



‘AMERICA BELONGS TO AMERICANS’: AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND THE RIVALRY U.S.- SPAIN FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 1854-1865

‘AMÉRICA PERTENECE A LOS AMERICANOS’: LA OPINIÓN PÚBLICA NORTEAMERICANA Y LA RIVALIDAD ENTRE ESTADOS UNIDOS Y ESPAÑA POR REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA, 1854-1865

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ABSTRACT: By utilizing primary sources, mainly newspapers, this article analyzes the rivalry between the US and Spain for the control of Dominican Republic by mid-nineteenth century, focusing on the responses given by the American public opinion to the Dominican Republic annexation to Spain in 1861. The article proposes that the US government, pressed by the events of the Civil War (1861-1865), neglected the foreign policy towards the hemisphere which, among other factors, allowed the intrusion of European powers in the Americas, like that of Spain in the Dominican Republic. American public opinion, on the contrary, saw with concern the Spaniards' attempts in the Caribbean debating topics such as race, slavery, masculinity, and the balance of power among the world potencies in the region.

KEY WORDS: American public opinion; Annexation; Dominican Republic; Spain

RESUMEN: Utilizando fuentes primarias, principalmente periódicos, en este artículo se analiza la rivalidad entre Estados Unidos y España por el control de República Dominicana a mediados del siglo XIX, poniendo énfasis en la reacción de la opinión pública norteamericana a la anexión del país caribeño por parte de España en 1861. Se propone que los agentes gubernamentales de Estados Unidos, presionado por los eventos de la Guerra Civil (1861-1865), descuidaron la política exterior hacia el hemisferio lo que, entre otros factores, posibilitó la intrusión de potencias europeas en América, como la de España en República Dominicana. La opinión pública norteamericana, en cambio, vio con preocupación las incursiones españolas en el Caribe aforando temáticas vinculadas con lo racial, la esclavitud, la masculinidad y el balance de poder entre las potencias en la región.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Opinión pública norteamericana; Anexión; República Dominicana; España

During the first half of the 1860s the United States experienced the most threatening crisis of their national history. Besides the loss in both human lives and material resources, the Civil War (1861-1865) jeopardized the present and future of the young American nation. Although the conflict was originated by internal causes related to slavery and its immediate consequences were eminently national, the Civil War also had international projections. In this regard, it is possible to state that the

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war provoked at least two main consequences: on the one hand, the internal conflict altered the international agenda carried out until then by the Union and the Confederacy; on the other hand, the Civil War opened up opportunities for external powers attempting to threaten and take advantage of the changes in the United States' priorities. The latter was the case of both the French involvement in Mexico and the Spanish intervention in the Dominican Republic; in both situations the Monroe Doctrine, one of the main principles of the American foreign policy, was ineffective and eventually could not be enforced.¹ In this article I shall examine the failed annexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain (1861-1865) by focusing on the responses given to this process by the American public opinion.² Although it is evident that the main interest of the U. S. Government and American public opinion lied on the events and consequences of the Civil War, the international arena was not completely neglected by Americans. Both northerner and southerner newspapers as well as the local and national media, paid attention to the events of the Dominican Republic and analyzed their implications, with different emphasis, for the United States. Unlike the official silence on the Dominican matter, the public opinion expressed its concern for the Spanish involvement in the Caribbean and pressed the government to play a more decisive role in the question.

The article is divided into three main parts. First, I shall characterize the American expansionist ethos in the Caribbean and particularly in the Dominican Republic. Although the so-called "second gem of the Caribbean" was not a priority for the American foreign policy, the Dominican Republic was geopolitically and economically important for the United States. Furthermore, the study of the international relationships between the United States and the Dominican Republic can be used as a lens to better understand the American involvement in the Caribbean region. Then, I shall briefly analyze one of the first sources of conflict between Spain and the United States in the Dominican Republic: the Samaná Treaty. Although unsuccessful, the negotiation of this treaty showed - the deep interest of both countries in the island and also gave some hints on the concern for the fate of the island in the American public opinion. In the last section, I shall study the reactions of the U. S. government and the American public opinion in the face of the annexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain (1861) and the subsequent revolution carried out by Dominicans against the Spaniards (1863-1865). Because of the particular conditions posed by the Civil War, the United States had to relinquish the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, one of their main principles in foreign policy toward the hemisphere during the nineteenth century, on the Dominican Republic.³ However, as we will see, the formal absence of the United States in the conflict did not imply that the American public opinion was indifferent to events. On the contrary, newspapers were attentive to the situation in the island and its impact in the United States. Although those references were not massive, and the majority of them were from Northern newspapers, it is possible to verify, first, the extent to which the American public opinion was interested in the fate of the Dominican Republic and, then, probably more relevant, how internal anxieties were projected into the international relationships of the United States. Issues like the balance of power among nations, the role of American foreign policy, race, and slavery, to mention just a few, were recurrent in the period and constitute the main focus of attention of this work.

The international relations between the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Spain over the Civil War period constitute the general framework of this work. To a great extent, this paper relies on the scant historiography covering the international dimensions of the Civil War, a subfield relatively neglected by historiography. Besides some works on the official relations between the

United States and other countries, on the role of the Union concerning cotton in Europe, and on the multiple efforts of the Confederacy to establish diplomatic relations with other nations, the international dimension of the war has been one of the topics less studied by scholars.⁴ In this context, both the foreign policy of the U.S toward the Americas during the Civil War era and the influence of the conflict in the Americas have received even less attention.⁵ In this work, I explore these dimensions from the perspective of the American public opinion, paying attention to the reactions to the events in the Dominican Republic and to the pressure that the press exerted over the American government in order to deploy a more active role in the conflict.

1. THE UNITED STATES, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND THE CARIBBEAN

The United States had a long history of involvement in the Caribbean. Traditionally, the region had been highly contested and disputed by imperial powers: France, Britain, and Spain were the main European actors in the region until the appearance of the United States as a hemispheric force. Based on the Monroe Doctrine (1823), American policies toward Latin America were eminently expansionist from the beginnings. The war against Mexico, which resulted in the incorporation of Texas, (1846-1848) along with the underground and, sometimes, open support to both the actions of Narciso López in Cuba and the dictatorship of William Walker in Nicaragua exemplify this policy.⁶

During the 1850s, the American foreign policy was eminently expansionist having the southern and western territorial domains as its main goals. Although the interest in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean had a longstanding history, the tropics with their resources and their people became attainable objectives. In the case of Santo Domingo, the expansionist policy was more evident after 1844, when the island was divided into two independent states: the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti. The influence of Spain and France upon the island slowly waned and the U.S. diplomats, politicians and businessmen intensified their labor in the region. The following fifty years were characterized by different efforts made by Americans in order to increase their influence over the island or, in a better scenario, to annex the territory or part of it to the United States. The historical images and representations of the island and its people helped to build these attempts. Portrayed as a contested land in which the rule and the order were almost nonexistent, the island seemed to be an objective easily achievable due to its permanent internal social and political instability.⁷

In the particular case of the Dominican Republic, some historians have stated that the interest of the United States in annexing this country laid on its transcendental geographical location, its strategic bays, its natural resources, and its weather.⁸ On the other side, other scholars have asserted that Dominican politicians continuously sought North American assistance, in the face of a continued Haitian menace and the virtual indifference of European powers.⁹ However, and beyond these differentiations, the presence of the United States in the region remained constant. As William Nelson states, before the annexation of the Dominican Republic by Spain, the United States had a wide assortment of people, with different reasons within its ranks, who favored the increase of the American presence in that country.¹⁰ Men in charge of the state, both northerners and southerners, coincided with the expansionist emphasis. On this point, it is useful consider the opinion of the politicians in charge of the State as well as the foreign policy. Presidents Franklin Pierce and James

Buchanan, for example, were ardent imperialists who promoted expansion. For them, the Dominican Republic, like Cuba, represented “a symbol of the empire”¹¹. The Secretary of the State, Daniel Webster, on his part, was more concerned with the protection of North American interests in the Caribbean increasingly menaced by European powers. In addition to these geopolitical considerations and visions of state, there were other actors involved, mainly businessmen who viewed Cuba and the Dominican Republic as good places to make profitable business.¹²

From a regional perspective, the idea of a U. S. expansion toward the Caribbean leading to the Civil War had strong supporters in both the Union and the Confederacy. The North and the South carried out campaigns of expansionism into the Caribbean that, although founded on different motives and ideological concerns, were fully matched with those visions of state mentioned above. Before the Civil War, in the South prevailed the idea of creating a pro slavery Caribbean empire which considered the annexation of Cuba and other Caribbean islands.¹³ Cuba and the South had a long and close relationship as slaveholding societies, with multiple connections between both regional zones.¹⁴ Culturally and economically the South and Cuba shared several characteristics that invited to promote the annexation or the purchase, as pretended the Ostend Manifest (1854). Politically, Cuba was seen as a potential new state, a new proslavery territory which upon incorporation would add its vote to the Southern interests at national levels, and thereby, fortify the position of the pro-slavery states in Congress.¹⁵ The Compromise of 1850 increased the interest on expansionism in the South; Southern politicians sought the way for counterbalancing the national power with the Northern states. Mississippi and Louisiana supported different filibuster expeditions with resources and men; New Orleans, for example, was the base for the financial and organizational expeditions of Narciso López in the 1850s.¹⁶ Internal political disputes, therefore, helped to fuel the expansionist efforts into the Caribbean in a recursive back and forth process.

The Northern states were also eager promoters of expansionism in the particular case of the Dominican Republic. Their project was based on commercial, financial, and shipping interests that were achieved with the signing of the Samaná Treaty in 1854. As we will see, after signing this treaty, the Dominican matter became a national concern for Spain.

Although Santo Domingo was clearly less important than Cuba, in part due to the absence of slavery, its role contributed to increase the conflicts and differences between Spain and the United States in the mid-century.¹⁷ With Santo Domingo under its control, Spain could militarily threaten the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, and afterward, the United States would have difficulties to reduce the Spanish influence there and in Central America, and then, Cuba would be a harder objective. American policy in the Dominican Republic, thus, was dominated by strategy-based military on its evaluation of the Caribbean context.

2. THE SAMANÁ TREATY (1854)

The Dominican Republic was one of the main sources of conflict between the United States and Spain in their attempts at controlling the Caribbean region. Symbolically, to recapture the control of the island represented for Spain the vindication and reaffirmation of its traditional links with the Dominicans, cemented during the colonial period as a former colony. On the other hand, and perhaps

more important, Spain's attempts were oriented to prevent the U. S. involvement in both the island and the entire Caribbean region. Thus, every effort made by Americans in order to increase their presence in the Island found opposition and resistance, through different methods, from Spanish authorities.

By mid 1850s, the American interest over the island increased. Several American agents devoted themselves to studying the local political conditions and the economic potentialities of the island. One of those agents, William Cazneau, who had participated actively in both the War against Mexico and the annexation process of Texas, proposed the annexation and occupation of a Dominican bay through the signing of a special treaty with the local government (1854). Along with commercial clauses, the treaty would establish a series of arrangements and facilities in order to install a coal fueling station for commercial ships and an American war fleet in the region of Samaná.¹⁸ The terms of the treaty caused concerns in Spain. Its Government rapidly protested by both claiming that Spain would never resign the colonial right over the Dominican Republic and rejecting the American involvement in the country.¹⁹ The Spanish representative in the Dominican Republic even offered either money, or a protectorate, or troops to the local government if it rejected the treaty.²⁰

The activities of the American agents were followed with attention by the American public opinion. The news mainly focused on the consequences that the possible incorporation of new territories would have in both the relationship with European powers and internal U. S. politics, particularly regarding slavery. On this last point, there were also references to the racial composition of the Dominican Republic.

The influential anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*, published in Boston, Massachusetts, strongly criticized the governmental decision of supporting the activities of Cuzneau and others in the Dominican Republic. In a heated editorial, this newspaper considered that the treaty responded to an old desire of taking control over the island formulated by the Southern slaveholders. The final objective, according to the newspaper, was to obtain the possession of Haiti to enslave its black population and keep them "at work under white republican masters"²¹. For that reason, Cuzneau's mission could be considered as part of a "filibustering mission of both Dominica and Haiti". To avoid achieving this purpose, the newspaper called for the recognition of the independence of both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, a decision several times postponed by the Government.²²

The racial composition of the Island and particularly of the Dominican Republic lured interest as well. Quoting a report made by an American citizen who lived in the Dominican Republic, *The Daily South Carolinian* reconsidered the "black character" of that country. Rejecting the assumption that the island was just inhabited by blacks and mulattoes, the newspaper highlighted the multiracial character of the Dominican society, in which whites and a mixture of white and indian blood, together with mulattoes and blacks, formed a diverse society. The "black character" of the Island, therefore, was discarded in the note and along with that the possibility of annexation with slave purposes.²³ The same report emphasized on the quality and quantity of the Dominican natural resources, being much richer in silver, coal, and mining compared to Cuba, and the crucial geopolitical importance of the Island, "if Cuba is the key to the Mexican Gulf, the bay of Samana, in the Dominican Republic, is no doubt the key to the Caribbean Sea"²⁴.

Because of the active diplomatic opposition made by Spain, backed by France and England, the treaty was eventually rejected by Dominicans.²⁵ Although the diplomatic contest was not a question of life or death, it shows us that the island was a clear space of competition for both Spain and the United States. After the rejection of the Samaná Treaty, a new phase in the United States-Spain dispute for the Republican Dominican began; one in which Spain sought to recover its presence and influence on the island and in which the Monroe Doctrine, in the context of the American Civil War and despite the pressure of public opinion, could not be enforced.

3. THE ANNEXATION PROCESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION RESPONSE

The Spanish diplomatic activity in the island did not end with the rejection of the Samaná Treaty but intensified toward the latter part of the 1850s. Several factors were involved in the process. First, the Dominican government sought the protection of Spain, fearful of the persistent Haitian menace. As a reflection of its republican life since 1844, the Dominican Republic continued suffering from instability and of a complete subordination and dependence to external powers.²⁶ On the other hand, the Spanish government began to pay closer attention to the Dominican Republic concluding that the possibility of its territorial incorporation was possible. The idea was even considered more feasible once it became clear that in the United States the internal problems occupied the entire public agenda.²⁷ As James Cortada suggests, the process of annexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain in no case could be considered as a violent event but as the culmination of a process desired by both sides and only understandable due to the American silence or absence.²⁸

By December 1860 the Spanish government had decided to start the annexation process fundamentally for three main reasons: the first, geopolitical; the second, economical; and the third, moral. While the control over the island would allow Spain a better defense of Cuba in case of an American aggression, the annexation would increase the trade between Spain and the Dominican Republic. Finally, the occupation would have a positive effect on the Spanish national ego. Dominican and Spanish diplomats worked out a series of arrangements regarding the terms of the annexation: slavery (existent in other Spanish colonies, such as Cuba and Puerto Rico) would not be reintroduced, some Dominican officials would conserve their post in the colonial government, Spain would introduce resources to reactivate the internal economy, and the Dominican laws would not be radically modified.²⁹ The agreement was approved by both parties and made effective on March 18, 1861, when the Dominican Republic was reincorporated into the Spanish Empire under the figure of "protectorate".

The international context facilitated the process with no relevant questionings. While in France the Spanish intervention in the Dominican Republic was seen with satisfaction and as a symbol of the death of the Monroe Doctrine –favorable to the their interests in Mexico–, the British did not protest, convinced by the Spaniards that slavery would not be reintroduced in the island. The United States, on its part, despite some minor diplomatic claims, found itself in the awkward position of facing an internal war at the same time that an international crisis erupted. Although initially the Secretary of State, William Seward, manifested to the President Abraham Lincoln his desire to actively intervene in the controversy and to demand explanations from both Spain for the annexation of the Dominican

Republic and France for its growing involvement in Mexico, Lincoln's decision of maintaining cautious neutrality in both cases prevailed at the end.³⁰

The official passivity, or resignation perhaps, contrasted with the great concern manifested by the public opinion throughout the United States.³¹ Not only Northern but also Southern newspapers saw in the Spanish intervention a menace for the United States' interests in both the Caribbean and the continental territories. Georgia's *Daily Morning News*, for example, warned that the "high-handed and outrageous conduct of Spain, in seizing that Island" could lead to serious confrontations between both governments and would even provoke an undesirable and unfortunate war.³² At the same time, Illinois' *Chicago Tribune*, asked for a direct and immediate response in the sense that the situation generated "an excellent opening for the application of the Monroe Doctrine by our government"³³. From a more critical point of view, South Carolina's *Charleston Mercury*, called for a stronger and more active position in the matter and criticized the "indifference with which the Spanish occupation of San Domingo has been received in Washington"³⁴. Even the popular magazine *Vanity Fair* acidly intervened in the matter. Utilizing a marked racial language, the magazine criticized the weakness of the U. S. foreign policy by allowing that "the Moorish-blooded Spaniard" threatened the dreaded name of America.³⁵

After these initial reactions, the calls of the press turned attention toward the island, its history, its people, and its traditional links with the United States. In a complete evaluation of the new international context, the *Chicago Tribune* considered that, although Spain could make claim on the sovereignty of the second "gem of the Antilles" based in the past due to their common history and now in the "powder and ball," the North Americans must show resolution to prevent such aspirations.³⁶ The editorial was also extremely critical to the previous government for having neglected the relations with the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In this regard, the newspaper regretted the loss of the opportunities provided for the Samaná Treaty, dismissed without apparent reasons. On the other hand, the newspaper censured the Lincoln's government that "turned a deaf ear alike to the solicitations of the colored commonwealth and to the New York and Boston merchants who seconded the claim of the Dominicans to recognition"³⁷. The situation in Haiti was also a focus of attention and several calls were made in order to assure its protection in front of a possible Spanish attack. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, the objective of the U. S. must be to defend the Haiti's territorial integrity, with its republican institutions, free homesteads, and religious liberty that could be utilized in the future as a "peculiar refuge of our colored population"³⁸. As the major fear was that Haitians could be subjected and enslaved, the appeal to the Government was clear and categorical "a response must be made to these things"³⁹. In the same sense, *The New York Times* alerted that the objective of Spain in its annexation of the Dominican Republic was not this country but to "subdue the neighboring republic of Haiti and transport its citizens to the sugar plantations of Cuba"⁴⁰. The internal antislavery discourses were employed in the international scene due to the specific racial particularities of the Dominican Republic and its neighbor.

The advance of Spain in the Caribbean was not only put into question in racial terms but also as a possible territorial threat for the United States. Although *The New York Times* believed that the objective of Spain was a domination over Mexico, the *Chicago Tribune* went beyond by expressing that the national homeland was in risk: "if the policy of reoccupying her American colonies has been decided upon by the Spanish court, their movements will naturally be directed to Florida, Louisiana,

Texas and Mexico, according to opportunities and circumstances"⁴¹. Virginia's southerner *Richmond Enquirer*, agreed in pointing out that the occupation of the Dominican Republic was just Spain's first step towards "her recovery of a portion of the immense American possessions which, not many years ago, belonged to her"⁴².

Although the press agreed in pointing out the threat represented by the Spanish presence in the Dominican Republic and the future consequences of such an act in racial, political, and territorial matters, the United States government decided not to intervene. The internal conflict prevented any kind of initiative to block the Spanish progress in the island and the domestic concerns simply took precedence over the Monroe Doctrine.⁴³ Moreover, the main fear of the United States government probably was that Spain might grant diplomatic recognition to the Confederates, which helps to explain the option taken by Lincoln and Seward: by threatening Spain, the risk of a double front was greater than accepting her presence in the Dominican Republic. A policy of resignation and the logic of "one war at a time," therefore, were imposed in the Dominican matter.⁴⁴

Despite the official silence of the United States Government in the Dominican question, the press continued to inform on the events of the island. And things were not as Spaniards expected, because a growing revolutionary discontent emerged among the Dominicans propitiating a revolt that erupted in 1863. The Dominicans were not satisfied with the Spanish colonial order imposed over them, the economy was stagnated, the displacement of Dominican officials was notorious and the levels of corruption were higher than ever. The growing Dominican discontent was followed with attention by American newspapers, eager to recover the island to put it the U. S. influence. *The New York Times* insisted on a more active American foreign policy in the matter, calling the Government to intervene directly in favor of the rebels due to the justice of their cause and that the "honor and security of the United States" were at stake.⁴⁵

In addition to reporting with interest on the progress of the Dominican rebels, the news revisited "recurrent" topics on race and slavery, particularly when they referred to the Haitian situation and its importance for the United States. For example, in June of 1861, *The New York Times* opined that the situation of Haiti was of extreme importance for the American government and society. Besides highlighting that Haiti was the eighth largest trading partner of the United States, this country, said the editorialist, had a double interest in the Haitian policy: first "on the ground of equality and right" and second "of self-interest and protection"⁴⁶. In order to achieve such objectives the newspapers proposed to recognize the Haitian nationality and to establish commercial and diplomatic treaties with Haiti. With the recognition "many thousands of colored Americans would gladly make their home under its banner"⁴⁷. As in the 1850s internal racial tensions were still projected into the Caribbean, although now, in the 1860s, the Caribbean represented a sort of promise land for blacks, at least from the northern point of view.

The presence in the Dominican Republic provoked multiple debates in Spain. The incessant rebels' action plus important material and economic losses prepared the political climate for the Spanish withdrawal.⁴⁸ Although the abandonment of the island and the renunciation to the attempt of annexation were regarded as signals of weakness and humiliation, the Lower House and the Senate approved the evacuation of all Spanish navy, army, and civil service personnel. Finally, the decree of annexation was annulled in the spring of 1865.⁴⁹ The decision was celebrated in the Dominican

Republic and in the American public opinion as well. The *Chicago Tribune* blamed Spain for its role in the annexation that “had been more than a crime a blunder”⁵⁰. The racial values of the rebels and their masculinity and bravery demonstrated in the battles were also vindicated by the newspaper, “the Latin race has been defeated and expelled by the natives –those, who, transferred to the Confederacy, would deemed fit only for slavery because of their inferiority to the white man. Our Saxon blood accepts the capacity to fight as the final test of manhood, and in the Antilles not less than in Port Hudson and at Ford Wagner, the despised color is redeeming itself on the battlefields of its liberty.”⁵¹ In the same sense, *The Chattanooga Daily Gazette*, TN, although pervaded by a scornful speech, congratulated the rebels and showed satisfaction with the end of the long conflict generated by an “unjust invasion, and an unrighteous attempt at conquest of a people who, however contemptible as a nation, had, nevertheless, a claim to be protected in the independence”⁵². With a hint of irony the correspondent of the *Daily National Intelligencer*, DC, highlighted the fact that the Dominicans had expelled the Spaniards without the support of external forces. With their “gallant defense” of their country, perhaps unintentionally, they had enforced the Monroe Doctrine, the same principle that the United States had to relinquish.⁵³

Almost at the same time that the American Civil War ended up, the conflict in the Caribbean that had questioned the Monroe Doctrine was solved without the American intervention. Rather than external threats, the limits of the Monroe Doctrine could be found in the internal weakness provoked by the internecine warfare. Although the United States official policy was eminently absent on this matter, the American public opinion attentively followed, from different point of views and with different emphasis, the Dominican events.

4. EPILOGUE

Almost one year after the withdrawal of the Spanish troops from the Dominican Republic, the United States Secretary of State, William H. Seward, visited the island and met with the highest local authorities, included the Dominican President, General Buenaventura Baéz. In a public ceremony, as they remembered the events of the Spanish occupation and clarified some misunderstandings between the United States and the Dominican Republic, General Baéz asked Seward the official recognition of the nation: “When Dominicans separated from Haiti, Baéz told Seward, many other states recognized Dominica, but the United States, for reasons doubtless of their own, have never recognized Dominica”⁵⁴. Seward responded that at the same moment when the United States was about to recognize the independence of the Dominican Republic, the annexation to Spain altered all the plans and postponed the decision by thinking that “a state that will permit and endure successful intervention in its political affairs, is unworthy, and therefore, incapable of being free. A brave people need no intervention to a timid or cowardly nation. Foreign intervention, though in friendly guise, has no blessings”. Then, Seward pledged his word for speeding up the process of recognition of the Dominican Republic at his return to the United States. A few days after, the recognition of the Dominican Republic by the United States government was official. William Cazneau, the same man who had promoted the Samaná Treaty, was appointed as Minister of the U. S. in the Dominican Republic.⁵⁵

Although the Civil War had forced to reconsider the official American involvement in the Dominican Republic, once the internal strife had gone the interest of the United States in the Caribbean nation was reactivated by utilizing the same methods and the same men than in the past. The Civil War represented only a moment of absence or, better to say, of official silence in the Dominican affairs. The American expansionism in the Dominican Republic only culminated, in its nineteenth-century version, after the incomplete process of annexation of this nation to the U. S. in 1871. The Civil War represented, therefore, just a little setback in a process that had begun to take place some decades earlier.

The presence of Seward immediately after the end of the American Civil War and the withdrawal of the Spaniards from the island plus the posterior attempt of annexation by the U. S. demonstrate that the Dominican Republic remained to be an important and attractive location within the geopolitical and economic interests of the United States government. Their silence during the years of the Spanish occupation had only responded to the critical internal situation and not to a lack of interest in the island. On the side of the public opinion, represented by northern and southern newspapers, the evaluation was diametrically opposed. Before, during, and after the Civil War, the public opinion paid attention to the events of the Dominican Republic and attempted to influence the American foreign policy. With discontinuities over time, with different emphasis, and sometimes without an accurate idea of what happened there, the island and its fate received a special consideration by the American public opinion particularly on the matters associated to or with implications for the United States, such as race, slavery, manhood, and balance of power among potencies in the Caribbean.

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¹ Although characterized under the same paradigm that the Spanish annexation of the Dominican Republic, the invasion of Mexico by France was a very different process. In June of 1861 the Mexican government decided to suspend the payment of its foreign debt due to a precarious internal economical condition. Spain, Britain, and France, the main stakeholders, energetically rejected the determination. While Britain and Spain rapidly reached a compensatory agreement with Mexico, France maintained its posture and demanded the payment. Seeing this conflict as an opportunity of incorporating a new territory to the Empire, Napoleon III decided to invade Mexico. The French eventually took control of Puebla in April 1863 and instituted a monarchy that would last three years under the rule of Maximilian, archduke of Austria. The U. S. government, as in the Dominican Republic, decided not to intervene or oppose either to Napoleon or Maximilian. Howard Jones has studied the attempts of the Confederacy for obtaining the support and recognition of the

French during this critical period. See his *Blue and Gray Diplomacy, A history of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

² Being a hard-to-define notion due to its multiple dimensions, the concept of public opinion could be understood as the social phenomenon in which, through the mass media, a public space of exchange and discussion of ideas is built. In the gestation of the public opinion take part the political institutions, the government's and state's organizations, the civil society, and the citizens. See an interesting discussion on this concept in "Opinión pública", in *Diccionario político y social del mundo iberoamericano*, by Javier Fernández Sebastián (Director) (Madrid: Fundación Carolina, Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2009).

³ The historiography on the Monroe Doctrine and the U. S. foreign policy toward Latin America during the nineteenth century is vast and varied, considering different temporal frames and geographical locations. For the brief references I mention I follow the interesting collection of articles *Race and U. S. Foreign Policy from the Colonial Period to the Present*, edited by Michael Krenn (Garland: New York and London, 1998). See also *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*, by Ernest May (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

⁴ Dean Mahin. *One War at a time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Brassey: Washington, 1999), p. viii.

⁵ Although Jones (2010) has acknowledged the importance that the American public opinion had at that time, his approach unfortunately focuses on Britain, France, and Russia. Spain and the Americas, therefore, receive little attention by the author. An exception in this trend is the book *The Confederados: Old South Immigrant in Brazil*, edited by Cyrus Dasey and James Dawsey (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995). Also see *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911. Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System*, by Thomas Schoonover (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

⁶ Probably the best analysis of the filibustering actions in the Caribbean and Central America is *Manifests Destiny's Underworld. Filibustering in Antebellum America*, by Robert May (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

⁷ The journalist W. Wright, for example, considered that the only fruits of the island after 1804 were "revolutions, massacres, misrule, insecurity, irreligion, ignorance, immorality, indolence, and neglect of agriculture." See his "Free Negroes in Hayti," *Debow's review, Agricultural, commercial, industrial progress and resources, New Orleans, LA* Vol. 27 n° 5 (November 1859), p. 531.

⁸ José Novas. *Frederick Douglass: La anexión a los Estados Unidos y otros episodios en la Isla de Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, La Integral, 1997), p. 4. For the Haitian case the main interest was geopolitical: to install a naval base in one of its bays.

⁹ William Javier Nelson. *Almost a Territory. America's Attempt to Annex the Dominican Republic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), p. 47. The Haitian menace was considerable during this period. In 1849-50 and 1844, Haitians mounted full-scale invasions with the objective of sacking and looting the Dominican cities. This latent threat pushed the Dominicans to look for external support.

¹⁰ Nelson (1990), p. 48.

¹¹ Nelson (1990), p. 48.

¹² Certainly both interests, geopolitical and economical, were intertwined. A columnist of an important Southerner newspaper highlighted the importance of Cuba and St. Domingo for the United States and the world economy. According to him, "with Cuba and St. Domingo, we could control the productions of the tropics, and with them the commerce of the world, and with that the power of the world." Although these words surely were exaggerated, they exemplify the degree of importance given to the Caribbean and particularly to Cuba and St. Domingo at that time. See "Destiny of the Slave States," in *Debow's review, Agricultural, commercial, industrial progress and resources, New Orleans, LA* Vol. 17 n° 3 (September 1854), p. 283.

¹³ Robert May. *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

¹⁴ Matthew Pratt Guterl. *American Mediterranean. Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 20-27.

¹⁵ Luis Alvarez-López. *The Dominican Republic and the Beginning of a Revolutionary Cycle in the Spanish Caribbean, 1861-1898* (New York: University Press of America, 2009).

¹⁶ Alvarez-López (2009), p. 2.

¹⁷ James Cortada. *Spain and the American Civil War at Mid-Century, 1855-1868* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1980), p. 30.

¹⁸ Nelson (1990), pp. 48-49.

¹⁹ Alvarez-López (2009), pp. 54-55.

²⁰ Cortada (1980), p. 31.

²¹ "The Slave Power and St. Domingo" *The Liberator*, Boston, MA (October 6, 1854).

²² "The Slave Power..." *The Liberator*, Boston, MA (October 6, 1854).

²³ "The Dominican Republic" *The Daily South Carolinian*, Columbus, South Carolina (February 14, 1855). A similar account on the local richness in "Emperour Souloque and St. Domingo" *The Weekly Raleigh Register*, Raleigh, North Carolina (January 27, 1858).

²⁴ A similar comparison between Cuba and the Dominican Republic was proposed by the traveler Samuel Hazard. Some years later, and in the context of the attempt of annexation of the Dominican Republic to the U. S. Hazard suggested that "It has been the fashion among some of our politicians to urge the purchase of Cuba, even at the price of one hundred million of dollars, and it has a large and extensively mixed population, with all their habits, ideas, and customs fully established, with still a larger number of slaves and coolies. But here [Dominican Republic] is an almost virgin island, more desirable in every way, with a free, limited, and simple people, who have no particularly fixed habits, ideas or customs, that would not readily assimilate to those of the new-comers". See his *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; with a Glance at Hayti* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873), pp. 486-487.

²⁵ "The St. Domingo Treaty" *Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, Augusta, Georgia (January 28, 1855).

²⁶ The *Daily Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia) summarized the fragility of the Dominican position with these lines, "with the Haitians threatening on one side and the European agents on the other, the republic [the Dominican Republic] is deprived of the power of voluntary action" (September 3, 1856).

²⁷ José Manuel Allende Salazar. *Apuntes sobre la relación diplomática Hispano-Norteamericana, 1763-1895* (Madrid: Biblioteca Diplomática Española, 1996), pp. 158-160.

²⁸ Cortada (1980), p. 33.

²⁹ Cortada (1980), p. 33.

³⁰ In the document "Some thoughts for the President's Consideration," April 1, 1861, Seward called for a clarification on both internal and foreign governmental policies. On foreign policy, Seward favored a stronger position of the United States in the international order. In a personal note, Lincoln rejected his suggestions by saying that the U. S. foreign policy had been clear enough from the very inauguration of his government. See "Abraham Lincoln to William H. Seward, Monday, April 1, 1861" in *Abraham Lincoln Papers*, at the Library of Congress.

³¹ The concern was also present in other American countries like, for example, Chile. Ricardo López has studied the reactions to the annexation in his article "Él único homenaje que nos era permitido: El de nuestros aplausos' Chile ante la anexión de Santo Domingo por España" *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* (Santo Domingo) n° 141 (enero-abril 2015), pp. 65-103.

³² "Spanish intrigues in St. Domingo" *Daily Morning News*, Savannah, GA (April 5, 1861).

³³ "Spanish filibustering in San Domingo" *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (Mar 30, 1861).

³⁴ "Our Washington Correspondence" *The Charleston Mercury*, Charleston, SC (April 3, 1861).

³⁵ "The first kick at the lion" *Vanity Fair*, New York, NY (April 6, 1861).

³⁶ "San Domingo" *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (April 1, 1861). A complete introduction to St. Domingo and its history, with the same descriptive objectives, in "The island of Haiti" *Daily Enquirer*, Columbus, GA (April 8, 1861).

³⁷ "The island..." *Daily Enquirer*, Columbus, GA (April 8, 1861).

³⁸ "The island..." *Daily Enquirer*, Columbus, GA (April 8, 1861).

³⁹ "Spanish designs on the American Continent. The re-conquest of San Domingo" *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (April 3, 1861). A similar analysis on the future of Haiti was posed by *The Christian Recorder*, Philadelphia, PA, in the note entitled "Spain and San Domingo" (April 6, 1861).

⁴⁰ "Editorial" *The New York Times*, NY (April 2, 1861).

⁴¹ "Spanish Movements" *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (April 05, 1861).

⁴² "The Dominican Republic-Spanish Ambition" *Richmond Enquirer*, Richmond, VA (April 6, 1861).

⁴³ Cortada (1980), p. 36.

⁴⁴ "Spain and the Southern Recognition" *The New York Times*, New York, NY (September 15, 1861).

⁴⁵ "Will Spain be able to retain Dominica?" *The New York Times*, New York, NY (June 3, 1861).

⁴⁶ "The Island of Santo Domingo" *The New York Times*, New York, NY (June 7, 1861).

⁴⁷ "The Island..." *The New York Times*, New York, NY (June 7, 1861).

⁴⁸ Historian Luis Alvarez-López has calculated the cost of the Spanish involvement in the Dominican Republic in 392 million of *reales*. On the other hand, the dead have been estimated in the order of 16,000 soldiers. See Alvarez-López (2009), p. 30.

⁴⁹ Juan Francisco Fuentes. *El fin del antiguo régimen (1808-1868) Política y Sociedad* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2007), pp. 217-218

⁵⁰ "San Domingo triumphant" *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (February 9, 1865).

⁵¹ "San Domingo..." *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (February 9, 1865).

⁵² "St. Domingo" *Chattanooga Daily Gazette*, Chattanooga, TN (March 10, 1865).

⁵³ "Letter from San Domingo" *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington City, DC (July 16, 1865).

⁵⁴ "The Dominican Republic" *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL (February 5, 1865).

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*. Manhood was often used as arguments in the formulation of the U. S. foreign policy during the XIXth century. On this point, see, for example, *Fighting for American Manhood. How gender politics provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars*, by Kristin L. Hoganson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

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