the North had contributed only 23,054.⁴¹ The *Democrat* also reminded its readers that many Northern politicians had denounced the contest as a war of conquest waged at the behest of rapacious Southern slaveholders against the defenceless Mexicans. The newspaper contended that this was a charge borne from sectional envy. Northerners had surmised that the conflict would likely result in the "annexation of Mexican land which would then join the Union as slave states" and had therefore done all they could to undermine the U.S. war effort.⁴² After the war, moreover, Northern politicians had sought to block Southerners from moving into these new additions. As Robert Toombs explained, during the debates regarding the organisation of the Mexican Cession, Southerners had asked for "nothing but equality in the common territories."⁴³ E. A. Thompson recalled, however, that Northern politicians had insisted that

³⁷ Ibid. Thompson was correct in the sense that a disproportionate number of volunteers during the Mexican-American War hailed from the South. It should be noted, however, that Indiana and Illinois provided more volunteers than several individual Southern states (see, Paul Foos, *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict during the Mexican-American War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 49).

³⁸ "Who Have Fought the Battles of the Union?" *Richmond Enquirer*, 12 February 1861, 2.

³⁹ Ibid. For more on the memory of the U.S.-Mexican War in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see Van Wagenen, *Remembering the Forgotten War*.

⁴⁰ "Who Fought the Battles," *Western Democrat* (NC), 19 February 1861, 1.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Robert Toombs' Speech to the Georgia Legislature," *Charleston Mercury*, 20 November 1860, 1.

these lands “should not be polluted with a population of slaveholders.”⁴⁴ Only Southern leaders’ willingness to give up their rightful claims to this territory in the name of national peace had brought the resulting political crisis to a temporary close. As Thompson explained, the subsequent Compromise of 1850 – which repealed the Missouri Line of 1820 in return for a “shadow” of a Fugitive Slave Law – effectively denied Southern slaveholders access to the land which they had spilled their blood to buy for the nation.⁴⁵ For these secessionists, then, the Mexican War demonstrated the extent to which Northern politicians had become consumed by a spirit of sectional self-interest.

While Northern obstructionism had inhibited the United States’ ability to pursue its destiny to extend its borders across the continent, disunionists promised that an independent Confederacy would inherit this mission and oversee its full consummation. “We are,” Robert Toombs asserted in November 1860, “constrained by the inexorable necessity to accept expansion or extermination.”⁴⁶ Throughout the antebellum period, proslavery advocates had insisted that the expansion of their peculiar institution was necessary in order to keep the black population in the existing slave states from reaching dangerously high levels. Cotton cultivation was, moreover, highly exhaustive to the soil. Southern slaveholders therefore insisted on their need for a continuous supply of land to keep their institution both safe and profitable and regarded Northern anti-expansionism as a strategy to kill slavery by the slow death of containment. Little wonder, then, that many Southern organs viewed secession as an opportunity for expansion. As the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* declared in January 1861, secession would guarantee the “preservation from destruction of our peculiar institution” by enabling Southerners to “extend and strengthen [slavery], almost without limit, in the Southern half of the North American continent.”⁴⁷ Secessionists were confident that the Confederacy possessed the necessary leadership and popular will to accomplish this endeavour. The *Western Democrat*, for example, reminded its readers that Jefferson Davis, “the statesman, the patriot, the hero of the Mexican war,” was now at the helm of the new Confederate republic.⁴⁸ Mississippi newspaper the *Southern Banner* similarly pointed out that the “growth and development” of the “glorious temple” of the U.S. republic had been the “work of the hands of Southern men,” who would continue their efforts with even greater enthusiasm under the

⁴⁴ “Speeches of G.V. Strong and E.A. Thompson, Reported for the Journal by W. A. H.,” *Wilmington Journal* (NC), 28 February 1861, 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ “Robert Toombs’ Speech to the Georgia Legislature,” *Charleston Mercury*, 20 November 1860, 1.

⁴⁷ “The Southern Confederacy,” *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, 10 January 1861, 4.

⁴⁸ No Title, *Western Democrat* (NC), 14 May 1861, 4.

auspices of the Confederate republic.⁴⁹ Just as Southerners were the guardians of the United States' republican institutions, so too were they the inheritors of the providential mission to see them extend across the continent and beyond.

These secessionists' continental ambitions were not limited to territorial expansion alone, however. This is something which historians have only recently begun to explore. Robert E. May's analysis of the role that conflicting visions for the United States' future in the hemisphere played in exacerbating sectional tensions in the antebellum Union is an important contribution to the historiography.⁵⁰ Yet his study suggests that Southerners' hemispheric ambitions centred solely on territorial expansion. This conclusion underplays the many stridently anti-expansionist voices in the antebellum South who warned that the annexation of more territory could endanger rather than strengthen slaveholding republican institutions. During the Mexican War, for example, South Carolina senator John C. Calhoun had cautioned his countrymen that "more than half of [Mexico's] population are pure Indians," and that to bring territory populated with such a people into the Union would be "fatal to our institutions."⁵¹ A focus on antebellum Southerners' territorial ambitions alone, moreover, overlooks the other methods they proposed to advance their interests in the hemisphere. As Matthew Karp has demonstrated, before the Civil War, Southern leaders championed a range of policies, from the expansion of U.S. naval power to the promotion of global free trade, to strengthen their peculiar institution's commercial connectivity.⁵² During the Secession Crisis, many disunionists similarly asserted that the nascent Confederate government should pursue a diverse hemispheric agenda. *De Bow's Review*, for example, argued that in addition to the "acquisition of more tropical territory," the Davis administration ought to develop the Confederacy's "trade with Mexico, the West Indies and South America."⁵³ To be sure, once it had found its footing as an independent nation the Confederacy could begin to expand its borders into these regions and push out their native inhabitants. Until that time, however, the non-white peoples of the hemisphere would be useful consumers of Southern goods while their raw materials fuelled Southern industries. As the *Richmond Enquirer* noted in March 1861, the Confederacy would have a broad set of foreign interests "apart from the mere question of territorial acquisition."⁵⁴ Access to the hemisphere's

⁴⁹ "Great Speech of Vice-President Stephens," *Southern Banner* (MS), 3 July 1861, 1.

⁵⁰ May, *Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire*; May, *Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics*.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* For how racism curbed the expansionist ambitions of some Americans in both the North and South during the nineteenth century, see Eric T. L. Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁵² Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire*.

⁵³ "Southern Trade," *De Bow's Review*, July 1861, 567-68.

⁵⁴ "The Policy and Prospects of the Southern Confederation," *Richmond Enquirer*, 26 March 1861, 4.

markets, trade, and resources, it asserted, was just as important to the Southern economy as the addition of new land.

Those who advocated these plans were adamant that an integrated programme of territorial and commercial expansion would see the Confederacy rapidly emerge as the foremost power of the Western Hemisphere. As the *Richmond Enquirer* explained, freed from the “selfish policy of Northern politicians,” Southerners would be “at liberty to act for themselves” with regard to economic policy and trade.⁵⁵ For years the federal government had granted subsidies to Northern steamship companies. As a result, the South’s transportation infrastructure was underdeveloped and its commercial influence in the southern portions of the hemisphere (regions which, by the laws of geography, the South ought to dominate), was limited. At present, the *Enquirer* noted, the “resources of Mexico and the South American states” were dominated by Europeans and utilised primarily for the “profit of England and France.”⁵⁶ However, Southern independence would shift the dynamics of hemispheric commerce into their natural shape. “The statesmen of the South,” the newspaper averred, “are not blind to the importance of closer intimacy with Mexico and the Republics of Central and South America” and would “endeavor to divert the trade of those countries from European channels into their own ports.”⁵⁷ The “Gulf of Mexico” would then be “transformed, as it were, into an inland lake” and from there the South could direct commercial exchanges both within the hemisphere and between its various regions and the wider world.⁵⁸ More than this, Southern ascendancy would trigger the North’s descent into commercial obscurity. No longer able to use Southern products to bolster their trade, the Northern states would lose their foothold in the global economy. “What has the Northern confederacy to fall back on,” the *Enquirer* asked, if it wished to “counterbalance this adhesion of commercial and territorial strength to the Southern confederacy?”⁵⁹ Unable to produce materials of any value in global markets and ruled by a wild-eyed cabal of abolitionists, the once mighty United States would descend into poverty and disorder. The Confederacy, meanwhile, would step in to take its place as the preeminent republic of the New World.

During the Secession Crisis, separatist voices in Southern public discourse advocated withdrawal from the Union on the grounds of both domestic security and overseas opportunities. The Founding Fathers had created a slaveholding republic, they claimed. The remarkable stability which the United States had enjoyed since independence had been made possible by the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

social and political preconditions created by the institution of slavery. Now that Republicans had gained control of the White House, however, abolitionists were in a position to carry out their plans for emancipation and black enfranchisement in order to inaugurate a reign of political demoralisation and social discord throughout the South. Once this occurred, the United States would be little better than the anarchic republics of Latin America. In the words of Confederate vice president Alexander H. Stephens, secession was therefore an effort to preserve “those principles which have distinguished the people of the United States above all countries and made them the light and hope of the world.”⁶⁰ Disunionists did not solely preach of the misery which awaited Southerners under Republican rule, however; they also emphasised the blessings they would enjoy as citizens of the Confederacy. With slavery preserved, harmony in public life would prevail and, with that, peace and stability in all areas of national life. More than this, once freed of Northern fetters, the Southern states could pursue their various interests in the southern portions of the hemisphere. Stable at home and ambitious abroad, the Confederacy would ascend to the top of the New World’s hierarchy of nations, a position Providence had first designed for the United States but which it had now bestowed upon the South. It was an inspiring vision, and one which during the Civil War Southerners worked hard to keep in focus as they navigated the changing realities on the continent around them.

A Franco-Confederate Alliance on the Continent: Southerners Discuss Mexican Policy

When Louis-Napoléon launched his invasion of Mexico in 1862, Confederate diplomats moved swiftly to assure the emperor that the South would offer no objection to his imperial venture. At home, meanwhile, the Southern press made efforts to explain to the public how this response was consistent with both their long-term hemispheric ambitions and the principle of slaveholding republicanism which underpinned them. Throughout the Civil War, Unionist organs denounced the Confederacy’s acquiescence to the French intervention as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine that obliged Americans to condemn European incursions in the New World. Sensitive to these accusations, Southern publications offered up a revised interpretation of the Doctrine. True republican government, they insisted, could only exist in a white slaveholding society. Given that the other American republics were now free labour societies, the Confederacy therefore represented the last bastion of free government in the New World. Confederate organs then asserted that in its original form, the Monroe Doctrine had insisted only

⁶⁰ “Great Speech of Vice-President Stephens at Washington,” *Southern Banner* (MS), 3 July 1861, 1.

on the hemisphere's non-white populations' right to *self-determination*, not self-government. Insisting that Mexicans had in fact asked Louis-Napoléon to help them depose of the inept Juárez administration, Southern publications charged that Yankees opposed the French intervention because they secretly wished to rule over Mexico themselves. Finally, these Confederates argued that cooperation with the French would help Southerners fulfil the Doctrine's other stated objective – the preservation of white slaveholding republicanism in the New World. These publications therefore sought to assure Southerners that the Davis administration's response to the Mexican question, far from reflecting an absence of principle, in fact demonstrated its commitment to the Southern republican cause and its ability to adapt to shifting geopolitical circumstances in order to defend it.

Soon after fighting broke out between French and Juarist forces, the Confederate commissioner in Paris John Slidell assured French foreign minister Edouard Thouvenel that Richmond looked with “no unfriendly eye” on Louis-Napoléon's Mexican venture.⁶¹ The Davis administration had good reason for taking this approach to the Mexican question. The critical litmus test of nationality was administered by world opinion and it was therefore imperative for the Confederacy to gain the recognition of a (preferably powerful) foreign nation. Since the start of the Civil War, Southern agents had been lobbying the European governments to establish formal relations with the Confederacy.⁶² President Davis was therefore understandably reluctant to undermine these efforts by condemning the French emperor for his intrigues in Mexico. Back home, meanwhile, much of the Southern press was optimistic that Louis-Napoléon's interests in Mexico would convince him to enter into an alliance with Richmond. “The Emperor,” the *Memphis Daily Appeal* declared in September 1863, “cannot maintain his foothold in Mexico without Confederate aid.”⁶³ A slight exaggeration, perhaps, but grounded in sound logic nonetheless. Washington had expressed its disapproval of the French intervention and its determination to maintain formal relations with the Juárez government, albeit in terms considered lukewarm by some critics in the Northern press. Southern newspapers warned that, although the Lincoln administration had pledged neutrality towards the Franco-Mexican

⁶¹ John Slidell to Edouard Thouvenel, July 21, 1862, in *A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, Including the Diplomatic Correspondence 1861-1865*, ed. James D. Richardson (Nashville, TN: United States Publishing Company, 1906), 282-83.

⁶² For more on Confederate diplomatic relations with the European powers, including the lobbying activities of Southern agents in Europe, see Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 83-144; Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 15-22; 44-57, 83-105. For an analysis of the issue of slavery in Confederate diplomacy, see Robert E. Bonner, “Slavery, Confederate Diplomacy, and the Racialist Mission of Henry Hotze,” *Civil War History* 51, no. 3 (September 2005), 288-316.

⁶³ “The News,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 25 September 1863, 1.

conflict, it would soon bow to the growing anti-French sentiment in the North and send a military force across the Rio Grande to aid the Juarists. North Carolina newspaper the *Southern Banner* therefore reasoned that, if Louis-Napoléon recognised the South, he would “gain for France a valuable ally” who would serve as a buffer against Yankee interference in his exploits in Mexico.⁶⁴ Moreover, a formal alliance would facilitate “commercial intercourse” between the two nations across the Rio Grande from which each would draw “reciprocal benefits.”⁶⁵ These newspapers therefore anticipated that the French intervention in Mexico would prove to be a boon for the cause of Southern independence.

While they accepted the pragmatic motivations behind Richmond’s Mexican policy, Southern newspapers also emphasised the principles which underpinned it. Throughout the Civil War, Northerners condemned the Davis administration’s acquiescence to the French intervention. It was, they claimed, a betrayal of the Monroe Doctrine and evidence that the notion that secession was guided by principles of liberty and self-government was a lie. Confederate publications, meanwhile, countered that Yankees had deliberately misinterpreted the Doctrine’s original meaning. In April 1862, Virginia newspaper the *Daily Dispatch* explained that when President Monroe had spoken of the spread of free government throughout the New World, he had meant the “unlimited expansion over this continent” of white U.S. citizens and their institutions.⁶⁶ Indeed, the newspaper averred, the Monroe administration had a dim view of the hemisphere’s non-white populations’ capacity for self-government and had expected them to soon abandon the republics they had created for some other form of government, such as a constitutional monarchy, better suited to their nature. Nevertheless, Monroe and his cabinet had apparently been adamant that the Latin Americans should choose their institutions free from outside interference. As the *Dispatch* explained, when the Doctrine was announced the Holy Alliance, committed to “obsolete maxims of arbitrary control over the consciousness and minds of men,” was forming plans to take back its American colonies.⁶⁷ “Mr. Monroe,” the newspaper continued, “wished to guard the new governments of South America against [this] despotism” and had therefore issued the Doctrine as a declaration that the United States would object to any attempt by a foreign power to overhaul these republics without their

⁶⁴ No Title, *Southern Banner* (MS), 2 July 1862, 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid. A lively illicit trade did in fact spring up across the Confederate-Mexican border, mostly in Southern cotton, conducted by Southerners, French military personnel, and rogue Mexican local and state officials (Rodman L. Underwood, *Waters of Discord: The Union Blockade of Texas During the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2003), 103-24).

⁶⁶ “European Influences,” *Daily Dispatch*, 16 April 1862, 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

populations' consent.⁶⁸ New Orleans newspaper the *Times-Picayune* agreed. The Yankees' claim that the Doctrine was the "pledge of America" to "preserve this continent for republics" was a gross misinterpretation of its intended meaning.⁶⁹ The Monroe Doctrine, these publications insisted, was an assertion of all peoples' right to self-determination, not of their capacity for representative democracy. Given this, the Doctrine did not oblige Americans to spread republican institutions among the non-white peoples of the hemisphere, much less intervene to defend such governments when they did appear.

These newspapers applied their reading of the Monroe Doctrine to the present situation in Mexico. During the Civil War, Juarist agents supplied the Northern press with information about the progress of events south of the Rio Grande. The Confederacy, however, never established diplomatic ties with the Juárez administration.⁷⁰ Moreover, Mexican Liberals were deeply suspicious of the Southern leadership, whom they regarded as the instigators of past U.S. aggressions against their country. Confederate reporters therefore often found a hostile reception among Juarist officials and troops. Given this, the Southern press relied largely on French sources – whether based in Mexico or Europe – to keep them informed about the ongoing Franco-Mexican conflict. They tended to accept the information they received without question. In fact, many Confederate newspapers made efforts to interpret French imperialists' justifications of their Mexican venture in ways that accorded with their pre-existing worldview. In 1863, for example, a pamphlet written by the French intellectual and ardent imperialist Michel Chevalier entitled *France, Mexico, and the Confederate States* was warmly received by the Southern press. Chevalier was a proponent of the concept of "Latinity," which held that Europeans divided into either Latin Catholic or Teutonic Protestant races.⁷¹ This division apparently extended to the New World, which was similarly split between Latin Americans and

⁶⁸ No Title, *Daily Dispatch*, 30 November 1864, 2.

⁶⁹ "From the North," (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 8 September 1863, 1.

⁷⁰ The Richmond government never established formal relations with the Juárez administration. This was not for want of trying. In the spring of 1861, the Davis administration sent its agent John T. Pickett to Mexico City to establish relations with the Juárez government. Pickett, who had participated in filibustering exploits in Cuba before the war, was an exceptionally poor choice for the post and quickly managed to offend his Mexican hosts by speaking openly of the Confederacy's supposed plans to invade their country. His loose talk earned him time in a Mexican prison. The prospect of a Mexican-Confederate alliance had never been likely, however. Even before the Civil War began, the Juárez administration threw its lot in with the Union. For the Mexican government's views of the Confederacy, see Schoonover, ed., *Mexican Lobby*, 2. After the Pickett episode, Richmond focused on finding Mexican allies outside of the Juárez administration. The audacious and semi-autonomous governor of Nuevo Leon Santiago Vidaurri proved to be a particularly good friend to the Confederacy and helped Southerners conduct a lively clandestine trade in small arms over the Rio Grande (Hubbard, *Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 46.)

⁷¹ For more on the concept of "Latinity" and its role in shaping Louis-Napoléon's imperial ambitions in the New World, see Thier, "View from Paris," 627-44.

their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. Chevalier argued that, since they had cut ties with their Spanish colonial rulers, Latin Americans had languished under democratic institutions which their temperament did not suit them for. The French, however, shared an affinity with these people based on their common Latin heritage and could therefore provide them with a system of government that would better serve their needs.⁷² “The object of [the French intervention],” Chevalier asserted, “is to aid the Mexicans in establishing, according to their own free will and choice, a government which may have some chance of stability.”⁷³ According to Chevalier, Louis-Napoléon’s venture was a merciful intervention to rescue Mexicans from the chaos of their republican experiment and offer them the chance for peace under a less democratic, and therefore more orderly, central state.

Chevalier’s reasoning accorded well with the notion commonplace in Confederate public discourse that non-white races were incapable of responsible self-government. Indeed, most Southern newspapers readily accepted that Mexicans had tired of the misery of their republican experiment. That they would turn to the French to give them a new government was all the most understandable given the evolution which European monarchism had undergone since the days of the Holy Alliance. As South Carolina’s *Edgefield Advertiser* explained, Louis-Napoléon was a leading proponent of a liberal form of monarchism that was “wise, moderate, and humane.”⁷⁴ This style of governance blended firm central control with a measured degree of democracy, an ideal method by which to transform anarchic republics into stable and progressive societies. The *Southern Banner* likewise agreed that Mexicans had “made but little of their fertile country” while they playacted at democracy.⁷⁵ The newspaper predicted that a French-backed constitutional monarchy would establish “law and order” in the country by taking the reins of power out of the hands of the raucous mob and handing them over to an enlightened yet firm emperor.⁷⁶ This change would augur well for Mexicans, and apparently they knew it. In September 1863, the *Times-Picayune* conceded that a small band of radical Juarists continued to harass French forces. However, if the reports of French officials were to be believed (which they should be), the majority of Mexicans were “welcoming [Louis-Napoléon’s

⁷² It should be noted that when they spoke of their affinity with Latin Americans, most French adherents to the concept of Latinity referred chiefly to the “white” elites of the region who were descended from either Spanish, French, or Portuguese colonists (Gobat, “Invention of ‘Latin America,’” 1347-49).

⁷³ Michael Chevalier, *France, Mexico, and the Confederate States* (New York: C. B. Richardson, 1863), 6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

forces] as their deliverers” from the mismanagement of the republican Juárez government.⁷⁷ The newspaper took the news as validation that the Davis administration was right to abide by the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine and respect the Mexicans’ right to choose their own form of government, whether it be democratic or not.

Confederate publications used this reading of the Franco-Mexican conflict to argue that the Yankees’ refusal to accede to Mexicans’ right to self-determination proved that they were in fact the real violators of the Monroe Doctrine. In July 1864, for example, North Carolina newspaper the *Wilmington Journal* declared that Northerners were convinced that they were “the (political) saints of the earth” and were determined that every other country conform to their ruinous strictures of abolitionist republicanism.⁷⁸ In their arrogance, the newspaper explained, the Yankees could not accept that other societies might not wish to embrace their radical political doctrines. There was more behind Unionists’ objections to the overthrow of the Juárez government than stubborn pride, however. During the Civil War, both Unionists and Mexican Liberals characterised Southern slaveholders as rapacious imperialists who posed a threat to the sovereignty and security of the other nations of the hemisphere. As Michel Gobat notes, however, that French proponents of the concept of Latinity defined themselves in opposition to the “aggressive Anglo-Saxon” nations of Great Britain and the Union, whose populations they claimed were by nature acquisitive and domineering.⁷⁹ French imperialists such as Chevalier therefore insisted that it was the Union, not the Confederacy, that harboured imperialist intentions and posed the real threat to the sovereignty of surrounding nations. According to this view, the Lincoln administration’s opposition to the French occupation of Mexico stemmed from its desire to rule over that nation itself.

Chevalier’s claim that Washington had designs on Mexico accorded with the well-established view in Confederate public discourse that Yankees were cruel and power-hungry tyrants. During the Secession Crisis, disunionist publications had listed among their grievances the efforts of antebellum Northerners to obstruct plans to extend the United States’ borders southward. After the start of the French invasion, these same organs insisted that Northerners’ anti-expansionism had been rooted in sectional envy, not a lack of ambition. The Yankee mind, the *Memphis Daily Appeal* told its readers in June 1864, had long been “inflated with visions of a splendid empire, embracing the entire continent.”⁸⁰ The newspaper explained that, when the time came for the Confederacy to annex more territory, it would do so in accordance with the

⁷⁷ “From the North,” (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 8 September 1863, 1.

⁷⁸ No Title, *Wilmington Journal* (NC), 28 January 1864, 2.

⁷⁹ Gobat, “Invention of Latin America,” 1352.

⁸⁰ “Hope On – Hope Ever,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 10 June 1864, 12.

laws of nature by ensuring that the non-white inhabitants of the regions it acquired either retreated further southwards or else found their place in the Southern racial hierarchy. Northerners, on the other hand, planned to spread doctrines of absolute democracy and miscegenation among the nations south of the Rio Grande in order to reduce them to scenes of “baccanalism [*sic*] revels.”⁸¹ Disordered and impoverished, these countries would be easy prey for Yankee troops as they moved in to strip them of their resources and hold their populations under military rule. *De Bow’s Review* similarly insisted that Unionists’ lamentations over the destruction of “universal democracy” in Mexico was borne from their frustration that the chaotic Juárez administration had been replaced by the firm rule of the French emperor, who would pose an obstacle to their plans to impose an “imperial despotism” south of the Rio Grande.⁸² Indeed, *De Bow’s* argued that in light of the Yankees’ imperialist designs, Confederates were not just fighting for their own independence, but for the security and happiness of Mexicans as well. As the journal explained, “if the South be conquered, empire will be the result, extending over the whole country, with a gigantic and invincible army, and a terrible and irresistible navy.”⁸³ The Monroe Doctrine had originally been aimed at the Holy Alliance; now, however, its enemy was the abolitionist Union. In their struggle against the Yankees, therefore, Confederates were fighting for the right of all inhabitants of the continent to self-determination and peace.

This interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine sought to assuage any qualms Southerners might have felt regarding their government’s acquiescence to the forcible overthrow of the Juárez administration. It did not, however, resolve all the issues raised by the French intervention. Specifically, when Southern organs framed Mexico’s future as a choice between either French or Yankee rule, they were conspicuously silent about their own possible future interests in that country. As we saw earlier, there was a strong expansionist thrust behind Southern secession. The French occupation, however, precluded the possibility of Southerners’ realising these ambitions, at least with regards to Mexico. Southern organs recognised this fact and adjusted their plans accordingly. Matthew Karp has noted that in the antebellum era, proslavery Southerners in the federal government were not unthinking expansionists but were in fact keenly aware of the need to balance their territorial ambitions with maintaining good relations with certain foreign powers, particularly slaveholding ones.⁸⁴ During the Civil War, *De Bow’s Review* similarly cautioned the Davis administration not to allow its expansionist desires to undermine its effort to court foreign allies. The journal explained, for instance, that “were we

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² “Our Confederate Status, Domestic and Foreign,” *De Bow’s Review*, July 1864, 20.

⁸³ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁴ Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire*.

to conquer Cuba, we should weaken the cause of slavery” by making an enemy of Spain, one of the few slaveholding powers in the world.⁸⁵ Southerners, moreover, had a reputation as aggressive expansionists, an image which Unionist agents were currently using to warn the European governments against granting recognition to the Confederacy. If Southerners wished to “command the respect and friendship of all Christendom,” *De Bow’s* concluded, they must announce that they were “satisfied with the present extent of our territory, and would not increase it.”⁸⁶ Other publications agreed. Regarding the Mexican question, for example, the *Charleston Mercury* regretted that Louis-Napoléon’s intrigues “hems in the Confederacy” and made the possibility of annexing territory south of the Rio Grande unlikely.⁸⁷ The price, however, was worth paying. As the newspaper explained, the “permanent occupation of Mexico by France means ultimate recognition of the Confederacy” by both the government in Paris and the newly-established Maximilian regime.⁸⁸ For these publications, the need for foreign allies trumped hazy dreams of future expansion.

Some Southern publications questioned the wisdom of annexing Mexican territory in other ways. While there was a long tradition of anti-expansionism in the antebellum South, its proponents were usually in the minority. During the Civil War, however, their arguments gained currency among a growing portion of the Southern press. In 1861, for example, *De Bow’s* commented that, having cut ties with the heretical abolitionists, the “Southern people, now, are fused into a common mass” who “speak the same language, have the same manners and customs, the same moral notions, the same political opinions.”⁸⁹ The journal pointed out that acquiring new land filled with non-white inhabitants would “introduce not only different, but very inferior races” into Southern society and thereby plunge it into a cycle of “dissensions” and “civil broils.”⁹⁰ *De Bow’s* had long advocated a cautious approach to territorial expansion. During the Civil War, however, publications which had previously been enthusiastic expansionists began to voice similar concerns. In March 1863, for example, the *Western Democrat* hoped that the “idea of future acquisitions of territory from Mexico will have no influence whatsoever upon our government” in its dealings with the French.⁹¹ After all, Southerners were currently fighting to escape from the turmoil and misery of their union with the abolitionists. It made little sense, then, for them willingly to bring into their now harmonious

⁸⁵ “Southern Trade,” *De Bow’s Review*, July 1861, 570.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ “Letters from Richmond,” *Charleston Mercury*, 10 February 1863, 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ “Cuba: The March of Empire and the Course of Trade,” *De Bow’s Review*, August 1861, 34.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ “The French Proposition,” *Western Democrat* (NC), 10 March 1863, 1.

republican society a multitude of Mexicans, most of whom were a “vile amalgam” of the “Spaniard, the Indian, and the negro” and were, moreover, as “bitterly opposed to our system of labor as the people of New England.”⁹² The *Richmond Enquirer* agreed. “We never want Mexico connected with the Confederacy,” the newspaper declared in March 1863, adding that it would “prove a curse rather than a benefit to have a mongrel breed like the Mexicans associated in a Government with us.”⁹³ These publications’ willingness to renounce expansion into Mexico was no doubt largely due to their desire to keep on good terms with the French. Nevertheless, they made it a point to explain to their readers how this adjustment in the Confederacy’s continental designs was consistent with the larger purpose of its war effort. The acquisition of Mexican land, they insisted, would undermine the tranquillity and stability of the slaveholding society which Southern soldiers were currently fighting to preserve.

As their doubts about expansion grew, many Confederate organs focused on their nation’s other interests south of the border. Don H. Doyle notes that “at its broadest conception,” Louis-Napoléon’s designs for the New World “envisioned a Latin Catholic monarchical league dominating the Western Hemisphere from California to the tip of South America.”⁹⁴ Occasionally, rumours that the French emperor had colonial ambitions beyond Mexico appeared in the Southern press.⁹⁵ Yet most Confederate publications were selective in what they deemed to be reliable information that came to them from abroad and remained convinced that Louis-Napoléon’s ambitions for the rest of the hemisphere were purely commercial. In this respect, they argued, the emperor’s interests accorded well with those of the Confederacy. The *Memphis Daily Appeal*, for example, noted that in recent years, Northern merchants and financiers had joined with their counterparts in Great Britain to establish an effective monopoly over global trade. France, the newspaper observed, the traditional “antagonist of England,” had suffered as much from this Anglo-Yankee partnership as had the South.⁹⁶ The *Appeal* deduced that one of the objectives of Louis-Napoléon’s intervention in Mexico was to break up the “supremacy of

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Don H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 108.

⁹⁵ In the summer of 1863, for example, rumours that French consuls stationed in Texas had attempted to foment a rebellion in the hopes of detaching that state from the Confederacy and adding it to the Mexican Empire caused a stir in both the Southern and Northern press. (Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 223-24). Most Confederate newspapers dismissed these rumours, while in the North several publications reported that there had been no attempted rebellion and that in fact French officials had approached Richmond with an offer to buy Texas, a proposal which they claimed the Davis administration had taken into serious consideration (“Our Relations with France,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1863, 1).

⁹⁶ “General Houston’s Speech,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 16 April 1863, 2.

commerce and trade” which the Yankees and the British enjoyed in the Western Hemisphere.⁹⁷ The *Daily Dispatch* also argued that Southerners ought to welcome Louis-Napoléon’s efforts to break up this monopoly. It added that, under French supervision, the Mexican economy would quickly regenerate and the country’s markets “opened to [Southern] trade under peaceful auspices.”⁹⁸ These newspapers also noted that the Confederacy would likely emerge from the Civil War with a weakened economy. This being the case, French capital could be used to develop the hemisphere’s infrastructure. As *De Bow’s* noted, Louis-Napoléon was as anxious as any Southerner to gain “free passage of the Isthmus” of Tehuantepec.⁹⁹ The Confederacy could collaborate with France in this and other initiatives to develop the hemisphere’s transportation networks, drain business away from Northern ports, and undercut the Yankees as the “preponderating power in Mexico and Central America.”¹⁰⁰ These publications were vague about how long this projected Franco-Confederate partnership would last and when the South would assume the position of sole director of hemispheric trade, as they insisted it would. Nevertheless, they told their readers, cooperation with France in the medium-term was a convenient way to spearhead their broader aim to establish Confederate commercial supremacy in the New World.

Some Southern newspapers theorised that a permanent French presence on the continent would not only advance the Confederacy’s commercial interests but also protect its slaveholding society from future aggressions from the Yankees. The notion of “Latinity” was grounded in the idea of an imagined global community of peoples of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and French origin bound by their similar languages, Catholic religion, and opposition to the Teutonic races of Europe and North America.¹⁰¹ Some of its French proponents extended this definition to include Southerners.¹⁰² Most Confederate publications were too proud of their republican institutions and Protestant religion to accept that Southerners were members of a global *Latinidad*. Nevertheless, the notion that Confederates shared a certain cultural affinity with the French did resonate with the idea, commonplace in the antebellum South, that Northerners and

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “The Monroe Doctrine,” *De Bow’s Review*, January 1864, 131.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Doyle, *Cause of All Nations*, 108.

¹⁰² French empress Eugenie, for example, apparently believed that Southerners were mostly Catholics or semi-Catholic Episcopalians of French and Spanish descent and was therefore sympathetic to the Confederate cause (T. Stephen Whitman, *Antietam 1862: Gateway to Emancipation* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 77).

Southerners were derived from two distinct “races” - the Puritans and the Cavaliers.¹⁰³ *De Bow’s Review*, for example, argued that, as the descendants of Norman-Cavaliers, Confederates shared with the French certain characteristics, including a spirit of “generosity, chivalry,” and a “high sense of honor.”¹⁰⁴ Cultural attributes translated into similar, though not identical, political values. As the journal explained, France’s ruling classes possessed an innate distaste for “licentious and revolutionary” doctrines.¹⁰⁵ While they were nominally antislavery, therefore, the French elite were not advocates of the proselytising branch of abolitionism propounded by the British and Yankees. So long as France remained in Mexico, therefore, it was unlikely to comment on, much less interfere with the South’s peculiar institution. *De Bow’s* even suggested that the presence of a constitutional monarchy in Mexico might strengthen the Confederate republic by encouraging its citizens to take pride in their “distinct” system of government and to “practice all the arts of life, which are necessary to preserve independence.”¹⁰⁶ The *Memphis Daily Appeal* also saw merits in the prospect of a politically-diverse North America. As it explained, a “balance of power” which divided the southern half of the continent between Northern abolitionism, French imperialism, and Confederate republicanism would provide a “check” on Yankee imperialism and thereby safeguard the Confederacy during its national infancy.¹⁰⁷ In this way, these publications reasoned, a permanent French presence in Mexico could be a boon to the cause of Southern independence and offer long-term protection to the Confederacy as the last bastion of republicanism in the New World.

Of course, there were sound pragmatic reasons why the Confederate government and so much of the Southern press were so willing to embrace the French intervention in Mexico. When Louis-Napoléon launched his invasion, the government in Richmond was faced with a stark choice; either support the venture and keep alive the hope of French recognition or condemn the emperor’s intrigues and make a dangerous enemy for itself on its southern border. That the Davis administration chose the former option is both unsurprising and understandable. It would be a mistake, however, to view Confederate Mexican policy as evidence of the

¹⁰³ William R. Taylor, *Cavalier & Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); James M. McPherson, “Was Blood Thicker Than Water?: Ethnic and Civic Nationalism in the American Civil War,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 143, no. 1 (March 1999), 102-8; James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ritchie Devon Watson Jr., *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ “The Pioneers, Preachers, and People, of the Mississippi Valley,” *De Bow’s Review*, 8 March 1863, 259-60.

¹⁰⁵ “The Past and Present,” *De Bow’s Review*, August 1864, 190.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ “From the Army of Tennessee,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 18 July 1863, 2.

shallowness of Southerners' professed commitment to the ideal of self-government, at least not this ideal as they interpreted it. Throughout the Civil War, the Southern press explained to the public how their government's response to the French intervention was consistent with the maxim that republican government could only exist in a slaveholding society. This notion held that republicanism could never flourish in a mixed-race, free labour society like Mexico. Meanwhile, the rise of abolitionism had not only corrupted republicanism in the Union but turned it into a grasping power with designs for continental conquest. Given this, the French occupation would both give Mexicans a stable government and provide a check on Yankee imperialism in the future. Most Southern publications argued that while this arrangement required some adjustments to their hemispheric plans, it would facilitate the achievement of that more important objective – the preservation of the slaveholding republic and the peace and security that it provided its citizens. The Davis administration's Mexican policy, they concluded, was consistent with both the principles and purpose of the Confederate cause.

Into the Yankee Empire: Confederates Face Reunion

That so many of the Confederacy's leading politicians and publications were willing to embrace the prospect of a permanent French occupation of Mexico reflected the extraordinary circumstances of wartime. It also demonstrated, however, the depth of their commitment to the principle of slaveholding republicanism. This commitment did not lessen even as the Confederacy's military effort disintegrated and re-entry into the Union looked increasingly likely. From late 1864 onwards, some prominent Southerners called on the Davis administration to abandon its pursuit of an alliance with France. Instead, they proposed the government take up the proposal circulating among Democrats in the Union at the time that Confederate and Unionist troops launch a joint invasion of Mexico to oust Louis-Napoléon's forces from the continent. These Southerners argued that the expedition could form the basis of an armistice between the North and South which would then lead to Washington's recognition of Southern independence. During the dying months of the Civil War, major Confederate newspapers grew resentful towards Louis-Napoléon for his refusal to come to their aid. Nevertheless, most of them roundly rejected this plan. To risk Southern lives in defence of the mongrel Mexicans, they declared, was absurd; to do so as part of an alliance with the Yankee abolitionists was unthinkable. Many leading Southern publications, therefore, remained committed to the notion that true republicanism was impossible without slavery, even as their military effort to create a nation based on this principle disintegrated. That they did so was an ominous omen for the

coming reunification of the states; many Southerners would re-enter the Union tired, defeated, but unwilling to adjust their beliefs to the new political order which awaited them as citizens of the post-emancipation United States.

A string of military defeats by the Union Army during the summer of 1864 signalled a changing of the tide in the Civil War in the North's favour. As Federal forces pushed deeper into Southern territory, Confederate agents abroad reported that the reception they received among Europe's political classes had turned decidedly cool. In Mexico, meanwhile, the overtures of Confederate envoy General William Preston to the recently arrived Emperor Maximilian had been rebuffed, and apparently on Louis-Napoléon's instructions. There were several reasons why the French emperor had by this time decided against forming an alliance with the South.¹⁰⁸ Most Southern newspapers, however, were sure that Louis-Napoléon's was due to the menacing attitude Unionist politicians had adopted in recent months regarding his Mexican intrigues. The *Daily Dispatch*, for example, believed that the U.S. House's 4th April resolution, which had forcefully condemned the French intervention, was proof that Washington had "long fixed its greedy eyes upon Mexico" and "looked forward to the day when it might make a meal of it."¹⁰⁹ The moment its hands were freed from the business of the Civil War, the newspaper warned, the Lincoln administration would send a flood of soldiers across the Rio Grande. The Unionists' latest sabre-rattling was no doubt why Louis-Napoléon had recently distanced himself from the South. The *Dispatch* advised the emperor, however, that conciliatory gestures would not be enough to persuade the Lincoln government to relinquish its designs on Mexico. "The Confederates," the newspaper asserted in July 1864, "are keeping Maximilian on his throne ... if we fail, the "manifest destiny" of the United States will thereupon absorb the young [Mexican] empire as an anaconda would a goat."¹¹⁰ In January 1865, the *Richmond Enquirer* similarly predicted that "if the Confederate States are ever conquered," Washington would immediately send "armies for Mexico, armies for Canada, armies for Cuba," until the entire "continent of North America, from the Straits to the Isthmus, would become the United States of America."¹¹¹ A few months before, these newspapers had pondered the wealth and glories to be reaped from a

¹⁰⁸ Union victories on the battlefield were certainly an important factor - Louis-Napoléon had no wish to antagonise the Union as it became increasingly likely that it would win the Civil War. However, as Michele Cunningham points out, the "realisation that Maximilian was expecting the financial and military support of France to continue indefinitely, as well as the unpopularity this was engendering in France, had the most influence on Napoleon" in his decision to wash his hands of his Mexican venture (Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 198).

¹⁰⁹ "The Monroe Doctrine," *Daily Dispatch*, 12 April 1864, 2.

¹¹⁰ "French Policy in Mexico," *Daily Dispatch*, 27 July 1864, 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Franco-Confederate alliance on the continent. As the prospect of defeat closed in on them, however, they focussed instead on the horrors that supposedly awaited them – and indeed the other occupants of North America – under a Yankee empire.

With their government's military and diplomatic fortunes dwindling, some Confederate politicians called for a change in strategy regarding the Mexican question. On 9 December 1864, Tennessee senator Henry S. Foote submitted a resolution to the Confederate Congress which proposed that, in return for Washington's recognition of its independence, the Confederacy would "unite with the United States" to send a military force into Mexico to depose Maximilian and expel French troops from the country.¹¹² Foote's resolution did not pass. However, his idea was later taken up by another congressman, Representative Daniel C. DeJarnette of Virginia. In January 1865, DeJarnette informed the Confederate House of Representatives that the "time may not be far distant when we will be prepared to unite" with the Unionists in Mexico in "vindication of the Monroe doctrine" in return for Washington's recognition of Southern independence.¹¹³ DeJarnette argued that such a venture would bring an end to hostilities between the warring republics and perhaps even encourage a degree of goodwill between their citizens. This time, the plan gained some traction. Having listened to DeJarnette's speech, the Confederate Congress instructed their commissioners to the Hampton Roads Conference to explore the subject further with the Union's representatives. Commissioner and Confederate vice president Alexander H. Stephens later recalled that during the conference he had suggested to President Lincoln that, despite their differences, Northerners and Southerners still shared an innate hatred of European monarchical imperialism. He had apparently asked that, this being the case, might not a "peaceful and harmonious solution" to the Civil War be found through a collaborative military effort to assert this shared sentiment on the battlefields of Mexico?¹¹⁴ The proposal was doomed to failure; Lincoln refused to consider any plans for peace which were not predicated on Confederate surrender. The South's commissioners, meanwhile, were under instructions to insist on Union recognition of the Confederacy as a precondition for a ceasefire. That the proposal had even been made, however, revealed that during the final months of the Civil War, some officials in Richmond were wavering on the Mexican question. Their support for the French intervention, it seemed, had begun to disintegrate along with the fight for Southern independence.

¹¹² "Three Days Later from the South, (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 9 December 1864, 1.

¹¹³ "Speech of Hon. D. C. DeJarnette," *Daily Dispatch*, 1 February 1865.

¹¹⁴ Alexander H. Stephens, *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States: Its Causes, Character, Conduct and Results, presented in a series of colloquies at Liberty Hall* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: National Publishing Company), 601-5.

No doubt these politicians' call for a change in Mexican policy was influenced by their realisation that France had forsaken the South. However, their willingness to enter into a military alliance with Federal forces also suggested that they believed there were limits to the notion that the Union and Confederacy represented two antithetical theories of government. Senator Foote's loyalties did waver during the final months of the Civil War.¹¹⁵ Both DeJarnette and Stephens, however, remained loyal to the Confederacy and steadfast in their defence of slaveholding republicanism to the end of the conflict. "This war," DeJarnette declared to the House in his January 1865 speech, "has proved that these opposing elements of free and slave labor cannot remain in harmony in the same Confederation."¹¹⁶ Their proposals for a North-South invasion of Mexico, furthermore, were predicated on Union recognition of the Confederacy. Nevertheless, these Confederates apparently believed that the people of the warring sections of the Union shared some ideological common ground. Vice President Stephens, for example, based his proposal to Lincoln on the notion that Unionists and Confederates both believed that "no European Power should impose Governments upon any Peoples on the Continent against their will."¹¹⁷ Foote thought the same. As he reminded the Confederate Senate in December 1864, all Americans, North and South, subscribed to the "favorite idea of all the venerated fathers of American liberty" that only republican "institutions of government" should exist on the North American continent."¹¹⁸ Throughout the French invasion, many Southern organs had declared that liberal European monarchism was preferable (at least for Mexicans) to abolitionist tyranny.¹¹⁹ While these Confederate politicians preferred a slaveholding nation to a free labour one, however, they could see a distinction between Old

¹¹⁵ Foote resubmitted his resolution later that month, this time suggesting that a joint North-South invasion of Mexico be used as a precondition for peace and reunion between the states, rather than for Northern recognition of Southern independence. The Confederate Congress moved to expel Foote as a traitor, though he fled to the North before the motion was carried through. Foote waited out the final months of the Civil War in Washington D.C., during which time he wrote letters to President Lincoln outlining his proposal for an invasion of Mexico. He doesn't appear to have received a reply (Henry S. Foote, *War of the Rebellion; Or, Scylla and Charybdis, Consisting of Observations upon the Causes, Course, and Consequences of the Late Civil War in the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866), 405-13).

¹¹⁶ "Speech of Hon. D. C. DeJarnette," *Daily Dispatch*, 1 February 1865.

¹¹⁷ Stephens, *A Constitutional View of the Late War*, 604.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Andrew Heath has argued that a similar phenomenon took place in the Reconstruction South. He notes that during the late 1860s, some Southern planters expressed monarchist sympathies and a wish to see a similar form of hierarchical governance established in the United States. Heath argues, however, that these expressions did not represent the planters' rejection of American republicanism, but rather their belief that the United States' traditional political values and institutions had been ruined by partisanship and corruption. In this sense, these Southerners were able to "claim affinity with American political traditions" even as they "expressed their admiration for Europe's crowned heads" (Heath, "'Let the Empire Come': Imperialism and Its Critics in the Reconstruction South," *Civil War History* 60, no. 2 (June 2014), 157-58).

World monarchism and Yankee republicanism – a distinction which apparently become clearer to them in light of the Confederacy’s impending defeat.

While these Confederates argued that there was a narrow ground of commonality between the North and South, most of the Southern press disagreed. Indeed, the hostile reception most Confederate newspapers gave proposals for a venture into Mexico revealed the tenacity with which they clung to their belief that an insurmountable ideological gap separated abolitionist and slaveholding republicanism. By January 1865, for example, the *Times-Picayune* had grown deeply resentful of Louis-Napoléon for having abandoned the South. The newspaper even hinted that Southerners might join arms with Unionists to banish French forces from Mexico. “At present,” the *Picayune* stated ominously in January 1865, “we see no immediate necessity for informing the Emperor whether he may regard us as friends or as enemies, seeing as that individual ignores our existence.”¹²⁰ By the following month, however, the newspaper had dropped this pretence. Southerners might be more willing to help the Juarists, the newspaper explained in February, if the Mexicans were engaged in a “genuine, honest attempt to found a solid government.”¹²¹ As it was, however, the Juarists were “neither republicans nor monarchists,” but rather slavish disciples to the “one man power” style of government.¹²² The *Daily Dispatch* similarly asserted that, should Southerners help restore the Juárez administration to power, they would condemn Mexico to the same condition of chronic anarchy which had characterised its existence since independence. Given this, the newspaper concluded, it would be “better for [Mexicans] that any nation of Europe – France, England, Austria, even Russia – should hold possession” of their country.¹²³ In response to Foote’s proposal, the *Dispatch* added that life under a Union empire would be even worse for Mexicans than self-government. As the newspaper explained, a North-South expedition to Mexico would make Southerners complicit in the “Yankee land-stealers” schemes for continental domination. The newspaper concluded that “it is to our interest to have a European government in Mexico for a neighbor because, if we do not, we shall have Yankees for our neighbors on the south as well as on the north; and it is impossible that any neighbors can be so bad as the Yankees.”¹²⁴ No matter how much satisfaction it might have given them to see Louis-Napoléon’s forces ousted from the continent, then, these newspapers refused to join arms with abolitionists in defence of the “mongrel” Mexican republic.

¹²⁰ “Monroe Doctrine,” (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 8 January 1865, 7.

¹²¹ “Letter from Mexico,” (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 23 February 1865, 1.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ No Title, *Daily Dispatch*, 30 November 1864, 2.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

These Southern publications' vehement rejection of plans for a collaborative expedition with the Union into Mexico reflected their commitment to the slaveholding republican ideal. As the Union Army advanced deeper south and potential foreign allies turned their backs on the Confederacy, some Southern leaders scrambled to find some common ground with Unionists on which they might negotiate a ceasefire. Whatever else divided them, these leaders reasoned, the people of the North and South still shared an antipathy to European monarchical imperialism. But most voices in Southern public discourse would not countenance this notion. To be sure, they too had given up hope of an alliance with France and were now less inclined to extol the virtues of Louis-Napoléon's brand of liberal monarchism. Nevertheless, their growing bitterness towards the French was not accompanied by a softening in their opinions of the Yankees. Most major Southern newspapers remained steadfast in their view that abolitionist republicanism was an inherently anarchic and deleterious form of government and was, furthermore, a threat to continental peace. This same conviction had given impetus to secession in 1860-1861. It had also helped these organs interpret for their readers the stormy tides of the Civil War and the altering reality of the continent around them. As their war effort disintegrated and their dream of an independent slaveholding republic came to an end, these Southerners carried these same notions with them back into the Union.

Conclusion

Four days after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April 1865, the *Daily Dispatch* pondered the future of the North American continent now that the fight for Confederate independence was over. For the Southern states, the future did not look bright. The abolitionists' goal had never been simply "to conquer the South," the newspaper reminded its readers, but to uproot the institutions on which its society was founded.¹²⁵ Having crushed the Confederacy on the battlefield, Republicans in Washington would now inaugurate their plan to liberate the South's slaves, set them on an equal footing with their former masters, and watch misery and anarchy reign throughout that section of the Union. It was not only former Confederates who could expect to suffer because of Union victory, however. As the *Dispatch* explained, "the people of the United States have always coveted Mexico."¹²⁶ Before the Civil War, sectional conflict and an "ignorance of [their] own strength" had prevented Northerners from engaging in a "wholesale

¹²⁵ No Title, *Daily Dispatch*, 7 January 1865, 1.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

plunder” of the country.¹²⁷ The fall of the Confederacy, however, had removed “the only breakwater which now keeps back the tide of Northern aggression.”¹²⁸ The Yankees, moreover, were buoyed by their recent victory and the “United States is no longer unconscious of its own power.”¹²⁹ The newspaper therefore predicted that the Union, which now had “a disposable army of at least three hundred thousand men for the invasion of Mexico,” would soon “have a navy which can blockade every Mexican port,” while a “swarm of privateers ... will sweep every French merchantman from the ocean.”¹³⁰ “Within six months after the conquest of the Southern Confederacy,” the *Dispatch* concluded darkly, “Mexico will become part and parcel of the United States.”¹³¹ Both Mexico and the South, then, were destined to be swallowed up in the abolitionist empire.

The *Daily Dispatch*'s prediction echoed the warnings often issued by Southern publications during the Civil War regarding Northerners' imperialistic predilections. Such claims were based on the notion that abolitionists were aspiring tyrants who sought to rule over the South as a colonial appendage. According to this narrative, Northern politicians wished to emancipate Southern slaves in order to point to the political and social anarchy which would inevitably follow as justification to impose military rule over the region. During the Secession Crisis, advocates of disunion invoked these warnings as they made their case for Southern withdrawal from the Union. The idea that the Union had transformed into an abolitionist despotism also shaped their visions for the Confederacy's future in the Western Hemisphere. The South, they predicted, would take on the mantle of the exceptional American republic with all the wealth and influence this entailed, while the abolitionist Union joined the long list of failed New World democracies. As their discussions over Mexican policy demonstrate, Southerners adapted certain aspects of this vision in response to shifting geopolitical dynamics during the Civil War. They were adamant, however, that they would not compromise the principles which underpinned it. To be sure, the French occupation of Mexico foreclosed the possibility of the annexation of land from that country in the future. In response, Confederates focused their ambitions on commercial rather than territorial aggrandisement south of the Rio Grande. Many of them also reasoned that cooperation with the French would safeguard the young Confederate republic from Yankee aggressions in the future and so help to preserve the last bastion of true republicanism in the New World. Southerners' belief in the exceptionalism of their projected slaveholding republic which had first fuelled their

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ No Title, *Daily Dispatch*, 25 February 1865, 1.

¹²⁹ No Title. *Daily Dispatch*, 7 January 1865, 1.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

bid for independence, therefore, also guided their approach to the Mexican question during the Civil War.

This chapter's examination of the values and aspirations which underpinned these Confederates' hemispheric visions helps to explain why they seceded from the Union and what kind of society they hoped to create by doing so. That so much of Southern discourse focussed on the need to preserve the American republican tradition from abolitionist subversion indicated that these prominent politicians, editors, and writers were imbued with a sense of ideological rectitude. However, these disunionists also understood that abstract principles alone could only sustain their fellow Southerners so far down the difficult path from secession to independence. Their promise that the Confederacy, resting on solid republican foundations, was destined to become the predominant power of the Western Hemisphere was no doubt designed to encourage Southerners to persevere in their fight against the Union. But Confederate politicians, publicists, and other advocates in public discourse promised Southerners something in addition to international glory. The basis of the Confederacy's grand future in the hemisphere, they insisted, would be the harmony and stability of its domestic republican institutions. While perhaps less enthralling than the vision of hemispheric domination, the promise of untrammelled domestic peace was compelling nonetheless. Indeed, after Confederate General Lee's surrender to Union forces in 1865, many Southern organs did not mourn the loss of the glories of their projected hemispheric empire, but rather the peace and security Southerners would have enjoyed as citizens of a slaveholding republic. "Had we been successful...in severing ourselves from the abolitionists in the North" the *Daily Dispatch* reflected in May 1865, Confederates would have had no cause for "dissension or strife" and so would have "afforded the best example of harmony in government the world had known."¹³² The promise of an end to political faction and domestic strife had been an important factor behind the movement for Southern independence. The anarchy which Southerners now believed awaited them under Republican rule in the Union made the loss of that dream even more acute.

¹³² "The Future of the South," *Daily Dispatch*, 14 May 1865, 1.

Chapter Three

Reconstructing the Model Republic: The Debate Over Mexican Policy, 1865-1867

Emperor Maximilian's execution at the hands of a Juarist firing squad on 19th June 1867 marked the collapse of the Mexican Empire and the return of republican government to Mexico. In the United States, the news split public opinion. The "great principle of Republican liberty" has been vindicated, former Representative Frederick A. Conkling declared at a celebratory banquet in New York City.¹ Coming two years after the Union's defeat over the Southern rebellion, the Juarists' triumph in their five-year long struggle against their French invaders elevated Mexico alongside the United States as the "twin bulwarks of Republican freedom" on the North American continent.² Not all Americans shared Conkling's elation, however. The *Southern Review*, for example, remarked in October of that year that Maximilian's execution was an act of brutality typical of the depraved nature of the "mixed races of Mexico."³ Such an uncivilized people would be "incapable of forming any stable government" to replace the one they had just destroyed. Given this, the journal concluded, the return of democracy to Mexico would bring its people nothing but misery and chaos.

These polarised reactions were consistent with the opposing positions Northerners and Southerners had adopted regarding the Mexican question during the Civil War. In public discussions which took place on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, Americans had viewed the Mexican conflict through the ideological prism of their own internecine contest. Many Unionist politicians, propagandists, and newspaperman, for example, had declared their sympathy with the Juarists, claiming the French incursion and the slaveholders' rebellion were part of a single monarchical-aristocratic conspiracy against free government in the New World. By contrast, most of their Confederate counterparts had condemned the Juarists as adherents of the radical doctrines propounded by Northern abolitionists which inevitably led to social anarchy and government tyranny. As the responses to Maximilian's execution in 1867 suggest, the end of the Civil War and two years of peace in the United States had done little to reconcile North and South on the Mexican question. Nor had it altered each section's reading of the causes of their recent internal strife. Far from it. As this chapter will show, postwar Americans from both sections questioned whether Confederate surrender in April 1865 had truly brought an end to the ideological struggle which had first sparked the Civil War. For them, the battle to defend the republic – whether from autocratic insurgency or

¹ Speech of F. A. Conkling, in *Banquet to Señor Matias Romero, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Mexico to the United States, by the Citizens of New York, 2 October 1867*, 39.

² *Ibid.*

³ "Mexico and Mexican Affairs," *Southern Review*, October 1867, 419.

radical perversion – carried on into the postwar period and would both define and complicate the process of national reunion.

Americans' interest in Maximilian's execution was partly due to the way that the Franco-Mexican conflict had been politicised in U.S. public discourse since the close of the Civil War. During this time, politicians and party organs in the United States used the Mexican question to frame and galvanise popular support behind their competing agendas for Southern Reconstruction. Republicans, for example, argued that Union victory had failed to expunge the Slave Power from Southern society. The only way to prevent the republic's erstwhile enemy from launching another rebellion, they insisted, was for the federal government to grant meaningful civil and political rights to freedpeople. To further make this point, Republican politicians and publications asserted that their party's Southern agenda would also help the Juarists in Mexico defeat their French invaders. By removing all disruptive elements from the U.S. body politic, they claimed, Radical Reconstruction would restore the United States to its proper place as the exemplary American republic. The sight of the reunified and stabilised United States would inspire confidence in the hearts of the Juarists and so lead them to victory on the battlefield. Not all former Unionists were convinced by this argument. While they had acceded to the necessity of emancipation, many former pro-war Democrats balked at what they viewed as the Republicans' revolutionary Southern agenda. Once among the Juarists' most enthusiastic champions, these Democrats began to suspect their former Republican allies of having co-opted the Mexican question to rally popular support behind a Reconstruction policy far beyond the original purpose of the Union war effort. It was a concern they shared with many ex-Confederates in the South, and over the course of the two years following Appomattox these voices combined in public discourse to renounce the Juarist cause and advocate for a policy of strict non-intervention towards the Mexican imbroglio. Postwar discussion of the Mexican question, therefore, both revealed and facilitated the fragmentation of the wartime Union alliance over the issue of postwar Reconstruction. At the same time, it provided a policy platform upon which former War Democrats could express their opposition to Radical Reconstruction and in so doing begin to build a political alliance with their wartime enemies in the South.

By examining the public discussions which took place in the United States over the Mexican question between 1865 and 1867, this chapter throws light on what Americans hoped to achieve as they drew their battle lines over Reconstruction. Permeating these debates was a sense of anxiety regarding the fragility of the postwar U.S. republic and the desire to find a method of national reunification which would guarantee Americans lasting peace. This desire was nothing new. As previous chapters discussed, both Unionists and Confederates saw their respective war efforts as crusades to purify the body politic of disruptive elements in the name of political harmony and, by extension, national stability.

After Appomattox, Northern and Southern voices in public discourse worried that four years of military conflict had failed to rid the United States of those internal pollutants which had first dragged it into civil war. For ex-Confederates this was hardly surprising. After all, their bid for independence had not only failed, but had inadvertently triggered the abolition of slavery in the South and effectively handed control of the federal government to their abolitionist Republican foes. Yet many former Unionists were also concerned that their military triumph had not purged the country of its domestic enemies. Republicans in particular were worried that a renewed Southern uprising might yet destroy their tentative national reunion. Furthermore, even some of those loyal Americans who did believe that Northern victory had successfully vanquished the slavocracy found that their triumphalism quickly evaporated. During the two years following Confederate surrender, former War Democrats warned with growing alarm that the fanatical Radical had taken the place of the antebellum slave master as the divisive force in national politics that inhibited sectional reconciliation. Regardless of one's political vantage point, then, the postwar United States looked as fractured as ever. For many Americans, Reconstruction would therefore determine whether their country could be reunified in a manner that would guarantee lasting domestic peace.

This chapter questions a prevalent view in existing scholarship which suggests that, after the Civil War, Americans' sense of confidence in their nation's capacity for growth and improvement provided much of the initial impetus behind Radical Reconstruction. Charles W. Calhoun, for example, argues that postwar Republicans sought to recreate Southern society as part of their broader scheme to transform the United States into a "new Republic."⁴ Their vision was underpinned by a range of values relating to liberty, virtue, and the primacy of federal power. Calhoun notes, however, that at its core the Republicans' plan was based on a reformulated principle of "democratic republicanism" which insisted on racial equality for all Americans.⁵ Heather Cox Richardson, meanwhile, argues that national Republicans viewed Reconstruction as a largely economic endeavour to reshape the South in accordance with the principles of free labour.⁶ Legislation which provided for African Americans' civil and political rights, she contends, was devised largely as a means to provide ex-slaves with the tools to transform themselves into independent, productive

⁴ Charles W. Calhoun, *Conceiving a New Republic: The Republican Party and the Southern Question, 1869-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 16.

⁵ Ibid. See also, Michael W. Fitzgerald, *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2007).

⁶ Richardson, *Death of Reconstruction*, 6-41. It should be noted that Richardson also argues that over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, increasingly popular notions of individualism and liberal capitalism helped to erode white Northern support for Reconstruction. For the origins of free labour ideology in antebellum Republican thought, see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

labourers. Other scholars have noted that postwar Americans directed their transformative energies to areas outside the South. Elliott West, for example, uses the term “Greater Reconstruction” to refer to what he argues was a nationwide process of consolidation after the Civil War which involved the settlement of Western territories and the incorporation of Native Americans, Asian immigrants, and Mexicans along the southern border into the national fold.⁷ These historians interpret the precise nature of Reconstruction differently and offer up various geographical focal points for its analysis. Collectively, however, they create an impression of the postwar era as a time of rapid development during which many Americans sought to use the power of the federal government to advance the forces of progress and innovation in their society.

Certainly, the postbellum period witnessed some remarkable transformations in the United States. But some scholars have warned of the danger of overstating the extent of these changes and the degree to which contemporaries embraced them. Kate Masur and Gregory P. Downs, for example, have taken historians of Reconstruction to task for reading the present into their analyses of the past. They suggest that because scholars know that by the dawn of the twentieth century the United States would become a world power, they too often search the post-Civil War era for the roots of that evolution. Downs and Masur suggest that historians should instead take the “transformative nature of the Civil War era as a question, not an assumption.”⁸ Those scholars who have done so have found reason to doubt the strength and unity of the postbellum United States. Stacey L. Smith, for example, argues that federal power remained limited in significant ways after the Civil War.⁹ Throughout the last third of the nineteenth century, she notes, Native Americans, Mexican raiders, and Mormon communities in the nation’s Western territories and borderlands regions continually defied the authority of the central state and exposed its shortcomings. Downs comes to a similar conclusion in his analysis of sectional reunion in the East. After Confederate

⁷ Elliott West, “Reconstructing Race,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no.1 (Spring 2003), 6-26. For other studies which adopt a similar approach, see Steven Hahn, “Slave Emancipation, Indian Peoples, and the Projects of a New American State,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 3 (September 2013), 307-30; Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom’s Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); D. Michael Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013); and Richard White, *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 103-35.

⁸ Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, “Introduction: Echoes of War: Rethinking Post-Civil War Governance and Politics,” in *The World the Civil War Made*, eds. Downs and Masur (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 15.

⁹ Stacey L. Smith, “Beyond North and South: Putting the West in the Civil War and Reconstruction,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December 2016), 579. See also, Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Adam Arenson and Andrew R. Graybill, eds., *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Bradley R. Clappitt, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015).

surrender in 1865, he argues, the tentative and contested nature of federal authority in the Southern states compelled policymakers in Washington to continue to make use of the government's war powers into the early 1870s.¹⁰ According to these historians, then, the power of the U.S. nation-state remained circumscribed and highly contested long after the Civil War had ended.¹¹

Some historians have noted that contemporary Americans were well-aware of the fragility of their post-Civil War nation. In an article published in 1974, for example, Michael Les Benedict suggested that this anxiety shaped how Republicans approached the task of Reconstruction.¹² These politicians, he argued, deliberately placed limitations on the scope of their Southern agenda in accordance with the constitutional tradition that circumscribed federal interference in state affairs. Black suffrage, for example, the most revolutionary Reconstruction measure, was rendered effectively meaningless by Republican lawmakers' unwillingness to make use of the federal authority necessary to protect it. According to Les Benedict, this concern for constitutional precedent reflected Republicans' conservative tendencies. Far from wishing to transform Southern society, he concludes, most simply wished to craft a method of reunion that cemented the still tentative national reunion and prevent the outbreak of a second rebellion. More recent scholars have made a similar point. For example, Mark Wahlgren Summers argues that many supporters of Reconstruction believed that the project's principal purpose was to confine sectional rivalries and guarantee the "permanent banishment of the fear and vaunting appeals to state sovereignty" which had dragged United States into civil war in 1861.¹³ Summers suggests that the fact that Republican lawmakers were ultimately more concerned with conciliating white Southerners than protecting freedpeople is evident in how their postwar policies only provided for temporary outlays for programmes such as the Freedman's Bureau and were often unclear regarding the extent of federal prerogative to intervene in Southern politics. According to

¹⁰ Gregory P. Downs, *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

¹¹ Scholars of U.S. state formation have made a similar point. Gary Gerstle, for example, argues that throughout the 1880s and 1890s, U.S. courts worked vigorously to restore the "boundary between federal and state power which the Civil War was thought to have obliterated" - another example of how in certain respects federal power remained highly circumscribed throughout the final third of the nineteenth century (Gerstle, "The Civil War and State-Building: A Reconsideration," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 1 (March 2017) <http://journalofthecivilwarera.org/forum-the-future-of-reconstruction-studies> (accessed 5 December 2017). See also Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 55-124.

¹² Michael Les Benedict, "Preserving the Constitution: The Conservative Basis of Radical Reconstruction," *Journal of American History* 61, no. 1 (June 1974), 65-90. LaWanda Cox also emphasised that the popular desire to secure the Union, rather than transform it, provided impetus behind Reconstruction (Cox, "Reflections on the Limits of the Possible," in *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction: Collected Writings of LaWanda Cox*, ed. Donald G. Nieman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 243-80.

¹³ Summers, *Ordeal of Reunion*, 3.

this view, then, Reconstruction was not a triumphant crusade of innovation, but an effort by nervous policymakers to stabilise a nation still riddled with internal divisions.

This chapter agrees that anxieties regarding the fragile condition of the post-Civil War United States shaped how Americans tackled the question of Reconstruction. The historians mentioned above focus on how these concerns dampened Reconstruction's revolutionary potential. This chapter argues, however, that advocates of Reconstruction also harnessed these popular anxieties in support of some of the most radical aspects of their postwar Southern agenda. Almost immediately after the Civil War, politicians, editors, and other prominent figures in public discourse began to worry that the nation had not purged itself of those disruptive elements which had first precipitated its descent into domestic warfare. This feeling was to be expected among ex-Confederates. After all, the federal government was now in the hands of those same Republicans who had instigated the rise of sectional tensions in the antebellum era. During the two years following Appomattox, these Southerners and a growing number of former pro-war Democrats attempted to rally Americans in opposition Radical Reconstruction by arguing that the programme would foment political and social anarchy throughout the Southern states. Yet even many Republicans' triumphalism vanished soon after Union victory. White vigilante violence in the South convinced many of them that the Slave Power remained a malignant presence within the body politic. They used this spectre of a second rebellion to sell their programme for reunion to the American public. Only a rigorous Reconstruction programme that included black enfranchisement and federal oversight of Southern politics, they insisted, could eradicate the slavocracy and so guarantee the United States lasting domestic peace. The Republicans' supporters emphasised that, while they might seem radical, these policies were in fact in keeping with the original purpose of the Union war effort. The popular yearning for an end to political faction and a guarantee of national stability, therefore, was harnessed by political actors to both oppose and advance Radical Reconstruction.

Between the end of the Civil War and the fall of the Maximilian regime in Mexico, supporters of Reconstruction and its critics used public discussions regarding the Mexican question to advance their competing postwar agendas to the public. The previous chapters demonstrated that both Unionists and Confederates viewed the rise of sectionalism in the antebellum Union and the nation's subsequent descent into civil war as a serious blow to its standing in the New World. Some had hoped that the end of hostilities in 1865 would return the United States to its former grandeur in the hemisphere. In the postwar era, however, persistent political factionalism convinced them that the internal pollutants which had first caused their civil conflict still operated within the body politic. Advocates of Reconstruction attempted to tap into this concern by connecting their postwar domestic agenda to the ongoing war in Mexico. Radical Reconstruction, they promised, would purify and thereby

harmonise public life in the United States. This done, the image of the exemplary U.S. republic would be restored, and by the influence of its symbolic power the Juarists inspired to victory over their monarchical assailants. Southerners and their Northern Democratic allies made a similar argument, albeit to oppose Radical Reconstruction. Taking note of how Republicans had co-opted popular sympathies for the Juarist cause, they denounced any ideological affinity with the Mexican republicans and castigated the Juarists as anarchic extremists of the Radical Republican stripe. Non-intervention in Mexico and opposition to Southern Reconstruction, the Republicans' opponents argued, would reverse the United States' slide towards anarchy and so keep alive the hope that it could one day regain its rightful role as the foremost American republic. Public debates regarding the Mexican question, therefore, revealed the depth of Americans' anxieties regarding the condition of their so-called exceptional republic and how these insecurities shaped their approach to Reconstruction.

The Unfinished Union Cause: Radical Reconstruction and the Franco-Mexican Conflict

During the two years following Appomattox, Republican politicians and publications attempted to channel their countrymen's sympathy for the Juarist cause behind their programme for Southern Reconstruction. Chapter one examined how during the Civil War, Unionists sought to cultivate a sense of solidarity among Northerners towards the Mexican Liberals. They had clearly done their work well. Following Confederate surrender there was a groundswell of popular enthusiasm in the United States (particularly in the North) for a U.S. military intervention in the Franco-Mexican war. Few leading Republicans supported this plan. They did, however, encourage popular sympathies for the Juarists as a means to advance their agenda for the postwar South. By mid-1865, Radical and moderate Republicans were concerned that President Johnson's generous terms for Southern readmission into the Union had allowed former Confederate leaders to regain their positions in Southern local and state governments. These Republicans therefore called for a more rigorous method of reunion which would include, among other measures, the disenfranchisement of ex-Confederate leaders and federal safeguards to protect the civil rights of freedpeople. To promote these policies to the public, Republicans turned to the Mexican question. The United States, they argued, supposedly the continent's foremost power, could not influence events south of the Rio Grande until it had finished the task begun in 1861 to cleanse its body politic of disruptive elements. By associating it with the ongoing Franco-Mexican conflict, therefore, Republicans cast their Reconstruction programme as a continuation of the original Union war effort to restore the United States to its historic standing in the New World. Doing so, they hoped, would downplay the

revolutionary aspects of their Southern policies and emphasise their stabilising intent in a way that would have broad-based popular appeal.

Historians often under-appreciate the extent of popular enthusiasm in the United States for a military intervention in Mexico after the Civil War. Rather, they typically argue that what support there was for such a venture came primarily from either U.S. military officials or representatives of the Juárez government residing in United States. To be sure, U.S. Army Commander Ulysses S. Grant was deeply troubled by the number of rebels who fled to Mexico as the Confederacy disintegrated, an exodus which by the early 1870s had seen roughly five thousand ex-Confederate soldiers of varying rank and socio-economic background resettle south of the Rio Grande.¹⁴ Grant was particularly concerned that these refugees might use Maximilian's regime as a base from which to conduct a campaign of guerrilla warfare along the southwestern U.S. border. Grant confided to Minister Romero in June 1865 that, given this, he "did not consider the Civil War completely terminated while the French remained in Mexico."¹⁵ After he took office, President Johnson initially wavered on the Mexican question.¹⁶ However, the demands of Reconstruction, as well as the advice of Secretary of State William Seward, ultimately convinced the president to maintain the neutral position towards the Mexican imbroglio first established by Lincoln during the Civil War. Nevertheless, between 1865 and 1866, Grant made repeated efforts to persuade Johnson to allow an unofficial body of American volunteers to enter Mexico and track down the self-exiled Confederates.¹⁷ It is also true that after Union victory, Romero and dozens of

¹⁴ Todd Wahlstrom finds that "approximately five thousand white and black southerners migrated to Mexico from 1865 to the early 1870s" (Wahlstrom, *The Southern Exodus to Mexico: Migration Across the Borderlands After the American Civil War* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), xiv). Andrew F. Rolle estimates that overall just under ten thousand Southerners migrated to Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, or elsewhere in Latin America during the years following the Civil War (Rolle, *The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1965), 9).

¹⁵ Matias Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 65.

¹⁶ While stumping for Lincoln during the 1864 presidential campaign, Johnson delivered a rousing speech which pledged that, once the Civil War was over, the United States would send a military force into Mexico to rout the French. After Johnson entered the White House, both General Grant and Minister Romero attempted to persuade the president to make good on this promise, and at times they looked likely to succeed (see footnote below). However, Secretary Seward, wary of a conflict with France, was adamant that the United States remain neutral on the Mexican question. In order to block Romero's access to Johnson, he therefore banned representatives of foreign nations from meeting with the president without first going through the State Department. For Romero's account of his interactions with the Johnson administration, see Schoonover, ed., *Mexican Lobby*, 65–140.

¹⁷ As mentioned, Johnson wavered on the Mexican question during his first few months in office. In the spring of 1865, he gave Grant and Romero tacit approval to organise a force of U.S. volunteers to march into Mexico on the condition that the operation maintained an unofficial character. Seward scuppered the plan by offering General Philip Sheridan, who Romero and Grant had tapped to head the informal invasion, the opportunity to go to France to meet with Emperor Napoleon III as an unofficial representative of the U.S. government. Flattered, Sheridan accepted. He spent several fruitless weeks in Paris, during which time he never met with the emperor. His European venture did fulfil its real purpose, however, by delaying and ultimately put an end to Grant and Romero's scheme to send the general into Mexico (Schoonover, ed., *Mexican Lobby*, 65-140).

other high-profile Mexican expatriates intensified their lobbying efforts on U.S. congressmen to send material, monetary, or military aid to the Juarist army.¹⁸ But a significant portion of the pressure for intervention also came from the American people. Throughout the spring and summer of 1865, large public rallies in support of the Mexican cause took place in cities across the United States. These events were often organised by those same patriotic associations that had promoted the Juarist cause in the Civil War North.¹⁹ Some Americans went beyond calling for a change in Mexican policy. From 1864 onwards, several clandestine pro-Juarist associations formed in major U.S. port cities, often by Union veterans and local politicians. Organisations such as New Orleans-based Defenders of the Monroe Doctrine (DMD) and the Monroe League of San Francisco transported munitions and volunteers to Mexico in defiance of U.S. neutrality laws.²⁰ At times, the scale of their activities undermined their efforts at secrecy. In May 1865, for example, the *New York Tribune* worried that the sheer number of Americans who had crossed over the Rio Grande to “volunteer their services to the republican cause in Mexico” threatened to “complicate our foreign relations” and might elicit a formal complaint from the French minister in Washington.²¹ Clearly, U.S. support for an invasion of Mexico was not limited to the military establishment.

To some extent this popular enthusiasm for a military intervention south of the border was fuelled by a spirit of nationalistic triumphalism which had gripped parts of American society following Union victory. Historians have argued that the postwar period

¹⁸ For an example of the propagandising efforts of Mexican exiles immediately after the Civil War, see “Speech of Señor Joaquin Villalobos,” *Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens of New York, to Express Sympathy and Respect for the Mexican Republican Exiles, Cooper Institute, July 19, 1865* (New York: John A. Gray & Green), 29.

¹⁹ For contemporary reports of these events in the national press, see “Meeting of the United States Service Club,” *New York Tribune*, 9 July 1865, 5; and “From California,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 July 1865, 3. For an example of the proceedings of one of these public rallies, see *Proceedings of a Meeting of the Citizens of New York*, 1-39.

²⁰ Given that it was a secret organisation, the DMD did not leave much of a record of its activities and has therefore received relatively little attention from historians. The association gets a passing mention in *Guide to U.S. Foreign Policy: A Diplomatic History*, ed., Robert J. McMahon and Thomas W. Zeiler (Washington, D.C.: Q.C. Press, 2012), 48. Throughout 1864 and 1865, the DMD’s activities occasionally appeared in the national press. In June 1864, for example, the *New York Times* reported that several of its members had been arrested in New Orleans, charged with breaking U.S. neutrality laws by recruiting American volunteers for the Mexican army (“The Defenders of the Monroe Doctrine,” *New York Times*, 9 July 1864). In 1864, Louisiana governor Henry Watkins Allen was accused of being involved in the society, a claim which he denied in a letter he wrote to Secretary of State William Seward. Somewhat suspiciously, Allen stressed that, while he had no knowledge of the DMD, he was nonetheless certain that the organisation’s only purpose was to “exert a moral influence in support of the Monroe Doctrine” and was not involved in the “recruitment of men, subscription of funds, or shipment of arms” to Mexico (Letter of Charles Prosper Fauconnet, in *Ruined by this Miserable War: The Dispatches of Charles Prosper Fauconnet, 1863-1868*, ed. Charles A. Brasseaux and Katherine Carmines Mooney (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 81).

²¹ “Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 25 May 1865, 4.

marked an important shift in some Americans' view of their nation's role in the wider world. Victory over the slaveholders' rebellion had convinced them that the U.S. nation-state could be used to promote the cause of human liberty and progress. After the Civil War, these Americans therefore looked for opportunities for the United States to use its benign power to improve the condition of those in need both at home and abroad.²² The Americans who organised and participated in mass pro-Juarist rallies following the Civil War - mostly prominent Union veterans, abolitionists, and members of wartime patriotic clubs - were among those most likely to interpret Union victory as confirmation of the rectitude of the post-emancipation United States. At a public meeting in July 1865, for example, committee members of the New York United States Service Club proudly proclaimed that "the country is quiet, union is re-established, law has triumphed, the Constitution commands."²³ "Strong and invincible," the United States was now in a position to demonstrate its ability to defend the republican cause wherever it was imperilled around the world.²⁴ Intervention in the Mexican conflict was justified, the Club members argued, because it would be done in the name of free government. Joshua Leavitt, the abolitionist and Congregationalist minister whose writings had often appeared as Union League pamphlets during the Civil War, made a similar argument at another pro-Mexico rally that same month. He added that any action by the United States south of the Rio Grande would not qualify as interference in a foreign conflict because the French invasion and the Southern rebellion had been "parts of one grand conspiracy" to "strike a united blow against republican liberty on the American continent."²⁵ Now that they had overcome their front of this continental assault, Leavitt insisted, Americans were duty-bound to make "common cause" with their Mexican allies and carry on the fight south of the border.²⁶ For Leavitt and many of those who organised these events,

²² Jay Sexton, for example, argues that Union victory renewed many Americans' faith in their country's moral righteousness and inculcated among them a "powerful patriotic nationalism" which led them to contemplate the ways that the might of the United States could be used to serve the cause of freedom both at home and abroad (Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine*, 159). For studies which similarly find that the Civil War encouraged interventionist impulses in the postwar United States, particularly among self-styled liberals in the North, see Leslie Butler, *Critical Americans: Victorian Intellectuals and Transatlantic Liberal Reform* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Ninkovich, *Global Dawn*, 80; Nancy Cohen, *Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and, David Prior, "'Crete the Opening Wedge': Nationalism and International Affairs in Postbellum America," *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 4 (Summer 2009), 861-87. For studies which argue that former abolitionists and African American leaders were particularly adamant that the post-emancipation United States ought to take an active role in facilitating abolition in foreign countries, see Nicholas Guyatt, "America's Conservatory: Race, Reconstruction, and the Santo Domingo Debate," *Journal of American History* 97, no. 4 (March 2011), 990; Leslie Butler, "Liberal Victorians and War in the Age of Empire," in *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom, and the Ambiguities of American Reform*, ed. Steven Mintz and John Stauffer (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 353-65.

²³ "Meeting of the United States Service Club," *New York Tribune*, 19 July 1865, 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Speech of Joshua Leavitt, in *Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens of New York*, 7-8.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 9-10.

the question was not whether intervention in Mexico was legal or expedient, but whether Americans possessed the fortitude to fulfil their obligations to their Mexican republican brethren.

Not all Americans were so confident about the strength of their postwar nation. Few leading politicians or publications in the United States seriously advocated intervention in Mexico, including those who prided themselves as being among that country's most ardent champions. Their reluctance was rooted in the unease they felt regarding the unsettled state of American society following the Civil War. The influential journal *Harper's Weekly*, for example, voiced the concerns of many when it noted that Americans were "weary" after their recent conflict.²⁷ They had, moreover, "a vast country to compose and a debt of three or four millions of dollars to pay."²⁸ Clearly the country was in no condition to pick a fight with one of the world's foremost imperial powers. More troubling still was the turbulent condition of the nation's politics, particularly in the South. In May 1865, President Johnson had begun to implement his plans for Southern restoration. His offer of amnesty to all Confederates who agreed to take a simple oath of allegiance to the United States had allowed a substantial portion of the antebellum Southern leadership to resume their positions in local and state government. The return of so many former secessionists to office was deeply troubling to Republicans. As doubts over Presidential Reconstruction within the party grew, reports filtered into the national press of instances of violence perpetrated by white vigilantes against freedpeople and Unionists in the South. The news led *Harper's Weekly* to warn that, given the "present condition of the lately insurgent States," Southern loyalty could not be depended on should the United States find itself at war with France.²⁹ Americans, the journal concluded, had enough of their own problems to deal with without taking on those of Mexico.

Even as they counselled non-intervention, however, leading Republican organs worked to keep the Mexican issue at the forefront of the public's mind. Throughout 1865 and 1866, the Republican press kept up a running commentary on the movements of Confederates who had fled south of the border. "A good many rebel generals and secesh lights," the *Chicago Tribune* reported in August 1865, "are struggling into Monterey and Matamoras."³⁰ The following month the newspaper estimated that so far "five thousand Confederates" had sought sanctuary across the Rio Grande.³¹ Historians have proposed various reasons for why these Southerners chose to flee the United States, from their fear of punishment at the hands of Republican legislators to the promise which Mexico's

²⁷ "Cowell Lending a Hand," *Harper's Weekly*, 25 March 1865, 178.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ "Our French Relations," *Harper's Weekly*, 30 December 1865, 818.

³⁰ "Mexico," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 August 1865, 1.

³¹ "Mexico," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 September 1865, 1.

uncultivated lands offered them for economic profit.³² In the summer of 1865, however, most Republican newspapers agreed with Grant's assessment that these Confederate veterans intended to use Mexico as a base from which to re-launch the rebellion.³³ As the *Tribune* explained in June 1865, the exiles were still adamant that the "Mexican scheme of Louis Napoleon could not be carried out without the aid of the Confederates."³⁴ They apparently hoped that, by lending their aid to the Maximilian regime, they could convince Louis-Napoléon to extend his military operations into the United States and so reignite the rebellion. By the autumn of 1865, however, fears of a renewed civil war had somewhat subsided. Instead, the Republican press accused the Southern migrants of seeking to resuscitate their peculiar institution south of the border.³⁵ In October, Emperor Maximilian, keen to encourage foreign immigration to fortify his regime, issued a decree which ordered that all African Americans who entered the country must be contracted to a patron for a period of five years.³⁶ The news sparked outrage among those African American newspapers that had formed soon after the Civil War. "Not satisfied with offending the United States by overthrowing the republicanism of Mexico," the *South Carolina Leader* fumed in November

³² For a long time, historians tended to assume that those Confederates who fled to Mexico after the Civil War were driven primarily by a desire to rebuild what they could of the "Old South's" plantation-based society of deference and dependence. The system of Mexican peonage appealed to them as a possible replacement for their now lost peculiar institution (Rolle, *The Lost Cause*). However, Todd Wahlstrom has recently challenged this view. He notes that most Southern migrants who went to Mexico during this time had been either middling-to-small slaveholders prior to the Civil War or had never held any slaves at all. Placing the postwar Southern exodus within the larger context of the continuous flow of U.S. migrants to the West and southwest throughout the nineteenth century, Wahlstrom posits that most of those ex-Confederates who participated in this movement were in fact more concerned with economic opportunity and the prospects of landownership south of the Rio Grande than they were about recreating some kind of "Old South" paradise (Wahlstrom, *Southern Exodus to Mexico*).

³³ Gregory P. Downs's study *After Appomattox* should caution historians against dismissing these claims as mere hyperbole. He notes that Confederate surrender at Appomattox only marked the termination of formal hostilities between the Union and Confederacy, and that fighting continued in the U.S. southwest well into the summer of 1865. See Downs, *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2015).

³⁴ "How the Rebels Turned their Eyes Toward Mexico," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 June 1865, 2. Throughout the summer of 1865, the *Tribune* carried similar reports of ex-Confederates joining the ranks of Maximilian's army, apparently with the same objective in mind. See, for example, "Texas and Mexico," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 July 1865, 2; and "From Mexico," *Chicago Tribune*, 5 August 1865, 4.

³⁵ These fears were not as irrational as they might appear at first glance. Some Southerners were indeed lured to Mexico by the prospect of making use of its supposedly docile labour force, although there is little evidence to suggest that any of them believed they could recreate chattel slavery south of the Rio Grande. However, as Andres Resendez shows, after the Civil War, Southern planters were on the hunt for alternative systems of labour to replace their peculiar institution. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, those situated in the U.S. southwest learned from and adapted elements of Mexico's peonage system to create coercive labour arrangements which kept their black labour force tightly controlled through restrictive contracts and legislation which provided for other types of social control (Resendez, "North American Peonage," 597-619).

³⁶ For more details on this and other decrees issued by the Maximilian regime which aimed to encourage Southern migration to Mexico, see Wahlstrom, *Southern Exodus to Mexico*, 140-5.

1865, "... Maximilian has added to his impertinence ... slavery under the name of serfdom or peonage" in order to "persuade persons whom he calls "emigrants" to settle in the country."³⁷ More well-established Northern organs were just as outraged. "The difference between this "patronage" and undisguised slavery," Connecticut newspaper the *Hartford Daily Courant* declared in October that same year, "is too small to be appreciated."³⁸ The *New York Tribune* similarly denounced this "heinous innovation" as a blatant invitation to "implacable slaveholders" to spirit their human property across the Rio Grande and re-build slavery under the United States' nose.³⁹ Evidently, these newspapers concluded, Southern migrants to Mexico were determined to salvage what they could of their disgraced institution.

These Republican organs emphasised that what was truly troubling about the activities of the self-exiled Confederates was their temerity and lack of repentance, even in defeat. This same defiant spirit, they argued, was also evident among many Southerners who had remained in the United States. In January 1866, for example, the *New York Tribune* pointed out that Maximilian's slavery decree did "not essentially differ from the ... slave laws and new apprenticeship forms" recently passed by several Southern state legislatures.⁴⁰ The *Tribune* was referring to the Black Codes, a series of laws designed to control the Southern black labour force by limiting African Americans' employment options and binding them to restrictive contracts which were enforced with stringent punishments. President Johnson's reluctance to use the federal military as a police power to protect freedpeople, moreover, left freedpeople without recourse when white Southerners resorted to extra-legal means to mete out punishment against supposed transgressors. The result was a surge in white vigilante violence against black Southerners throughout 1865 and 1866. By January 1866 it was clear to the *New York Tribune* that, having taken back control of their state governments, Southern planters "sought to conserve all the despotism of Slavery while rendering its legal aspect more plausible."⁴¹ The Southern migration to Mexico, then, was just one branch of a broader effort by intractable rebels to use any means they could to resurrect their antebellum system of tyranny and oppression.

Republican voices in public discourse used the spectre of a resurgent Slave Power and the threat it posed of further civil strife to call for a more exacting programme of Reconstruction. In April 1866, for example, the *Chicago Tribune* reprinted a speech delivered in the House by Republican representative of Iowa James F. Wilson which proposed that all adult Southern white males be required to take an ironclad oath before they

³⁷ "Maximilian and Slavery," *South Carolina Ledger*, 25 November 1865, 4.

³⁸ "Mexico and Slavery," *Hartford Daily Courant*, 19 October 1865, 2.

³⁹ "Slavery in Mexico," *New York Tribune*, 6 January 1866, 4.

⁴⁰ "Peonage in Mexico," *New York Tribune*, 4 January 1866, 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

were given the franchise. Wilson warned that many former Confederates still harboured anti-republican sentiments and that if they regained political power the “treachery of 1861 may be repeated.”⁴² The *New York Times* agreed that national security required that disloyal Southerners be denied the vote. The newspaper added that a period of exclusion from public life would allow these ex-rebels time to adjust to the new “laws of our national existence” and therefore “bring about a more harmonious working of the national machinery” and thereby “secure its permanence.”⁴³ Some Republican organs used similar arguments to make the case for federal provisions to protect the rights of former slaves. Without these safeguards, the *New York Tribune* argued in February 1866, ex-slaves would be left only with “such protection as the ruling [white Southern] caste is disposed to accord them.”⁴⁴ If this occurred, former masters would be free to rebuild their antebellum structures of economic and social power and so re-establish their tyrannical hold over Southern society. Some publications, particularly those with radical sympathies, used the same argument to advocate for black enfranchisement, although this battle would not be won until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, suggested that black voters would “counteract the treason of the late rebels” by breaking the unity of the white Southern vote, thereby denying the Slave Power a political monopoly over the region.⁴⁵ However revolutionary they might appear, these organs insisted, the Republicans’ proposals for Reconstruction were crafted with domestic peace in mind; without them, the Slave Power might resurface and the nation disrupted by further dislocations.

To raise the stakes of Reconstruction even higher, Republicans linked their domestic agenda to the nation’s Mexican policy. As mentioned, soon after he assumed the presidency, Johnson resolved to remain neutral towards the Franco-Mexican conflict. Behind the scenes, Secretary Seward was engaged in an ongoing correspondence with his counterpart in Paris in an effort to persuade the government at Tuileries to wash its hands of its Mexican venture.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the national Republican press explained to the public how non-intervention was the most effective means by which they could assist the Juarists. When they did so, they adopted the same strategy many Unionist organs had used during the Civil War to translate popular sympathy for the Mexican republicans into support for emancipation. The *New York Tribune*, for example, reminded its readers that following Confederate surrender in April 1865, news of the “triumph of the great American Republic” had inspired Mexicans “with new confidence in themselves” and led to a string of Juarist victories over French forces.⁴⁷

⁴² “The Test Oath,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 April 1866, 2.

⁴³ “The North and the South: Their Future Relations,” *New York Times*, 28 December 1865, 4.

⁴⁴ “Denunciation of Congress,” *New York Tribune*, 5 February 1866, 4.

⁴⁵ “Suffrage,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 May 1866, 2.

⁴⁶ Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 270-85.

⁴⁷ “Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 25 May 1865, 4.

However, since that electrifying moment the Juarist offensive had wavered. The *Chicago Tribune* explained in February 1866 that the “distracted condition into which our domestic politics are again thrown by [President Johnson’s] proceedings” had given Maximilian and his allies fresh hope.⁴⁸ Supposedly emboldened by reports that the United States was still plagued with internal dissensions, the Mexican emperor had stepped up his military efforts and had even called on his native Austria for additional troops. Events on the battlefields of Mexico, these newspapers argued, followed the pattern of politics in the United States; it was therefore clear how Americans might best help the Juarist cause. “Maximilian’s regime is not self-supporting,” the *Hartford Daily Courant* reminded its readers, and all that was required to bring it down was a final grand assault by Juarist forces.⁴⁹ The newspaper insisted that Americans could provide Mexicans with the determination to do this by expunging disruptive elements from their midst and thereby enabling the inspirational influence of the now stabilised U.S. republic to be felt across the Rio Grande. “The moral force of our favor,” the *Courant* predicted, “will prove in the end to have been of the greatest importance” in bringing about a successful end to the Franco-Mexican war.⁵⁰ In order to ensure a Juarist triumph in Mexico, these newspapers argued, Americans must deal with the source of their own internal convulsions.

Much as Unionists had done during the Civil War, these Republican organs argued that the stabilisation of the U.S. republic and the return of its awe-inspiring symbolic power would have consequences beyond the resolution of the Mexican crisis. In 1865 *Harper’s Weekly* reminded its readers that when the federal government had been under the thumb of the antebellum slavocracy, it had pursued a policy of aggressive expansionism which in its “infinite swagger and bluster” had “disgusted every decent nation in the world.”⁵¹ Republican lawmakers now at the helm of government, however, could have a more powerful means than military might to advance the United States’ interests in the hemisphere. As the journal explained in a separate article in 1866, the programme of Radical Reconstruction would ensure that “party-spirit and sectional jealousy” in the United States “are to be kept in check” and “keep our many people and States at one.”⁵² Harmony and peace “among our States and races,” *Harper’s* explained, would regenerate the United States’ “vital power” as the model of stable self-government.⁵³ Americans would then be able to “act on foreign nations rather by our example of freedom and prosperity than by

⁴⁸ “England and France,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 February 1866, 2.

⁴⁹ “Mexico and Maximilian,” *Hartford Daily Courant*, 18 November 1865, 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ “Cowell Lending a Hand,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 25 March 1865, 179.

⁵² “The Second Life of Washington,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 7 May 1866, 463.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 467.

meddlesome intervention.”⁵⁴ Much as the Juarists would gain new confidence in their fight to save their republic, so too would the citizens of the other independent nations in the hemisphere redouble their efforts to subdue their own internal convulsions and press on with new determination down the path towards stable democracy. As it led the Latin American republics out of political disorder, moreover, the United States would aid their economic growth by overseeing the development of transportation and trading networks throughout the hemisphere until it became a cohesive commercial unit undergirded by republican principles. “Our republic will dominate the continent,” *Harper’s* concluded, “and keep at bay the crowned Powers of Europe by its own prosperity and intelligence, its liberty and order.”⁵⁵ The successful completion of Radical Reconstruction would, in short, enable Americans to use their symbolic power to carve out a grand future for their nation as the exceptional republic of the New World.

During the two years following Appomattox, leading Republican politicians and newspapers used public discussions regarding the Mexican question to emphasise what they claimed would be the conservative effects of Radical Reconstruction. It should be noted, however, that this is not the only way in which those who sought to advance the Republican agenda made use of references to Mexico. In September 1866, for example, African American newspaper the *Elevator* pointed out that Mexico was “a far more enlightened country than the United States on the questions of race and the franchise,” and urged Americans to embrace black suffrage in order to avoid being “left behind as the nations of the world march towards progress.”⁵⁶ Most major Republican organs, however, used Mexico as a means to emphasise the stabilising rather than liberal qualities of their postwar agenda. This was, they believed, a strategy that would resonate with the public. Indeed, in July 1865 no less a Radical than Henry Winter Davis cautioned his fellow Republicans not to be “always talking of justice and humanity to the negro” to the American people.⁵⁷ While some

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 467-68.

⁵⁶ “Reforms – Manhood Suffrage,” *Elevator*, 27 September 1866. I was unable to access a sufficient number of African American newspapers from this period – partly because so many Reconstruction era black publications were short-lived – to feel confident enough to make broad conclusions regarding their perceptions of Mexico during this period. The research I was able to conduct, however, turned up surprisingly few references to Mexico. Most black newspapers seem to have followed the standard Republican line (non-intervention and ideological sympathy with the Juarists) when it came to Mexican policy. Regarding the suffrage question, however, they were reluctant to hold Mexico up as a model. The quote mentioned here came from an article which recounted similar reformist trends taking place all over the world at the time, not just in Mexico. Perhaps the editors of African American newspapers were aware that, despite the groundswell of sympathy for the Juarists in the Civil War North, Americans’ long-standing prejudices against Mexico meant that it would be unwise to use the country as an example of a successful free labour, multi-racial democracy.

⁵⁷ Henry Winter Davis, “Lessons of the War – The American Continent Republican – Security for the Future, and Self-Government by Law, with Liberty Guarded by Power,” speech delivered at a Chicago Civic Celebration on July 4th, 1865 in *Speeches and Addresses Delivered in the Congress of*

might support their Reconstruction programme on humanitarian or economic grounds, he explained, many more of them simply wished for a method of reunion that would guarantee lasting domestic peace. Davis advised that advocates of Radical Reconstruction must therefore explain to Americans how Radical Reconstruction was vital to “our safety” as a republic.⁵⁸ Placing Radical Reconstruction within the broader framework of Mexican policy helped Republicans to make this case. The ongoing war in Mexico, they argued, proved that the Franco-Confederate conspiracy was alive and still posed a threat to the nation. Given this, the Reconstruction policies they proposed were a continuation of the wartime Union cause – a legislative means to finish what was left undone by the war effort. Republicans also argued that, by obliterating the last remnants of the slavocracy, Radical Reconstruction would renew the power of the U.S. example overseas. The notion that this would be enough to turn the tide of war in the Juarists’ favour in Mexico was perhaps far-fetched. However, it spoke to a deeply-felt anxiety in postwar U.S. society that the Civil War had tarnished their country’s image as the preeminent American republic. Republicans attempted to tap into that concern when they framed their programme for the South as a crusade to restore the United States’ prestige in the New World. By doing so, they hoped to appeal to the same coalition of supporters which had gathered around the Union cause during the Civil War. Their efforts, however, were not entirely successful.

Northern Democrats, Ex-Confederates, and the Other Non-Intervention Mexican Policy

Between 1865 and 1867, many Northern Democratic politicians and publications shifted their position on the Mexican question. During the Civil War, those Democrats who had supported the Union war effort had dutifully proclaimed their solidarity with the Juarists. Immediately following Appomattox, some even supported a U.S. military intervention south of the Rio Grande to oust Louis-Napoléon’s troops from Mexico. However, their enthusiasm for this plan quickly evaporated. Their support for the Juarists, moreover, mutated into cold indifference and even outright hostility. This change was a response to the way in which Republicans had attempted to co-opt the Mexican question to garner support for Radical Reconstruction. Chapter one examined the different shades of loyalty within the wartime Democracy. While some of its members opposed the war effort to subdue the Southern rebellion, others lent it their support and even accepted the necessity of emancipation to eradicate the Slave Power and so protect the country from future convulsions. Yet even pro-war Democrats had been deeply suspicious of the Radical elements within the Union

the United States, and on Several Public Occasions, by Henry Winter Davis of Maryland (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1867), 582-83.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

coalition. When those elements gained control of Congress after the Civil War, these Democrats worried that their programme of Reconstruction far exceeded the original mandate of the Union cause and would in fact sow new seeds of dissension in American society. As they watched how Republicans used Mexican policy to advance this agenda, former War Democrats renounced their solidarity with the Juarists. Instead, they moved closer to ex-Confederates on the Mexican question, many of whom had consistently warned that even rhetorical expressions of support for the Mexican Liberals strengthened the hand of the Radicals as they pursued their policies for the South. Public discussions regarding Mexico, then, both revealed and facilitated the breakup of the wartime Union coalition over the issue of Reconstruction and provided a policy issue on which Northern Democrats could begin to build bridges with their former enemies in the South.

Immediately following Appomattox, some prominent Northern Democratic newspapers called for a U.S. military intervention in Mexico. James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* was one of the most influential and outspoken among them. Chapter one discussed how this scheme had first been proposed during the Civil War by Democratic leaders such as Senator James McDougall and Samuel S. Cox as a means to secure a ceasefire between the Union and Confederate armies. At the time, Republicans had denounced the plan as a plot by traitorous elements in the North to embroil the Union in a conflict with France and thereby ensure Confederate victory in the Civil War. While a fierce critic of the Lincoln administration, the *New York Herald* was a firmly pro-Union publication and while it had expressed some interest during the Civil War in the idea of an invasion of Mexico, its support had been tempered by the plan's association with Copperhead disloyalty. In March 1865, however, with Union victory seemingly inevitable, the newspaper reconsidered the proposal. "The masses of the people and of the armies of the rebellious States," the *Herald* reasoned, "are not only ready but anxious to end the war on the simple basis of submission."⁵⁹ The notion that the spirit of rebellion had worn itself out in the South was consistent with a view held by many Northern Democrats at the time that most ordinary Southerners had been reluctant secessionists at best. Few among them, they argued, adhered to the slavocracy's aristocratic doctrines and had in fact been duped into secession by the lies of the Southern master class. The *Herald* therefore anticipated that with slavery all but destroyed, the reunion of the states would be a relatively straightforward matter; all that was required was to rebuild bonds of affection between the people of the North and South by reminding them of the history and values they still had in common.

The *Herald* believed that a military expedition into Mexico would facilitate this process. As it reminded its readers in January 1865, "the Southern people were always the

⁵⁹ "The Peace Question," *New York Herald*, 25 March 1865, 4.

most devoted to the Monroe doctrine” and four years of civil warfare had not changed this fact.⁶⁰ To be sure, the Davis administration had courted an alliance with Louis-Napoléon. But the *Herald* advised its readers that the views of the Confederate government did not necessarily reflect those of its citizens, most of whom were outraged at France’s effort to overthrow a sovereign American republic. Given this, the newspaper predicted, once the Confederacy had fallen most Southerners would “be eager to enter upon ... a crusade” to rout French forces from Mexico.⁶¹ An instinctive antipathy towards Old World monarchism was, after all, something that people from both sections of the Union held in common, and despite the “confusion and conflicting sentiment” that had disturbed sectional relations in recent years, the Monroe Doctrine was the “one thing upon which all [Americans] agree.”⁶² Washington D.C.’s *Daily Intelligencer* agreed. “Enough soldiers from both armies in this country,” the newspaper declared in May 1865, “will flock to Juárez to speedily upset all the aid that Napoleon will give [Emperor Maximilian].”⁶³ Indeed, the newspaper predicted that such was the enthusiasm among both Union and Confederate veterans for intervention, “it is not improbable that fifty thousand discharged soldiers from this country will be in Mexico before fall.”⁶⁴ According to these publications, a collaborative venture to throw the French imperialists off the continent would provide Southerners with an opportunity to demonstrate their continued devotion to the founding principles of the United States. More than this, it would remind Americans of their shared republican heritage, revive those bonds of nationality that had been strained by fratricidal warfare, and so facilitate a speedy and peaceable reunion of the states.

However, these Democratic organs soon began to cool on the idea of sending a military force over the Rio Grande. In fact, within a matter of months many of them would renounce their professed sympathy with the Juarist cause altogether. This about-face was a response to events which took place in the United States during this period. Many Northern Democrats were aghast, for example, when in early 1866 congressional Republicans began to push for legislation which would disenfranchise large swathes of the Southern white population. These proposals moved Representative Thomas N. Stilwell of Indiana to remind his colleagues in the House that the Lincoln administration had pledged to “preserve, not destroy” the Southern states.⁶⁵ The president had, moreover, promised the citizens of that region that they would have their rights “fully restored” to them once they re-entered the

⁶⁰ “The Last Device of the Rebels,” *New York Herald*, 27 January 1865, 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² “Political Conventions and the Monroe Doctrine,” *New York Herald*, 11 September 1865, 4.

⁶³ No Title, *Daily Intelligencer* (D.C.), 10 May 1865, 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Speech of Thomas N. Stilwell of Indiana, *Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 5 February 1866, 668.

Union.⁶⁶ Stilwell pointed out that, following Confederate surrender, President Johnson had kept faith with this pledge and allowed ex-Confederates a hand in the reformation of their local and state governments. At that time, prospects for a quick and painless reunion had seemed bright. “The South immediately showed signs of national life,” Stilwell recalled, and Northerners had rejoiced that “their labors had not been in vain; that they were again to have a whole country, a united country.”⁶⁷ However, Radicals had since sabotaged this process by propagating false claims about the persistence of rebellious elements in the postwar South. The Slave Power was still a threat to public safety, they had cried, and all Southerners must therefore be stripped of their rights and “treated as public enemies.”⁶⁸ Other Democrats argued that excluding white Southerners from electoral politics would in fact increase the risk of future rebellions in the Union. “The people of the South have been so completely prostrated by this war,” Senator David T. Patterson of Tennessee asserted in January 1866, “that they would bear almost any humiliation before rising in arms again.”⁶⁹ However, Radical efforts to rob ex-Confederates of their rights and vilify them in the eyes of their fellow citizens would “demoralize and dishearten the friends of the Union at the South, and turn their loyalty into hatred.”⁷⁰ Disenfranchisement, these Democrats claimed, would perpetuate tensions within the Union and so inhibit national reunion.

While these Democrats worried that Confederate disenfranchisement would undermine domestic peace, they were convinced that the Republicans’ plans to extend the franchise to ex-slaves would plunge the nation into utter chaos. Indeed, the Democrats’ response to proposals to extend civil and perhaps political rights to African Americans revealed that, while they had not wished the United States to be run by slaveholders, they were just as adamant that it must remain a white man’s republic. This sentiment was evident in the congressional debates that took place in early 1866 following Representative William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania’s introduction of a bill to extend the franchise to African Americans in Washington D.C. For Representative Green Clay Smith of Kentucky, the measure went far beyond the original aims of the Union cause that he had once supported. Smith accepted that the slaves had to be “emancipated, their shackles knocked off, and their freedom achieved” in order for the United States to be freed from the divisive influence of the Slave Power.⁷¹ He even conceded that the federal government had a duty to protect the freedpeople in “all their rights of property, liberty, and life.”⁷² But Smith warned his

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Speech of Senator David T. Patterson of Tennessee, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 17 January 1866, 274.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Speech of Green Clay Smith of Kentucky, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 27 January 1866, 53.

⁷² Ibid.

Republican colleagues that they “must not ask me to go so far at this time as to declare that these negroes are all entitled to the right of suffrage.”⁷³ Democratic representative Benjamin M. Boyer of Pennsylvania agreed. For him, black suffrage did not go beyond so much as fundamentally contradict the original purpose of the Union war effort. As Boyer explained, African Americans were “by nature inferior in mental calibre” to the white race and therefore lacked the intelligence and self-control necessary in citizens of a democracy.⁷⁴ More than this, he continued, “there is no political alchemy by which two races, representing as these do the opposite extremes of humanity, can be made to unite.”⁷⁵ The black and white races were inherently different, not only in terms of their mental capabilities but also their social needs and interests. This being so, Boyer warned, universal suffrage would create a “political rivalry between the races.”⁷⁶ Conflict in the political arena would spill out into the rest of society and lead to animosity, violence, and perhaps eventually an all-out race war. Contrary to Republicans’ cries about national security, then, the inclusion of African Americans in the public sphere would undo whatever progress had been made towards national pacification and stabilisation since the Civil War.

According to many Northern Democrats, there was a sinister design behind the Republicans’ supposedly deliberate attempts to foment disorder in the Southern states. In March 1867, congressional Republicans began to pass a series of statutes which provided for the division of the former Confederacy into five military districts. Former Unionist Democratic organs balked at what they viewed as this brazen usurpation of civil by military power. The *New York Herald*, for example, warned that the statutes gave unelected generals undue control over Southern politics by allowing them to “suppress newspaper publications” that they disliked and strike individuals from electoral rolls at will.⁷⁷ For this newspaper, the Republicans’ claims that such measures were necessary for national security rang hollow. Indeed, it was now clear that all preceding Republican legislation – Confederate disenfranchisement, federal protection for black civil rights – had been designed to perpetuate domestic instability in the South in order to justify this unprecedented expansion of federal power. As the newspaper explained, Radicals knew that to “give up the South to the political rule of the negroes, and then to withdraw the protection of the United States army, would be simply preparing the way for a war of races and a general massacre.”⁷⁸

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Speech of Benjamin Markley Boyer of Pennsylvania, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 10 January 1866, 177. The notion that biological deficiencies rendered the black Americans inherently incapable of meeting the requirements of republican citizenship had a long history in antebellum Northern Democratic political culture (Baker, *Affairs of Party*, 237-43).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “Politics in the Army,” *New York Herald*, 5 September 1867, 4.

⁷⁸ “Madness of the Republican Party Leaders,” *New York Herald*, 5 September 1867, 4.

Radicals anticipated that they could then point to this “anarchy and ruin” to justify a “permanent military policy in all the reconstructed territory, and to maintain a standing army large enough to hold possession of the Southern States and enforce the authority of their civil governments by the power of the bayonet.”⁷⁹ It was not just the South that would come to feel the tightening grasp of the federal military, however. As the *Herald* explained, the Radicals’ ultimate aim was the “overthrow of the republic by imposing the same rule over the North that now exists in the South.”⁸⁰ “We are marching to the system of the Roman republic,” the newspaper concluded darkly, “...where the military ... overturned the republic and established an empire upon its ruins.”⁸¹ Far from seeking unity and peace, then, the Republicans wished to perpetuate civil strife and so facilitate the U.S. republic’s conversion into a military despotism.

Their growing concern over Radical Reconstruction led many Democrats to reconsider their position on the Mexican question. Scholars have shown how antebellum Americans often used the examples of Haiti and other post-emancipation societies in the Americas to either extol or decry the potential consequences of abolition in the United States.⁸² In the postwar era, as the question of black suffrage rose to the top of the political agenda, Northern Democrats cast about for historical precedents of universal suffrage in a multi-racial society. Frequently their gaze landed on Mexico. Representative Green Clay Smith, for example, asserted that Mexico’s long history of political turmoil was a consequence of the “amalgamation of different races among her people.”⁸³ Mexican history, he believed, offered irrefutable proof that “governments under which different and distinct races become commingled politically and socially cannot in the very nature of things endure.”⁸⁴ Wartime Unionist and Democratic senator from Kentucky Garrett Davis similarly warned that the United States’ future as a mixed-race democracy “is illustrated by Mexico at this time.”⁸⁵ As he explained, universal suffrage had precipitated the “rise of military factions” and “brigandism” among the Mexican political class.⁸⁶ Political disorder beget social unrest, which over time had destroyed any semblance of “industry, business, prosperity, law, order, and security” in that country.⁸⁷ The idea that Mexico’s troubled experience with democracy was the product of the racial deficiencies of its population had a

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “Politics in the Army,” *New York Herald*, 5 September 1867, 4.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² See, for example, Guterl, *American Mediterranean*; Nichola Clayton, “Managing the Transition to a Free Society: American Interpretations of the British West Indies during the Civil War and Reconstruction,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 7, no. 1 (2006), 89-108.

⁸³ “Reconstruction,” Speech of Green Clay Smith of Kentucky, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 54.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Speech of Garret Davis of Kentucky, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 16 January 1866, 251.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

long history in the antebellum United States. During the Civil War, however, pro-war Democrats had largely echoed the Unionist refrain that Mexico's past and present difficulties were due to the machinations of the clergy. Doing so had helped them throw the anti-republican nature of their own domestic slaveholding enemies into sharper relief. But with the Slave Power apparently gone and the prospect of black suffrage looming, the Mexican republic morphed in Democratic discourse into a sinister portent of what would become of the United States under Radical rule. "The example of Mexico is before us," Davis warned his colleagues, and Americans must resist the Radicals' efforts to sow factionalism and discord among them lest they "become so much Mexicanized as to be incapable of self-government."⁸⁸ As black enfranchisement in the United States turned from an abolitionists' dream into a legislators' reality, therefore, these Northern Democrats revealed how shallow their wartime sympathy for the Mexican republican experiment had been.

Unsurprisingly, Democratic support for the Juarist cause also began to erode. During the summer and autumn of 1866, for example, reports which reached the American press that divisions had begun to emerge within the ranks of the Juarist leadership compounded their growing scepticism regarding the Mexicans' competency for self-government. Throughout the Civil War, the *New York Herald* had praised the bravery of the Juarist troops and commended their leaders for setting aside their rivalries to defend their country against clerical-imperial subjugation. By September 1866, however, the newspaper suspected that the Mexicans' unity would prove to be transitory. Should they defeat Maximilian, the newspaper predicted, the Juarists would lose their common enemy and therefore be quickly "torn into fragments by contending factions."⁸⁹ The *Herald* concluded that this being the case, "the abdication of Maximilian" would leave Mexico "in a worse condition than ever."⁹⁰ The *Daily Intelligencer* agreed. Factionalism was the natural state of Mexican politics, the newspaper reasoned, and if Juárez returned to power the country would "relapse into its former anarchy, weakness, and helplessness."⁹¹ Certainly, representative democracy was the best form of government mankind had devised. This did not, however, mean it was suitable for all peoples and all races. Indeed, the *Intelligencer* credited the Maximilian regime as the first "well-ordered government" Mexico had ever known, even if it was an autocratic regime.⁹² In principle, an intervention to sustain republican government south of the border would be a noble endeavour; these Democrats increasingly doubted, however, whether it would be for the benefit of the Mexican people.

⁸⁸ Speech of Garret Davis of Kentucky, 251.

⁸⁹ "Mexico and Her Leaders," *New York Herald*, 1 September 1866, 4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ "Washington Correspondence," *Daily Intelligencer* (D.C.), 27 February 1866, 1.

⁹² *Ibid.*

Republican efforts to make political capital out of their professed solidarity with the Juarists in order to advance their Reconstruction agenda also encouraged Northern Democrats to rethink their position on the Mexican question. In January 1866, rumours began to circulate in the American press that Emperor Napoleon III had determined to begin a staggered withdrawal of his troops from Mexico.⁹³ According to some Democratic organs, this decision changed the nature of the Mexican conflict from a foreign invasion into a civil war. In February, for example, the *Daily Intelligencer* concluded that the change in French policy meant that it was no longer possible to justify a U.S. intervention south of the border in the name of anti-imperialism. The newspaper noted that while Democratic leaders were now advising the Johnson administration to maintain good relations with Louis-Napoléon in order to ensure that he followed through on his plans for withdrawal, “prominent Radical politicians are ... disposed to crow over the promised evacuation of Mexico as a great triumph of the Monroe doctrine” and were gleefully predicting that Maximilian would soon also tuck-tail and run.⁹⁴ The *Intelligencer* asserted that, if their aim was to aid the Juarists, these Republicans’ boastful posturing was counter-productive. Indeed, their reckless blustering might convince Louis-Napoléon to reverse his decision on the grounds that the United States intended to “attack Maximilian, or force him to abdicate” the moment French forces departed Mexico.⁹⁵ “If these hot-headed radicals want to keep the French troops in Mexico for a year or two longer,” the newspaper concluded, then their present sabre-rattling was “the way to do it.”⁹⁶ It seemed impossible to the *Intelligencer* that Republicans were foolhardy enough not to see the danger of their actions. The journal was forced to conclude, therefore, that Republicans in fact wished to prevent a peaceful resolution of the Franco-Mexican conflict.

There were several ways that Republicans would apparently benefit from prolonging the war in Mexico. For example, the *New York Herald* suspected that the Republicans’ continual wrangling on the Mexican question was motivated by intra-party factionalism. The newspaper deduced that Radicals anticipated that, by forestalling a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Mexico, they could deny President Johnson a foreign policy victory that could reflect well on his “abilities as a statesman” and improve his standing in public opinion.⁹⁷ However, there was a larger and more sinister plot also at play. As the *Herald* explained, the ongoing war in Mexico helped Republicans keep “sectional questions ... above all others in

⁹³ This rumour was confirmed in April 1866 when Paris sent an official dispatch to Washington stating that Louis-Napoléon had instructed his troops to withdraw from Mexico in three detachments – the first in November 1866, the second in March 1867, and the third in November 1867 (Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 276).

⁹⁴ “Washington Correspondence,” *Daily Intelligencer* (D.C.), 27 February 1866, 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ “Congress and the Mexican Muddle,” *New York Herald*, 2 December 1866, 4.

importance” in the minds of the American people.⁹⁸ The *Baltimore Sun* explained this further when it observed that, by “harping on the Monroe doctrine,” Republicans sought to remind the public of Southerners’ shameful wartime alliance with the French while fuelling popular fears of a future attack by Confederate exiles in Mexico.⁹⁹ Democrats claimed that Republicans had employed a similar strategy when they fed Americans exaggerated reports regarding the unsettled condition of the postwar Southern states. In January 1866, for example, Senator Garrett Davis asserted that “there is not, and has not been for months, any rebellion, or insurrection, or resistance, or a single armed soldier or citizen in [the Southern] States ... against the United States.”¹⁰⁰ Yet if the Republican press was to be believed, the region was in a state of perilous unrest, its white citizens still gripped by the “frenzied, wicked, and demonic passions” that had first driven them towards secession.¹⁰¹ Kentucky’s representative Aaron Harding similarly questioned the veracity of the “stories that are told about crimes that prevail in the South” and accused Republicans of dispatching “agents to find or manufacture stories” about Southern recalcitrance in order to “feed and fan” the flames of a “fiery, burning, sectional sentiment” within the Union.¹⁰² These Democrats concluded that any public expressions of support for the Juarist cause would therefore aid the Republicans’ efforts to convince Americans that the Slave Power lived on and that decisive federal action was required to put down this menace once and for all.

As they backed away from the Republicans’ position on the Mexican question, these Democrats moved closer to that of their former Confederate enemies. Since the end of the Civil War, most Southern publications had adopted a strict non-intervention stance regarding the Franco-Mexican conflict. While Republican organs combined non-intervention with ideological solidarity with the Juarists, however, these former Confederate publications expressed no sympathy with the Mexican Liberal cause. Chapter two demonstrated that, in the final months of the Civil War, some Confederate leaders proposed the South collaborate with the Union in an invasion of Mexico as a means to secure Confederate independence. These proposals had been roundly rejected by most of the Southern press. After Appomattox, they gave Democratic proposals to use a Mexican expedition as a method of sectional reconciliation an equally frosty response. “We have no sympathy for England or France,” the *Western Democrat* explained in August 1865, “... both treated the South villainously during the late war, and we do not believe that the Southern people care how

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “Our Mexican Neighbors,” (*Baltimore Sun*, 10 January 1866, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Speech of Garrett Davis of Kentucky, 250.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Speech of Hon. Aaron Harding of Kentucky, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1st Sess., 12 February 1867, 1168.

much they are whipped” in the event of a U.S. invasion of Mexico.¹⁰³ But resentment towards Louis-Napoléon did not translate into sympathy for the Juarists. The *Memphis Daily Appeal*, for instance, was deeply resentful towards both Louis-Napoléon and Maximilian for their refusal to come to the Confederacy’s aid during the Civil War. Yet, as the newspaper asserted in December 1865, “there is not a single honest, intelligent man who believes that Mexico is fit for a republican government.”¹⁰⁴ The *Appeal* maintained that republicanism was the preserve of the white race alone. It therefore struck the newspaper as absurd that Southerners should be asked to spill their blood in order for the mongrel Mexicans to continue to flounder at democracy. More than this, the newspaper argued, given the Mexicans’ demonstrable inability to sustain orderly self-government, the return of the Juárez administration “would be greatly for the worse” for the country.¹⁰⁵ Those who insisted that Mexico must be a republic clearly did not have its citizens’ best interests at heart. So long as whatever government ruled Mexico brought its people safety and stability, the *Appeal* concluded, “it is absurd to haggle about the name,” be it a republic, democracy, or monarchy.¹⁰⁶ Southern blood, these publications averred, should not be shed in the name of such an unworthy cause as Mexico’s mongrel republicanism.

Southern publications did more than reject intervention in Mexico. During the spring and summer of 1865, as they observed Republican efforts to harness popular sympathies for the Juarists behind their campaign to vilify the South, organs in that region responded with their own position on the Mexican question. In June 1865, for example, Atlanta’s *Daily Intelligencer* took issue with Republican accusations that the migration of Confederates into Mexico was part of a plot to relaunch the rebellion. The “prominent influential rebels” who fled across the border, the newspaper explained, sought to escape the anarchy that would engulf the South under the abolitionists’ ruinous programme of black enfranchisement and miscegenation.¹⁰⁷ The exiles looked upon Maximilian’s regime, therefore, as an “asylum from Yankee rule” where they might find “peace and stability.”¹⁰⁸ The *Western Democrat* agreed that the Confederate exodus across the Rio Grande was fuelled by the migrants’ fear of being “crushed” under “Negro rule.”¹⁰⁹ Renewed warfare was the farthest thing from their minds - a sentiment the newspaper insisted they shared with Southerners back home. Indeed, in response to proposals for a North-South invasion of Mexico, the *Western Democrat* insisted that Southerners “should regret to see this country

¹⁰³ “Prospect of Another War,” *Western Democrat* (NC), 8 August 1865, 3.

¹⁰⁴ “From the City of Mexico,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 6 December 1865, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ “Mexican News,” *Daily Intelligencer* (D.C.), 23 June 1865, 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ No Title, *Western Democrat* (NC), 24 October 1865, 3.

again involved in war ... we are, emphatically for peace.”¹¹⁰ The *Staunton Spectator* was no less adamant that “the South wants war with nobody” and that the region was “much too engrossed with her own sorrows ... to think about, or care about, either Mexico or the Monroe doctrine, Maximilian or Napoleon.”¹¹¹ New Orleans’ *Times-Picayune* similarly claimed that Southerners had taken refuge in Mexico out of fear of the vengeful passions of the Republicans, not a desire to reignite the Civil War. This being the case, the Johnson administration could stem the southward flow of migrants by adopting a judicious and merciful course regarding national reunification. “Wise and equal laws,” the newspaper advised, would “conciliate the good will of all portions of the Union.”¹¹² “Gratified by the proofs that they can have a home and a country where they were born and raised,” the Southern exiles would soon return to the United States and join in the work of national regeneration.¹¹³ The subtext of these declarations was clear: The South was, if not repentant, certainly pacified and no overbearing federal oversight or oppressive legislation was required to make it obedient. The administration would do far more for sectional reconciliation if it approached the process of reunion in a spirit of forgiveness and magnanimity.

By early 1866, Southern publications had adopted a different strategy in their efforts to use public debates over Mexican policy to influence the course of Reconstruction. By this time, congressional Republicans had stepped up their efforts to take control of the reunion process from the administration. In response, Southern organs ceased their conciliatory pleading to President Johnson and instead launched a campaign to discredit Radical Reconstruction. Republicans’ professed alliance with the Juarists, they argued, was proof that their Southern agenda was in reality a scheme for continental conquest. The *Daily Dispatch*, for example, asserted that Republicans were well aware of the Mexicans’ incapacity for orderly self-government and that “the return of Juárez to power ... would only plunge Mexico into new anarchy.”¹¹⁴ The *Times-Picayune*, meanwhile, pointed out that the Republicans’ insistence that Mexico remain a republic was consistent with their determination to raise ex-slaves in the South “into a political condition they are not fitted for” by giving them the franchise.¹¹⁵ In both instances, the ultimate goal was political conflict and social disorder. As the *Daily Dispatch* explained, racial strife in the former Confederate states would justify the use of federal power to hold that region under permanent military occupation. The Republicans could similarly point to the anarchy which

¹¹⁰ “Prospect of Another War,” *Western Democrat* (NC), 8 August 1865, 3.

¹¹¹ “Mutterings of War,” *Staunton Spectator* (VA), 7 November 1865, 2.

¹¹² “Emigration,” (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*), 20 October 1865, 2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ “Maximilian,” *Daily Dispatch*, 9 February 1866, 3.

¹¹⁵ “New York Jurists,” (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*), 26 January 1866, 2.

would surely follow Juárez's return to power to extend their rule over Mexico as well. The government in Washington, the *Dispatch* warned, would pronounce its "obligation to establish order in Mexico ... by loans and by extending the national protection over the Mexicans."¹¹⁶ This done, it would then insist that "protection will ... not at all answer to restore order to Mexico" and that "positive rule or annexation will probably alone accomplish that."¹¹⁷ The Radicals, in short, would order U.S. troops to occupy Mexico and rule over it as a colony, just as they had done with the Southern states. Any efforts by Americans to lend moral or material aid to the Juarists, they concluded, would therefore play into this scheme for continental domination of which Southerners were to be the first victims.

Between 1866 and 1867, Northern Democrats also began to warn about the continental implications of Radical Reconstruction. Initially, most were primarily concerned that the Republicans' divisive Southern agenda inhibited the United States' ability to reclaim its standing as the exemplary republic in the New World. In December 1866, for example, the *New York World* pointed out that, contrary to his promises, Louis-Napoléon had not yet begun his withdrawal from Mexico. "This unfortunate hitch is not to be explained by anything that has taken place in Mexico," the newspaper explained, "but by what has been taking place in the United States."¹¹⁸ The *World* surmised that Louis-Napoléon viewed the "progress of our dissensions" over the Reconstruction question as evidence that the ostensibly reunified United States was still wracked with internal divisions.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the emperor apparently anticipated that Southerners, "excluded from [their] rights and treated with haughty insolence" by congressional Republicans, would soon become "discontented and recalcitrant" and mount a second rebellion.¹²⁰ Confident that the United States no longer posed a threat to his continental designs, Louis-Napoléon had therefore determined to "prolong his stay in Mexico."¹²¹ Tennessee senator David T. Patterson was similarly concerned that, should it go to war with France, the U.S. government could not rely on the "allegiance of the southern people" to whom it had shown such disrespect and cruelty.¹²² Patterson also questioned the moral grounds of a U.S. intervention south of the border. As he explained, in the past the United States' symbolic force had derived from the unmatched harmony of its political institutions. The present rancour over Reconstruction, however, undermined Americans' ability to make judgements about, much less intervene to resolve,

¹¹⁶ "Mexico – The U.S. Eagle Hovering Over Her," *Daily Dispatch*, 4 August 1866, 4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ "The United States and Mexico," *New York World*, quoted in *Weekly Atlanta Intelligencer*, 5 December 1866, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Speech of David T. Patterson, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 1 Sess., 17 January 1866, 274.

the conflicts of foreign nations. The people of the North and South “must close up this civil war and restore the union of these States,” Patterson insisted, before they could “speak with the voice of a united people . . . to France about intervention in Mexico.”¹²³ Domestic divisions over Reconstruction, these Democrats claimed, inhibited the United States’ ability to fulfil its proper role as the model of stable government on the continent. Given the discord that would surely come from the Radicals’ Southern agenda, moreover, it seemed certain that the United States’ image would erode further still.

Some Democrats’ premonitions regarding their country’s future standing in the New World were even more ominous. “We are greatly exercised,” Missouri representative Thomas E. Noel noted in the House in early 1867, “lest the Emperor of France should set up a monarch in Mexico.”¹²⁴ Yet those who supported Radical Reconstruction apparently felt “no uneasiness that in our own country, under the very wings of the American eagle, freedom is to be struck down, the sovereignty of the citizen is to be denied, and a throne of despotism erected in every Southern state.”¹²⁵ What right did Americans have to denounce Maximilian’s empire when in their own country they had erected a “military despotism” that ruled over half of the population as “conquered enemies”?¹²⁶ Representative Aaron Harding of Kentucky also railed against what he saw as Radical hypocrisy on the Mexican question. “But a few months ago,” he put to his Republican colleagues in February 1867, “you were alarmed at the mere shadow of monarchy in Mexico” and yet at the same time had been formulating plans “to establish and enthrone an absolute despotism over ten States of the Union.”¹²⁷ The United States was in no position to posture on the world stage as the defender of free government while at home its politicians implemented policies that would condemn the nation to the long list of “wrecks of departed republics” that had devolved into tyrannies.¹²⁸ As it currently stood, Harding declared, the only lesson that the United States could teach the world was that “the experiment of man’s capacity for self-government is a failure.”¹²⁹ Such forecasts echoed the warnings issued by Southern publications about the Radicals’ schemes for a continental empire. Indeed, by September 1866 the *New York Herald* had come to believe that the Republicans’ support for the Juarists was merely a ruse for their own imperial designs. Once President Juárez was restored, the newspaper predicted, anarchy in Mexico would follow. The United States would then intervene and establish

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ “Government of Insurrectionary States,” Speech of Hon. T. E. Noel of Missouri, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 2nd Sess., 12 February 1867, 108.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Speech of Hon. A. Harding of Kentucky, *Cong. Globe*, 39th Cong. 2nd Sess., 12 February 1867, 1168.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 1167.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

“martial law all over the country.”¹³⁰ Quick on the heels of the U.S. Army would be those other agents of Reconstruction – the bureaucrats and carpetbaggers, swindlers and “shoddyites” – who, having drained the South of its energy and wealth, would be on the hunt for new fields to plunder. Once they had extended Reconstruction over the Rio Grande, the *Herald* predicted, Republicans would congratulate themselves for having blessed that country with “a better government than she ever had before.”¹³¹ By 1866, therefore, both Northern Democratic and Southern publications were convinced that Radical Reconstruction had continental proportions; despotism in the South, they warned their countrymen, would extend into Mexico and perhaps beyond.

The Democrats’ evolution on the Mexican question throws light on what fuelled their opposition to Reconstruction. During wartime, most of them who had supported the Union cause had agreed on the need to eradicate the Slave Power and had reluctantly accepted that emancipation was the way to do this. The Republicans’ postwar Southern agenda, however, went far beyond this goal and threatened not only to perpetuate sectional divisions but to sow new seeds of dissension in American society. These Democrats therefore insisted that Reconstruction must be opposed in the name of national peace. Public discussion regarding the Mexican question was a useful means for them to make this case to the public. Certainly, the Republicans’ efforts to manipulate popular sympathies for the Juarists to forward their domestic agenda required a response. The argument that military occupation of the South was in fact part of a broader plot for continental domination, therefore, was designed to highlight the supposed tyrannical aspirations of the Radicals in Congress. Meanwhile, Democratic lamentations over the decline of United States’ image as the most stable American republic emphasised Reconstruction’s potentially divisive effects on U.S. society. Finally, by casting Radicals as deviants who wished to undermine the integrity of the U.S. republic, both Northern Democrats and Southerners attempted to counter the stigma of disloyalty which Republicans constantly attached to them. Instead they cast themselves as defenders of the United States’ traditional values which had made the United States the foremost republic of the New World. Resisting Radical Reconstruction, they informed the American people, was the only hope the United States had of being able to reclaim that standing in the future.

¹³⁰ “Mexico and Her Leaders,” *New York Herald*, 1 September 1866, 4.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Major newspapers in the United States were quick to credit their nation for the fall of Maximilian's empire in July 1867. "To America," the *New York Tribune* boasted, "... more than any other agency, Mexico owes her freedom."¹³² To be sure, the Johnson administration had not deviated from the neutrality policy first laid out by President Lincoln. As the newspaper explained, however, once congressional Republicans had taken control over Reconstruction policy, the symbolic power of the U.S. republic had begun to radiate across the Rio Grande. When its citizens denounced the intrigues of the French imperialists, therefore, the "moral sentiment of [the United States] was so in earnest" that Louis-Napoléon had been "compelled to evacuate so hastily that his retreat was virtually a humiliation."¹³³ Other newspapers also saw the hand of the United States in the events that had recently occurred in Mexico. They were not, however, convinced that this influence had worked for the benefit of the Mexican people. The *Southern Review*, for example, conceded that "the [New York] *Tribune* is right in attributing the success of the Juarists to aid from this country."¹³⁴ Take, for example, the brutal execution of Maximilian, surely evidence of Juarists mimicking the "vicious, bloodthirsty" approach Republicans had adopted after the Civil War when dealing with the defeated Southern states.¹³⁵ The *New York Herald* similarly concluded that "universal murder is the present platform of the dominant party in Mexico," a method of national pacification that they had no doubt learned from Radicals in the United States.¹³⁶ These newspapers agreed, then, that the U.S. republic possessed immense symbolic power that could influence events beyond its borders. Whether they believed it worked for good or ill, however, depended on their interpretation of the kind of society Reconstruction had created in the United States.

These responses to the Juarist victory reflected how Mexican policy had become entwined with the issue of Reconstruction in U.S. public discourse. This process had occurred primarily because postwar Americans believed their nation's approach to the Mexican question reflected its ability to assert its influence as the exemplary republic of the New World. Previous chapters examined how Americans in both the North and South had worried that the Civil War undermined their nation's claim to be the model of stable self-governance. These concerns persisted after the conflict had ended. In the immediate postwar period, therefore, politicians and partisan publications used public discussions regarding the Mexican question as a means to harness these popular anxieties in support of their different

¹³² "The Execution of Maximilian," *New York Tribune*, 1 July 1867, 4.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ "Mexico and Mexican Affairs," *Southern Review*, October 1867, 403.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ "Mexico and the United States – The Duty of Congress," *New York Herald*, 5 July 1867, 4.

agendas for national reunification. Republicans, for example, insisted that the only way to regenerate the United States' symbolic influence and so embolden the Juarists to defeat their imperialist invaders was to purge American society of all remaining rebellious elements through a rigorous process of Southern Reconstruction. Ex-Confederates, Copperheads, and a growing number of formerly pro-war Democrats, meanwhile, condemned Radical Reconstruction as a revolutionary plot to transform the U.S. republic into a military despotism. In the short term, they argued, the divisive effects of this agenda would undercut the nation's ability to speak with a unified voice against autocracy and oppression in Mexico. In the long-term, it would mutate the United States' historic mission to spread free government throughout the world into an imperialistic quest for power and profit. Postwar politicians and party organs of all stripes, therefore, used the Mexican question to present their different Reconstruction agendas as crusades to reclaim the United States' traditional identity as the most stable and successful of the American republics.

The ways in which these Americans associated Reconstruction policy with the United States' image in the New World illuminates some of the hopes and fears which occupied their minds as they faced the task of postwar national reunion. Scholars continue to debate what motivated Americans as they confronted this difficult issue and what they hoped would come from its eventual resolution. Some argue that contemporaries viewed Reconstruction as a struggle between white supremacy on the one hand and racial justice on the other. Other scholars contend that its advocates viewed the programme chiefly as a means to reshape the Southern economy in accordance with the principles of free labour and capitalist liberalism. This chapter points to another desire, one that transcended sections and partisan affiliations. Underpinning Americans' postwar debates over the Mexican question was a yearning to find a method of Reconstruction that would harmonise their nation's politics, stabilise its society, and so restore it to its rightful place as the world's exemplar of good self-government. For a population that had suffered through decades of sectional strife and four years of civil war, this desire was both understandable and profound. So profound, in fact, that leaders in public discourse believed they could manipulate it to either oppose Reconstruction or advance some of its most revolutionary aspects.

Chapter Four

Factionalism in the Model Republic: Fears of Mexicanization in U.S. Public Discourse, 1876-1881

On 2nd July 1881, for the second time in less than two decades, an assassin's gun took aim at a sitting U.S. president. Charles J. Guiteau acted alone when he made his attempt on President James Garfield's life at the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station, and during his subsequent murder trial several medical practitioners testified to his insanity. Despite the idiosyncrasies of Guiteau's crime, however, much of the American press proclaimed the incident to be the outgrowth of a broader trend which had recently emerged in their nation's political culture. The *New York Tribune*, for example, attributed the assassination attempt to what it called the "gradual Mexicanization" of U.S. public life since the Civil War.¹ By Mexicanization, the *Tribune* referred to a particular form of political demoralisation which manifested as a "blind and furious fanaticism of faction" among the electorate.² Americans, the *Tribune* lamented, voted according to the emotional pulls of tribalism and habitual distrust of the opposition, rather than through reasoned consideration of the different parties' principles and policies. For this newspaper, the issue was more than a matter of propriety in public life. As it explained, when the citizens of a democracy became convinced that one party or another could not be trusted with the reins of government, they were liable to tolerate all kinds of nefarious activities on the part of their preferred candidates. Deception, fraud, even violence – all were justifiable so long as they kept the hated opposition out of office. This being the case, the *Tribune* warned, the present "shameful phase of partisanship" in American politics threatened the integrity of the nation's entire electoral system.³

While the electorate had played its part in abetting this process of Mexicanization, the *Tribune* believed that blame also lay at the feet of their political leaders. The ideal republican statesman was civic-minded and self-sacrificing; most current American politicians were, by contrast, "malignant, selfish, grasping and desperate," and sought office purely to satisfy their hunger for profit and power.⁴ Devoid of ideological convictions or coherent policy agendas, these politicians garnered popular support by appealing to their voters' base instincts of fear and hate. According to the *Tribune*, leaders of both the nation's major political parties "create, feed and stimulate" antipathy among the electorate by playing on the sectional issues which had divided them since the antebellum period.⁵ The *Tribune's* use of the term Mexicanization reflected the newspaper's sense that this phenomenon had

¹ "Faction's Latest Crime," *New York Tribune*, 3 July 1881, 6.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

undermined the United States' standing as the world's model republic. Historically, Americans had taken pride in their nation's reputation as the paragon of well-ordered self-governance. In its present condition, however, the United States' public sphere resembled that of Mexico, where a climate of chronic political factionalism made regular and peaceful electoral politics all but impossible. Rightly understood, therefore, the assassination attempt against President Garfield was an extreme outgrowth of a general loss of harmony in American politics. Encouraged by "leaders of faction" in both the Republican and Democratic parties, this demoralisation could spell the end of the United States as the exceptional American republic.⁶

This chapter argues that during the 1870s, fears regarding the Mexicanization of American political culture eroded popular support for the postwar project of Southern Reconstruction. Chapter three examined how immediately after the Civil War, Republican voices in public discourse invoked the spectre of a resurgent Slave Power to persuade Americans to back federal efforts to rework the South's political order. Over the course of President Grant's first term 1868-1872, however, a growing number of independent and conservative Republican organs came to believe that the avaricious office-seeker had replaced the slave master as the preeminent pollutant within the U.S. body politic. Unlike aristocratic slaveholders, these spoilsmen lacked any specific ideological beliefs. The danger they posed to the United States did not stem from their anti-republican values, therefore, but from their lack of moral character. In their pursuit of power, these politicians fomented divisions among Americans in the belief that sectionalism kept voters loyal their chosen party no matter how inefficient or corrupt that organisation might become. As their alarm regarding the excesses of faction grew, these publications used the term Mexicanization to draw public attention to this form of demoralisation. Over time, the language spread throughout the national press until by the late 1870s, newspapers and journals from across the political spectrum were warning that the Mexicanization of American politics posed an existential threat to the republic. As this notion took hold, support for Radical Reconstruction waned. Even Republican organs expressed their concern that the Southern question had become a tool used by unscrupulous politicians to perpetuate sectional tensions within the Union. By the late 1870s, publications of every political stripe concluded that in order to drain the toxic spirit of faction from their nation's public sphere and so prevent its total Mexicanization, Reconstruction must end.

Immediately after the Civil War, newspapers, journals, and other voices in national public discourse had argued that Radical Reconstruction was necessary in order to restore harmony to American politics. By the late 1870s, however, many of these same publications

⁶ Ibid.

were calling for the programme to end on the same grounds. By making this point, this chapter challenges the notion that Reconstruction ended primarily due to the inconstancy of its initial supporters, particularly white Northerners. This argument is most compelling when predicated on the notion that these Americans viewed Reconstruction as a crusade for racial equality. Historians who take this view usually offer up some blend of resurgent racism, the desire for sectional reconciliation, and a general weariness with the Southern question to explain these Northerners' waning enthusiasm for the postwar Southern project. Edward Blum, for example, argues that by the mid-1870s, the persistence of Southern resistance to the biracial Reconstruction state legislatures had convinced many Northerners that they must choose between defending the rights of freedpeople and making peace with their white countrymen in the South – they could not have both. According to Blum, most Northern religious leaders chose the latter and therefore urged their congregants to pressure the government in Washington to turn its attention “away from racial uplift and toward national conciliation.”⁷ Blum adds that a burgeoning ethnic nationalism which conflated godliness with whiteness also made postwar Northerners increasingly intolerant of federal interventions to protect the liberties of black Southerners.⁸ Without discounting the importance of these factors, other scholars suggest that over the course of the 1870s, many Northerners simply tired of Reconstruction. As Nicolas Barreyre argues, the cataclysmic economic crash of 1873 and subsequent depression convinced many that the Southern question was a distraction which sapped federal funds and energies away from more pressing issues of national concern.⁹ According to these historians, the willingness of Reconstruction's initial supporters to abandon freedpeople to the mercies of the lily-white redeemer legislatures revealed how shallow their commitment to the principle of racial equality had been.¹⁰

⁷ Edward Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 247.

⁸ For other studies which emphasise the importance of Northern racism in declining support for Reconstruction in that section, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 499; Donald G. Nieman, ed. *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction: Collected Writings of LaWanda Cox* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Mitchell Snay, *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); and, Michael Fitzgerald, *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2007).

⁹ Nicolas Barreyre, “The Politics of Economic Crisis: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 4 (October 2011), 403-23.

¹⁰ Conventional narratives tend to focus on racial justice as the animating issue at the heart of the Reconstruction question. However, more recently scholars have suggested that other issues were also at play. For example, Heather Cox Richardson argues that economic motivations – specifically the desire to reshape the South into a free labour society – shaped the Republicans' postwar Southern agenda. She contends, however, that over time the rise of new political economic theories such as laissez faire capitalism and individualism eroded these Republicans' support for federal efforts to

While these arguments continue to hold sway in the historiography, some scholars contend that certain Northerners who turned against Reconstruction may not have been as fickle as historians have suggested. Andrew Slap, for example, argues that many of those leading Republicans who initially supported Reconstruction did so because they viewed it as an effort to purge Southern politics of those slavocratic influences which had survived the Civil War and thereby create an “environment friendly towards republicanism” in the former Confederate states.”¹¹ Slap notes, however, that while they were anxious to rid the region of anti-republican elements, many moderate and conservative Republicans were equally adamant that federal power should not extend too far or for too long beyond its constitutional boundaries. This proved to be a delicate balancing act. The virulence of white Southern opposition to Reconstruction created a tension between these two objectives which eventually became untenable. Slap explains that by the early 1870s, many Republicans had concluded that it was impossible to force Southerners to accept Reconstruction without expanding federal authority in extraordinary and perhaps irreversible ways. They therefore called for an end to the postwar project to avoid “damaging the nation’s republican institutions.”¹² It was an unhappy compromise; even as they pressured the federal government to retreat from the South, few of these Republicans believed enough had been done to democratise the former Confederate states. According to Slap, however, compromise was not the same as betrayal, and throughout the postwar period these Republicans were consistent in their desire to see government institutions at both the state and federal level take on their proper republican form as outlined in the Constitution.

This chapter agrees that anxieties regarding the integrity of their republic led some Americans to withdraw their support from Radical Reconstruction. It builds on the existing scholarship by drawing attention to their specific concerns regarding the condition of the nation’s political culture. The historians mentioned above note that many Americans were worried that the postwar expansion of federal power had awakened authoritarian tendencies among the country’s political leaders. This chapter, however, demonstrates that some also believed that Reconstruction had encouraged the rise of other vices in the public sphere. In

provide opportunities for individual improvement and social mobility to freedpeople. In this sense, Richardson reinforces the idea that the inconsistency and impatience of Reconstruction’s initial supporters led to the project’s ultimate demise (Richardson, *Death of Reconstruction*). For studies which also emphasise the influence of concepts relating to capitalist liberalism in eroding popular support for Reconstruction, see Ninkovich, *Global Dawn*, 168-74; and, Smith, “Beyond North and South,” 580.

¹¹ Lang, “Republicanism, Race, and Reconstruction,” 562; Slap, *Doom of Reconstruction*, 89. For earlier studies which similarly emphasise the constitutional scruples and conservative intentions of Reconstruction’s Republican architects, see Benedict, “Preserving the Constitution,” 65-90; and, William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

¹² *Ibid.*

the late 1860s and early 1870s, several prominent independent and conservative Republican organs began to warn that the Southern question exacerbated a spirit of factionalism both among politicians and the electorate more broadly. Once supportive of Reconstruction, these publications were by this time satisfied that the most dangerous elements of the slavocracy that had survived the fall of the Confederacy had been subdued. When leading Republicans continued to insist that the Slave Power posed a threat to the nation, therefore, newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Tribune* grew suspicious that these politicians wished to prolong Reconstruction for their own ends. Republicans, they concluded, sought to heighten popular fears regarding a resurgent slavocracy as a means to slander the Democratic Party that they claimed housed it. By spreading the notion that voting for the Democracy was tantamount to handing the republic over to traitorous Southern masters, these Republicans apparently aimed to shore up their support among the electorate. More than this, their voters' unwavering loyalty enabled these politicians to engage in all kinds of political criminality – bribery, fraud, plundering state treasuries – without fear of retribution at the polls. These conservative and independent organs therefore concluded that Reconstruction, initially designed to combat one internal pollutant, had inadvertently given rise to another; the office-seeker had replaced the slave master as the preeminent disruptive element within the body politic.

To draw public attention to this demoralising trend, these publications compared the current state of the United States' political culture to that of Mexico. During the Civil War, these organs had subscribed to the notion that the Church power was the principal cause of political instability in the Mexican republic. They had therefore been optimistic that the Juarist victory over the Franco-clerical assault in 1867 would usher in an era of tranquillity in Mexico. When domestic uprisings and political in-fighting continued to plague the Juárez administration after its return to power, however, these publications concluded that some insidious force other than the priesthood was at work south of the Rio Grande. What ailed Mexico, they theorised, was not the machinations of a cabal within its body politic, but rather a culture of political factionalism which had been learned by its population by years of civil strife. Factionalism, they reasoned, made Mexicans easy prey to demagogues and ambitious *caudillos* who whipped up popular antipathies to lever themselves into office and create a cloud of confusion which obscured their nefarious activities once there. Throughout the Grant presidency 1869-1877, these independent and conservative Republican organs applied these theories to explain what they saw as the rise of a dangerous spirit of division and corruption in American politics. The Civil War, they argued, had wrought deep fissures in American society that were now being exploited by unscrupulous politicians. The Reconstruction issue was a particularly effective weapon in the hands of Republican office-seekers who wielded it to encourage popular suspicion towards the South and, by extension,

the Democracy. While their ire was initially directed towards Republican leaders, towards the end of Grant's second term these publications concluded that Democrats also used the Southern question to foment resentment towards the opposition among their voters. During the Civil War, these independent and conservative publications had praised Mexicans as allies in the struggle to defend the American republican tradition. Throughout the 1870s, however, they pointed to Mexico as a portent of the condition of chronic political conflict, instability, and corruption the U.S. republic was sliding towards. The only way to avoid this fate, they told the American people, was to bring an end to Reconstruction.

These concerns were not the sole preserve of independents and conservatives. Previous chapters discussed how throughout the 1860s, Americans often attributed the rise of sectionalism in their once harmonious republic to the machinations of either the Slave Power or Radical abolitionists. As the United States moved further from its civil war, however, these familiar villains lost some of their potency. It became difficult for Democrats to characterise all Republicans as wild-eyed radicals, for example, when in 1877 President Hayes withdrew federal troops from the South. Republicans' claims that a second slaveholders' revolt was imminent likewise lost credibility with every year that passed after emancipation. And yet throughout the 1870s, the nation remained divided, its politics polarised and contentious. Given this, a growing number of publications from across the political spectrum came to agree that leaders in both the nation's major parties were using the Reconstruction question to exacerbate divisions in American society for their own benefit. Their use of the term Mexicanization to describe this process reflected the depth of their anxieties. The notion that instability in Mexico was the result of a learned culture implied that any citizenry exposed to a prolonged period of domestic strife could succumb to a similar condition. Throughout the 1870s, as a growing number of both Democratic and Republican voices in public discourse decried what they saw as the Mexicanization of American political life, they expressed their fear that the experience of the Civil War had taught their countrymen ruinous habits of political conflict and division which might never be unlearned. Reconstruction must end, they agreed, if Americans were to have any hope of removing the stain of factionalism from their political culture and so restoring harmony to their so-called exceptional republic.

The 1876 Electoral Crisis and the Emergence of Mexicanization in U.S. Public Discourse

The term Mexicanization first gained sustained and widespread use in American public discourse during the electoral crisis of 1876. That year's presidential contest between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel J. Tilden had resulted in an impasse. The first count of the electoral vote gave 184 to Tilden against Hayes' 165. The remaining

twenty votes were in dispute. Democrats and Republicans accused one another of having manipulated the returns in Oregon, Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana. Each claimed these states for their respective candidate and sent their own set of returns to Washington to be counted by Congress. Gregory P. Downs argues that throughout the controversy, Americans used the term Mexicanization to describe what they viewed as a general loss of law and order in their nation's political system.¹³ This chapter demonstrates, however, that different sectors in public discourse in fact defined the nature and cause of Mexicanization differently. Most Democrats and Republicans, for example, used the term to frame the 1876 electoral crisis as the most recent in a long line of assaults against the integrity of the U.S. republic perpetrated since the Civil War by either Radicals or the Slave Power. While many turned to these familiar villains, furthermore, a small but influential collection of independent and conservative Republican publications used the language of Mexicanization to point to a new menace which they claimed had emerged within the body politic in recent years. A plague of office-seekers, they charged, had infiltrated both parties and through their machinations had brought about the electoral crisis in 1876. This third interpretation of Mexicanization revealed that for some of Reconstruction's early supporters, the spectre of the Slave Power had lost its potency; instead they insisted that a new faction now disturbed the nation, and a new strategy was required to combat it.

During the tumult surrounding the 1876 presidential election, leading Democratic politicians and publications insisted that the crisis marked the latest phase of the campaign Radicals had waged since the Civil War to Mexicanize the U.S. republic. Indeed, the term Mexicanization had appeared sporadically in Democratic discourse throughout the 1860s and 1870s as a means to attack Radical Reconstruction. During the 1868 presidential election campaign, for instance, Democratic vice-presidential nominee Francis P. Blair explained what he viewed as the Mexicanizing intent behind the Republicans' Southern policies. "The South," he warned an Indianapolis audience, "is to be Mexicanized" in the first instance "by a mixture of ... two races" within the body politic."¹⁴ Blair explained that African Americans lacked the mental capacity to make responsible choices when they participated in the electoral process and that they were therefore liable to send all manner of demagogues and opportunists into office. The attempt to place two races with distinct needs and interests on an equal footing, moreover, would foment conflict in the social and political

¹³ Downs, "Mexicanization of American Politics," 387-409. One of the few other scholars to take note of the language of Mexicanization in U.S. political discourse is Mark W. Summers, who briefly notes that during the 1870s some Americans used the term to express their alarm regarding the apparent prevalence of political violence and corruption in the Reconstruction South. See Summers, *A Dangerous Stir: Fear, Paranoia, and the Making of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 262.

¹⁴ "General Blair's Speech and Indianapolis," *Daily National Intelligencer* (D.C.), 30 September 1868.

arenas. Blair predicted that the subsequent turmoil would “create a state of things so dangerous to property and public order, that to escape from a state of semi-anarchy ... men will gladly surrender the whole system of free institutions to the head of the army.”¹⁵ Severe social upheaval could compel even the most ardent of democrats to clamour for the firm rule of an authoritarian federal state. According to Blair, Republican efforts to extend the vote to black Americans was therefore part of a broader scheme to “create contempt for popular forms of government” among Americans and so persuade them to accept a consolidated, militarised central government.¹⁶ One only had to look to the South, he claimed, where federal bayonets propped up a string of unpopular biracial carpetbagger legislatures, to see how far this plan had already progressed.

In 1876, Democrats charged that Republicans had used similar methods in an attempt to steal the presidency. Few of them doubted that Tilden had won the election. When Republicans pointed to alleged instances of white vigilante violence as justification to send “visiting statesmen” to recount the vote in the disputed states, Democrats therefore saw it as another act of unwarranted federal interference in the electoral process. Such abuse of power, the *Galveston Daily News* asserted, resembled the “traditional way of managing elections and constructing administrations in Mexico,” where the presidency was the “spoils of the party that can display sufficient military force to control State and municipal authorities, intimidate voters and command the deliberations of Congress.”¹⁷ The *Atlanta Constitution* was similarly alarmed by reports in December of that year that President Grant had increased the number of federal troops stationed in Washington D.C. The president had insisted that the measure was a necessary response to the increasingly restive national mood. The *Constitution*, however, was convinced that the move signalled Grant’s intention to use the military to install Hayes in the White House regardless of the outcome of the vote count. “Will the rightful candidate be prevented from taking his seat?” the newspaper asked anxiously.¹⁸ If Americans permitted such a blatant violation of their popular will to pass, it warned, they would “need not pity Mexico, for it is our turn now.”¹⁹ These Democratic newspapers therefore saw the 1876 electoral crisis as part of what they claimed had been a campaign launched by Republicans after the Civil War to subvert civil for military power in the United States. Their use of the term Mexicanization to describe this process indicated their belief that, while they had heretofore confined these practices to the South, Republicans now sought to apply them on a nationwide scale. Should they succeed in stealing the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Hayes by the Light of Chandler,” *Galveston Daily News*, 15 December 1876, 4.

¹⁸ “Mr. Edmund’s Resolution,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 December 1876.

¹⁹ Ibid.

presidency, these Democrats warned, the United States would be, like Mexico, a despotism merely masquerading as a republic.

These charges did not go unanswered. Republicans countered that it was in fact the Democrats who were the country's true Mexicanizers. That they adopted this language with such alacrity requires some explanation. Most Democratic leaders and publications had long derided the "mongrel" Mexican republic as a hotbed of political instability. Since the start of the French invasion in 1862, by contrast, most Republican organs had championed the Mexican republican cause. When the Maximilian regime fell in 1867, many of them were optimistic that with the French imperialists gone and the power of the clergy broken, all sources of dissension in Mexican society had been removed. As the *San Francisco Chronicle* predicted in August of that year, Mexicans would now be able to "prove themselves capable of maintaining a stable and well-ordered government."²⁰ However, such hopes were soon disappointed. As Juárez's term progressed, news of small-scale uprisings throughout the Mexican countryside appeared with growing frequency on the pages of American newspapers. Philadelphia's *Evening Telegraph* surmised that, while the Church power had suffered a blow, it still possessed enough influence to harass the central government by riling its congregants into low-level revolts. The newspaper therefore advised President Juárez to push forward legislation "securing religious liberty, establishing independence between Church and State" and "declaring the immense real estate of the Church to be national property."²¹ Historian Friedrich Katz notes that Juárez did in fact implement various reform measures and scrupulously upheld the 1857 Constitution's anti-clerical provisions. The unrest which "reached unprecedented proportions" between 1867 and 1871 was largely due to class tensions within the country.²² Among observers in the United States, however, continued disorder south of the border was taken as proof that the priesthood was as strong as ever. By the early 1870s, many leading Republican organs had therefore concluded that the much-heralded Juárez was not up to the task of uprooting this faction from Mexican society. "It seems Juárez is not to be the deliverer of his country," the *San Francisco Chronicle* conceded in September 1871, "... for he does not recognise what is required to reconstruct a nation after a bitter civil war."²³ In just a few short years, Republicans' optimism had turned into pessimism; prospects for a stable government in Mexico, most came to agree, were as dim as they had ever been.²⁴

²⁰ "Juárez in Mexico City," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 August 1867, 1.

²¹ "What Will Juárez Do?" *Evening Telegraph* (PA), 22 May 1867, 6.

²² Friedrich Katz, "The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato, 1867-1910," in *Mexico Since Independence*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56.

²³ "News from Mexico," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 September 1871, 3.

²⁴ Another indication that Mexico's image was on the decline in the United States during this period is that when making the case for black suffrage, African American newspaper the *Elevator* deliberately avoided Mexico as an example of a successful mixed-race democracy. "Liberia," the newspaper

Republicans used this diagnosis of Mexico's persistent political troubles to explain the causes of the 1876 electoral crisis in the United States. Democrats defined Mexicanization as the abuse of federal power from above. Republicans, meanwhile, understood it as the use of violence to disrupt electoral processes from below. "Republicans," the *North American* asserted in November 1876, "have never appealed from the ballot to the sword in this country."²⁵ That was a uniquely Democratic form of political criminality. The newspaper explained that ever since the Civil War, Democrats in the South, most of whom were former slaveholders who were resentful that black suffrage had broken their monopoly over their state governments, had resorted to "fraud, force, or intimidation" to get their candidates elected.²⁶ The "right to vote" in the South, the newspaper explained, was determined by whoever possessed "the longest rifle or the heaviest artillery."²⁷ Reports of violence at Southern polling stations on election day in November was evidence that the antebellum slavocracy had become sufficiently emboldened to use these tactics to attempt to steal the presidency. The question at the heart of the electoral crisis, then, was "whether a Presidential election in this Republic shall be decided by a fair and free ballot or by mounted and armed marauders."²⁸ According to Republican organs, then, the United States, much like its southern neighbour, was still struggling to rid itself of its anti-democratic domestic enemies. Should the current dispute over the presidential election be settled in Tilden's favour, it would signal that these internal foes had become powerful enough to force their preferred candidate into the White House and that the United States was indeed fully "Mexicanized."²⁹

A third interpretation of Mexicanization circulated in the American press during this period, albeit among a relatively small number of publications. This version was based on these organs' own explanation for why instability reigned south of the Rio Grande throughout the 1870s. Much like many of its fellow Republican publications, the *New York Tribune* had been disappointed to see the Juárez government plagued by social and political unrest after its restoration in 1867. However, the newspaper did not accept that the Church power was to blame. The *Tribune* in fact credited Juárez with having demonstrated "vigor and sound judgment" by implementing a series of secular reforms after regaining the presidency.³⁰ The *Chicago Tribune*, another influential Republican organ, agreed. "As a

asserted in July 1868, "holds rank with many of the older European governments in stability of government" compared with the "anarchy, changes of government and periodical rebellions" of "Mexico and the South American republics" ("The Morning Call," *Elevator*, 31 July 1868, 2).

²⁵ "Some Differences," *North American*, 13 November 1876, 743.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ No Title, *North American*, 7 November 1876, 738.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ No Title, *New York Tribune*, 12 January 1870, 1.

political power, the Church itself has been conquered,” the newspaper declared in February 1870, “... its lands, which once absorbed three-fifths of the whole country, have been confiscated” and “it owns only its buildings for worship.”³¹ The newspaper surmised that some other disruptive force was at work south of the Rio Grande. Throughout much of Mexican history, the *Tribune* explained, the towering spectre of the Church had kept Liberals united. The Juarist triumph in 1867, however, had destroyed the clergy and so robbed its opponents of a common foe against which they could rally. An ideological void had emerged in Mexican politics into which personal ambition had flowed. “Party feeling is strong” in Mexico, the *Chicago Tribune* explained, but the issues which separated each faction were “ill-defined.”³² Aspirants for office were drawn into cliques by the promise of patronage, while election campaigns, supposed to be forums for ideological debate, were contests waged “chiefly between the “ins” and “outs” of political power.”³³ The *Tribune* surmised that since he had regained his office, President Juárez had been continuously disturbed by “cliques of disappointed office-seekers, or discharged military officers” who sought to advance their careers even at the expense of party unity and national peace.³⁴ If the Church power had brought out the heroism of Mexico’s leaders, these publications concluded, its absence had revealed their basest impulses.

These newspapers believed that Mexican politicians’ greed and self-interest had precipitated a breakdown of law and order in that country’s political system. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, explained to its readers in 1869 that south of the border losing candidates frequently contest election results and “refuse to accept defeat.”³⁵ Sometimes their claims were justified (corruption was, after all, commonplace in Mexican politics), other times they were pure fabrications. In either case, the consequence was that often “no sooner is the result of an election announced” in Mexico than a disappointed officer-seeker rallied up a band of armed supporters and “a civil war, of greater or less proportions, is declared.”³⁶ The counting of the vote was never the final word on any election result, and no politician was ever entirely secure in his seat. Moreover, bitter in-fighting within the ranks of his own party had compelled President Juárez to make liberal use of his executive authority to protect himself from intriguers against his title. In February 1870, the *New York Tribune* was disturbed to learn that the Mexican Congress had granted Juárez additional “ample powers” to combat the “fever of anarchy” which currently coursed throughout his

³¹ “Present Condition of Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 February 1870, 2.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ “Affairs in Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 27 July 1869, 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

country.³⁷ Some American newspapers accepted that the degree of unrest necessitated a temporary expansion of federal power. The *Tribune*, however, was not convinced. “The President,” the newspaper asserted, “is attempting to make himself dictator by telling his people that their only safety lies in his being cloaked with “ample faculties.... by pointing to alleged disturbances, real or imagined.”³⁸ Had Juárez only sought to subdue domestic uprisings, that would be one thing. But, as the *Chicago Tribune* explained in January 1871, the Mexican president had used his enhanced powers to shut down newspapers critical of his administration and imprison political opponents. The central state in Mexico had, the newspaper concluded, “morphed into a dictatorship,” while local and state governments throughout the country were rotten with the “plague of corruption.”³⁹ In short, a weakness of character among Mexico’s leaders had dashed that country’s opportunity to create a well-ordered and respectable government after the French invasion.

While Mexican politicians were certainly to blame for that country’s deplorable condition, these publications believed that their ability to engage in corruption and abuse their power stemmed from a habit of factionalism that was deeply ingrained in Mexican political culture. In July 1871, for example, the *Chicago Tribune* posited that Mexicans had become so accustomed to living in dread of the Church power that they believed Juárez when he told them that his “petty quarrels with rivals” were in fact clashes with a resurgent priesthood.⁴⁰ The Mexican president had become a despot not through an overt power-grab, therefore, but by the careful manipulation of the insecurities of his own people. As the newspaper surmised, “the first blow which Republicanism received in Mexico” under Juárez “was when a facile congress” had willingly traded the peoples’ liberties in return for the promise of security.⁴¹ In 1868 the *Nation*, which often leaned towards the conservative end of the Republican spectrum, pointed out another harmful effect of Mexico’s culture of factionalism. The journal mused that the foundation of a stable democratic government was its citizenry’s “habit of obedience to the law.”⁴² For much of its history, Mexico’s electoral contests had been cataclysmic struggles between the defenders of the republic and its avowed enemies. With the stakes so high, Mexicans had learned to tolerate all kinds of criminal behaviour by their representatives, so long as it kept the Church Party from taking office and dismantling the republic. The *Nation* acknowledged that the clergy’s power was

³⁷ “The Situation in Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 15 February 1870, 4. For more on President Juárez’s use of extraordinary powers and coercive legislation to establish order in Mexico after the tumult of the French invasion, see Erika Pani, “Law Allegiance, and Sovereignty in Civil War Mexico, 1857-1867,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017), 570-96.

³⁸ “Mexico,” *New York Tribune*, 23 March 1870, 3.

³⁹ “Poor Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 January 1871, 4.

⁴⁰ “Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 July 1871, 2.

⁴¹ “The Military Interference Act,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 May 1872.

⁴² “Commercial Immorality and Political Corruption,” *Nation*, July 1868, 28.

now broken. But Mexicans had come to accept corruption and violence as normal forms of political conduct; a candidate need only accuse his opponent of collusion with the fearful priesthood and voters would endorse his right to lie, bribe, or force his way into office. Respect for the law was the lifeblood of a democracy, the journal concluded, and “if a people once loses it ... the result, as we see in Mexico, is anarchy.”⁴³ Mexico’s long history of internal conflict had therefore left its citizenry vulnerable to the machinations of avaricious office-seekers which in turn undermined the very fabric of the republic.

These publications’ interest in Mexico’s maladies was fuelled by their sense that a similar disease had infected American society after the Civil War. Most of their editors, including Horace White of the *Chicago Tribune* and Edwin L. Godkin of the *Nation*, proudly styled themselves as non-partisans. All were staunch Unionists during the Civil War, however, and had been generally supportive of the Republican Party since the conflict ended. Indeed, immediately following Appomattox they had provided critical support to Radical Reconstruction by explaining to their readers why the programme was essential in order to expunge the last remnants of the slavocracy from Southern society. During the late 1860s and early 1870s, however, these organs began to express their concern that Reconstruction had given license to the same deleterious forces which had undermined stable government in Mexico since the end of the French invasion in 1867. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, pointed out in 1871 that President Grant’s efforts to secure the passage of the Ku Klux Klan Act were the “same thing in principle” to how Juárez had pressured the Mexican Congress to grant him “ample powers.”⁴⁴ “Like Juárez in Mexico,” the newspaper charged, Grant’s true intention was to use his enhanced authority to “silence all opposition by arrest, without trial ... all persons who may oppose him.”⁴⁵ More than this, Grant had used federal troops to prop up a string of state governments in the South in defiance of the popular will of the people. The *New York Tribune* conceded that a military presence in the South may have been necessary initially after the Civil War to protect Republican state legislators from assaults by diehard rebels. But Republican officials in the region had quickly learned that federal bayonets also protected them in office even if they mismanaged public affairs, plundered state treasuries, and distributed favours to their friends and associates. As a result, the newspaper declared, Southern Reconstruction governments were now filled with “hyenas and jackals” who “hold their offices” solely to fatten themselves “upon the pickings of the camp.”⁴⁶ Peace in the United States, much as in

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “The Military Interference Act,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 May 1872.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “A Just Rebuke,” *New York Tribune*, 1 October 1872, 5.

Mexico, had exposed the venality and greed of those leaders once heralded as saviours of the republic.⁴⁷

These organs claimed that, just as it was south of the border, an excessive spirit of factionalism among the American people had given these venal elements sustenance. In October 1872, the *New York Tribune* recalled that when General Grant first ran for the presidency in 1868, he had been carried into the White House on a “war wave.”⁴⁸ Sectional tensions were running high at the time, and Grant’s reputation as the hero of the Union Army had been at its apogee. The general had therefore been able to “eke out war enthusiasm” among Northerners to lever himself into office on a purely sectional vote.⁴⁹ The *Tribune* noted that Grant had since proven himself an incompetent administrator with a predilection for nepotism and dictatorial tendencies. His continual abuse of federal authority ought to have been distasteful to the liberty-loving citizens of the United States. However, as the newspaper explained, the president had kept up a constant “war-crying” over the supposed ever-present danger of the Slave Power and so terrified Americans into acceding to his demands for more executive power and privilege.⁵⁰ Republicans were now using similar tactics to secure Grant a second term. As the *Tribune* observed in October 1872, the “Grant Republicans are ... anxious to keep up the war agitations of the past” by filling their campaign speeches and literature with diatribes against the slavocracy and warnings of their imminent return to power.⁵¹ Only the firm hand of the trusted general, these demagogues declared, could prevent the outbreak of another civil war. Much like in Mexico, then, a prolonged period of civil strife had taught Americans to fear one another more than they loved their liberties.

To further emphasise the harmful effects which the excesses of faction had wrought in the United States, these publications directed their readers’ attention to the current state of their nation’s relationship with its southern neighbour. In May 1872, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that when Grant’s cabinet had received news that the Mexican Congress had agreed to expand Juárez’s presidential powers, several members had expressed their “delight at the

⁴⁷ This appraisal of Grant’s Reconstruction policy was echoed years later by scholars of the Dunning School. For one of the key studies of this school of thought, see William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic, 1865-1877* (New York: Harper, 1907). Since the mid-twentieth century, scholars have revised Grant’s image as a bloodthirsty tyrant. For a study which emphasises his military prowess, see Bruce Catton, *Grant Takes Command* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1968). For a rather critical view of Grant’s conduct of Reconstruction policy, and particularly his lukewarm commitment to the defense of the rights of former slaves, see William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981). For an overview of the evolution of Grant’s reputation among scholars and the public more broadly, see Joan Waugh, *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

⁴⁸ “Political History Repeating Itself,” *New York Tribune*, 7 October 1872, 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

mode of making laws” in Mexico and praised that country’s president for having taken a “judicious step in cutting the Gordian knot” of constitutional restraint to enable him to “make laws by decree.”⁵² Evidently, the newspaper surmised, Juárez’s style of governance appealed to the administration’s own tyrannical proclivities. The admiration apparently went both ways. As the *New York Tribune* declared in August that year, “Juárez is sustained in his course of dictatorship by the example of Grant,” whom the Mexican president would point to whenever he was accused of abusing his powers.⁵³ How could his conduct be wrong, Juárez apparently asked his critics, if the leader of the world’s exemplary republic administered his government in a similar manner? “Thus,” the *Tribune* lamented, “the baleful example of the “model Republic”” had exacted the “most deleterious influence” in Mexico.⁵⁴ According to these newspapers, the two presidents of the North American republics justified and encouraged one another’s autocratic impulses. Such a toxic relationship was a shameful perversion of the United States’ proper role as the standard-bearer of self-governance and demonstrated the extent to which factionalism had undermined the integrity of the republic.

These newspapers did more than rail against Grant and his conduct of Reconstruction policy. As the 1872 presidential election approached, they threw their support behind a candidate who they believed could reverse this demoralisation of American political culture. In 1872, Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, accepted the Liberal Republicans’ invitation to run as their candidate for president. His candidacy would later also be adopted by the Democratic Party. The Liberal Republicans had their origins in 1870, when a group of intellectuals and politicians from both the nation’s major political parties came together to form their own organisation. Historians have struggled to explain how such a disparate collection of individuals, some of whom held opposing positions on such vital issues as the tariff and free trade, joined together in a single political movement.⁵⁵ One thing which did unite them was their belief that Reconstruction exacerbated sectional

⁵² “What Are We Coming To?” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 May 1872.

⁵³ “Mexico: Signs of Revival,” *New York Tribune*, 21 August 1872, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ In the mid-twentieth century, a common view among scholars held that the Liberal Republican leadership consisted of out-of-touch elitists who waged war against the spoils system in a bid to regain the political and cultural status they had lost to the rise of party machines. For an example of this interpretation, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 131-64. Other historians have characterised the Liberal Republicans as primarily an anti-Grant movement with no discernible agenda other than to prevent his re-election. See, for example, John G. Sproat, *“The Best Men”: Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). Recent scholarship tends to take the Liberal Republicans more seriously and draws attention to the sincere ideological and political values which informed their policy agenda. See, for example, Slap, *Doom of Reconstruction*; and, Robert W. Burg, “Amnesty, Civil Rights, and the Meaning of Liberal Republicanism, 1862-1872,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 4, no. 3 (2003), 29-60.

tensions among Americans and that the project must therefore end if they were to ever bridge the chasms which had separated them since the Civil War. “The war of arms was over seven years ago,” the *New York Tribune*, now the effective mouthpiece Greeley’s campaign, announced in June 1872, “and it is high time real peace was established.”⁵⁶ It is important to note that the Liberals did not propose to reverse Reconstruction’s achievements, but rather believed that its gains, such as black suffrage, ought to be protected by state instead of federal power.⁵⁷ Liberals therefore called for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South in order to bring federal power, so egregiously abused by President Grant, back within its constitutional limits. The *New York Tribune* added that doing so would force the carpetbaggers in Southern legislatures to stand before the public in elections without the protection of federal arms. The newspaper predicted that voters would immediately rout the “reprobate and crooked” from office and replace them with honest and civic-minded representatives who would “work for the good of the people – black and white.”⁵⁸ Ending Reconstruction, these Liberals hoped, would undercut the venal elements which had polluted the nation’s public sphere during Grant’s presidency.

While these policies targeted office-seekers, other elements of the Liberal Republican agenda aimed to tackle the deeply-rooted habit of sectionalism both within the United States’ political class and society more broadly. Once again, they insisted that an end to Reconstruction was critical to achieve this objective. Robert W. Burg notes that Liberals were confident that there was a large contingent of Southerners “who accepted the results of the war and were ready to rebuild southern society” in partnership with their Northern countrymen.⁵⁹ Accordingly, they proposed a programme of universal amnesty which would remove the political disabilities that the federal government had placed on former rebels after the Civil War in return for the guarantee that henceforth Southern legislatures would abide by the Reconstruction Amendments. On this basis the Reconstruction question would be put to rest and could no longer be used by demagogic politicians to whip up animosities among the American people. Instead, citizens of both sections could direct their energies towards more useful and unifying pursuits. “We have no time,” one Liberal orator told an audience in Washington D.C. in August 1872, “to stop and chaffer and bandy words” of sectional recrimination “when a great and glorious nation is prostrate in her commerce, trammelled in her manufacturers, straitened in her agriculture, cramped in her finance, and

⁵⁶ “Stirring Reform Meeting at Syracuse,” *New York Tribune*, 26 June 1872, 1.

⁵⁷ For more on how Liberal Republicans proposed to preserve the gains of Reconstruction while advocating for federal retreat from the South, see Burg, “Amnesty, Civil Rights, and the Meaning of Liberal Republicanism, 1862-1872,” 40-43.

⁵⁸ “Grant’s Policy,” *New York Tribune*, 4 October 1872, 2.

⁵⁹ Burg, “Amnesty, Civil Rights, and the Meaning of Liberal Republicanism, 1862-1872,” 36.

bleeding at every pore.”⁶⁰ The Liberal Republicans claimed that the reconciling potential of their agenda was evident in their movement’s ability to draw in supporters from both the North and South. “The inveterate enmity is forgotten,” the *New York Tribune* said of one Liberal meeting in Vermont, which it claimed was attended by former Republican and Democratic voters in equal measure.⁶¹ “The issues of the war are closed, and family dissensions on political topics that had existed since 1845 are now harmonized under the head of Greeley.”⁶² If Americans denied Grant a second term on polling day in November, the newspaper predicted, this trend would spread throughout the nation.

These newspapers had previously warned that rampant factionalism had undermined the United States’ status as the model of stable self-government in the New World. During the 1872 campaign, they insisted that a Greeley presidency would restore the dynamics of the continent to their proper form. In August that year, a reporter based in Mexico City informed readers of the *New York Tribune* that “there is considerable anxiety expressed among the Mexicans on the subject of the Presidential election in the United States.”⁶³ They were apparently all Greeley men, and entertained “the highest hopes” of his election in November.⁶⁴ For this journalist, Mexicans’ interest in the upcoming U.S. presidential election was understandable. After all, he reasoned, they recognised that Juárez had been “sustained in his course of dictatorship by the example of Grant.”⁶⁵ A victory for tyranny north of the border would strengthen its hold to the south and Mexicans therefore had as much at stake in the coming election as did their American neighbours. According to this reporter, then, Mexicans understood something which many Americans appeared to have forgotten: The United States was the standard-bearer of republicanism in the world and the integrity of its electoral processes was therefore of concern to anyone who wished to point to its example as evidence of the benefits of democracy and self-governance. The *Chicago Tribune* made a similar point in October 1872. In recent years, the newspaper noted, the United States had slipped from its “proper role as the model of democracy” by “permitting vice and venality to pollute its institutions.”⁶⁶ However, Greeley’s election would return virtue and lawfulness to the nation’s politics and so project a positive image of republicanism to which Mexicans and other admirers of free government across the globe could aspire. Resting on the shoulders of American voters on election day, therefore, was not only the future of their own republic, but that of all others around the world.

⁶⁰ “Political Intelligence,” *New York Tribune*, 15 August 1872, 2.

⁶¹ No Title, *Springfield Republican* (MA), quoted in “Political Intelligence,” *New York Tribune*, 15 August 1872, 2.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ “Mexico: Signs of Revival,” *New York Tribune*, 21 August 1872, 1.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “The Presidential Campaign,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 October 1872, 1.

When Grant won re-election in November 1872, Liberal Republicans viewed it as a triumph for the forces of faction.⁶⁷ Pro-Greeley Massachusetts newspaper the *Springfield Republican*, for example, believed that the Liberal Republicans had offered Americans the chance to achieve true reconciliation and domestic peace. Yet it seemed that the influences of sectionalism and party prejudice had too strong a hold over the popular mind. The Republicans' dire warnings of imminent Southern rebellions had persuaded credulous voters to send Grant back into office with a mandate to continue Reconstruction and with it the "perpetuation of the divisions and the animosities of a generation of strife."⁶⁸ Indeed, over the course of Grant's second term, these publications sensed that the forces of division and corruption in public life not only continued but evolved. As the *Nation* observed in 1874, "there has developed in the South ... a pattern of tit-for-tat" whereby "one party's wrongdoing ... is taken as license for the other to do the same."⁶⁹ Republicans, the journal explained, used their control over the machinery of electoral processes in the region to tamper with voting returns during elections. Southern Democrats therefore turned to extra-legal and often violent methods to depress the Republican vote and give their party a fighting chance at the polls. Republicans then pointed to this violence to ease their own consciences for the frauds which they had committed. In short, the two parties were locked in a spiral of corruption which looked set to escalate out of control. "The next step in this devil's logic," the *Springfield Republican* warned in 1874, "will be for the party so counted out to refuse to peacefully submit – then we shall have come to Mexicanization and anarchy."⁷⁰ Political corruption was an infectious phenomenon which spread like a disease, these publications warned, and it was only a matter of time before the nefarious practices of carpetbaggers in the South spread throughout the nation.

When the 1876 presidential election devolved into crisis, these newspapers saw it as evidence that their worst fears had come to pass. Mexicanization had spread beyond Southern state governments throughout the national electoral system. Unlike the partisan press, these former Liberal organs blamed both parties for the situation. Violence perpetrated at polling stations by white Southerners, they argued, had given license to Republican agents

⁶⁷ Historians have offered different explanations for Grant's landslide victory in 1872. Greeley's weakness as a candidate – both politically and in terms of personality - certainly played a role. Internal fissures within the Liberal Republican Party were also an important factor; Greeley's views about free trade were utterly at odds with much of his party's membership while his reputation as an abolitionist no doubt kept some Democratic voters at home on election day. For a useful summary of these factors which also takes into account the sophisticated machinery of the Republican Party organisation, in determining the outcome of the 1872 election, see Slap, *Doom of Reconstruction*, 164-98.

⁶⁸ *Springfield Republican* (MA), quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*, 9 November 1872, 2.

⁶⁹ "The South Today," *Nation*, 8 July 1874, 6.

⁷⁰ No Title, *Springfield Republican* (MA), quoted in George S. Merriam, *The Life and Times of Samuel Bowles* (New York: The Century Company, 1885), 287.

to tamper with the vote count in the disputed states. “No party,” the *New York Tribune* concluded in November, “has emerged from this election well.”⁷¹ True to form, these newspapers declared that a culture of factionalism among the American people had enabled this political lawlessness. As the *Nation* lamented in December 1876, American voters had grown accustomed over recent years to “treating the political party opposed to [their] own as a band of criminals or conspirators against the Government.”⁷² As a result, they had learned to tolerate all kinds of nefarious behaviour on the part of their preferred party, convinced that to punish them for such wrongdoing by voting for the opposition would only do greater harm to the republic. The *Nation* surmised that ever since the Civil War, Americans had lost their “familiarity and respect for certain forms and processes and principles” which had previously formed the foundation of peaceful and well-ordered government in their country.⁷³ This demoralising process had been evident “in a greater or less degree all over the South” ever since the close of the conflict.⁷⁴ The outcome of the 1876 presidential election, however, indicated that the virus was spreading and that “the north has signs of catching the disease too.”⁷⁵ Like Mexicans, it seemed, Americans’ prolonged exposure to a climate of severe internal strife had eroded their respect for lawful political conduct. The shameful way in which the 1876 election had been conducted was proof of how this Mexicanizing trend threatened the stability of the institutions of the republic.

The version of Mexicanization forwarded by these independent and conservative Republican publications helps to explain why they welcomed President-elect Hayes’ decision in January 1877 to remove federal troops from the South. This apparent end to Southern Reconstruction, they believed, was critical if Americans were ever to harmonise their deeply polarised political culture. Interestingly, a similar motivation had led these same organs to support Radical Reconstruction immediately after Civil War. At that time, they had accepted the need for a thorough-going federal programme of political reform in the former Confederate states in order to rid the region of the divisive influence of the Slave Power. However, over time newspapers such as the *New York Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune* came to suspect that avaricious office-seekers had taken advantage of Reconstruction policy to advance their personal ambitions. Editors such as Edwin Godkin and Horace White belonged to a network of reform-minded intellectuals and writers whose distaste for political corruption long predated the Civil War.⁷⁶ During the 1870s, however, their use of the language of Mexicanization revealed their concern that the Civil War had damaged

⁷¹ “The Presidential Election,” *New York Tribune*, 23 November 1876, 3.

⁷² “What is Mexicanization,” *Nation* (NY), 21 December 1876, 365.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Butler, *Critical Americans*, 17-51.

American political culture in ways that might be irreparable. Mexico's troubled political history, they claimed, was a result of the habits of factionalism which had been engrafted into its population by decades of domestic conflict. The turmoil of Mexican politics could therefore befall any republic which experienced a prolonged period of civil strife. The unsettled state of American politics during the 1870s convinced these publications that the Civil War had normalised division and conflict in the United States and left a stain of faction on its political culture. When President Hayes announced the removal of federal troops from the South, therefore, these publications breathed a sigh of relief that perhaps now their country's slide into towards Mexicanization might be reversed.

Rethinking Mexicanization: The Fear of the Spoilsman in Partisan Political Discourse

In January 1877, the U.S. Congress created the Electoral Commission and tasked it with determining who had won last November's disputed presidential election. The Commission eventually decided in Hayes' favour. The following March, most of the national press celebrated the new president's peaceful inauguration as a testament to the resilience of the U.S. democratic system. "Though we have experienced dark days," Washington D.C. newspaper the *National Republican* declared, "our nation has weathered the storm."⁷⁷ However, two years later a group of congressional Democrats launched an investigation into the alleged frauds surrounding Hayes' election. As the controversy of 1876 resurfaced, the language of Mexicanization re-emerged in public discourse. This time, however, organs from across the political spectrum used the term in much the same way that the conservative Republican and independent organs had done in 1876. Previously, Democratic and Republican publications typically blamed instability in national politics on those familiar villains of the Civil War era, either Radicals or slaveholders. In 1878, however, many of them were more inclined to view office-seekers as the principal pollutant within the public sphere. They agreed, moreover, that the spoilsman's source of power lay in the rampant sectionalism which had been exacerbated since the Civil War by the Reconstruction question. When in 1878 a cohort of Stalwart Republicans pressed for the recommencement of federal oversight of Southern politics, therefore, much of the national press – Democratic, independent, and Republican – moved swiftly to denounce them as agitators of domestic peace. Widespread concerns regarding factionalism in public life, in short, helped to foreclose this Stalwart move and so drive the final nail into Reconstruction's coffin.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ "Domestic Politics," *National Republican* (D.C.), 20 March 1877, 4.

⁷⁸ The conventional narrative is that Reconstruction ended with Hayes' inauguration in 1877. As the Stalwart effort to recommence the programme in 1878 suggests, however, the recommencement of formal Reconstruction was still a possibility even after Hayes removed federal troops from the South. Recently, historians have also begun to question whether 1877 truly marked the end of

In May 1878, the House of Representatives formed the Potter Committee and in doing so returned the controversy surrounding President Hayes' election to the forefront of national public discourse. While many Americans had celebrated the peaceful resolution of the 1876 electoral crisis, some Democrats had refused to accept the Electoral Commission's decision. Throughout Hayes' term they had continuously derided the president as an impostor who had cheated his way into the White House. In 1878, a cohort of Northern Congressmen took the effort to undermine Hayes' claim to the presidency one step further. In May of that year, Democratic Representative of New York Clarkson N. Potter introduced a resolution to the House which called for an investigation into the 1876 election. That body's Democratic majority immediately approved the bill, and for the next ten months the Potter Committee investigated accusations of wrongdoing by Republican operatives in charge of recounting votes in the disputed states of Florida and Louisiana. Ultimately, the results of the investigation were rather lacklustre; the evidence uncovered by the investigation was mostly contradictory and inconclusive, and served only to tarnish the reputations of a handful of state election officials. While it carried on its work, however, the Committee produced a sensation in the national press and made the issue of corruption in the electoral system once again a matter of public discussion.

Certain portions of the Republican press revived their former rhetoric of Mexicanization to condemn the Potter Committee as another Southern conspiracy to foment discord within the republic. In July 1878, for example, the *National Republican* declared that the investigation was nothing short of an outright "assault upon the title of President Hayes."⁷⁹ Its sole purpose was to cultivate doubt in the public mind regarding the legitimacy of Hayes' claim to the presidency. Once the peoples' confidence in their president had been sufficiently undermined, the newspaper warned, congressional Democrats would push forward legislation to overturn the decision of the 1877 Electoral Commission and install Tilden into the White House. According to the *Republican*, this plot had all the hallmarks of a Slave Power conspiracy. To be sure, Representative Potter was a New Yorker and most of the Democrats who had approved his resolution hailed from Northern states. But these congressmen had simply taken on the role played by Copperheads during the Civil War –

Reconstruction. Heather Cox Richardson notes that the disenfranchisement of African Americans in the South was a drawn-out process which was not completed until roughly 1900 (Richardson, *Death of Reconstruction*, 122-224). Hilary Green points out that the federal government continued to provide funds for the education of black children in the South until the 1890s. See Green, *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016). It should also be noted that other historians have argued that Reconstruction effectively ended when Democrats gained control of the House of Representatives in 1874 – all of which suggests that scholars should exercise caution when attempting to identify the precise start and end dates of Reconstruction.

⁷⁹ No Title, *National Republican* (D.C.) quoted in "Grant in 1880," *St-Louis Globe Democrat*, 11 July 1878, 4.

obedient stooges of the Southern slavocracy who facilitated the “encroachment of Confederate power” in the Union.⁸⁰ The *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* agreed. These Democrats’ refusal to accept the results of the Electoral Commission echoed the Southern theory that “the minority always rule.”⁸¹ It was the same undemocratic notion which had spurred the South to secede after Lincoln’s election, and which drove Southern Democrats to use intimidation and violence to win elections after the Civil War. If the Committee was successful in its plot to oust Hayes, it would signal that this slavocratic doctrine had become the law of the land. “Mexicanization will prevail,” the *Record-Union* warned, “all true ordered government will cease, and fraud and force will be in the ascent everywhere.”⁸² Thirteen years since the fall of the Confederacy, these newspapers proclaimed, and the Southern rebel had still not given up his anti-democratic notions and treasonous ambitions.

These Republican organs argued that the recent revival of the South’s Mexicanizing agenda was evidence that the work of Reconstruction was incomplete. Indeed, for the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, the Potter investigation proved the “error of the President’s Southern policy.”⁸³ Hayes had agreed to remove federal troops from the South in the faith that those states would abide by the Reconstruction Amendments and acquiesce to his claim to the presidency. Representative Potter and his cabal of congressional Democrats’ recent assault on his title proved that Hayes’ trust had been misplaced. The “Mexicanization schemes of the Tilden plotters,” the *National Republican* declared, demonstrated that the Southern traitors’ ambition to overhaul the republic was as strong as ever.⁸⁴ In the spring and summer of 1878, these newspapers’ claims that plans for a second rebellion lay behind the Potter investigation were bolstered by reports of violence perpetrated by white vigilantes against African Americans during local elections in several Southern states. The “spirit of the Confederate Democracy,” the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* asserted, had been “inspired with new hopes in the recent Mexicanization schemes inaugurated at the Capital.”⁸⁵ While Northern Democrats fomented instability in Washington, their co-conspirators did the same throughout the South. According to the *Sentinel*, there was only one way to combat this resurgent assault against the republic. “The growing lawlessness needs to be checked,” the newspaper insisted, “and it can only be done by the use or menace of force.”⁸⁶ Federal troops must return to the South and the Hayes administration pledge itself to the defence of the voting rights of black Americans throughout the region. Only by doing so, the newspaper

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “The Fundamental Issue,” *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 11 September 1880.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Calling a Halt,” *Inter-Ocean* (IL), 30 May 1878, 1.

⁸⁴ *National Republican* (D.C.) quoted in “Grant in 1880,” *St-Louis Globe Democrat*, 11 July 1878, 4.

⁸⁵ No Title, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 24 May 1878, 4.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

concluded, could this nascent second rebellion be put down, peace in the South restored, and the American people guaranteed any “stability of administration” in Washington.⁸⁷

According to these Republican organs, the Potter investigation signalled the beginning of another Southern uprising which only the recommencement of Reconstruction could prevent.

Democrats vigorously denied these accusations. “There is no intention,” the *Memphis Daily Appeal* asserted in June 1878, “of the Democratic party in any part of the country to make an attempt to oust Mr. Hayes.”⁸⁸ This claim gained further credence when, two weeks after it was formed, the Committee pledged that it would not seek the authority to overturn the decision of the 1877 Electoral Commission or in any way challenge Hayes’ claim to the presidency. Democrats pointed to this oath as proof that the Potter Committee did not harbour any revolutionary intentions and was motivated solely by a desire to tackle corruption in the nation’s political system. A pamphlet issued in June by the Tammany Hall Democracy, for example, noted that the “whole world knows – or ought to know” that the Electoral Commission had erred in its decision.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Democrats understood that there could be “no appeal except to the ballot-box in 1880.”⁹⁰ Having established the purity of the Committee’s goals, Democratic organs argued that Republicans had deliberately mischaracterised the Potter investigation as a rebel conspiracy in order to agitate public sentiment against the South. The *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, for example, castigated the “Radical fanatics” who sought to escalate the investigation into a “mare’s nest” by convincing Americans that it foreshadowed a “rebellion and revolution” in the South.⁹¹ The *Daily Arkansas Courier-Journal* similarly chastised Republicans for attempting to persuade the public that “all Democrats were rebels ... awaiting a fair opportunity to seize the arsenals and forts” of the federal government.⁹² These publications reminded their readers that since the close of the Civil War, Radicals had used black suffrage to sow discord in Southern politics and pointed to the ensuing anarchy as justification for holding that region under federal military control. A similar strategy was at play in 1878. As the *Gazette* observed, Republicans coupled their warnings that plans for an “armed rebellion” lay behind the Potter investigation with calls for the administration to recommence Reconstruction.⁹³ The old

⁸⁷ No Title, *National Republican* (D.C.) quoted in “Grant in 1880,” *St Louis Globe-Democrat*, 11 July 1878, 4.

⁸⁸ “Tammany Hall and the Presidency,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 12 June 1878, 2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ “The Attitude of Mr. Stephens,” *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, 11 June 1878.

⁹² No Title, *Courier-Journal* (KY), quoted in “Sherman’s Girl,” *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, 2 July 1878, 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Radical plot to exaggerate and exacerbate domestic instability as a means to consolidate federal power was in operation yet again.

The argument that the Republicans' Mexicanizing intrigues were fuelled by Radical doctrines of militarism and centralisation echoed the charges Democrats had made in the aftermath of the 1876 presidential election. In 1878, however, many noted that another motivation was behind Republican opposition to the Potter investigation. In June, for example, Atlanta's *Daily Constitution* explained to its readers that the Republicans' "howl of revolution ... was intended to intimidate and overawe the Potter committee" in the hopes that the investigation would be shut down before it could reveal the "stupendous frauds" their operatives had committed during the 1876 election.⁹⁴ The *Memphis Daily Appeal* agreed. Republicans, the newspaper explained, were terrified that the Committee's pledge not to disturb Hayes' title would ensure that Americans' "fears of revolution are set to rest."⁹⁵ If this occurred, the investigation would be permitted to carry out its probe and quickly uncover the full extent of the "fraud, perjury and forgery" committed by Republicans in 1876.⁹⁶ These newspapers had no doubt that some zealous Radicals had seized on the Potter investigation to revive popular fears of the slavocracy and so resurrect their long-cherished scheme to rule over the South as a colonial appendage. As the *Georgia Weekly Telegraph* noted, however, a great many Republicans opposed the investigation purely out of concern for their own "personal fortunes."⁹⁷ The Republican organisation, the newspaper explained, was rotten to the core, filled with reprobates and demagogues who had swindled, lied, and bribed their way into power. Should the Potter investigation reveal their true nature, therefore, the public would punish them at the polls and drive them out of office. According to these Democrats, ambition and self-interest, perhaps even more than ideology, lay behind Republican opposition to the Potter investigation.

According to these Democrats, the reason why the Republican Party was apparently rife with corruption was due to the way its members had incessantly wrangled over the Reconstruction question ever since the Civil War. The *Galveston Daily News*, for example, observed in June 1878 that since the Civil War, Radicals had "assiduously cultivated" among their voters the notion that the Democracy was the effective political arm of the ever-present slavocracy and should be considered a "public enemy whose triumph would be the sum of all political calamities."⁹⁸ The original purpose behind these lies had been to terrify Americans into supporting Radical Reconstruction. Over time, however, the strategy had unwittingly attracted a disproportionate number of degenerates into the Republican fold. As

⁹⁴ "The Squeak of the Organs," *Daily Constitution* (GA), 22 June 1878, 2.

⁹⁵ "The Last Gun Spiked," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 19 June 1878, 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ "Personal Politics – Mexicanization," *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, 9 April 1880, 4.

⁹⁸ "Mexicanization and Party Spirit," *Galveston Daily News*, 23 June 1878, 1.

the newspaper explained, the belief that leaders of one party or another were enemies of the nation “lent sanction to the maxim that all is fair in politics.”⁹⁹ Republican demagoguery rendered its supporters so fearful of the Democracy that they could not contemplate transferring their vote to the party even when they learned that their Republican representatives had committed all manner of “fraud and infamy” while in office.¹⁰⁰ Naturally, a party which encouraged such demagoguery – and, by extension, such corruption – would appeal to opportunists who looked upon political office primarily as a means to fill their own pockets. The result was that over the course of the postwar era, Republicans had inadvertently encouraged the accumulation of “vices and profligacies” within their ranks.¹⁰¹ The *News*’ theory of political demoralisation echoed that which conservative Republican and independent publications had formulated in the early 1870s. “True Mexicanization,” the newspaper concluded, “consists in the spread of the belief ... that the state government can only be carried on by one party, and that if the opposition should gain the ascendancy” it would lead to the country’s destruction.¹⁰² Publications such as the *New York Tribune* and the *Nation* had maintained that Reconstruction policy bred corruption in both the nation’s major political parties. According to the *Galveston Daily News* and other Democratic organs, however, vice and venality were the sole preserve of the Republican Party whose members, once actuated by extreme political doctrines, were now principally unified by their shared hunger for the spoils of office.

These Democrats used this image of the corrupt Republican organisation in their effort to forestall the move among some of its members to pressure the Hayes administration to resuscitate Reconstruction policy. Certainly, by pushing the notion that the Republican Party was a cesspool of vice and corruption, Democrats sought to portray themselves before the American people as the party of honest government. As the *Memphis Daily Appeal* claimed, the congressional Democrats’ creation of the Potter Committee had been an “able and patriotic act,” the opening salvo in that party’s “warfare against villainy and hypocrisy” in the public sphere.¹⁰³ More than this, however, by arguing that Republicans agitated old sectional animosities in order to avoid facing public scorn for their ineptitude and corruption, Democrats elevated Reconstruction from a regional issue focussed solely on the South to a matter of national concern. “All who hate venal elements ... who have infected every state house, every legislature, every congress,” the *Appeal* declared in November 1878, “must stand up against the Stalwart move to give these forces fresh life again in the

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ “Winona,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 12 June 1878, 2.

South.”¹⁰⁴ The heart of the issue, therefore, was not the controversial questions of black suffrage, Southern loyalty, states’ rights or the proper limits of federal power. Instead, Democrats insisted, the latest front of the Reconstruction battle was a contest between the forces of honesty and corruption, virtue and selfishness in public life. All those who cared about the rule of law in public life must therefore oppose the move to recommence Reconstruction.

Some Republican organs also developed a different reading of the Mexicanizing threat which Democrats apparently posed to the nation. Much like their Democratic counterparts, they too began to emphasise personal ambition, rather than ideological doctrine, as the motivating force behind their opponents’ recent efforts to destabilise the republic. As we have seen, several major Republican publications claimed to see the hand of the Slave Power pulling the strings of the Potter Committee. Others, however, questioned this assessment. To the *San Francisco Chronicle*, for example, the investigation seemed more like the desperate machinations of a clique of party “managers,” united by a “unanimous desire for office and power.”¹⁰⁵ The Chicago *Inter-Ocean* agreed. The architects of the plot were Northerners, the newspaper pointed out, and appeared to be seeking to advance “the personal ambition of a disappointed man,” their defeated candidate Samuel Tilden, rather than resurrect the Southern slavocracy.¹⁰⁶ Even the tactics which the Potter cabal had employed differed from those typically used by intransigent rebels since the fall of the Confederacy. As the Pittsburgh *Commercial Gazette* noted, diehard Confederates resorted to crude violence and assault to intimidate their political opponents. The Potter Committee, by contrast, aimed at “overturning the logically ascertained results of the election, by an illegal and extraordinary use of the powers of one branch of Government.”¹⁰⁷ Political chicanery and legislative trickery, rather than outright force, were their preferred methods of disruption. These newspapers therefore concluded that the Potter investigation bore the hallmarks of an intrigue by party managers, rather than of a resurgent Southern rebellion.

This threat required a new response to subdue it. Reconstruction was perhaps an appropriate method to combat the Southern Slave Power. In the case of the conniving party manager, however, it could only exacerbate the problem. These organs based this logic on the notion that in recent years the reins of power within the Democracy had shifted from South to North. The *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, for example, argued that the party’s former Southern leaders had been steeped in doctrines of proslavery, aristocratic ideology. The

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ “Mexicanization,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 May 1878, 3.

¹⁰⁶ “Results of Democratic Policy,” *Inter-Ocean* (IL), 25 May 1878, 4.

¹⁰⁷ No Title, *Commercial Gazette* (PA) quoted in “Mexicanization,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 May 1878, 3.

Potter Committee, however, signalled the advent of a new epoch in Democratic leadership, the members of which hailed from the North and Northeast and derived principally from the “office-holding and office-seeking class.”¹⁰⁸ Unlike their predecessors, these men were largely apolitical and viewed elections, voters, and even their own party merely as “instruments for their own advancement.”¹⁰⁹ There was, however, a strand of ideological continuity which connected these new party managers with their Southern forbears. As the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette* explained, while never slaveholders themselves, these Northern Democrats agreed with the old “Southern theory, that a warlike minority shall rule the nation.”¹¹⁰ The *Cleveland Herald* explained this further when it reminded its readers that Democrats had a history of opposing the popular will of the people, including their refusal to accept Lincoln’s election in 1860 and the recent violation of their pledge to “abide loyally by the decision of the Electoral Commission.”¹¹¹ There was, in short, a culture of disdain for law and order within the ranks of the Democracy that held that a minority could use any means at its disposal to overturn the results of a democratic election. This culture had drawn ambitious opportunists into the party’s ranks and viewed it as a mandate to engage in all manner of criminal and dishonest political activity without fear of retribution.

In a somewhat remarkable leap of logic, these Republicans then argued that the Potter investigation was a deliberate attempt by Northern Democrats to compel the Hayes administration to re-open the Reconstruction question. This objective apparently stemmed from the fact that the recent transfer of power within the Democracy had created a gulf between the party’s leadership and its traditional supporters in the South. As the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* explained, over recent years the Democratic Party had become “less and less under the control of or in sympathy with the people” which it represented, particularly in the Southern states.¹¹² This was a problem because, as the *Baltimore Sun* pointed out, the party needed a “solid South” in order to maintain any influence in the federal government.¹¹³ That Southern support for Democrats was slipping away was evident by the warm welcome Hayes’ conciliation policy had received among substantial portions of the Southern press. Lacking any ideological beliefs of their own, Northern Democrats had apparently therefore concluded that they must reinvigorate sectional tensions to keep Southern voters within the party fold, and that the most effective way to do this would be by reigniting the public debate over the Reconstruction question. This, these Republican publications claimed, was the true purpose behind the Potter investigation. As the *National Republican* explained,

¹⁰⁸ “The Democratic Plot,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 20 May 1878, 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ No Title, *Commercial Gazette* quoted in “Mexicanization,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 May 1878, 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² “The Democratic Plot,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 20 May 1878, 4.

¹¹³ “The Political Campaign,” (*Baltimore Sun*), 29 May 1878, 4.

President Hayes had been convinced that Southern Democrats were “honest and sincere” in their pledge to respect both the Reconstruction Amendments and his claim to the presidency.¹¹⁴ The Potter investigation, however, had inflamed Southern ire over the supposedly stolen election of 1876. The subsequent outpouring of hostility towards the president from much of the Southern press had begun to convince Hayes that his strategy, predicated on sectional goodwill, had been “a complete failure.”¹¹⁵ The Democratic leadership was even more pleased by the Stalwart Republicans’ response to the investigation. As the *National Republican* explained, those Republican publications which had criticised the “president as an over-trustful and sadly mistaken man” for ending federal oversight of Southern politics played directly into the hands of the Democratic managers.¹¹⁶ The insults which they had hurled towards the South would put off any wavering voters in the region from switching their allegiance to the Republicans. If their agitations led to the recommencement of Reconstruction policy, moreover, Southern fealty to the Democracy in perpetuity would be guaranteed.

These Republican organs used this reinterpretation of Mexicanization to present themselves as the party of honest government and sectional peace. Central to this claim was their rejection of Reconstruction as a needlessly divisive policy. The *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, for example, made this argument in an article in which it appealed to Southerners to reject the Democracy and its self-serving leaders. As the newspaper argued, the Northern cabal at the head of the Democracy was determined to reopen the Reconstruction question in order to reawaken sectional tensions among the American people and so “Mexicanize the United States” for their own ends.¹¹⁷ “Nothing can prevent serious results from this proposed scheme,” the newspaper insisted, “but the united, prompt, and vigorous opposition to it by the law-and-order element of all parties the country over.”¹¹⁸ The *Sentinel* therefore called on Southerners to denounce the machinations of the Potter clique and so demonstrate that “the confidence was not misplaced which President Hayes manifested in the South when he withdrew the troops from the State Houses of South Carolina and Louisiana.”¹¹⁹ Contrary to the accusations of Democrats, then, Republicans did not wish to re-open the Reconstruction question. Indeed, they recognised that doing so would feed Southern resentments, foment faction throughout the country, and so give succour to the grasping politicians in the Northern Democracy. The *Sentinel* called on Southerners to reject the Democratic Party as a corrupt organisation and instead enter the ranks of the Republicans, where together with

¹¹⁴ “The Postmaster’s Letter,” *National Republican* (D.C.), 30 May 1878, 4.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ “The Democratic Plot,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 20 May 1878, 4.

¹¹⁸ “The Proposed Revolution,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 30 May 1878, 4.

¹¹⁹ “The Political Campaign,” (*Baltimore*) *Sun*, 29 May 1878, 4.

their Northern countrymen they could initiate a “revolt against professional politicians” and make “progress towards the purification of politics.”¹²⁰ By rejecting Reconstruction, then, these Republican publications aimed to portray themselves to Southern voters as the defenders of sectional peace and, by extension, of honest and lawful politics in the United States.

These Republican organs’ willingness to reject Reconstruction in the name of sectional peace reveals the extent to which their perception of what was the principal disruptive pollutant within the republic had changed. Not all Republicans were unanimous on this question. As the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* observed, certain Stalwart Republicans apparently still lived in fear of rebellious Southern elements and campaigned “on a denunciation of the President’s Southern policy and a restoration of the bayonet policy in the South.”¹²¹ The *Sentinel* concluded that these portions of the Republican Party did not appreciate how damaging a “revival of sectional animosity” would be to the republic.¹²² Indeed, the transition which most Republicans’ interpretation of Mexicanization underwent between 1876 and 1878 reveals that for them, the office-seeker had eclipsed the slaveholder as the principal menace within the body politic. This is not to suggest that one internal threat had neatly supplanted another in the period of two years. Rather, what these two iterations of Mexicanization reveal is that Republicans were conscious of two threats existing in their midst, with each being illuminated by the dynamics of the 1876 electoral crisis and the Potter investigation of 1878 respectively. The turmoil of Hayes’ election, which centred on white violence against black voters at Southern polling stations, bore the familiar hallmarks of the disruptive practices of intransigent rebels. Meanwhile, the Potter investigation more closely resembled the intrigues of office-seekers. Republicans were certainly capable of holding both perceived threats in their minds at the same time. What is clear, however, is that in 1878, when faced with the choice between combating the slaveholder or the office-seeker, most Republican organs chose the latter. In doing so, they demonstrated that they too had come to accept that Reconstruction, however laudable its original intent, had inadvertently spawned a more menacing threat to the republic.

Conclusion

When the news spread that President Garfield had been shot by a disappointed office-seeker in July 1881, the *New York Tribune* declared the act a product of the “malignant, grasping

¹²⁰ “The Democratic Plot,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 20 May 1878, 4.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

and desperate spirit” which had infected the nation’s political class in recent years.¹²³ The *Tribune* was a long-time foe of immorality in the public sphere and its disdain for corruption, selfishness, and deception among public officials stretched back into the antebellum period. Publications across the political spectrum, however, echoed the *Tribune*’s view. “This dreadful tragedy at Washington,” Democratic newspaper the *Boston Herald* bemoaned, “can be traced directly to the low level of our politics.”¹²⁴ The Republican *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* similarly asserted that Guiteau’s crime was the outgrowth of the “general lawlessness” which currently reigned in American politics based on the ruinous code that “every man shall be a law unto himself.”¹²⁵ Selfishness and a thirst for power, these publications concluded, had infected the country’s leaders and driven them to desperate and deplorable acts. Guiteau’s crime was extreme, but for years politicians had been committing a thousand other lesser transgressions – fraud, extortion, deception, bribery – to get themselves into office. These newspapers’ scorn did not stop at politicians, however. According to the *New York Tribune*, while Guiteau’s overweening ambition led him to pull the trigger, “there is absolutely nothing to account for this horrible deed ... except the Mexicanization” of American society which had manifested as a “crazy spirit of faction” among the people.¹²⁶ Repeating the warning it had issued throughout the previous decade, the *Tribune* explained that by their unquestioning loyalty to party and section, Americans had permitted their leaders to carry on their harmful practices without fear of punishment at the polls. Americans’ distrust of one another, it seemed, was stronger than their love for their country’s institutions.

These publications’ diagnosis of the cause of the attempted assassination of President Garfield revealed how they had come to see the officer-seeker, and the spirit of faction he bred, as the principal destabilising force in their postwar society. During the 1870s, this growing fear helped to erode popular support for the postwar project of Southern Reconstruction. During the early part of the decade, certain independent and conservative Republican organs had been the first to raise this concern and use it as an argument to bring an end to federal oversight of Southern politics. These publications had initially supported Radical Reconstruction as a necessary effort to eradicate the last vestiges of the slavocracy from Southern society and thereby guarantee the nation domestic peace and stability. But over time they had come to believe that the powers that Reconstruction legislation had granted to the federal government had cultivated a host of vices among American politicians and emboldened them to commit all manner of crimes to get themselves into office. What

¹²³ “Faction’s Latest Crime,” *New York Tribune*, 3 July 1881, 6.

¹²⁴ “Lift the Level,” *Boston Herald*, 5 July 1881, 2.

¹²⁵ “The Fourth,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 4 July 1881, 4.

¹²⁶ “Faction’s Latest Crime,” *New York Tribune*, 3 July 1881, 6.

was more, the Reconstruction question itself was a useful tool for these malignant elements to whip up sectional animosities among the American people and so persuade them to accept the corruption practiced by their representatives as a lesser evil than voting them out of office. These former supporters of Reconstruction did not necessarily believe that all remaining elements of the slavocracy had been expunged from Southern society. They did, however, insist that whatever the threat it still posed to the nation paled in comparison to that of the avaricious office-seeker.

The same notion gradually gained traction throughout all portions of the American press. Previous chapters have shown that, during the Civil War and immediate postwar period, partisan publications generally split in their understanding of who represented the principal domestic menace to the republic. Republican organs pointed to the aristocratic slaveholder and his agents in government while the ire of Democratic publications chiefly focussed on Radicals. Over the course of the 1870s, however, even the most partisan of organs expressed their sense that office-seekers were a growing disruptive force within the country. This shift made sense as their nation moved further from its civil war. With each year of peace, the possibility of a second Southern rebellion seemed less likely. It was difficult for Democrats in 1878 to paint all Republicans as rabid extremists, meanwhile, as that party's president held out the olive branch of conciliation to the South. In short, while powerful enough to influence political discourse throughout much of the 1870s, the familiar villains of the Civil War were losing their menacing aspect and new enemies stepped in to take their place. To be sure, partisan publications differed in their interpretation of both the origins and principal purveyors of spoilsmanship and corruption in the public sphere. They agreed, however, on the seriousness of the threat it posed to the country. More than this, their concern contributed to an emergent consensus that Reconstruction had become a weapon in the hands of these elements, and that the policy must not be resurrected lest the stability of the republic be further imperilled.

Anxieties regarding the state of American political culture therefore contributed to the erosion of popular support for Reconstruction. The language of Mexicanization which emerged in U.S. discourse during the late 1870s to describe this concern reveals how deeply it was felt. That Mexico's political malaise was the product of a learned culture was a worrying conclusion for Americans to come to because it implied that any nation, any citizenry, could descend into a similar state given the right circumstances. All that was needed was prolonged exposure to internal strife and extreme political factionalism. Some worried that this was exactly what had happened to Americans during the Civil War. Henry Bellows, a prominent member of the Civil Service Reform Association, put it well when he wrote in 1879 that the most harmful legacy of the Civil War was that it had "created an ethics and almost a religion of its own in antagonism with the habitual conscience" of the

American people.¹²⁷ During the conflict, the Slave Power had constituted an “open enemy, whom powder and shot could reach and overcome.”¹²⁸ The “degraded public sentiment” which years of internecine conflict had imbedded in American political culture, meanwhile, took the form of a “secret rot, an enemy with the invisible powers of a pestilence” which was much harder to combat.¹²⁹ The language of Mexicanization demonstrated that Americans saw this form of demoralisation as a threat not only to the stability of their institutions, but to their nation’s standing as the exemplary American republic, and that their fear of it was strong enough to convince many of them to turn their backs on the Reconstruction project.

¹²⁷ Henry W. Bellows, *Historical Sketch of the Union League Club of New York: Its Origins, Organization, and Work, 1863-1879* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1879), 84-5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Chapter Five

The Search for Reconciliation: Americans Reimagine the U.S.-Mexican Relationship, 1876-1881

On 11th March 1883, a baby was baptised in Montevideo, Mexico. The child was the son of Mexican general Geronimo Trevino and his wife Roberta, the daughter of U.S. Army Commander General Edward O. C. Ord. The ceremony generated a remarkable amount of interest in the American press. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, gave a detailed account of the christening of what it claimed was the “only child known to have been born in wedlock by the cross of Mexican upon American stock” – or rather, the first child born “whose parents had any social or political standing in the Republic of Mexico.”¹ For the *Tribune*, the “International Baby” symbolised how far relations between the United States and Mexico had improved over recent years. In the summer of 1877, General Ord and General Trevino had faced one another on opposite sides of the Rio Grande, their armies at the backs, while their respective governments engaged in tense negotiations over issues arising from their shared border.² At the time, newspapers in both countries had worried that the situation might degenerate into armed conflict.³ That six years later the two generals were joined by familial blood was a fitting representation of how the relationship between their countries had since blossomed into an intimate partnership of trade and investment. Better still, the child’s godfather was former Mexican president Porfirio Díaz, the man who many in the United States credited with having first thrown his nation’s doors open to U.S. capital and enterprise. For many observers in the United States, the baptism at Galveston sanctified a new epoch in U.S.-Mexican relations grounded in economic collaboration and friendship.

This chapter argues that by the late 1870s, many prominent Americans and major newspapers had come to view U.S. commercial expansion into Mexico as a means to unify their own fractured postwar society. The previous chapter examined how by the end of this

¹ “Mexican Scenes: The International Baby and the Part it Plays in Mexican Politics,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 March 1883, 1.

² The dispute centered on President Hayes’ general order, issued on 1st June 1877, which authorised U.S. Commander of the Department of Texas General Ord to pursue Indian raiders across the border and seize them on Mexican soil if necessary (David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 1865-1900* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 86-87).

³ See, for example, “Indignant Mexico: The Orders to Ord Makes the Blood of the Greasers Boil,” *Daily Constitution* (GA), 7 July 1877, 1; “Mexico Hostile: Not to Help Order,” *New York Tribune*, 17 July 1877, 1; “Mexico: Threatening Condition of Affairs,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 November 1877, 5. Dire predictions of warfare issued by Mexican newspapers at the time were also reported in the American press. See, for example, “Mexico: The View from Both Sides of the Fratricidal Conflict,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 August 1877, 1.

decade, politicians and partisan organs from across the political spectrum denounced Reconstruction as a divisive project which exacerbated factionalism and conflict in public life. As they looked for a way to ease these divisions, many of these Americans turned their gaze southward. They agreed, to be sure, that Mexico was an unstable republic prone to political upheavals and social unrest. But their turbulent neighbour did have some redeeming qualities. Though impoverished by decades of internal strife, the country was rich in natural resources such as silver, gold, coffee, lumber, and tropical fruits. Its population, moreover, was an untapped market for U.S. finished goods. These Americans anticipated that the vast wealth lying just beneath their southern border could distract their countrymen from the issues which had continued to divide them after the Civil War. They anticipated, for example, that commercial enterprise in Mexico could divert Americans' attention away from the controversial Reconstruction question. Collaboration in a grand venture to extend the United States' economic and financial reach south of the Rio Grande, moreover, would strengthen bonds of trust and affection between North and South. The divisive rhetoric of demagogues would fall on deaf ears as the members of each section subsumed their antipathies in a resurgent sense of national unity and pride. In this way, these Americans anticipated, Mexico could help the United States find the peace and stability it had been searching for since the Civil War.

For those who advocated this plan, Mexico's stabilising role was both conceptual and literal. The promotion of Mexican democracy was no doubt low on the list of objectives of those U.S. businessmen, entrepreneurs, and railroad magnates who engaged in business south of the Rio Grande during this period. In the American press, however, their ventures were cloaked in the rhetorical garb of the United States' providential mission to spread republican government throughout the New World. As we saw in the previous chapter, during the mid-to-late 1870s the notion that the Mexican republic suffered from a deeply-engrained culture of factionalism gained traction in U.S. public discourse. Those organs which posited this theory insisted that, by underwriting Mexico's economic regeneration, Americans could redirect its population's attention towards projects for national development. By doing so, they would help to distract Mexicans from the issues which divided them, heal the fissures in their society, and so lay the social preconditions necessary for that country's evolution into a stable democratic republic. The notion that the United States would oversee the eventual success of the Mexican republican experiment was a gratifying thought for postwar Americans. Indeed, during this period many voices in national public discourse insisted that Americans were leading Mexicans down the same economic path to political stability which they themselves had first carved out as a means to unify their society after the Civil War. By the early 1880s, then, a new image of Mexico had emerged in U.S. public discourse as the United States' faithful protégé. Americans invoked

this image to assure themselves that their nation had finally overcome its internal divisions and was once again the model of stable self-government in the New World.

By examining Americans' search for domestic unity south of the Rio Grande, this chapter brings the realm of foreign policy into scholarly discussions regarding reconciliation in the post-Civil War United States. Historians take care to distinguish between national reunion and sectional reconciliation. By the former they generally mean the postwar political reunification of the Northern and Southern states. They use the latter, meanwhile, to refer to the various means by which post-Civil War Americans reaffirmed their affective bonds of common respect, affinity, and affection in order to resuscitate a shared sense of national identity. Reconciliation was therefore largely emotional and spiritual in nature. For this reason, historians have been reluctant to define the process definitively or identify a point in time at which it was complete. Instead they trace the various cultural, intellectual, and political channels into which Americans poured their reconciliationist impulses in their efforts to reconstruct a sense of common meaning and purpose. One fruitful area of analysis has been the realm of public memory. As scholars such as David Blight, Caroline E. Janney and others have shown, historians, veterans, orators, and others in the postbellum United States wrote versions of their national history, and particularly of the Civil War, which they hoped both Northerners and Southerners could celebrate.⁴ While these historians examine how Americans made sense of their past, others consider how they planned for the future. Reunion, some scholars argue, compelled Americans to engage in different forms of national reimagining which could bring people of both sections together around new sets of economic, cultural, or political values and objectives. Paul Buck was one of the first historians to examine how postwar Americans used domestic economic development as a means to bury their sectional hostilities in a new national creed based on concepts of progress and modernity.⁵ Buck offers a somewhat celebratory view of this method of

⁴ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). See also Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993). Some scholars question what they have termed the "reconciliationist paradigm" in this field, arguing that it obscures the persistence of various group, regional, and sectional versions of Civil War memory. See, for example, William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); John Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); and, M. Keith Harris, *Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration among Civil War Veterans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014).

⁵ Paul H. Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937). For more recent studies which also emphasise the role of concepts of economic progress and modernity, particularly among New South "boosters," in facilitating reconciliation between North and South, see Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford

reconciliation, and more recently scholars have drawn attention to its darker underside. For example, Heather Cox Richardson agrees with Buck that evolutions in U.S. political economic thought, including increasingly popular notions of liberal capitalism and the supremacy of market forces, provided a basis for postwar sectional collaboration.⁶ She notes, however, that this national turn towards individualism came at a cost for African Americans, who found the federal government increasingly reluctant to provide them with economic assistance. Reimagining the nation's future as a means of sectional reconciliation, then, involved some heavy casualties.

These studies largely focus on the domestic sphere. Other scholars claim to see a correlation between Americans' efforts towards reconciliation at home and their activities overseas. They usually characterise this as a dialectical relationship by which Americans' belief that sectional reconciliation had been achieved infused them with a sense of national self-confidence which in turn led them to take a more active role in the wider world. For example, Jay Sexton argues that for much of the 1860s and 1870s, Americans' preoccupation with Reconstruction and other domestic issues precluded them from taking much interest in international affairs. The fractious state of postwar politics similarly absorbed the attention of the nation's policymakers and inhibited them from formulating coherent foreign policy agendas.⁷ By the 1880s, however, with Reconstruction over and reconciliation apparently accomplished, popular and political interest in foreign affairs increased. Edward Blum similarly argues that "reunion enabled the United States to focus its energies on foreign lands" and "diverted [Americans'] eyes from the problems in the South and toward global militarism and domination."⁸ Blum traces this process to the end of the nineteenth century and argues that the U.S. intervention in the Spanish-Cuban War in 1898 marked the "culmination of the postbellum reforging of the white republic."⁹ For Blum and

University Press, 1992); Michael W. Fitzgerald, *Reconstruction in Alabama: From Civil War to Redemption in the Cotton South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017).

⁶ Richardson, *Death of Reconstruction*. It should be noted that scholars have pointed out that increasingly popular notions of social Darwinism and ethnic nationalism combined with these evolutions in political economic thought to facilitate both white reconciliation and black exclusion from dominant notions of national identity. See, for example, West, "Reconstructing Race," 6-26; Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*.

⁷ Sexton's examination of Americans' debates regarding the Cuban Rebellion 1868-1878 offers a particularly compelling depiction of the fractured, halting, and incoherent nature of U.S. foreign policymaking in the immediate post-Civil War period (Sexton, "The United States, the Cuban Rebellion," 335-365). It should be noted that scholars such as Leslie Butler and Frank Ninkovich have argued that Union victory in fact spurred Americans' interest in world affairs by strengthening their belief that the United States had a role to play as the champion of progress and liberty on the world stage (Butler, *Critical Americans*; Ninkovich, *Global Dawn*). However, both these scholars confine their analyses to a relatively small elite group of self-described liberals. Each, moreover, finds that these liberals' postwar foreign interactions were largely intellectual, rather than commercial, financial, or diplomatic.

⁸ Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*, 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*

others, therefore, peace at home renewed Americans' faith in their nation's domestic strength and unity and therefore gave them the confidence to take an assertive role in global affairs.

This interpretation of the relationship between domestic reconciliation and foreign policy corresponds with the prevailing view among diplomatic historians that the post-Civil War period marked a new epoch in Americans' understanding of their country's role in the wider world. Max Edling, for example, argues that during this period, most Americans thought more about the "promotion of civilization rather than republicanism" as they pursued their interests overseas.¹⁰ This shift was influenced by notions of laissez-faire capitalism and consumerism which gained currency in the United States throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. While most antebellum Americans had conceived of their nation's global importance as a symbol of successful self-government, during the latter half of the century these new trends in political and economic thought encouraged many to see the United States instead as the leader of global economic modernisation and technological innovation.¹¹ This is not to suggest that the postwar United States' international activities were purely a crusade of commercial acquisitiveness. As Frank Ninkovich notes, Americans emphasised the "civilizing" effects of their advancement of global economic development, such as the promotion of prosperity, social mobility, and education among the world's "uncivilized" societies.¹² He nonetheless concedes that after the Civil War, U.S. diplomacy was principally guided by notions of economic, rather than political, progress. Some scholars have pointed to Americans' economic activities in Mexico immediately following the Civil War as an early example of how they put this method of "informal imperialism" into practice. John Mason Hart, for example, points out that "Americans entered Mexico well before they developed the capacity to exercise a

¹⁰ Max Edling, H-Diplo Roundtable Review XIV, no. 10 (2012), 11.

¹¹ For examples of this argument see Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion* (New York: Knopf, 2008); and, Andrew Priest, "Imperial Exchange: American Views of the British Empire during the Civil War and Reconstruction," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2015). For studies which examine how postwar Americans sought to mimic the European powers' methods of informal imperialism, see Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011), 1348-91; and, Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and the United States Empires, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (2002), 1315-53.

¹² Ninkovich, *Global Dawn*. For more on the role of various concepts of "civilization" in shaping U.S. foreign policy after the Civil War, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); David Prior, "Civilization, Republic, Nation: Contested Keywords, Northern Republicans, and the Forgotten Reconstruction of Mormon Utah," *Civil War History* 56, no. 3 (September 2010), 283-310; and, Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang 2011);

powerful influence in the farther reaches of the world.”¹³ During the 1860s and 1870s, he argues, an “elite group of financiers and industrialists” stepped up their investment and business ventures south of the Rio Grande, adamant that in doing so they bestowed on Mexicans the benefits of “social mobility, Protestant values, a capitalist free market” and “a consumer culture.”¹⁴ Changes in postwar U.S.-Mexican relations, then, reflected a broader process taking place in American society at that time whereby the forces of reconciliation precipitated a popular re-imagining of the United States’ role in the wider world.

While agreeing that reconciliation influenced how Americans thought about the nature of their nation’s foreign interests, this chapter argues that this relationship was more complicated than scholars have so far appreciated. Americans’ interest in Mexico’s natural resources and market potential stretched back to the antebellum era.¹⁵ During the 1870s, however, U.S. politicians and large portions of the national press began to champion trade and investment south of the Rio Grande specifically as a means to facilitate sectional reconciliation in the United States. Reconstruction, they argued, was a divisive policy which exacerbated divisions in American society. By doing so, it undercut the nation’s economic growth and inhibited its ability to establish a proper foothold in Mexico’s burgeoning commerce. These Americans therefore called on their countrymen to abandon the effort to rework the South’s political order and concentrate on the regeneration of the region’s war-ravaged economic instead. Part of this process, they stressed, should include the construction of railroads and other lines of transportation between the Southern states and Mexico in order to extend the United States’ commercial reach south of the Rio Grande. These Americans not only hoped that the lure of Mexico’s natural wealth would persuade their countrymen to give up Reconstruction, but that collaboration in the pursuit of U.S. commercial interests overseas would encourage Americans to forget their sectional antipathies and instead embrace a renewed spirit of common purpose. During the 1870s, therefore, the exuberance with which the riches of Mexico were discussed in U.S. public discourse was fuelled in no small part by the anxieties which still haunted Americans about the fractured condition of their postwar republic.

Many voices in public discourse the 1870s and 1880s also argued that by seeking out economic opportunities in Mexico, Americans would ensure the eventual success of that

¹³ John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2. See also Thomas D. Schoonover, *Dollars over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); and, David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 1865-1900* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 80-113.

¹⁴ Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 2.

¹⁵ John A. Adams, Jr., *Conflict and Commerce on the Rio Grande, 1775-1955* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 1-95.

country's republican experiment. Chapter four examined how during the 1870s, the notion gained currency in the United States that Mexico's past and ongoing political turmoil was the consequence of the deeply-rooted habit of faction in that country's political culture. Throughout this same period, prominent U.S. publications from across the political spectrum came to champion economic regeneration as a way to remedy this situation. American investment, they argued, would develop Mexico's industries, diversify its agriculture, and expand its transportation and communication networks. This in turn would promote individual prosperity and social mobility in Mexican society. These gains would apparently teach Mexicans that they had much to lose and little to gain from the political instability and social dislocation which came from engaging in rebellions led by demagogic strongmen. Moreover, the growth of Mexico's domestic trade and industries would facilitate communication and collaboration between its various sections and thereby cultivate a sense of shared national identity among the population. Economic regeneration would, in short, harmonise Mexican society and so lay the preconditions necessary to sustain a stable republican system in the future. Historians are no doubt right to conclude that post-Civil War Americans' interests south of the Rio Grande were primarily financial and commercial. In domestic public discourse, however, these economic exploits were presented to Americans as a continuation of the United States' historic mission to teach Mexicans good and stable self-governance.

This narrative explains why so much of the American press during this period saw Mexico as a means to harmonise the United States' fractured postwar society. It is difficult to say with any certainty whether these organs truly believed that their countrymen's commercial and business ventures in Mexico would lead to the eventual success of that country's republican experiment. Nevertheless, it is significant that they felt the need stress this notion to the American public. When they prescribed economic regeneration as means to remedy Mexico's social and political ills, these publications claimed that they were teaching their southern neighbours the same method Americans had used during the 1870s to overcome their own sectional divisions. The United States was therefore not only the sponsor of Mexico's economic regeneration, they claimed, but the model for its political stabilisation. This was a powerful message to send to a people who for years had grappled with the fear that the Civil War had left a legacy of faction in the United States which undermined its historic identity as the world's model republic. Grippled by self-doubt, Americans in public discourse had invoked images of chaos and misery in Mexico to voice this concern and warn Americans of the condition they were rapidly spiralling towards. By the early 1880s, however, the image of Mexico which most frequently appeared in U.S. public discourse characterised that nation as the United States' pupil which was dutifully following it down the economic path to political harmony. This image told Americans that

that the natural dynamics between the two nations had been restored, that the United States had overcome its internal difficulties and was therefore looked upon as a guide for stable self-governance.

The Question of Territorial Expansion into Mexico after the Civil War

During the 1870s, large portions of the U.S. press declared that their countrymen must relinquish any plans for territorial expansion into Mexico and concentrate instead on commercial and financial pursuits south of the Rio Grande. Historians often suggest that during the postbellum era, the shift in emphasis in U.S. overseas ambitions was relatively straightforward. After the Civil War, they argue, control over the federal government transferred to the Republicans, most of whom had long preferred trade and investment over territorial annexation as a means of U.S. aggrandisement both on the continent and throughout the hemisphere. Moreover, Republicans were keen to show the world that emancipation had rejuvenated the United States' moral power by rejecting the antebellum Slave Power's shameful policies of aggression and conquest against neighbouring republics.¹⁶ There is much truth in this analysis. It is, however, incomplete. The notion that, in the antebellum era, Southern slaveholders alone favoured extending U.S. borders southward underplays the extent to which expansionist impulses were present throughout various sectors U.S. society at the time and persisted after the Civil War. The idea that postwar Americans rejected expansionism from a sense of pride in their nation's renewed moral integrity is also misleading. During the 1870s, many organs in U.S. public discourse were disturbed by the apparent rise of corruption and vice among their nation's political leaders and worried that the addition of more land to the Union would give these venal elements further fields upon which to conduct their nefarious activities. Many postwar Americans therefore rejected territorial expansion into Mexico from a sense of unease rather than confidence regarding then the condition of their postwar republic.

In the 1870s, support in national public discourse for the United States to acquire territory from Mexico came from two principal sources. Throughout the decade, certain newspapers in the Southwest, particularly Texas, kept up a steady stream of calls for the federal government to take possession of land on the northern Mexican frontier.¹⁷ In March 1875, for example, the *Dallas Weekly Herald* pointed out that American citizens who lived along the Texan-Mexican border were perpetually harassed by cattle thieves and bands of

¹⁶ Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine*; Priest, "Imperial Exchange."

¹⁷ For more on the unsettled condition of the U.S.-Mexican border in the postbellum era, see St. John, *Line in the Sand*, 39-147. For more on the persistence of expansionist ambitions regarding Mexico in the postbellum South, see Joseph A. Stout, *Schemers and Dreamers: Filibustering in Mexico, 1848-1921* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2002), 56-82.

Native American raiders who pillaged their towns and then slipped across the Rio Grande to evade punishment. Successive Mexican governments had proved incapable of suppressing this lawlessness. The newspaper therefore called on the Grant administration to establish a protectorate over Mexico's northern frontier so that the region could be "placed under a power possessing the means of enforcing order among its population."¹⁸ Calls for the annexation of Mexican territory also came from a relatively small but influential collection of Northern Democratic newspapers. During the Civil War, the *New York Herald* had proclaimed itself an ardent champion of the Mexican republican cause. In the initial months after Appomattox, the newspaper had even suggested that the United States intervene to help Mexicans defeat their French invaders and restore President Juárez to power. After the advent of Congressional Reconstruction 1866-1867, however, the *Herald* rescinded its support for the Mexican Liberals. The horror of witnessing the creation of biracial governments throughout the postwar South caused the newspaper to balk at the notion of lending aid – and therefore endorsement – to Mexico's system of "mongrel republicanism." Little wonder, then, that when in 1872 news reached the United States of a large-scale rebellion which threatened to unseat the much-lauded President Juárez, the *Herald* viewed it as conclusive proof that "no stable government is possible" in Mexico or ever would be.¹⁹ For this newspaper, the imminent demise of Mexico's republican experiment re-opened the possibility of U.S. expansion south of the Rio Grande.

The *New York Herald* framed its proposal for the annexation of Mexican territory as part of a broader effort to revive the United States' antebellum mission to extend its borders across the North American continent. Scholars have noted that, after the Civil War, various Democratic leaders attempted to revive elements of their party's antebellum ideology, specifically aspects of its Jacksonian heritage. Thomas S. Mach, for example, argues that Ohio Democratic leader George H. Pendleton applied a traditional Jacksonian distrust of monopolies and advocacy for states' rights to his interpretation of various contemporary political issues, including Civil Service Reform and the currency question.²⁰ What scholars have so far overlooked, however, is the ways in which some Democratic organs made similar efforts in the realm of foreign policy. In 1872, with the Juárez administration apparently on the brink of collapse, the *New York Herald* proposed that the U.S. government establish a protectorate over Mexico's northern provinces. This accomplished, the

¹⁸ No Title, *Dallas Weekly Herald*, 27 March 1875, 2.

¹⁹ "More Mexican Anarchy and Depredations – The Duty and Opportunity of General Grant," *New York Herald*, 5 June 1872, 6.

²⁰ Thomas S. Mach, "Gentleman George" *Hunt Pendleton: Party Politics and Ideological Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2007). For other works which examine the influence of Jacksonian ideology in the post-Civil War Democracy, see Baker, *Affairs of Party*, 42-5.

newspaper predicted, “forty millions of vigorous Americans” would flood into the region and sweep away its “decaying populations.”²¹ This unused and desolate land would quickly “blossom” under the United States’ “strong and progressive” influence.²² Other Northern Democratic organs seconded the *Herald*’s call. “Mexico,” the *Boston Daily Globe* insisted in April of that year, “is geographically just as much part of the United States as are Texas and California,” and was destined “by the inevitable laws of fate” to eventually “drift into the Union.”²³ What harm could it do, then, for the federal government to hasten this process by taking immediate action to bring that country under its control and so allow “civilization to spring up afresh in the Land of the Aztec”?²⁴ True to the Jacksonian creed, then, these newspapers believed that Providence had reserved the North American continent for the sole use of white Americans. To them, the imminent fall of Mexico’s government offered an ideal opportunity to consummate this national destiny.

These newspapers claimed that the resuscitation of the United States’ Manifest Destiny would have healing effects on the country’s fractured postwar society. Some were chiefly concerned with resolving divisions within the Democratic Party. In June 1873, for example, Illinois newspaper the *Cairo Bulletin* praised the *Herald*’s proposal and urged its readers to “join with those who will cry: “On to Mexico!””²⁵ The newspaper reasoned that antebellum Democrats had always been the most committed expansionists. A revival of the “old democratic idea of manifest destiny” would therefore rally the party’s members together and bridge the gap between its Northern and Southern wings wrought by the Civil War and the decades of sectional tensions which had preceded it.²⁶ Others, however, emphasised that a policy of expansionism would have unifying effects beyond the ranks of the Democracy. At the core of the American character, the *New York Herald* argued in February 1872, there was an “irresistible impulse” for “territorial aggrandizement.”²⁷ Since they had first arrived on the continent, white Americans had spread across it “like the onward passage of a flood of water carrying everything before it.”²⁸ “National pride” had flourished with each push for “expansion and the grandeur of the country.”²⁹ The *Herald* believed that the postwar era was a particularly auspicious time to launch another effort to extend the nation’s boundaries. As the newspaper explained, the “measures of reconstruction

²¹ “Mexico the Sick Man of America – No Remedy But in Annexation,” *New York Herald*, 2 February 1872, 6.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ “Mexico,” *Boston Daily Globe*, 8 April 1872, 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ “On to Mexico,” *Cairo Bulletin* (IL), 1 June 1873, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ “The Revolutionary War in Mexico – Interposition of the United States Necessary,” *New York Herald*, 17 February 1872, 6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

heretofore adopted by Congress” since the Civil War had “failed to restore peace and order in the South.”³⁰ Indeed, federal efforts to impose Negro rule on the Southern states had kept “alive the bitter memories of the war” in that section and fomented “conflict between the white and colored races.”³¹ The newspaper therefore advised the Grant administration to cease meddling in Southern politics and instead “bring ... a sharp and decisive issue involving the annexation ... of Mexico” before the American people.³² The controversies of Reconstruction would soon be forgotten amidst a “general uprising of the people on the grand idea of ‘manifest destiny.’”³³

Opposition to this plan came from all sectors of the American press and for a variety of reasons. Republican organs denounced what they saw as the *Herald’s* attempt to resuscitate the antebellum slavocracy’s disgraced policy of territorial expansion. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, for example, insisted that even the establishment of a protectorate over Mexico’s northern provinces would be “unjust and totally subversive to the principles of liberty and fair play which are the foundation of our Constitution.”³⁴ Emancipation had purged the United States of the scourge of slavery, and the country must henceforth conduct itself on the world stage in a manner “as might be expected of a great and magnanimous nation.”³⁵ “We are bound,” the newspaper concluded firmly, “to assist our sister republic in the world of development, rather than to annex her.”³⁶ Others opposed the acquisition of Mexican territory on somewhat less lofty grounds. Tennessee newspaper the *Public Ledger*, for example, pointed out that expansion would require the United States to absorb the “mongrel populations of ... Mexico,” who would be “joined to the blacks and mulattoes of the Southern States.”³⁷ The newspaper explained that should this take place, “the United States would be so hybrid in the character of its population as to make it impossible to claim for its civilization that of the white race.”³⁸ The same case was made by publications across the South. Many conceded that in the past it had been possible for the United States to absorb land populated by non-white peoples, as in the cases of Texas and the Mexican Cession, without jeopardising white Americans’ position at the top of the nation’s racial hierarchy. Since emancipation and the advent of black suffrage in the United States, however, the mongrel Mexicans would enter the Union as full-fledged citizens. As one

³⁰ “The Foreign Policy of the American Nation – The Spread of Republican Institutions,” *New York Herald*, 25 November 1872, 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² “Cuba and Mexico, or Either – General Grant’s Great Opportunity,” *New York Herald*, 10 January 1872, 6.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ “Mexico and Annexation,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 July 1873, 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “Mongrel Progress,” *Public Ledger* (PA), 8 December 1871, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Louisiana publication pointed out, Northern readers of newspapers such as the *New York Herald* might benefit from the bounties to be had from Mexican land. It would be Southerners, however, who would suffer as “several millions of Mexican Indians” flooded into their states and joined arms with the carpetbaggers to strengthen the system of “Negro domination.”³⁹ Far from bringing an end to Reconstruction, expansion would exacerbate its most harmful effects. In both the North and South, then, newspapers concluded that emancipation had rendered the annexation of Mexican land unthinkable, albeit for very different reasons.

These arguments against territorial expansion largely ran along sectional lines. During the 1870s, however, certain publications in both the North and South voiced another reason why the United States should not seek to acquire any more land from Mexico. Democratic newspaper the *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, for example, predicted in September 1875 that Republican politicians would use any additional territory to “manufacture carpet-bag States” in order to “maintain the supremacy of the Radical party” in the federal government.⁴⁰ This was not a new concern. Ever since it began, opponents of Reconstruction had accused Republicans of plotting to extend their tyrannical rule beyond the South and across the Rio Grande. By the early 1870s, however, certain publications which had once supported Radical Reconstruction began to express similar concerns. In June 1872, for example, the *Chicago Tribune* informed its readers of a rumour that President Grant, apparently inspired by the *Herald*’s calls for the administration to take advantage of the precarious condition of the Juárez government, planned to “raise four regiments of troops ... to go to the Mexican frontier” and take possession of several of that country’s northern states.⁴¹ The newspaper surmised that such a venture appealed to Grant’s vainglorious and militaristic tendencies.⁴² More than this, if the plan worked, Grant could fill the governments of these new territories with the same class of office-seekers which currently dominated the Southern Reconstruction legislatures. “Let the reader imagine the horror,” the *Tribune* declared, “of a carpet-bag Government erected in each of the fifty states of Mexico, each Government supported by one or two regiments of troops.”⁴³ The *Chicago Tribune* was among those Northern organs which by the early 1870s had come to believe that Reconstruction exacerbated factionalism and corruption in American public life. Together

³⁹ “Mexico,” *Bossier Banner* (LA), 14 September 1872, 2.

⁴⁰ “The Next Conflict,” *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, 5 September 1875, 2.

⁴¹ “Another Mexican War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 June 1872, 4.

⁴² Grant’s opponents also charged him of harbouring imperialist ambitions during his ultimately unsuccessful effort to lobby Congress to approve his plan to annex Santo Domingo. For more on this, see Guyatt, “America’s Conservatory,” 947-1000.

⁴³ “Another Mexican War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 June 1872, 4.

with many Southern publications, these organs therefore opposed territorial expansion partly on the grounds that it would give further fuel to these malignant forces.

Over the course of the 1870s, most portions of the American national press renounced the notion that the United States ought to seek additional territory from Mexico. In 1877 even the ardently expansionist *New York Herald* was forced to concede that the “desire to acquire new territory was never so little felt by the American people as now.”⁴⁴ “There has not been for many years so little talk in the newspapers and on the stump about “manifest destiny,”” the newspaper observed regretfully, “and it is extremely doubtful whether a half dozen speakers to-morrow will care to picture our noble bird of freedom spreading his wings and darting toward the distant mountains of Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, Sonora and Sinaloa.”⁴⁵ As historians have noted, some Republican organs insisted that the post-emancipation United States had no business resurrecting the Slave Power’s dishonourable practices of aggression and conquest. However, a great deal of the opposition to proposals to extend the United States’ boundaries southward was shaped by a sense of uneasiness regarding the internal condition of the republic, particularly its highly polarised political climate and the demoralised state of its political leaders. While they argued that territorial expansion into Mexico would strengthen the forces of division and corruption in American public life, however, many publications insisted that a policy of commercial penetration into that country might in fact help to combat them.

Reconciliation through Commerce: U.S. Enterprise South of the Rio Grande

Throughout the 1870s, prominent organs in U.S. public discourse from across the political spectrum discussed the opportunities for trade and investment in Mexico with growing enthusiasm. In part, their interest was fuelled by their desire to counteract the spirit of factionalism which they believed the Reconstruction question generated in American society at the time. In their efforts to convince Americans to abandon the federal effort to reform Southern politics, they argued that the project drained vital funds and energies away from the regeneration of the South’s war-ravaged economy and in turn inhibited the United States’ ability to establish a foothold in Mexico’s burgeoning commerce. These publications anticipated that the allure of Mexico’s natural wealth could do more than simply distract

⁴⁴ “The Mexican Mystery,” *New York Herald*, 3 July 1877, 6. The *Herald* was commenting on Americans’ lacklustre response to rumours that the recently-deposed Mexican president Lerdo de Tejada was in Texas seeking the U.S. volunteers to help him invade Mexico and seize back the presidency from his usurper Porfirio Díaz. While the alleged plot gained little credence or enthusiasm in the American press, the *Herald* claimed to have it on good authority that it had the backing of certain powerful financial interests on the U.S. west coast who apparently saw it as an opportunity to gain a foothold in certain Mexican mining districts (“Mexico,” *New York Herald*, 13 May 1877, 7).

⁴⁵ “The Mexican Mystery,” *New York Herald*, 3 July 1877, 6.

Americans from the Southern question, however. As they reminded their countrymen, Mexico lay within the United States' geographical sphere of influence, and the United States therefore ought to be that country's primary trading partner and the principal beneficiary of its untapped resources and markets. In short, these publications asserted that commercial hegemony over Mexico was their country's providential right as the foremost nation of the North American continent. This argument aimed to pique Americans' sense of national pride and cultivate a sense of common purpose among them powerful enough to subsume their sectional antipathies. Beneath these publications' enthusiastic calls for their countrymen to seek out economic opportunities south of the Rio Grande, therefore, ran a nervous desire to find some remedy to the disease of faction which still plagued American society so long after the Civil War.

Politicians and newspapers based in Southern urban and industrial centres were among the first to propose that a collective effort to extend their economic reach into Mexico could erase Americans' sectional antipathies. Former governor of Tennessee John C. Brown, for example, was particularly taken by the prospect of the bounties which lay below the Rio Grande. Brown became vice president of the Texas and Pacific Railroad company in 1876. In this capacity he advocated for a southern transcontinental railroad which would develop the South's industries by connecting the region to port cities along the U.S. Pacific coast. However, Brown was equally adamant that the road also be used to develop trunk lines which would run from Texas and elsewhere in the Southwest into northern Mexico. There were several reasons why he believed this was important. As Brown explained in an interview he gave to the *Railroad Gazette* in January 1876, these lines would facilitate U.S. emigration into the U.S.-Mexican borderlands and thereby bring law and order to that tumultuous region. A settled population, he explained, would be a "stronger guarantee of peace" along the border than if the U.S. government flooded it with a "multitude of soldiers."⁴⁶ Furthermore, these lines would facilitate a trade which would bring Mexico's "semi-tropical fruits, sugar, coffee, and many other productions" into American markets.⁴⁷ Texas representative and attorney for the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company James W. Throckmorton was equally certain that Americans would benefit from more railroad connections with their southern neighbour. As he reminded his colleagues in the House in 1877, Mexico possessed "many of the oldest and richest mines" in the world, most of which were currently "unworked for want of proper machinery to exhaust the water."⁴⁸ Once able

⁴⁶ John C. Brown, "The Texas & Pacific Railroad," *Railroad Gazette* (NY), 25 January 1876, 63.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ James W. Throckmorton, "Texas and Pacific Railway, Speech of Hon. Jas. W. Throckmorton of Texas, in the House of Representatives, 1 March 1877, together with the Report of the Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar, of Mississippi, Chairman of the Committee on Pacific Railroads, made to the House of Representatives, 24 January 1877 (Washington, 1877), 19.

to travel to Mexico's mineral districts, however, Americans could use their capital and technology to open these mines and send their wealth northward to fuel U.S. industries. Throckmorton added that the Mexican population, which consisted of "ten millions of people," was itself an untapped resource.⁴⁹ Most Mexicans were subsistence farmers who had little interest in finished goods. Interaction with their northern neighbours, however, would convert them into eager consumers of U.S. manufactured products. "What a field for American enterprise and capital is here," Throckmorton declared, "and what a source of revenue to a railroad."⁵⁰ According to these men, a veritable Eden of untouched natural riches lay just below the United States' southern border.

These politicians emphasised that the only way Americans could access Mexico's wealth was through the South. Indeed, for Throckmorton the landscape of the Rio Grande region was evidence that the Southern states were bound by geographic predestination to control Mexico's commercial interactions with the wider world.⁵¹ The mountain range that ran through central Mexico, he observed, inhibited communication between that country's eastern and western ports and therefore hindered the development of its domestic trade. And yet the "hand of God has smoothed the table-lands" which ran from Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona over the Rio Grande.⁵² Clearly Providence had shaped the landscape to facilitate the construction of railroad lines from north to south with the intention that "commercial exchanges between Mexico and the outside world would be chiefly with the United States" and conducted, moreover, "principally along Texan lines."⁵³ Others saw the work of the Divine elsewhere. "Our Creator has so shaped the Mississippi River," one Louisianan legislator enthused in 1875, to "serve as the commercial artery" between the interior states of the Union and Mexico.⁵⁴ "Indeed," he continued, "it is the destiny of that mighty River and the port of New Orleans to be the commercial highway and harbor for all the principal trade between the United States and its southern neighbor."⁵⁵ St. Louis booster Logan U. Reavis thought similarly. As he remarked in 1874, "the particular formation of the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Albert K. Weinberg argues that nineteenth-century Americans used the notion of "geographic predestination" to give moral and ideological force to their plans for U.S. expansion on the continent (Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935). For a more recent study which considers how concepts of providentialism and predestination shaped how Americans perceived their nation's role both on the continent and in the hemisphere, see Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Intervention of the United States, 1607-1876* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁵² Throckmorton, "Texas and Pacific Railway," 20.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Quoted in *Louisiana As It Is: Reliable Information for Farmers, Patrons of Husbandry, Laboring Men, Manufacturers, Capitalists, Men of Enterprise, Invalids – Any Who May Desire to Settle or Purchase Lands in the Gulf States*, ed. Daniel Dennett (New Orleans: Eureka Press, 1876), 123.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Gulf of Mexico indicates that the port of New Orleans should command the trade of Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies.”⁵⁶ “That port and its surrounding environs,” Reavis concluded, “are destined to be the emporium of all trade in the southern reaches of the hemisphere.”⁵⁷ These claims often contained a competitive edge; each industrially-minded Southern politician and city booster was at pains to prove that their locality provided the best advantages for both domestic and foreign trade.⁵⁸ Collectively, however, they impressed upon their countrymen the notion that the South was the vital link between the rest of the Union and Mexico and was therefore the key to unlocking the riches of the southern hemisphere.

In part, these politicians’ efforts to emphasise the South’s proximity to Mexico was due to financial self-interest. The Civil War had left scars everywhere across the South. Its major towns were in rubble and in the countryside years of neglect had seen many plantations revert to bush. Even if Southern farmers had been able to produce cash crops, they had limited means to transport them. Soldiers had torn up much of the region’s railroads and those that remained were in desperate need of repair. Many postwar Southerners recognised the need to modernise their region’s industry, diversify its agriculture, and improve its transportation and communication networks. Yet Confederate money had inflated tremendously during the Civil War and by the end of the conflict had become worthless. A lack of a valid currency was therefore one of the severest obstacles facing the postwar Southern economy and the region’s businessmen and industrialists were acutely aware of the need to raise outside capital in order to rebuild their war-ravaged economy.⁵⁹ The Texas and Pacific Railroad Company, for example, was forced to halt construction on the southern transcontinental line after the economic crash of 1873 wiped out its existing funds. The company’s representatives, including Brown and Throckmorton, therefore launched a campaign to promote the projected railroad’s potential value to both private investors and the federal government in order to draw in enough capital to

⁵⁶ Logan U. Reavis, *Saint Louis: The Future Great City of the World* (St Louis: Missouri Democrat Printing House, 1870), 51.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Mark Wahlgren Summers finds that when it came to lobbying for federal funds, postwar Southerners were often more interested in the development of railroads in their own state or local community, rather than the South as a whole (Summers, *Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid under the Radical Republicans, 1865-1877* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 97).

⁵⁹ Harold E. Davis, “Henry Grady, the Atlanta Constitution, and the Politics of Farming in the 1880s,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Winter 1987), 571-600; Mark V. Wetherington, *The New South Comes to Wiregrass Georgia, 1860-1910* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994); William A. Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South: Race and Remembering the Civil War’s Aftermath* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); K. Stephen Prince, *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 97-166.

recommence work on the line. Pointing to the Texas and Pacific Railroad's utility in opening up the trade of Mexico was a useful way for these agents to enhance the project's appeal in the eyes of potential investors. "This is not merely a sectional road," Brown insisted, "nor even a national one, but instead a highway of international significance."⁶⁰ The same strategy was used by advocates of numerous other projects to develop Southern transport systems after the Civil War.⁶¹ The only way to access the riches beyond the Rio Grande, they insisted, was through the development of Southern infrastructure.

However, these Southerners had other reasons to argue that their region's economic regeneration was essential in order to facilitate U.S. trading and business activities in Mexico. Specifically, they believed that in doing so, they could distract their countrymen from the Reconstruction question which currently dominated American politics. Brown was "deeply troubled" that the "violence of feeling" among white Southerners regarding federal interference in their politics had created a degree of political and social instability in the region which inhibited its economic development.⁶² To be sure, Brown was no friend of the carpetbagger. In 1871 a wave of anti-Reconstruction sentiment had carried him into the Tennessee governor's mansion with a mandate to strip African Americans of the rights they had gained since the Civil War. However, by 1876 Brown was preaching moderation to his fellow Southerners. That he had become vice president of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company in the intervening period might have had something to do with his change of heart. As he explained, the Reconstruction Amendments "are now a *fait accompli* ... no demonstration, no protest can change this."⁶³ The disruptive and often violent methods white vigilantes used to intimidate black voters and carpetbag politicians only served to sow discord throughout the South and make the region "an uninviting field for investment" to Northern capitalists.⁶⁴ Brown appealed to Southerners to cease their virulent opposition to Reconstruction, "lay aside all questions of sectional political strife," and instead "address all

⁶⁰ John C. Brown, "The Texas & Pacific Railroad," *Railroad Gazette* (NJ), 25 January 1876, 64.

⁶¹ For more examples of how representatives of the Texas and Pacific Railroad stressed their projected road's utility for carrying trade between the United States and Mexico, see *Proceedings of the National Railroad Convention at St. Louis, MO., November 23 & 24, 1875, in Regard to the Construction of the Texas & Pacific Railway as a Southern Trans-Continental Line from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific Ocean on the Thirty-Second Parallel of Latitude* (St Louis: Woodward, Tiernan & Hale, 1875), 163; "Statement of the Memphis Commercial Convention Committee on the Southern Pacific Railroad, made at the Louisville Commercial Convention 1872," in *The Rising City of the West: San Diego, Southern California, The Pacific Terminus of the Texas Pacific Railroad, 1872* (New York: Wm. Moore, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1872), 4. For an example of how "boosters" from the Mississippi Valley region made similar arguments, see Logan U. Reavis, *Saint Louis: The Future Great City of the World* (St Louis: Missouri Democrat Printing House, 1870), 51-52; Logan U. Reavis, *An International Railway to the City of Mexico* (St Louis, MO: Woodward, Tiernan & Hale, 1879).

⁶² Brown, "The Texas & Pacific Railroad," 62.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

their efforts to the improvement of their country.”⁶⁵ Throckmorton was similarly concerned that Southerners’ sectional prejudices hindered their region’s economic development. He found their distrust of the federal government particularly misguided. “How long,” he asked his Southern colleagues in the House in 1877, “will you refuse to aid yourselves, or to assist your kindred and your neighbors, because of your ancient prejudices against the policy of the Federal Government contributing its powerful countenance to the support of the ... general welfare?”⁶⁶ Not only did some Southerners refuse government aid when it was offered to them, Throckmorton noted, but their continued defiance of federal authority lost them friends in Congress who might otherwise have supported bills to improve the Southern economy. According to these politicians, certain aspects of Reconstruction could not be reversed. Southerners would therefore be wise to accept this reality and collaborate with the Yankees in their region’s regeneration.

To add greater appeal to their calls for conciliation, these politicians promised that, if Southerners made peace with their Northern brethren, they would help to elevate their section to its rightful place as the United States’ vital link to the trade of Mexico. Historians have noted that New South boosters repeatedly insisted that the South could and ought to be the Union’s most productive and prosperous region as a means to encourage their fellow Southerners to collaborate with Northern capitalists and the federal government in its regeneration.⁶⁷ Less scholarly attention has been paid to how these boosters frequently presented their region as being vital not only to the U.S. economy, but international trade as well. Throckmorton, for example, acknowledged that the Southern states had “languished in poverty” since the Civil War and “fallen far behind some of their sisters in the march of progress.”⁶⁸ However, Throckmorton asserted, the region possessed the most genial climate and fertile land in the Union. Of even greater value was its “proximity, for several hundred miles, to the northern states of Mexico.”⁶⁹ If Southerners ceased their futile raging against Reconstruction and focussed on the construction of railroad and other transport connections southward into Mexico instead, they would quickly transform the South “into a busy hub of continental trade.”⁷⁰ The same argument was made in certain sectors of the Southern press, particularly by publications based in the region’s urban and industrial centres. “The splendid career of the Republic,” *De Bow’s Review* reminded its readers, “its vast expansion, and its

⁶⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁶⁶ Throckmorton, “Texas and Pacific Railway,” 19.

⁶⁷ For more on the New South, see Dwight B. Billings, *Planters and the Making of a “New South”*: *Class, Politics, and Development in South Carolina, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2002).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 14.

rapid increase in wealth and population” had been due to the “merit, the energy, and the wisdom” of the Southern people.⁷¹ During the Civil War, *De Bow’s* had proudly recounted Southerners’ contributions to the aggrandisement of the antebellum United States as a guarantee of the glorious destiny which the journal believed awaited the Confederate republic. In the postwar era, however, *De Bow’s* invoked these same memories to persuade Southerners to make the most of their future within the Union. “The trade of Mexico and ... the southern tropics,” the journal proclaimed, “is among the most rapidly growing in the world.”⁷² The South was the vital conduit to this commerce and if Northerners wished to access it “the cordial cooperation of ... the Southern sections will be necessary.”⁷³ Southerners should therefore put aside their sectional prejudices, accept Northerners’ assistance in the regeneration their economy, and in doing so “gain recognition and appreciation” as the United States’ “connecting link to the trade of the hemisphere.”⁷⁴ Clearly, such promises aimed to make the prospect of making peace with Northerners palatable to even the most defiant elements of Southern society.

Publications outside the South also used the allure of Mexico to add force to their pleas for sectional reconciliation. Their focus, however, was on the people of the North. By 1874, the *New York Tribune* had concluded that Reconstruction was a “foolhardy enterprise” which only served to “whip up passions and prejudices” between the sections of the Union.⁷⁵ This being the case, the *Tribune* advised, the federal government ought to “focus its energies on the regeneration of [the South’s] economy” instead of “meddling with its politics.”⁷⁶ Since the Civil War, Republican legislators in the Reconstruction state governments had tried to win over white Southerners with liberal subsidies and land grants to various railroad projects in the region.⁷⁷ According to the *Tribune*, however, reprobate carpetbaggers had turned projects for Southern economic development into yet another source of sectional resentment. As the newspaper explained, in the Reconstruction South “corporations need only hint at a bribe ... to make all members of an Administration its tools.”⁷⁸ State aid was awarded not to those companies whose projects would be of the greatest benefit to the public good, but to those willing to pay the highest price. The *Tribune*

⁷¹ “The Two Aristocracies of America,” *De Bow’s Review*, October 1866, 462.

⁷² “Commerce between the Lakes and the South Seas,” *De Bow’s Review*, May 1869, 380.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* *De Bow’s* strategy here corresponds with Paul Gaston’s argument that members of the New South movement buttressed their visions for a modern and dynamic South with elements of nostalgia for its antebellum greatness (Gaston, *New South Creed*, 41-48).

⁷⁵ “The Southern Question,” *New York Tribune*, 15 May 1874, 2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ For more on Southern Republicans’ efforts to use railroad policy to bring together a coalition of white and black voters in the region after the Civil War, see Mark Wahlgren Summers, *Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid Under the Radical Republicans, 1865-1877* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

believed that Reconstruction must end in order to purge Southern legislatures of corrupt office-seekers and replace them with politicians who were natives of the region and willing to deal honestly with both federal and private interests to bring about its economic regeneration. This would do “more to restore the ancient good-will and esteem between the different sections of the Union” the newspaper asserted, and “wipe out bitter remembrances of the late civil war” than congressional legislation or federal bayonets ever could.⁷⁹ If Northerners called on Washington to cease its interference in Southern politics and direct its energies towards the states’ economic development, Southerners would learn to look upon it “not as an enemy ... but as a generous benefactor.”⁸⁰ An honest effort by Southern and Northern private interests to improve the industries and infrastructure of the former Confederate states would, moreover, create a “unity of interest” among the people of each section and remind them of their “reliance upon one another.”⁸¹ If Northerners wanted sectional peace and domestic harmony, therefore, they must turn their attention from the South’s political reconstruction towards its economic regeneration.

The *New York Tribune* hoped that the prospect of gaining access to Mexican commerce would encourage Northerners to see the South as a field for economic development rather than political experimentation. “Sectional prejudice,” the newspaper complained in January 1875, made Northern investors distrustful of the South and reluctant to “channel their funds into any honest program for those States’ improvement.”⁸² Instead “capitalists have focussed their energies westward,” the result being that “we have a multitude of railroads running east to west” and “hardly any ... north to south.”⁸³ If Americans knew about the riches which lay beyond the Rio Grande, however, they might be encouraged to “invest more in the Southern States” in order to “open up the commerce of the continent.”⁸⁴ The *Chicago Tribune* thought along similar lines. In an article published in December 1873, the newspaper observed that “what trade there is to be had from Mexico ... is currently controlled by the Europeans.”⁸⁵ This was no exaggeration. Britain, France, and Prussia had broken diplomatic relations with Mexico after Maximilian’s execution in 1867. The merchants of these countries, however, remained as active as ever and those of the new German Empire had in fact improved their position during the 1870s. Between 1872 and 1873, the three nations accounted for 56.7 percent of Mexican exports and 64.8 percent of that country’s imports. This compared with the American share of 36.1 percent and 25.7

⁷⁹ “Railroads and the South,” *New York Tribune*, 2 October 1874, 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² No Title, *New York Tribune*, 4 January 1875, 3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ “Our Commerce with Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 December 1873, 2.

percent respectively.⁸⁶ In tones reminiscent of the Southern industrialists, the *Tribune* insisted that it was “against the natural law of proximity, against the sympathies inspired by similar political institutions” for the commerce of the United States’ closest republican neighbour to be dominated by Europeans.⁸⁷ Having made this appeal to its readers’ sense of national pride, the *Tribune* advised them that to remedy this situation and “establish ourselves on the continent,” Americans must immediately focus their attention on “the development of railroads and other means of travel in the South.”⁸⁸ Only then, the newspaper concluded, would the United States be able to take on its rightful role as the “purveyor of commerce on this continent.”⁸⁹ Much like their Southern counterparts, these Northern publications hoped that Americans’ pecuniary interests would be enough to distract them from their sectional disputes.

These publications anticipated that a collective endeavour to extend U.S. commercial influence in Mexico would also be a potent force for sectional reconciliation. As the *Chicago Tribune* explained, “our citizens have been so long at war with one another, it seems they have lost all sense of a common purpose or belonging.”⁹⁰ The newspaper believed that Reconstruction needlessly aggravated tensions between the North and South and must therefore end if the country was to have any hope of lasting domestic peace. This would not be enough to bridge the fissures wrought in American society by decades of internal strife, however; positive action was needed in order to rebuild the affective bonds of national unity between the sections of the Union. “A bold venture to assert our nation’s influence on the continent,” the *Chicago Tribune* asserted, could “go far towards this end.”⁹¹ As the newspaper explained, collective action to “build up one vast empire” on the continent would rekindle the flames of patriotism in the hearts of the American people and so “melt away the prejudices of faction.”⁹² This resurgent spirit of national pride would, furthermore, undercut the calls of demagogues who appealed to sectional animosities to sow division among the electorate and so take “political trump cards out of the hands of gambling politicians.”⁹³ This was a somewhat remarkable conclusion for the *Tribune* to come to given that, at that time, much of the American press criticised economic monopolies, and particularly railroad corporations, for bribing public officials and viewed them as a corrupting force in U.S. politics.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the *Tribune* insisted that when it came to

⁸⁶ Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Trade and Investment*, 109.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ “Over the Rio Grande,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 March 1875, 1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Summers, *Ordeal of Reunion*, 285-90.

the issue of factionalism, the expansion of U.S. railroads into Mexico and the pursuit of other industrial and financial endeavours south of the Rio Grande would help to cure “some of the evils” which had plagued the postwar United States and put it on the path to political harmony and national stability.⁹⁵

These conservative Republican newspapers were among those which by the early 1870s had become thoroughly disillusioned with Reconstruction and eager for Americans to move on to new issues. As the decade progressed, however, organs on all sides of the Southern question began to speak of the unifying effects which increased trade and investment in Mexico could have on American society. In 1875, the *San Francisco Chronicle* was still largely supportive of the policy of federal oversight of Southern politics. The newspaper nevertheless conceded that for all its merits, Reconstruction had done little to create goodwill between the people of the North and South. “Extend the empire of our trade and commerce” over Mexico, the newspaper advised in January of that year, and they would “forget the hostilities of the past” and “put the internecine contest behind [them].”⁹⁶ Certain publications on the other end of the political spectrum came to a similar conclusion. The *Daily Dispatch*, for example, was a determined foe of Reconstruction and hardly likely to heed the call for conciliation and cooperation with the carpetbaggers who had swarmed into the South after the Civil War. Yet it too viewed the cultivation of “intimacy and intercourse between our people and the Mexicans” as a matter in which “the whole nation is vitally interested.”⁹⁷ The newspaper added, moreover, that the “grand field for growth and development” for American industry and trade in Mexico could help to remedy the “disagreements and want of good faith at home.”⁹⁸ These newspapers’ views on Reconstruction could not have been more different. Concern about the fractious condition of postwar U.S. political culture, however, transcended partisan lines and encouraged Americans from both sections to look beyond their nation’s borders for a means to combat this perceived demoralisation.

For all their growing enthusiasm regarding the opportunities for trade and investment in Mexico, Americans’ economic activities south of the border remained relatively limited throughout much of the 1870s. U.S. commercial activity in that country had been on the rise since the mid-1860s when wars in both countries precipitated a lively illicit trade among different factions of Unionist, Confederate, Juarist, and French imperial forces.⁹⁹ After his return to power in 1867, moreover, President Juárez cooperated with various American entrepreneurs and financiers who sought to invest in Mexico’s industries

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ “Texas and Pacific Railroad,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 January 1875, 2.

⁹⁷ “Our Mexican Relations,” *Daily Dispatch*, 15 February 1879, 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Miller, “Arms Across the Border,” 1-68.

or construct railroads throughout the country's interior.¹⁰⁰ But persistent political instability in Mexico made investment in that country a risky endeavour. Mexican politicians had a reputation among U.S. businessmen and financiers as being unreliable. In 1875, for example, then-President Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada awarded a series of concessions to various American railroad consortiums, only to cancel them after his re-election victory later that same year.¹⁰¹ The decision incensed bondholders in the United States - and financially ruined some of them. In 1876, however, Porfirio Díaz assumed the presidency in Mexico. His first term in office 1876-1881, marked a period of remarkable social and political calm in Mexico. Moreover, the president's friendly attitude to foreign capital and business allowed Americans to channel their collective energies into economic exploits south of the Rio Grande. As they did so, they began to discuss how this enterprise helped to unify and stabilise not only their own republic, but also that of Mexico.

Rethinking the U.S. Republican Mission in Mexico

More than any of his predecessors, President Díaz opened his country's doors to U.S. capital, technology, and emigration. Having discussed the wealth lying dormant below the Rio Grande with growing enthusiasm throughout much of the 1870s, Americans eagerly seized the opportunity Díaz offered them to pursue their commercial and business interests in his country. Previously, the American press had discussed commercial expansion into Mexico chiefly in terms of how it might harmonise the discordant elements of postwar American society. During Díaz's first term, however, as their countrymen opened mines and constructed railroads south of the border, many newspapers and other organs in U.S. public discourse focussed on how their economic activities might benefit Mexico as well. Economic regeneration, they argued, would soothe those divisions in Mexican society that had inhibited the country's ability to sustain a well-ordered republican government in the past. But there was more to it than that. These newspapers declared that by promoting Mexico's economic regeneration, Americans were teaching the people of that country one of the methods they themselves had used during the 1870s to heal sectional fissures in their own society. The notion was actively encouraged by representatives of the Díaz government, who throughout this period made it known to U.S. newspapers that their president had been inspired to create his domestic economic agenda after having witnessed how Americans had successfully harmonised their country after the Civil War. As a result, during the late 1870s and early 1880s, an image of President Díaz emerged in U.S. public discourse as an admirer

¹⁰⁰ Schoonover, *Dollars over Dominion*; Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Trade and Investment*, 80-113.

¹⁰¹ Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 59.

of the United States who looked to the country as a guide for how to stabilise his own nation. This image was intended to give Americans the reassurance they had been searching for since the Civil War that the United States had restored its standing as the world's exemplary republic.

When Porfirio Díaz first came to power in the summer of 1876, few major newspapers in the United States thought he would last for long. Earlier that year, then-president Lerdo de Tejada had announced he would run for re-election. Díaz, who had gained a national reputation as a war hero during the French invasion 1862-1867, accused Lerdo of violating the clause in the Constitution of 1857 that limited presidents to a single term, and promptly launched a rebellion. By November, Lerdo was in exile in Texas and Díaz had installed himself in the National Palace in Mexico City. To most observers in the United States, Mexico's new president seemed like just another *caudillo* who, having fomented a revolution to force his way into office, would likely be deposed before too long in a similar manner. "Díaz is President," the *New York Times* remarked in December 1876, and until "some one raises a larger and better army he will retain possession of the supreme power."¹⁰² When in July 1877 Díaz sent his personal emissary Jose Maria Mata to Washington to seek U.S. recognition of the new administration, the *New York Herald* advised President Hayes to exercise caution. As the newspaper pointed out, relations between the United States and Mexico at that time were tense. Mexico's latest political upheaval had wiped out any semblance of federal authority in the country's northern frontier and the frequency of raids on Texan communities had increased dramatically over recent months as a result. Given the unsettled condition of the rest of the country, moreover, there was good reason to expect that another military chieftain would soon emerge to challenge Díaz's claim to the presidency. As the *Herald* reminded Hayes, Mexico was "subject to constant revolutions" and habitually produced administrations "whose permanence, or even duration from month to month no prudent man would underwrite."¹⁰³ This being the case, the newspaper surmised, the United States ought to withhold recognition until the Díaz government either made some demonstration of its staying power, or else fell apart. Most U.S. publications at the time believed the latter outcome was the more likely of the two.

But Díaz's standing in the American press improved rapidly over the course of the first few months of his administration. Having taken office, the new president began to implement a domestic agenda based on the principles of "Order and Progress." The first element consisted of stabilising Mexican society by expanding the police presence in its lawless northern frontier and granting state officials enhanced authority to mete out speedy

¹⁰² "The Mexican Presidents," *New York Times*, 16 December 1876, 4.

¹⁰³ "The Mexican Complication – Does this Mean War?" *New York Herald*, 6 July 1877, 4. The Hayes administration recognised the Díaz government in May 1878.

punishments to criminals in their districts. In the United States, several newspapers were impressed by how quickly these measures produced results. “Díaz has suppressed the armed marauders that used to come across the Rio Grande,” the *Springfield Republican* noted approvingly in June 1879, and had done much to “cultivate the arts of peace at home.”¹⁰⁴ Díaz coupled social order with political harmony. Ostensibly a Liberal, the president was no ideologue and during his first term went to great lengths to conciliate Conservative leaders with generous patronage appointments.¹⁰⁵ Although he publicly endorsed the Constitution of 1857, moreover, Díaz quietly refused to enforce its anti-clerical provisions and was therefore able to maintain his image as a Liberal without invoking the ire of the Church. This adroit political manoeuvring earned him further praise in the United States. In 1880, for example, the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that the “political situation is unusually quiet” south of the border and attributed this calm to Díaz’s deft management of that country’s various political factions.¹⁰⁶ It was becoming clear to these publications that, unlike his predecessors, Díaz did not intend to use divisions in Mexican society as an instrument by which to wield political power.

Domestic stability laid the foundation for the second component of Díaz’s agenda – economic modernisation. By consolidating central power under his regime, the president was able to exercise a great deal of flexibility in his efforts to direct his country’s industrial and commercial growth. With respect to infrastructure, for example, Díaz issued generous land grants and subsidies to railroad companies to lay tracks which would penetrate isolated rural regions and connect them with cities and ports. Between 1867 and 1876, railroad trackage in Mexico increased from 50 to 666 kilometres. From 1876 to 1884, the government committed between 130,000 and 270,000 *pesos* annually to railroad planning and in 1879 it agreed to contribute 32 million *pesos* for the construction of five railroads totalling 2,500 miles of track.¹⁰⁷ By 1880 the trackage at the end of the year reached 1,052 milometers. In 1881 it increased to 1,661 kilometres and by 1883 the total was 5,328 kilometres.¹⁰⁸ As railroads were constructed, goods and raw materials moved around the country as never before and sedate villages developed into urban centres. In addition to this, Díaz made use of his executive power to dispose of over a thousand land titles owned by the government and put them into the public domain. He also abolished the *ejido* system, a

¹⁰⁴ No Title, *Springfield Republican* (MA), 25 June 1879.

¹⁰⁵ For more on Díaz’s pragmatic (as opposed to ideological) approach to domestic politics, see Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz: Profiles in Power* (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2001).

¹⁰⁶ “Mexican Affairs,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 November 1880, 3.

¹⁰⁷ John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1987), 131.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

communal form of land ownership, in favour of a private enterprise approach.¹⁰⁹ While their full effect took years to manifest, these policies were quickly recognised by the American press as proof that Díaz possessed a clear vision for how to improve and diversify the Mexican economy. A “progressive spirit” has come over Mexico, the *Springfield Republican* enthused in 1879, and a “phenomenal condition of peace and order” prevailed over the entire country.¹¹⁰ It seemed that under Díaz’s direction, Mexico would make rapid strides down the road of modernity.

Many American newspapers predicted that these remarkable transformations would eventually culminate in the creation of a stable and truly democratic government in Mexico. Such predications were somewhat at odds with Díaz’s own plans for his country. As historian William D. Raat explains, the “Porfirian elites” were influenced by intellectual trends, including positivism and utilitarianism, which emphasised “secular progress and material development,” rather than political rights, creeds, and constitutions, as the markers of a modern nation.¹¹¹ In short, democracy for Mexicans was not among Díaz’s objectives, a fact which was clear to any observer at the time who cared to take notice. While he permitted local and state elections to continue, for example, Díaz made sure that these events were tightly-controlled and that his preferred candidate always won. Moreover, he routinely imprisoned political opponents and shut down organisations which were critical of his administration. Some U.S. newspapers were remarkably tolerant of the blatantly autocratic aspects of the Díaz regime. The *Weekly Democratic Statesman*, for example, dismissed the notion that the violent manner by which Díaz had first obtained power made his government illegitimate. “The truth is that however defective the title of Díaz to the presidency,” the newspaper stated in April 1878, “it was none of our business to investigate.”¹¹² Indeed, the newspaper concluded, “questions of right and law concerned the Mexicans and not ourselves.”¹¹³ The *Statesman* was among those American newspapers which by the 1870s had become deeply sceptical regarding the mixed-race Mexicans’ capacity for self-

¹⁰⁹ Jeffery L. Bortz and Stephen Haber, eds., *The Mexican Economy, 1870-1930: Essays on the Economic History of Institutions, Revolution, and Growth* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁰ No Title, *Springfield Republican* (MA), 25 June 1879.

¹¹¹ William D. Raat, “Ideas and Society in Don Porfirio’s Mexico,” *The Americas* 30, no. 1 (July 1973), 52-53. Historians have noted that the ideas which informed Díaz’s presidency were part of a broader trend towards liberalism and positivism among the governing classes of Latin America during the mid-to-late nineteenth century (Nikita Harwich Vallenilla, “Venezuelan Positivism and Modernity,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 70, no. 2 (1990), 327-44; Guy P. Thompson, “Popular Aspects of Liberalism in Mexico, 1848-1888,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 10, no. 3 (1991), 265-92; David K. Burden, “Reform before La Reforma: Liberals, Conservatives and the Debate over Immigration, 1846-1855,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2007), 283-316).

¹¹² “Díaz Foster and Schleicher,” *Weekly Democratic Statesmen* (TX), 11 April 1878, 1.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

government. For these publications, it was enough that Díaz had brought stability and a modicum of economic progress to his country; any native Mexican government could hardly expect to do more.

However, many others in the United States were not ready to give up on Mexico's republican experiment. To them, Díaz's economic domestic agenda looked like an effective means to encourage Mexicans to give up those habits of factionalism which had undermined their efforts at self-governance in the past. The *Washington Post*, for example, noted that widespread poverty exacerbated divisions in Mexican society and encouraged its lower orders to "join in any revolutionary uprising" whose leader promised to improve their condition.¹¹⁴ Once among the ranks of a military chieftain, the newspaper continued, Mexican men quickly "acquired all the habits of idleness, and the vices common to soldiers."¹¹⁵ With no other opportunities for useful employment, they became a permanent disruptive element in society. Industrial development and agricultural diversification, however, would provide new jobs for the Mexico's malcontents while growing prosperity and social mobility would lessen the appeal of demagogues' calls for rebellion. As the *New York Herald* explained, employment cultivated a "desire for stable government and steady business, instead of bad government and frequent revolutions."¹¹⁶ The *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, meanwhile, pointed out that increased communication and collaboration between the different regions of Mexico would help towards "pacifying existing differences" among its citizens, thereby "making Mexico homogeneous."¹¹⁷ By channelling popular energies towards a broad programme for national economic regeneration, moreover, Díaz's policies would imbue Mexicans with sense of common purpose and strengthen their attachment to a shared national identity. "Pronunciamentos," the *Boston Herald* concluded in 1883, "have given place to prospectuses, and muskets to spades."¹¹⁸ In these ways, then, economic development would uproot the habits of faction, conflict, and revolution from Mexican society by giving impetus to a popular spirit of national progress and unity.

These newspapers predicted that the stabilising effects of Díaz's economic policies would create the social preconditions necessary for the creation of durable republican institutions in Mexico in the future. They conceded that this process would take time. In 1867, for example, the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* had expected that Juárez's return to power would usher in an era of political tranquillity and true democracy south of the Rio Grande. In February 1883, however, the newspaper admitted that the Juarists, "with the best of

¹¹⁴ "Justice to Mexico," *Washington Post*, 13 May 1878, 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *New York Herald* quoted in "Mexico Americanized – How Commerce is Awakened and the Spirit of Self-Government Fostered," *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 18 February 1883, 7.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ "Gen. Díaz on Mexico," *Boston Herald*, 28 March 1883, 2.

intentions, altogether overshot their mark.”¹¹⁹ While the Liberals had possessed admirable ideological principles, their doctrines and constitutions were inadequate tools to combat their country’s deeply-rooted culture of internal strife and division. The *Daily Picayune* explained that, given this, the “Díaz administration was a logical and natural sequence of the one which preceded it.”¹²⁰ Juárez had infused his people with a love for republicanism; Díaz would now teach them the habits of law, order, and unity which would enable them to put these values into practice in the future. The *Boston Herald* agreed. Díaz’s economic agenda was, the newspaper asserted, the most effective way to combat factionalism in Mexican society and so bring the “country out of the chaos of civil war” once and for all.¹²¹ “The process ... must be slow,” the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* informed its readers, “but that a start has been made toward securing so desirable a result is a great point gained.”¹²² The Díaz regime, then, marked a critical juncture in Mexican history which had redirected the country onto the path towards stable republicanism.

Envisioning Mexico’s future as a gradual but linear evolution towards stable representative democracy enabled these U.S. newspapers to tolerate some of the deeply undemocratic aspects of the Díaz regime. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, for example, forgave Díaz for having gained his title through an armed uprising. That a “certain amount of force” must be used to unseat presidents “is generally understood in Mexico,” the newspaper conceded.¹²³ Mexico’s broken electoral system made it impossible for any candidate to win office by an honest popular vote, and the use of force was therefore almost a necessity for any Mexican who aspired to the presidency. In the summer of 1879, contrary to the expectations of many in both the United States and Mexico, Díaz announced that he would abide by the Mexican Constitution’s single-term clause and step down from office at the end of his term in 1880. In the United States, the news was interpreted as evidence that the Mexican president understood the importance of the rule of law in a functioning republic. “He firmly declines to serve another term,” an amazed *Atlanta Constitution* reported, “even if the constitutional amendment prohibiting his re-election is repealed.”¹²⁴ This was not the ordinary conduct of a Mexican president – even the much-vaunted Juárez had twice run for re-election. Equally impressive was Díaz’s conduct of the 1880 presidential contest. As the *Chicago Tribune* noted in November of that year, “President

¹¹⁹ *New York Herald* quoted in “Mexico Americanized – how Commerce is Awakened and the Spirit of Self-Government Fostered,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 18 February 1883, 7.

¹²⁰ “Porfirio Díaz – Ex-President of the Mexican Republic,” (*New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 2 March 1883.

¹²¹ No Title, *Boston Herald*, 14 March 1883.

¹²² *New York Herald* quoted in “Mexico Americanized – How Commerce is Awakened and the Spirit of Self-Government Fostered,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 18 February 1883, 7.

¹²³ “Gath’s Gossip: The Present Condition of Mexico,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 March 1883.

¹²⁴ “A Special Dispatch to the Constitution,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 August 1879.

Díaz has taken firm ground against office intrigues in the coming election” and had instructed “circulars to be directed to all Government employees throughout the Republic, ordering them to abstain from all participation in the election organization under a penalty of removal.”¹²⁵ To be sure, rumours did reach the United States during this time that Díaz had in fact personally selected his successor, Manuel González, who had in turn agreed to return the presidency to Díaz after he had served his term. However, most major U.S. newspapers dismissed these rumours as baseless accusations concocted by the Mexican president’s detractors.¹²⁶ When at the end of 1880 Díaz fulfilled his pledge and peacefully handed over the presidency, his image in most sectors of the American press as a Cincinnatus-like figure who had given up power to teach his people the importance of the rule of law was cemented.

Newspapers in the United States were keen to believe that Díaz was guiding Mexico towards a brighter political future because it allowed them to see Americans’ economic activities in that country as a vital part of this process. In part, they claimed, this contribution was financial. When Díaz first came to power in 1876, Mexico was deeply in debt and throughout his first term, the president sought to entice both private companies and foreign governments to invest in the development of his country’s industries and infrastructure. Many American newspapers, however, were convinced that Díaz wished the United States to be the sole sponsor of Mexico’s economic regeneration. This impression began to take shape in 1877 when Díaz made a series of public gestures designed to court the goodwill of Americans, including committing more troops along the U.S.-Mexican border and paying the first instalment of outstanding claims owed by the Mexican government to private U.S. citizens. More than this, Díaz adopted a notably friendly attitude towards American enterprise, encouraging U.S. emigration into Mexico (something which successive Mexican administrations had been reluctant to do since the Texans revolted in 1835) and adjusting trade regulations to accommodate the interests of American merchants. Most importantly, the president dealt generously with U.S. railroad companies and awarded them land grants and subsidies to construct lines both across the border and throughout the Mexican interior.¹²⁷ Within three years after Díaz came to power, concessions to the United States provided for the construction of five railroads in Mexico – some twenty-five hundred miles

¹²⁵ “Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 November 1879.

¹²⁶ Even newspapers which gave credence to these rumours often failed to muster much outrage. Louisiana newspaper the *Feliciano Sentinel*, for example, remarked that González was the “choice of the Díaz Government for the Presidency,” yet seemed to think better of the Mexican precisely because he had the “endorsement of that administration.” The newspaper also commented approvingly on the tranquil condition of the country as the election approached, a stark contrast to the turmoil which usually surrounded changes of government in Mexico. “Singular to state,” the newspaper concluded, “peace seems to reign in the land of the Aztecs” (No Title, *Feliciano Sentinel* (LA), 31 July 1880, 2).

¹²⁷ Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Trade and Investment*, 89.

– carrying subsidies of more than \$32 million.¹²⁸ In June 1878, *New York Herald* concluded that Díaz was clearly aware that “the prosperity of Mexico depends ... on giving free play to American enterprise.”¹²⁹ To the *Herald* and many other American newspapers, Mexico’s new president seemed determined to enlist the United States as the sponsor and co-ordinator of his country’s economic development.

Not everyone in the United States was convinced that the growth of U.S. economic activity in Mexico was a good thing. Some newspapers in the South and Southwest, for example, were deeply troubled by the expansion of U.S. corporate and financial influence south of the border. In July 1883 the *Galveston Daily News* reported that many Mexicans were concerned that “monopolies ... owned by Americans” were “eating up [their] substance in subsidies and concessions.”¹³⁰ American companies, the newspaper asserted, drained wealth away from Mexico rather than investing their profits back into that country’s economy. The *News* was one of a growing number of U.S. publications aligned with either the Farmers’ Alliance or, later, the Populists, which were concerned about the rise of corporate and Eastern financial power in late-nineteenth-century American society. As the newspaper explained, railroad companies in the United States had “corrupted our public men abused our citizens, and carry on a regular system of extortion.”¹³¹ These corporations’ close relationship with Díaz proved that they planned to extend their reach south of the Rio Grande. “A ring composed of Gould, Grant, Palmer & Sullivan, Díaz, Gonzales and Trevino,” the newspaper concluded, “seek to rule the destinies of Mexico.”¹³² Other Texan newspapers were equally suspicious of the intentions of U.S. corporations regarding to Mexico. The “financial resources of the Mexican republic,” the *Austin Weekly Statesman* declared in August 1883, had been “mortgaged to Yankee syndicates.”¹³³ The *Fort Worth Daily Gazette* similarly derided Díaz as “the Grand Mogul” who had “leagued with Americans to betray his country” by selling off its lands and resources to foreign business interests.¹³⁴ According to these newspapers, then, the growth of American financial and commercial influence south of the Rio Grande enhanced the power of U.S. corporations and thereby exacerbated political corruption in both the United States and Mexico.

These viewpoints were in the minority, however. Many publications in the United States praised the U.S. financiers, industrialists, and railroad men active in Mexico for having brought stability to that country. In 1882, for example, the *Weekly Chillicothe Crisis*

¹²⁸ Gilbert G. González and Raul A. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History: Empires, Nations, and Migration* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 36-37,

¹²⁹ “Our Sister Republic – An Interview with President Díaz,” 7 June 1878, 6.

¹³⁰ “The Absorption of Mexico,” *Galveston Daily News*, 28 July 1883.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ “Mortgaged to Yankee Greed,” *Austin Weekly Statesman*, 23 August, 1883, 6.

¹³⁴ No Title, *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, 28 July 1883, 1.

credited Americans with having constructed practically all the “means of communication and transportation” which had appeared in Mexico over the last six years.¹³⁵ Thanks to their efforts, the newspaper claimed, lines now ran “across the continent from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific ocean,” while others connected “the city of Mexico, with our own trunk lines of railroad” in Texas and elsewhere in the U.S. Southwest.¹³⁶ By facilitating greater communication and collaboration between Mexico’s rural and urban centres, the newspaper concluded, American railroad companies “assure ... national tranquillity” south of the border.¹³⁷ Other newspapers also pointed out the stabilising effects of U.S. railroads on Mexican society. As the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* declared, the “more important result that the completion of the projected railway systems will achieve is the unification of the several states which constitute the Republic [of Mexico].”¹³⁸ Moreover, Americans had poured capital into Mexico’s dormant mining industries, taught its industrialists new technologies, and filled its markets with those goods which were the hallmarks of modern civilization. Given this, the *Sentinel* concluded, the “commercial awakening” currently taking place in Mexico was “due almost wholly to the American energy and American money that have come into the land.”¹³⁹ According to these newspapers, the United States was the principal sponsor of Mexico’s economic regeneration and therefore the cause for its recent transformation from a failed anarchic republic into a budding democracy.

Even more gratifying for these publications was the thought that the United States was not only the financial backer of Díaz’s domestic agenda, but also the model which had inspired it. During the French intervention, agents of the Juárez government in the United States had engaged in a propaganda effort to cultivate Americans’ sympathies for the Mexican republican cause in the hope that this would translate into monetary or military aid. During his first term, President Díaz similarly dispatched agents to the United States tasked with courting the goodwill of the American people in order to draw their capital and skills southward. These emissaries frequently insisted that President Díaz had taken the United States as his guide when he formulated his plans for Mexico. “The Díaz party don’t fear the United States,” secretary of state for Nuevo Leon Maruo Sepúlveda assured readers of the *Galveston Daily News* in July 1883, but rather “aim to imitate her as far as possible.”¹⁴⁰ Mexican general Jose Marsical said much the same in an interview he gave to the *New York Herald* in 1877. The Díaz administration, he informed the newspaper, wished to “cultivate

¹³⁵ No Title, *Weekly Chillicothe Crisis* (TX), 30 November 1882, 1.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *New York Herald* quoted in “Mexico Americanized – How Commerce is Awakened and the Spirit of Self-Government Fostered,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 18 February 1883, 7.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ “The Absorption of Mexico,” *Galveston Daily News*, 28 July 1883.

the most friendly relations with our eldest sister, from whom we have copied many of our institutions.”¹⁴¹ According to these Mexicans, President Díaz understood that after the Civil War, the United States had suffered from a climate of acute political factionalism similar to that which had plagued Mexico for decades. As Marsical explained, over the years, Díaz had therefore observed with interest and “admiration” as Americans managed to overcome their “many prejudices” by channelling their energies into projects for domestic economic development and commercial expansion and had determined to encourage his countrymen to do the same.¹⁴² Agents of the Díaz government therefore impressed on the American public that the new generation of leaders in Mexico viewed the United States as the model of stable self-government which they wished to emulate.

Such flattery was well-received. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, believed it gave Díaz high praise when it described him as “a man who is familiar with the United States, who knows our greatness and resources, is acquainted with our manners, customs, and intentions, and who is familiar with our public men and public policy.”¹⁴³ The newspaper was particularly pleased to learn that the Mexican president “has watched how we in the United States have recovered so well from our regrettable ... internecine conflict” and that he “hoped that he might apply the same lessons to his own country.”¹⁴⁴ The *New York Tribune* thought the same. “Mexico has suffered terribly with interminable domestic strife,” the newspaper remarked in 1880, “... and never was able to recover from one civil war before there was another.”¹⁴⁵ But having watched how Americans had resolved the legacy of sectionalism through national economic aggrandisement, Mexicans “have caught the spark ... and will no doubt soon find that their troubles are far behind them.”¹⁴⁶ The thought that Mexico’s leaders had learned their method of domestic stabilisation from Americans was a welcome one to these publications, most of which had worried that the United States might never overcome the stain of factionalism and internal strife the Civil War had left on its political culture. In their darkest moments, these newspapers had even wondered whether their country had become so Mexicanized that it would never regain its title as the world’s exemplary republic. The notion that President Díaz now looked northward for a model for successful stable self-governance did much to ease these fears. “Why should they not look at us as their guide,” the *New York Herald* asked in 1879, “when we have made such a success after having sunk so low?”¹⁴⁷ Díaz’s presidency, therefore, enabled these

¹⁴¹ “Troubled Mexico,” *New York Herald*, 3 July 1877, 3.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ “Petty Jealousy,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 June 1883.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ “The Mexican President,” *New York Tribune*, 14 April 1880, 3.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ “Mexico,” *New York Herald*, 17 August 1879, 2.

publications to recreate an image of Mexico as the United States' admiring pupil which aimed to assure Americans that the Civil War had in fact not done lasting damage to their nation's self-claimed role as the model republic.

The sense that the United States' exemplary influence was on the rise once more was evident in the enthusiasm with which many of these newspapers began to discuss their country's future in the wider hemisphere. In 1881, for example, the *Chicago Tribune* declared that the time was right for Americans to revive the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and so recommence the United States' mission to spread republicanism throughout the New World. The United States would pursue this historic goal, however, through modern means. "Mexico's success under American influences," the *Chicago Tribune* explained, could be repeated "throughout the southern portions of the hemisphere."¹⁴⁸ Specifically, the newspaper advised Americans to "extend our commerce ever further southward" in order to teach the "weaker republics, modelled after our own, the benefits ... of domestic peace and industry."¹⁴⁹ The *New York Herald* agreed. "The Monroe Doctrine must be readjusted to the modern times in which we live," the newspaper asserted in 1879, and be used "as a means of spreading America's commercial influence in the name of industry, law, and order."¹⁵⁰ This is not to suggest that there was a consensus among these publications regarding the precise form which U.S. foreign policy in the hemisphere ought to take in the future.¹⁵¹ Most agreed, however, that henceforth the United States should enhance its influence in the region primarily through commercial means. As was the case with Mexico, they asserted, U.S. economic aggrandisement in the region would have long-term social and political benefits, particularly for those republics which had suffered from chronic political instability and social discord since independence. "We will teach them industry," the *Chicago Tribune* predicted in 1881, "and with that ... the blessings of peace and harmony."¹⁵² In doing so, Americans would transform those "chaotic nations into fine republics like our own."¹⁵³ By applying the methods it had used in Mexico throughout the hemisphere, therefore, the United States could fulfil its mission to guide the rest of the New World towards stable self-government.

Over the course of Díaz's first administration, a growing portion of the American press came to view U.S. economic activities in Mexico as proof that their nation had

¹⁴⁸ "The Monroe Doctrine," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 February 1881, 4.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ "Mexico," *New York Herald*, 17 August 1879, 2.

¹⁵¹ For more on Americans' debates regarding policy in the Western Hemisphere throughout the final third of the nineteenth century, see Thomas D. Schoonover, *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1991); and, Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine*, 159-240.

¹⁵² "The American Doctrine," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 June 1881, 2.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

regained its standing as the world's exemplary republic. Americans, they claimed, would teach Mexicans stable self-government through practical methods of economic development, rather than exporting to that country high-minded political doctrines and ideals. This was, perhaps, only rhetoric; whether American newspapers truly believed that economic development and commercial expansion would transform Mexico into a thriving republic is difficult to know with any degree of certainty. That many of these publications had for years insisted that Mexicans were incapable of responsible self-government, moreover, calls into doubt the sincerity of their claims that true democracy was on the horizon south of the Rio Grande. However, the fact that these organs felt the need to make these assertions is significant. By framing their countrymen's economic activities in Mexico as a continuation of the United States' historic republican mission, these publications assured their readers that they had regained their standing as representatives of the world's most successful democracy. It was a profound message to communicate to postwar Americans, many of whom had grappled with self-doubt over the seeming terminal instability of their republican system since the end of the Civil War.

Conclusion

After attending his godson's christening at Montevideo, Mexico, in March 1883, former president Porfirio Díaz embarked on a three-month tour of the United States. The route he followed read like a roadmap of the nation's burgeoning postwar industrial and commercial centres. The journey began in New Orleans, where merchants impressed their Mexican guest with a tour of their city's warehouses filled with stock from the interior states ready to be shipped into the Mexican Gulf. The Mexican then boarded a special carriage provided by James Sullivan, president of the Sullivan and Palmer Railroad Company, which carried him through the hub towns of Galveston, Brownsville, and Laredo which connected the Texan trunk lines with branch roads running southward over the Rio Grande. Next Díaz travelled north to New York via St. Louis and Chicago, making sure to visit factories and manufacturers which flooded Mexican markets with finished goods along the way. His tour ended in Washington D.C., where Díaz met with President Chester A. Arthur and received a formal welcome by the U.S. Congress. At every stop of his tour, the former president was praised by the local press as a visionary, the deliverer of the Mexican republic who had pulled his country out of the depths of anarchy and placed it firmly on the road to stability and progress. The Mexican's decision to tour the United States' commercial and manufacturing centres, moreover, was taken as further proof that Díaz's innovative agenda to revitalise Mexico had been inspired by U.S. enterprise, ingenuity, and skill. The United

States, the American press proudly proclaimed, was both the sponsor and model of Mexico's remarkable transformation in recent years.

The notion that Mexico was the United States' admiring pupil was a relatively recent phenomenon in U.S. public discourse. During the 1870s, many American publications were troubled by the persistence of factionalism in their nation's political culture so long after its civil war. In their more pessimistic moments, they had invoked an image of Mexico as an anarchic and miserable republic to warn their countrymen of the condition which the United States was descending towards. Yet while this image of Mexico reflected Americans' insecurities about the persistence of factionalism in their republic, Mexico itself offered them a way to reverse this deleterious trend. During the 1870s, U.S. newspapers and journals began to suggest that a collective effort by Americans to extend their country's commercial reach into Mexico would help to unify the discordant elements of their postwar society. Specifically, they anticipated that a grand venture for national aggrandisement would distract their countrymen from controversial issues surrounding Reconstruction and subsume their sectional antipathies in an intoxicating spirit of patriotic fervour. In this sense, then, a potent force which fuelled postwar Americans' interest in commercial expansion south of the Rio Grande was a popular yearning to heal the fissures of the Civil War and so pull their country back from the brink of interminable domestic discord and strife.

Mexico's function as a site for harmonising postwar U.S. society was symbolic as well as literal. During Díaz's first term, as their economic activities in that country accelerated, American publications constructed an interpretation of Mexico's recent regeneration which eased their concerns regarding the integrity of their own republican system. Central to this interpretation was the notion that, by contributing to Mexico's economic development, Americans laid the groundwork for its social and political stabilisation. It was a notion actively encouraged by Díaz's spokesmen in the United States, who emphasised that Americans' ability to overcome the divisive legacies of their civil war through programmes for national economic development had inspired the president to attempt the same in Mexico. Díaz never claimed that he wished to bring democracy to his country. American publications, however, insisted that by following their example, Mexicans would harmonise the discordant elements of their society and so lay the necessary preconditions for the eventual development of a stable representative system in their country in the future. The process would be a slow one; Mexico's internal divisions were more deeply entrenched than those in the United States, and it would take time for economic forces to complete the work of stabilisation in that country. Nevertheless, American newspapers proudly declared that the United States now stood as the guide for the eventual success of Mexico's republican experiment. By the early 1880s, then, Mexico's image in U.S. public discourse, so long a reflection of Americans' deepest insecurities, had

transformed into a symbol which aimed to reassure them that the United States had recovered its standing as the New World's exceptional republic.

Conclusion

By November 1883, the *Atlanta Constitution* had concluded that Mexico's new president was something of a disappointment. Earlier that year, President Manuel González had switched his country's currency from nickel to silver. The move precipitated a dramatic rise in inflation, a devaluation of the *peso*, and economic hardship across the country. In the months that followed, Mexican newspapers reported murmurings of unrest which would later culminate in a series of uprisings in several major cities. Yet the *Constitution* was remarkably sanguine about Mexico's future. As the newspaper reminded its readers, the following year there would be a presidential election which would likely see former president Porfirio Díaz "elected without opposition."¹ Unlike his successor, Díaz was an intelligent and decisive leader. He was, moreover, a careful student of American history who understood that the "sectional differences in Mexico are similar to those of the United States."² During his first term 1876-1880, Díaz had therefore implemented a domestic agenda "modelled after that of this country" which aimed to soothe social and political divisions in Mexican society by channelling popular energies into projects for national economic regeneration.³ The *Constitution* anticipated that, when Díaz resumed office, he would recommence this programme and, with the aid of U.S. capital, men, and technology, rapidly transform Mexico into "one of the most progressive [nations] in the world."⁴

The image that the *Constitution* portrayed of Mexico as the United States' admiring protégé was a relatively new one. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, few Americans had been so optimistic about Mexicans' ability to stabilise their country. Since the establishment of its first federalist republican government in 1824, Mexico had been gripped by what seemed to observers in the United States to be an endless cycle of civil conflicts and political upheavals which ranged from military coups and *caudillo* uprisings to revolts by Native tribes in the northern frontier. For those Americans who had cared to take notice, this endemic chaos pointed to a single truth – Mexicans, whether due to biology, culture, or religion, were incapable of self-government. This notion might have troubled Americans of the Founding generation, many of whom had anticipated that the republican institutions they had devised were destined to be adopted by nations around the world. Antebellum Americans, however, often derived a certain gratification from the turmoil which reigned south of their border. The first half of the nineteenth century had wrought some dramatic changes in U.S. politics: the advent of universal white male democracy and

¹ "The Use of Díaz," *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 November 1883, 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

the rise of party organisations had caused disquiet in certain sectors of the United States and had led some Americans to worry about the direction in which their republic was headed. No matter their concerns, however, they could look across the Rio Grande and be reassured that at least in their country electoral processes were largely free of corruption, transfers of power passed off peacefully, and partisan disputes were contained within the legal apparatus of government. By its failings, Mexico offered proof of the unique stability and success of the U.S. republic.

This dissertation has demonstrated that for many Americans, the Civil War shattered this illusion. Of course, the sectional crisis had been mounting for decades and during the 1850s had even broken out into occasional violence. But no matter how fractious the political climate, antebellum Americans could still believe that their representatives understood the importance of putting the public good over sectional self-interest and were ultimately able to work through their disagreements in the name of national peace. In 1861, however, tensions between the Northern and Southern states broke out into full-blown warfare. Whether they welcomed Southern secession or not, Americans were now confronted with the reality that their country had succumbed to the kind of civil strife that many of them had believed possible only in republics south of the Rio Grande. This realisation destabilised Mexico's image in both Northern and Southern public discourse. For many Unionist spokesmen and newspapers, the fact that the slaveholders' rebellion took place just as Mexico was threatened by another clerical assault led them to look upon their southern neighbour with a newfound sense of sympathy. Throughout the Civil War, they urged Northerners to forget their prior assumptions about Mexicans and embrace them as co-defenders of the republican tradition on the North American continent. Confederate publications, meanwhile, congratulated Southerners for having broken free from the abolitionists in Washington before they could consummate their plot to transform the United States into another "mongrel" emancipationist republic like Mexico. Apparently, the Civil War had illuminated similarities between the United States and Mexico which were evident no matter on which side of the Mason-Dixon line one stood.

Confederate surrender in 1865 did little to reassure Americans that their republic had passed through its episode of domestic strife. Images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse therefore remained in flux. That ex-Confederates and many Northern Democrats were pessimistic about their nation's future was unsurprising. After all, emancipation was now the law of the land and the federal government was in the hands of wild-eyed Radicals. Nevertheless, following Appomattox, these Americans attempted to shape the process of sectional reunion in their favour by pointing to the spectre of Mexican anarchy to warn of the ruinous consequences that the Republicans' plans for military rule and black suffrage would have on the defeated Southern states. Over time, even those voices in U.S. public

discourse that had previously declared themselves champions of the Juarist cause articulated an increasingly dim view of their sister republic. Immediately after the Civil War, many Northern politicians and publications had been hopeful that a thorough-going programme of Southern Reconstruction would expunge the last remnants of the Slave Power from American society and so remove all sources of dissension from the republic. Throughout the 1870s, however, national politics was marred by persistent factionalism, contested elections, and accusations of corruption. As their doubts grew regarding the United States' ability to reclaim its title as the model republic, these Americans' view of Mexico darkened. While they had once praised the country as an ally, they increasingly invoked its image as a warning of the interminable disorder that awaited Americans if they could not find a way to reunite the discordant elements of their postwar society.

It was not until the late 1870s and early 1880s that fears that the United States was sliding into a condition analogous to Mexico faded from U.S. public discourse. Having concluded that Reconstruction had not only failed to ease sectional tensions but had in fact spawned new agitators of domestic peace, many publications rejected political experimentation as a means of harmonising the Union. Instead, they argued that the pursuit of economic opportunities south of the Rio Grande would distract Americans from the bitter legacies of the Civil War and encourage them to subsume their sectional antipathies in a collaborative project of national commercial aggrandisement. When in 1876 Mexico's new president, Porfirio Díaz, opened his country's doors to U.S. capital, emigration, and enterprise, therefore, organs from across the American political spectrum saw the chance to put this plan into action. Over the course of Díaz's first term, moreover, his spokesmen impressed upon the American public that the new administration in Mexico City considered the United States to be the paragon of stable self-government and was determined to follow its example in its efforts to bring about order and peace in Mexico where there had once been turmoil and misery. These platitudes were well received in the U.S. press, much of which had spent the last decade bemoaning the demoralised condition of their so-called exemplary republic. These publications began to promote a new image of Mexico that depicted the country as the United States' pupil whose every step towards stability and progress was evidence of the benign power of the U.S. example. This final image, the culmination of a prolonged period of national self-doubt, aimed to assure Americans that the United States had finally overcome its domestic difficulties and reclaimed its providential role as the New World's model republic.

Tracing the evolution of images of Mexico in U.S. public discourse between 1860 and 1883 reveals that the Civil War dealt a blow to Americans' faith in the integrity of their so-called exceptional republic. It also throws light on how different groups in the United States interpreted the causes of their internecine strife and the unsettled political climate that

followed it. During the Secession Crisis 1860-1861, advocates of disunion compared the abolitionist Republicans in Washington to the radical Juarist leaders of Mexico. Both these extremist groups, they argued, advocated policies that fomented social and political conflict and so weakened their populations until they were powerless to oppose their leaders when they transformed their governments into militarised despotisms. Unionist organs and spokesmen, meanwhile, drew parallels between the Mexican clergy and the Southern slavocracy and castigated both as vestiges of Old World colonialism which harboured anti-democratic principles and a thirst for power. According to this interpretation, the rise of sectional tensions in the antebellum Union had been caused by the machinations of the Slave Power, which had disrupted the nation's electoral processes and defied federal authority whenever it felt its monopoly over the Southern states was threatened. Unionists argued that these aristocratic slaveholders had persuaded Southerners to support secession in much the same way that the Mexican priesthood would periodically rile its congregants into rebellion to undermine the government in Mexico City. By the 1870s, Americans had located a new enemy in their midst – the avaricious spoilsmen who had their counterparts in the demagogues of Mexico. Unlike their predecessors, these new internal pollutants were not actuated by ideology, whether aristocratic or radical. They did, however, possess an overweening lust for power which led them to foment divisions in American society as a means to lever themselves into office. By drawing these comparisons, politicians, newspapers, and others in U.S. public discourse sought to explain to Americans the causes of dissension in their society and direct public scorn onto those elements which they claimed had precipitated the decline of the once exemplary American republic.

This dissertation has shown that contributors to national public discourse used images of Mexico not only to highlight insidious elements within their republic, but to rally popular support behind the different methods they proposed to combat them. Chapter two demonstrated that, during the Secession Crisis, disunionists pointed to Mexico to warn Southerners of the chronic anarchy which would engulf their society if they remained within the Union while abolitionist Republicans controlled the federal government. As they did so, these secessionists also emphasised the tranquillity and prosperity which an independent Confederacy was destined to enjoy as the New World's last remaining slaveholding republic. Chapter three explored how, when the bid for Southern independence failed, former Confederate and Northern Democratic organs used images of Mexico in a similar fashion to rally popular opposition to Radical Reconstruction. The Republicans' plans to eradicate racial barriers in the defeated Southern states, they argued, would plunge that section of the Union into the kind of turmoil and conflict which raged incessantly south of the Rio Grande. Many went further and charged that Radicals in Washington hoped to see disorder reign in both the South and Mexico so that they could extend federal military rule

over these regions and hold them as colonial appendages. Chapter four discussed how, during the 1870s, a growing number of Republican voices in public discourse used the term Mexicanization to describe what they saw as the culture of factionalism that had become ingrained in American society since the Civil War. Concluding that federal interference in Southern politics exacerbated this phenomenon, these organs urged Americans to withdraw their support from Radical Reconstruction and so prevent the United States from joining Mexico alongside the ranks of the New World's failed republics.

While some Americans used Mexico as a warning of what must be avoided, others invoked its image as an inspirational device to impel Americans towards some revolutionary courses of action. After President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, many Northerners were concerned that the war to save the Union had been transformed into a crusade to free the slaves. Chapter one traces how Unionist propagandists in public discourse sought to frame the Proclamation in terms which they believed would be palatable to Northerners who were either suspicious of or downright hostile to abolition. Emancipation, they argued, was essential in order to destroy the Slave Power, thereby guaranteeing that the United States would never be threatened again by internal convulsions and rebellions. To emphasise this point, Unionists encouraged Northerners to think of the Juarists in Mexico, who at that time were engaged in their own struggle against anti-democratic assailants. Once the United States had purged itself of disruptive elements, they claimed, the potent power of its exemplary image would be felt south of the Rio Grande and turn the tide of the Franco-Mexican war in the Juarists' favour. Chapter five revealed that a similar argument was made during the late 1870s and early 1880s by publications seeking to encourage Americans to embark on what they anticipated would be a unifying venture to extend the United States' commercial influence south of the Rio Grande. By sponsoring Mexico's economic regeneration, they asserted, Americans would bring unity to that divided country and so help to lay the preconditions for the development of democratic institutions. In doing so, Americans would fulfil the role Providence had ordained for them as the representatives and champions of stable self-governance in the New World. Between 1860 and 1883, images of Mexico appeared in different incarnations in U.S. public discourse and were used to advance a variety of agendas. What united them, however, was the notion that the United States was a republic in decline, and that Americans must find a way to harmonise their nation before it could resume its title as the model of self-governance in the New World.

Mexico was not the only country that Americans compared themselves to during the Civil War era. In July 1865, for example, the *Nation's* editor Edwin L. Godkin's attention was not trained south of the Rio Grande, but across the Atlantic. "This country," he declared, writing a few months after Appomattox, "has done more for the cause of republicanism in

four years than has been achieved in fifty by European discussion.”⁵ Godkin’s assertion fits well with a large body of transnational scholarship which has established that, when they thought about the global significance of their civil war, many Americans focussed on Europe. As historians such as Andre Fleche, Don H. Doyle, and others have convincingly demonstrated, throughout the conflict both Northerners and Southerners attempted to win the support of European audiences by arguing that their respective war causes were waged in defence of those principles of liberty, democracy, and self-determination that had inspired many of the nationalist movements that had swept across the European continent earlier in the century.⁶ Frank Ninkovich explains that, when Union troops defeated the rebels in 1865, many Americans (particularly those in the North) saw the victory an “epoch-making” event.⁷ Now purged of the scourge of slavery, they believed, the United States had entered a new phase of its national existence as a modern, powerful, and truly democratic nation-state ready to take up the banner of freedom and progress from the European revolutionaries of 1848. Certainly, this is how Godkin felt during those heady months following the end of the Civil War: The United States, he asserted, had ceased to be “merely American, and becomes cosmopolitan.”⁸

In 1876, however, Godkin expressed a rather different view of the impact of the Civil War on the United States. Having now witnessed nine years of bitter political wrangling over the Reconstruction question, Godkin informed his readers that the conflict had in fact marked the start of the country’s protracted decline into a near-constant condition of political turmoil to the point where it was now almost fully “Mexicanized.”⁹ Scholars of U.S. history have established that nineteenth-century Americans contrasted themselves against the Latin American republics to delineate those qualities they believed made their nation unique. This dissertation, however, has built upon a small but growing body of scholarship which explores how, during periods of national self-doubt, Americans used these

⁵ No Title, *Nation*, 6 July 1865, 1.

⁶ Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Andre M. Fleche, “The American Civil War in the Age of Revolution,” *South Central Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2016), 5-20; Ayers, “The American Civil War: Emancipation and Reconstruction on the World Stage,” *OAH Magazine of History* 20, no. 1 (January 2006), 54-61; Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*; Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations*; Gerlach, *British Liberalism and the United States*; Butler, *Critical Americans*. For studies which compare Southern secession and the subsequent process of national reunion in the United States to comparable movements of national unification taking place in Europe at the time, see Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Degler, “One Among Many,” 289-90; Stig Forster and Jörg Nagler, eds. *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the Wars of German Unification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Enrico Dal Lago, *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery, and Beyond: The U.S. “Peculiar Institution” in International Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 145-172.

⁷ Ninkovich, *Global Dawn*, 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

same images as mirrors that reflected back to them their own insecurities. As Godkin's quote suggests, throughout the Civil War and postwar era, those Americans who were nervous about the condition of their republic used images of Mexico to identify what they saw as the weaknesses within their own society. As we have seen, Americans differed in their precise interpretations of what had caused their nation's descent into civil strife. They agreed, however, that some insidious internal force had infected their political culture with a spirit of factionalism. As Godkin surmised, somehow his countrymen had forgotten those "deeply-rooted political habits" of harmony and cooperation, and until they regained them they would be forever menaced by instability and the threat of domestic strife.¹⁰ When he placed the Civil War in the context of the European revolutions, therefore, it appeared to Godkin to have marked the United States' ascendancy as a modern nation-state. When he looked southward, however, his nation's internecine conflict more closely resembled the kind of internal convulsions that had ruined all the republics beyond the Rio Grande.

That Godkin expressed both optimism and pessimism about his country's future indicates the complexity of emotions that Americans experienced as they emerged from their civil war. Certainly, the United States had not only overcome the rebellion but had emerged from the contest with a sophisticated economic apparatus, a powerful and active federal state, and free of the contentious issue of slavery which had been the source of so much tension and conflict in the antebellum Union. While many were jubilant that their nation had survived what would surely be its greatest trial, however, some Americans were also deeply disturbed that the United States had proven to be vulnerable to the forces of internal dissension which had destroyed other republics in the world, both ancient and modern. Indeed, the experiences of those republics taught Americans that civil wars were often cyclical, and that one domestic conflict was usually followed by further fragmentations. Some of them therefore worried that there was no reason why the United States' fate would be any different. Historians have appreciated the conflicted nature of postwar U.S. society, torn between triumph and hope on the one hand, and insecurity and dread on the other. Yet too often scholars divide these emotions and attribute them to separate sectors of society.¹¹ The Civil War's "victors," they argue, were confident about their nation's future and pushed it to embrace a range of transformative agendas, from emancipation and racial equality to economic modernization. Meanwhile, the "losers"—slaveholders, secessionists, white supremacists—fearful of the transformations taking place in their society, clung stubbornly to the past and pushed back on the forces of progress.

¹⁰ "What is Mexicanization?" *Nation*, 21 December 1876, 1.

¹¹ Baker, *Affairs of Party*; Slap, *Doom of Reconstruction*; Michael Thomas Smith, *The Enemy Within: Fears of Corruption in the Civil War North* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Summers, *Ordeal of Reunion*.

A binary view which pits the confident impulses of innovation against the insecurities of conservatism underappreciates the extent to which the Civil War was a bewildering and unsettling experience for all of those who lived through it. By following how different groups in U.S. public discourse invoked images of Mexico between 1860 and 1883, this dissertation has demonstrated that concerns about political disharmony, and hence the integrity of the republic, transcended party and sectional lines. These anxieties could, moreover, be marshalled in support of a variety of agendas. Fears that Radicals wished to foment division and conflict in the United States fueled opposition to emancipation and, later, to efforts by the federal government to rework the South's political order on the basis of racial equality. At other times, however, anxieties regarding political disharmony were harnessed in support of programmes for unprecedented change. Unionist organs used the promise of an end to factionalism to persuade wartime Northerners to accept emancipation. A similar argument was made after the Civil War by the advocates of Radical Reconstruction. Only by granting civil and political rights to freedpeople, they argued, could the federal government uproot the Slave Power from the South and eradicate the cause of division and instability in American society. In the 1870s, many U.S. publications called on Americans to pursue overseas commercial expansion as a means of undercutting efforts by demagogic office-seekers to perpetuate sectional tensions within the Union. The initial outward thrust which began the United States' postwar informal empire, so often viewed by scholars as evidence of a unified and self-assured nation, was in fact partly fueled by a current of insecurity which ran through postwar American society. Some of the revolutionary changes of the Civil War era, in short, were made possible only when Americans believed they could guarantee their nation political harmony and, with it, domestic stability. This study has shown, therefore, that anxieties regarding the integrity of the U.S. republic were a pervasive force in the Civil War era United States that must be appreciated in order to understand how Americans navigated the road from disunion to lasting national peace.

Bibliography

Primary Sources: Newspapers, Journals, and Periodicals

Congressional Globe

Congressional Record

Atlanta Constitution

Austin Weekly Statesman

Bossier Banner (LA)

Boston Herald

Cairo Bulletin (IL)

Charleston Mercury

Chicago Tribune

Cincinnati Enquirer

Commercial Bulletin (MA)

Commercial Gazette (PA)

Courier-Journal (KY)

Crisis (OH)

Daily Arkansas Gazette

Daily Constitution (GA)

Daily Dispatch (VA)

Daily Intelligencer (D.C.)

Dallas Weekly Herald

De Bow's Review

Elevator (CA)

Evening Telegraph (PA)

Feliciano Sentinel (LA)

Fort Worth Daily Gazette

Galveston Daily News

Georgia Weekly Telegraph

Harper's Review

Hartford Daily Courant

Inter-Ocean (IL)

Los Angeles Daily Herald

Milwaukee Sentinel

Nashville Union and American

Nation
National Intelligencer (D.C.)
National Republican (D.C.)
New Hampshire Patriot and United States Gazette
New Orleans Daily Crescent
New York Herald
New York Post
New York Times
New York Tribune
New York World
North American
Ohio Daily Statesman
Old Guard (NJ)
Philadelphia Inquirer
Public Ledger (PA)
Railroad Gazette (NY)
Richmond Enquirer
Sacramento Daily Record-Union
San Francisco Chronicle
South Carolina Ledger
Southern Banner (MS)
Southern Review (LA)
Springfield Republican (MA)
Staunton Spectator (VA)
St-Louis Globe Democrat
(Baltimore) Sun
(New Orleans) Times-Picayune
Washington Post
Weekly Atlanta Intelligencer
Weekly Chillicothe Crisis
Weekly Democratic Statesmen (TX)
Western Democrat (NC)
Wilmington Journal (NC)

Primary Sources: Other Published Materials

Bellows, Henry W. *Historical Sketch of the Union League Club of New York: Its Origins, Organization, and Work, 1863-1879*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1879

Brassaeux, Charles A., and Katherine Carmines Mooney, eds. *Ruined by this Miserable War: The Dispatches of Charles Prosper Fauconnet, 1863-1868*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012

Chevalier, Michael. *France, Mexico, and the Confederate States*. New York: C. B. Richardson, 1863

Davis, Henry Winter. *Speeches and Addresses Delivered in the Congress of the United States, and on Several Public Occasions, by Henry Winter Davis of Maryland*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1867

Dennett, Daniel. *Louisiana As It Is: Reliable Information for Farmers, Patrons of Husbandry, Laboring Men, Manufacturers, Capitalists, Men of Enterprise, Invalids – Any Who May Desire to Settle or Purchase Lands in the Gulf States*. New Orleans: Eureka Press, 1876

Dinner to Señor Matias Romero, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Mexico, December 28, 1863. New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864.

Dinner to Señor Matias Romero, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Mexico, March 29, 1864. New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864.

Elliott, E. N., ed. *Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments: Comprising the Writings of Hammond, Harper, Christy, Hodges, Bledsoe, and Cartwright*. Augusta, GA: Pritchard, Abbott & Loomis, 1860

Foote, Henry S. *War of the Rebellion; Or, Scylla and Charybdis, Consisting of Observations upon the Causes, Course, and Consequences of the Late Civil War in the United States*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866

Leavitt, Joshua. *The Monroe Doctrine*. New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864.

McDougall, James A. *French Interference in Mexico: Speech of Hon. J. A. McDougall of California in the U.S. Senate, February 3, 1863*. Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1863

McPherson, Edward. *The Political History of the United States of America, During the Period of Reconstruction*. Washington D.C.: Philp & Solomons, 1871

Opinions of Loyalists Concerning the Great Questions of the Times: Expressed in the Speeches and Letters from Prominent Citizens of all Sections and Parties, on Occasion of the Inauguration of the Loyal National League, in Mass Meeting in Union Square, New York, 11 April 1863. New York: C. S. Westcott & Co., 1863.

Owen, Robert Dale. *The Policy of Emancipation: In Three Letters to the Secretary of War, the President of the United States, and the Secretary of the Treasury by Robert Dale Owen*. Philadelphia: Lippincott & Co. 1863

Owen, Robert Dale. *The Wrongs of Slavery, the Right of Emancipation and the Future of the African Race in the United States*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864

Pamphlets Issued by the Loyal Publication Society, from February 1 1863 to February 1 1864. New York: Loyal Publication Society, 1864

Proceedings at the Organization of the Loyal National League at the Cooper Institute, March 20, 1863. New York: C.S. Westcott & Co., 1863.

Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens of New York, to Express Sympathy and Respect for the Mexican Republican Exiles at the Cooper Institute, July 19, 1865. New York: John A. Gray & Green, 1864

Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens of New York, to Express Sympathy and Respect for the Mexican Republican Exiles, Cooper Institute, July 19, 1865. New York: John A. Gray & Green, 1865

Proceedings of the National Railroad Convention at St. Louis, MO., November 23 & 24, 1875, in Regard to the Construction of the Texas & Pacific Railway as a Southern Trans-Continental Line from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific Ocean on the Thirty-Second Parallel of Latitude. St Louis: Woodward, Tiernan & Hale, 1875

Proceedings of the Union League of Philadelphia in Commemoration of the Eighty-Seventh Anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 1863. Philadelphia: King & Bird, 1863

Reavis, Logan U. *An International Railway to the City of Mexico.* St Louis, MO: Woodward, Tiernan & Hale, 1879

———. *Saint Louis: The Future Great City of the World.* St Louis: Missouri Democrat Printing House, 1870

Richardson, James D. *A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, Including the Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865.* Nashville, TN: United States Publishing Company, 1906

Schoonover, Thomas D., ed. and trans. *A Mexican View of America in the 1860s: A Foreign Diplomat Describes the Civil War and Reconstruction.* London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1991

———. *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986

Stephens, Alexander H. *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States: Its Causes, Character, Conduct and Results, Presented in a Series of Colloquies at Liberty Hall.* Vol 2. Philadelphia, PA: National Publishing Company, 1868

The Rising City of the West: San Diego, Southern California, The Pacific Terminus of the Texas Pacific Railroad, 1872. New York: Wm. Moore, 1872.

The Slavery Question a Pretext to Lead the Masses on to Revolution. Philadelphia: Union League of Philadelphia Board of Publication, 1863.

Throckmorton, James W. *Speech of Hon. Jas. W. Throckmorton of Texas, in the House of Representatives, March 1, 1877, together with the Report of the Hon. L. Q. Lamar, of Mississippi, Chairman of the Committee on Pacific Railroads, made to the House of Representatives, January 24, 1877.* Washington, 1877

Secondary Sources: Articles

Ayers, Edward L. "The American Civil War: Emancipation and Reconstruction on the World Stage." *OAH Magazine of History* 20, no. 1 (January 2006), 54-61

Barreyre, Nicolas. "The Politics of Economic Crisis: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 4 (October 2011), 403-23

Benedict, Michael Les. "Preserving the Constitution: The Conservative Bias of Radical Reconstruction." *Journal of American History* 61, no. 1 (June 1974), 65-90

Bolton, Herbert E. "The Epic of Greater America." *American Historical Review* 38, no. 3 (April 1933), 448-74

Bonner, Robert E. "Slavery, Confederate Diplomacy, and the Racialist Mission of Henry Hotze." *Civil War History* 51, no. 3 (September 2005), 288-316

Buckner, Philip. "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution": The American Civil War in the Making of Canadian Confederation." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017), 512-40

Burden, David K. "Reform before La Reforma: Liberals, Conservatives and the Debate over Immigration, 1846-1855." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2007), 283-316

Burg, Robert W. "Amnesty, Civil Rights, and the Meaning of Liberal Republicanism, 1862-1872." *American Nineteenth Century History* 4, no. 3 (2003), 29-60

Clavin, Matthew J. "American Toussaints: Symbols, Subversion, and the Black Atlantic Tradition in the American Civil War." *Slavery & Abolition* 28, no. 1 (May 2007), 87-113

Clayton, Nichola. "Managing the Transition to a Free Society: American Interpretations of the British West Indies during the Civil War and Reconstruction." *American Nineteenth Century History* 7, no. 1 (2006), 89-108

- Curry, Richard O. "The Union as it Was: A Critique of Recent Interpretations of the 'Copperheads.'" *Civil War History* 13, no.1 (March 1967), 25-39
- Davis, Harold E. "Henry Grady, the Atlanta Constitution, and the Politics of Farming in the 1880s." *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Winter 1987), 571-600
- Degler, Carl N. "One Among Many." *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1963), 289-306
- Degler, Carl N. "Slavery in the United States and Brazil: An Essay in Comparative History." *American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (April 1970), 1004-28
- Downs, Gregory P. "The Mexicanization of American Politics: The United States' Transnational Path from Civil War to Stabilization." *American Historical Review* 117, no. 2 (April 2012), 387-409
- Edling, Max. *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* XIV, no. 10 (2012). <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIV-10.pdf> (accessed 8 February 2018)
- Fleche, Andre M. "The American Civil War in the Age of Revolution." *South Central Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2016), 5-20
- Gentry, Fenner. "A Confederate Success in Europe: The Erlanger Loan." *Journal of Southern History* 36, no. 2 (May 1970), 157-88
- Gerstle, Gary. "The Civil War and State-Building: A Reconsideration." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 1 (March 2017). <http://journalofthecivilwarera.org/forum-the-future-of-reconstruction-studies> (accessed 5 December 2017)
- Gobat, Michel. "The Invention of Latin America: A Transnational History of Anti-Imperialism, Democracy, and Race." *American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December 2013), 1347-49
- Goldwert, Marvin. "Matias Romero and Congressional Opposition to Seward's Policy toward the French Intervention in Mexico." *The Americas* 22, no. 1 (July 1965), 22-40

- Graham, Richard. "Slavery and Economic Development: Brazil and the U.S. in the 19th Century." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (October 1981), 620-55
- Grandin, Greg. "The Liberal Traditions in the Americas: Rights, Sovereignty, and the Origins of Liberal Multi-Lateralism." *American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (February 2012), 68-91
- Greene, Jack P. "Comparing Early Modern American Worlds: Some Reflections on the Promise of a Hemispheric Perspective." *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (January 2003). <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1478-0542.026/abstract> (accessed 8 February 2018)
- Guyatt, Nicholas. "America's Conservatory: Race, Reconstruction, and the Santo Domingo Debate." *Journal of American History* 97, no. 4 (March 2011), 974-1000
- Hahn, Steven. "Slave Emancipation, Indian Peoples, and the Projects of a New American State." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 3 (September 2013), 307-30
- Heath, Andrew. "'Let the Empire Come': Imperialism and Its Critics in the Reconstruction South." *Civil War History* 60, no. 2 (June 2014), 152-89
- Hickey, Donald R. "America's Response to the Slave Revolt in Haiti, 1791-1806." *Journal of the Early Republic* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1982), 362-79
- Kelly, Patrick. "The North American Crisis of the 1860s." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2, no. 3 (September 2012), 337-68
- Kim, Young C. "The Concept of Political Culture in Comparative Politics." *Journal of Politics* 26, no. 2 (May 1964), 313-36
- Klement, Frank L. "Civil War Politics, Nationalism, and Postwar Myths." *The Historian* 38, no. 3 (May 1976), 419-38
- Kramer, Paul A. "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and the United States Empires, 1880-1910." *Journal of American History* 88, no.4 (March 2002), 1315-53

- Kramer, Paul A. "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World." *American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011), 1348-91
- Kruman, Marc W. "The Second American Party System and the Transformation of Revolutionary Republicanism." *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (Winter 1992), 509-37
- Kushner, Howard I. "Visions of the Northwest Coast: Gwin and Seward in the 1850s." *Western Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (July 1973), 295-306
- Lang, Andrew F. "Republicanism, Race, and Reconstruction: The Ethos of Military Occupation in Civil War America." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 4 (December 2014), 559-89
- McPherson, James M. "Was Blood Thicker Than Water?: Ethnic and Civic Nationalism in the American Civil War." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 143, no. 1 (March 1999), 102-8
- Miller, Robert Ryal. "Arms Across the Border: U.S. Aid to Juárez during the French Intervention in Mexico." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, no. 6 (December 1973), 1-68
- Pani, Erika. "Law Allegiance, and Sovereignty in Civil War Mexico, 1857-1867." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017), 570-96
- Priest, Andrew. "Imperial Exchange: American Views of the British Empire during the Civil War and Reconstruction." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2015). <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed 8 February 2018)
- Prior, David. "'Crete the Opening Wedge': Nationalism and International Affairs in Postbellum America." *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 4 (Summer 2009), 861-87
- Prior, David. "Civilization, Republic, Nation: Contested Keywords, Northern Republicans, and the Forgotten Reconstruction of Mormon Utah." *Civil War History* 56, no. 3 (September 2010), 283-310

- Raat, William D. "Ideas and Society in Don Porfirio's Mexico." *The Americas* 30, no. 1 (July 1973), 32-53
- Resendez, Andres. "North American Peonage." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017), 597-619
- Rogers, Daniel T. "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept." *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992), 11-38
- Rugemer, Edward B. "Robert Monroe Harrison, British Abolition, Southern Anglophobia and Texas Annexation." *Slavery & Abolition* 28, no. 2 (August 2007), 169-91
- Rugemer, Edward B. "The Southern Response to British Abolitionism: The Maturation of Proslavery Apologetics." *Journal of Southern History* 70, no. 2 (May 2004), 221-48
- Sanders, James E. "Atlantic Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century Colombia: Spanish America's Challenge to the Contours of Atlantic History." *Journal of World History* 20, no. 1 (March 2009), 131-50
- Sexton, Jay. "The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875." *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 3 (May 2006), 335-65
- Shallope, Robert E. "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought." *Journal of Southern History* 42, no. 4 (November 1976), 529-56
- Smith, Stacey L. "Beyond North and South: Putting the West in the Civil War and Reconstruction." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December 2016), 566-91
- Thelen, David. "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History." *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999), 965-75
- Thier, Maike. "The View from Paris: 'Latinity', 'Anglo-Saxonism', and the Americas, as discussed in the *Revue des Races Latines*, 1857-1864." *International History Review* 33, no. 4 (December 2011), 627-44
- Thompson, Guy P. "Popular Aspects of Liberalism in Mexico, 1848-1888." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 10, no. 3 (1991), 265-92

Tyler, Ronnie C. "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico." *Journal of Negro History* 57, no. 1 (January 1972), 1-12

Vallenilla, Nikita Harwich. "Venezuelan Positivism and Modernity." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 70, no. 2 (1990), 327-44

Von Hoy, Teresa. "Mexican Exiles and the Monroe Doctrine: New York and the Borderlands, 1865." *Camino Real* 7, no. 10 (2015), 39-60

Waite, Kevin. "Jefferson Davis and Proslavery Visions of Empire in the Far West." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December 2016), 536-65

West, Elliot. "Reconstructing Race." *Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2003), 6-26

Wood, Gordon S. "Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution." *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 66, no. 1 (April 1990), 13-38

Secondary Sources: Books

Adams, Jr., John A. *Conflict and Commerce on the Rio Grande, 1775-1955*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008

Adas, Michael. *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1972

Arenson, Adam, and Andrew R. Graybill, eds. *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015

Ayers, Edward L. *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992

- Azevedo, Celia. *Abolitionism in the United States and Brazil: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: Garland, 1995.
- Bailyn, Bernard. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967
- Baker, Jean. *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1983
- Baldwin, Deborah J. *Protestants and the Mexican Revolution: Missionaries, Ministers, and Social Change*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990
- Baptist, Edward. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 2014
- Beckert, Sven, and Seth Rockman, eds. *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016
- Beckert, Sven. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014
- . *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995.
- Bender, Thomas, ed. *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002
- Bergad, Laird W. *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007
- Bethell, Leslie, ed. *Mexico Since Independence*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991

- Billings, Dwight B. *Planters and the Making of a "New South": Class, Politics, and Development in South Carolina, 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979
- Blair, William. *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004
- Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001
- Blum, Edward. *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005
- Bortz, Jeffery L., and Stephen Haber, eds. *The Mexican Economy, 1870-1930: Essays on the Economic History of Institutions, Revolution, and Growth*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002
- Bottoms, D. Michael. *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013
- Buck, Paul H. *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937
- Butler, Leslie. *Critical Americans: Victorian Intellectuals and Transatlantic Liberal Reform*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007
- Cabanas, Miguel A. *The Cultural "Other" in Nineteenth-Century Travel Narratives: How the United States and Latin America Described Each Other*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008
- Calhoun, Charles W. *Conceiving a New Republic: The Republican Party and the Southern Question, 1869-1900*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006
- Catton, Bruce. *Grant Takes Command*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1968
- Clampitt, Bradley R. *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015

- Clavin, Matthew J. *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010
- Cobb, James C. *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005
- Cohen, Nancy. *Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002
- Cottrol, Robert J. *The Long, Lingering Shadow: Slavery, Race, and Law in the American Hemisphere*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013
- Cox, LaWanda. *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction: Collected Writings of LaWanda Cox*. Edited by Donald G. Nieman. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997
- Cunningham, Michele. *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*. New York: Palgrave, 2011
- Dal Lago, Enrico. *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery, and Beyond: The U.S. "Peculiar Institution" in International Perspective*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013
- Dash, J. Michael. *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and Literary Imagination*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998
- Davis, Hugh. *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990
- Davis, William C., ed. *Secret History of Confederate Diplomacy Abroad*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005
- Downs, Gregory P. *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2015
- Downs, Gregory P., and Kate Masur, eds. *The World the Civil War Made*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015

- Doyle, Don H. and Marco Antonio Pamplona, eds. *Nationalism in the New World*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006
- Doyle, Don H. *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War*. New York: Basic Books, 2015
- Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012
- Duigan, Peter J. and Lewis H. Gann, *The Spanish Speakers in the United States: A History*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998.
- Duncan, Jason K. *Citizens or Papists? The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Dunning, William A. *Reconstruction, Political and Economic, 1865-1877*. New York: Harper, 1907
- Farrelly, Maura Jane. *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982
- Fifer, J. Valerie. *United States Perceptions of Latin America, 1850-1930: A "New West" South of Capricorn?* New York: Manchester University Press, 1991
- Fitz, Caitlin. *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2016
- Fitzgerald, Michael W. *Reconstruction in Alabama: From Civil War to Redemption in the Cotton South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017
- . *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2007)
- . *The Union League Movement in the Deep South: Politics and Agricultural Change during Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989.

- Fleche, Andrew M. *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012
- Foner, Eric. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970
- . *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988
- Foos, Paul. *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict during the Mexican-American War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002
- Ford, Lacy K. *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988
- Formisano, Ronald P. *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983
- Forster, Stig and Jörg Nagler, eds. *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the Wars of German Unification*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth, and Eugene D. Genovese. *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005
- Frederickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press 1987
- Frymer, Paul D. *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017
- Gallagher, Gary W. *The Union War*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2011

- Gannon, Barbara A. *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011
- Garner, Paul. *Porfirio Díaz: Profiles in Power*. New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2001
- Gaston, Paul M. *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking*. Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2002
- Geggus, David P., ed. *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Atlantic World*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001.
- Genovese, Eugene D. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974
- Gerlach, Murney. *British Liberalism and the United States: Political and Social Thought in the Late Victorian Age*. New York: Palgrave, 2001
- Gerstle, Gary. *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015
- Gibson, Charles, ed., *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971
- Gienapp, William E. *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002
- Gillette, William. *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979
- Glickstein, Jonathon A. *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety: Wages, Competition, and Degraded Labor in the Antebellum United States*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002
- Gonzalez, Gilbert G., and Raul A. Fernandez. *A Century of Chicano History: Empires, Nations, and Migration*. New York and London: Routledge, 2003

- Gordon, David ed. *Secession, State, and Liberty*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998
- Grant, Susan-Mary, and Brian Holden Reid, eds. *Themes of the American Civil War: The War Between the States*. New York and London: Routledge, 2010
- Green, Hillary. *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016
- Green, Michael S. *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and his Party during the American Civil War*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2004
- Greenberg, Amy S. *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005
- Greenfield, Liah. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992
- Grimsley, Mark. *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995
- Guterl, Matthew Pratt. *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008
- Guyatt, Nicholas. *Providence and the Intervention of the United States, 1607-1876*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007
- Hämäläinen, Pekka. *The Comanche Empire*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008
- Hanke, Lewis. *Do the Americas have a Common History? A Critique of the Bolton Theory*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1964
- Harris, M. Keith. *Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration among Civil War Veterans*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014
- Hart, John Mason. *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002

- Hess, Earl J. *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997
- Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* New York: Vintage Books, 1955
- Horsman, Reginald. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1981
- Hubbard, Charles M. *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998
- Hunt, Alfred N. *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988
- Hunt, Michael H. *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1987
- Huston, James L. *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003
- Iriye, Akira. *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2011
- Janney, Caroline E. *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013
- Johannsen, Robert W. *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985
- Johnson, John J. *A Hemisphere Apart: The Foundations of United States Policy Toward Latin America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990

- Jones, Howard. *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010
- Joseph, Gilbert M., Catherine C. Legrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds. *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1998
- Kaplan, Amy and Donald E. Pease, eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993
- Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002
- Karp, Matthew. *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2016
- Korner, Axel, Adam I. P. Smith, and Nicola Miller, eds. *America Imagined: Explaining the United States in Nineteenth-Century Europe and Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012
- LaFeber, Walter. *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1963
- Langley, Lester D. *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996
- Lause, Mark A. *Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of an American Working Class*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015
- Lavender, Caroline F. and Robert S. Levine, eds. *Hemispheric American Studies*. New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008
- Lawson, Melinda. *Patriot Fires: Forging a New American Nationalism in the Civil War North*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002

- Lewis, Jr., James. *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1820*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998
- Linderman, Gerald F. *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War*. New York: The Free Press, 1987
- Linenthal, Edward Tabor. *Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993
- Link, William A. *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South: Race and Remembering the Civil War's Aftermath*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013
- Love, Eric T. L. *Race Over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004
- Loveman, Brian. *No Higher Law: American Foreign Policy in the Western Hemisphere Since 1776*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010
- Mach, Thomas S. "Gentleman George" Hunt Pendleton: *Party Politics and Ideological Identity in Nineteenth-Century America*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2007
- Mahin, Dean B. *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1999
- Majewski, John. *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of a Confederate Nation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009
- Manning, Chandra. *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007
- May, Robert E. *Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013
- . *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973

- McCurry, Stephanie. *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995
- McFeely, William S. *Grant: A Biography*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1981
- McMahon, Robert J., and Thomas W. Zeiler. *Guide to U.S. Foreign Policy: A Diplomatic History*. Vol 1. Washington D.C.: Q. C. Press, 2012
- McPherson, James M. *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991
- . *What They Fought For, 1861-1865*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994
- Mintz, Steven, and John Stauffer, eds. *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom, and the Ambiguities of American Reform*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007
- Murphy, Gretchen. *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005
- Naish, Paul D. *Silence and Slavery: Latin America and the U.S. Slave Debate*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017
- Neely, Mark E. *Lincoln and the Democrats: The Politics of Opposition in the Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017
- . *Lincoln and the Triumph of the Nation: Constitutional Conflict in the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011
- . *The Boundaries of Political Culture in the Civil War Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Neff, John. *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005

- Ninkovich, Frank. *Global Dawn: The Cultural Foundation of American Internationalism, 1865-1890*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010
- Noll, Mark A. *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006
- Nugent, Walter. *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008
- Pike, Frederick B. *The United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilization and Nature*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992
- Pinheiro, John C. *Missionaries of Republicanism: A Religious History of the Mexican-American War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014
- Pletcher, David M. *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 1865-1900*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1998
- Pocock, J. G. A. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1975
- Prince, K. Stephen. *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865-1915*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014
- Quigley, Paul. *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010
- Rable, George C. *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010
- Richardson, Heather Cox. *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2001

- Roberts, Timothy Mason. *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009
- Rolle, Andrew F. *The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico*. Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1965
- Sanders, James E. *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014
- Schoonover, Thomas D. *Dollars over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978
- . *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1991
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1998
- Sexton, Jay. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2011
- Shalhope, Robert E. *John Taylor of Caroline: Pastoral Republican*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980
- Silbey, Joel. *A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860-1868*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1977
- . *The American Political Nation, 1838-1898*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991
- Sinha, Manisha. *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000

- Slap, Andrew L. *The Doom of Reconstruction: The Liberal Republicans in the Civil War Era*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006
- Smith, Michael Thomas. *The Enemy Within: Fears of Corruption in the Civil War North*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011
- Smith, Stacey L. *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013
- Snay, Mitchell. *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007
- Sproat, John G. *"The Best Men": Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968
- St. John, Rachel. *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexican Border*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011
- Stout, Joseph A. *Schemers and Dreamers: Filibustering in Mexico, 1848-1921*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2002
- Summers, Mark Wahlgren. *Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid Under the Radical Republicans, 1865-1877*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984
- . *A Dangerous Stir: Fear, Paranoia, and the Making of Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009
- . *The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 2014
- Taylor, William R. *Cavalier & Yankee: The Old South and American National Character*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993

- Thompson, Guy P. C. and David G. LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999
- Tripp, Steven Elliott. *Yankee Town, Southern City: Race and Class Relations in Civil War Lynchburg*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1997
- Truett, Samuel. *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006
- Tyrell, Ian. *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010
- . *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007
- Underwood, Rodman L. *Waters of Discord: The Union Blockade of Texas During the Civil War*. Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2003
- Van Wagenen, Michael Scott. *Remembering the Forgotten War: The Enduring Legacies of the U.S.-Mexican War*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013
- Van Minnen, Cornelius A. and Manfred Berg, eds., *The U. S. South and Europe: Transatlantic Relation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013
- Voss-Hubbard, Mark. *Beyond Party: Cultures of Antipartisanship in Northern Politics before the Civil War*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002
- Wahlstrom, Todd. *The Southern Exodus to Mexico: Migration Across the Borderlands After the American Civil War*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015
- Watson Jr., Ritchie Devon. *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008

- Waugh, Joan. *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009
- Weber, David J., ed. *Myth and the History of the Hispanic Southwest: Essays*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987
- Weinberg, Albert K. *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935
- Wetherington, Mark V. *The New South Comes to Wiregrass Georgia, 1860-1910*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994
- White, Ashi. *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010
- White, Richard. *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017
- Whitman, T. Stephen. *Antietam 1862: Gateway to Emancipation*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012
- Wiley, Bell Irvin. *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952
- Wood, Gordon S. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969
- Woog, Adam. *The Emancipation Proclamation: Ending Slavery in America*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009
- Wrobel, David M. *Global West, American Frontier: Travel, Empire, and Exceptionalism from Manifest Destiny to the Great Depression*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013