



Slavery: Reshaping the US-Mexico relationship from 1859 to 1910

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Slavery: Reshaping the US-Mexico relationship from 1859 to 1910

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Abstract

The thesis examines the impact and repercussions of slavery known as debt peonage in Mexico on the bilateral relationship with the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. It argues that many American politicians and legislators knew about the slavery system in Mexico, which was one of the main reasons to oppose two trade agreements beneficial to the United States. The proportion of Congress against slavery was enough to reject institutional agreements with Mexico. It also argues that the slavery politics that divided the North and the South of the United States before the Civil War were a key feature to shape the relationship with Mexico in the following century. The slavery that prevailed in Mexico until the Mexican Revolution weakened the bilateral relationship with the United States due to its progress in human rights and the threat of returning slavery forces into the country.

Author's Biographical Sketch

Leonardo Lavallo Maury was born in Campeche, Mexico, on November 23, 1981. His father, Jorge Luis, worked in the government early in his life. His career inspired Leonardo's passion for public policy and understanding the influential roles governments played in reshaping Mexican society.

Leonardo has a master's degree in public management and a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM). He started his professional life as an analyst of Crisis Management at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Monterrey, Mexico. His primary role was to support the restructuring plans for financial debt with foreign and international banks by designing long-term recovery plans for various industries.

A few years later, Leonardo worked as director of Social Communication and Institutional Relations of the Commission of Transparency of the state of Campeche. He designed political and social communication strategies. Lavallo Maury organized press conferences with state journalists. In addition, he created an institutional television program to interview public officials.

In 2012, Lavallo worked as consul, Head of Economic and Cultural Promotion at the Consulate of Mexico in New Orleans. He encouraged Mexican exports and the development of Mexican international projects in the region. Moreover, he coordinated trade missions between the United States and Mexico.

In 2016, he was appointed to the post of consul, head of Economic Promotion, Innovation, and Academic Affairs, at the Consulate General of Mexico in Boston. He coordinated trade missions and strengthened the collaboration with the main chambers of

commerce in New England. Also, he organized conferences and discussion panels with more than forty universities in New England.

Lavalle worked together with the DLAB of MIT and MIT Enterprise Forum Mexico in projects to educate indigenous communities about innovative solutions to combat poverty and, at the same time, preserve their traditions and culture. He served as a mentor to more than seventy Mexican startups and connected them with the main actors in the innovation ecosystem in Greater Boston. He participated as a panelist and speaker as a Boston's Diplomatic Circle of Science and Technology member.

In recent years, he has worked as CEO at UMA Circle for North America, a digital platform to link experts in specialized topics of Ivy League universities in the United States with industry, academia, and government in Mexico.

He has recognitions such as the title of honorary citizen of Lafayette, Louisiana, for organizing a bilateral economic forum. Additionally, trade organizations have publicly recognized his contributions to the Associated Industries of Massachusetts (AIM), the Chamber of Commerce of Central Mass, Maine Trade Organization, among others.

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to my parents, Jorge Luis and Aura; my brother, Jorge; and my nephews, Jorge Luis, Juan Pablo, Carlos, my niece María, and the love of my life, Paulina.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this study could not have been possible without the support and guidance of Dr. David Carrasco. He worked with me on shaping the thesis, even though he was on his sabbatical writing one of his books. I want to thank him for his patience and dedication to helping me finish my thesis.

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Introduction

The relationship between the United States and Mexico has been an elaborate adaptation of different ideologies, religions, cultures, and economic interests. Particularly in the nineteenth century, when the United States had its expansionist project based on Manifest Destiny, Mexico went from a monarchy to an independent country in 1821. It is not well known that slavery and its aftermath played a crucial role in the political relationships between the two countries. Mexico legally abolished slavery through the Mexican Constitution of 1824 and later ratified its antislavery position in its Constitutions of 1836, 1857, and 1917.

However, a closer look at labor practices during these years shows that Mexico practiced a robust slavery system¹ in the form of debt peonage. Several US politicians and journalists knew of this labor practice in Mexico. From 1830 to 1860, the United States went through extreme political pressure and conflicts around slavery and the antislavery movements resulting in the American Civil War that broke out in 1861 and ended with a Northern victory in 1865. The United States made a partial end to slavery through the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. The American Civil War's economic and human losses were massive, and historians agree it was the deadliest war for American lives in US history.² Conflicts over slavery's future in US society were one of the main reasons behind the American Civil War.

From 1859 to 1910, the US Congress failed to ratify two significant bilateral agreements between the United States and Mexico. Those bilateral agreements aimed to

¹ John Kenneth Turner, *Barbarous Mexico: An Indictment of a Cruel and Corrupt System* (Chicago: C. H. Kerr, 1911), 11, Kindle.

² Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 112.

modify both countries' political and economic relationships. By establishing rules and mechanisms on bilateral trade, migration, and transportation, both countries would have benefited due to their competitive advantages increasing wealth and productivity. On May 31, 1860, the rejection by the US Senate of the McLane-Ocampo Treaty (MOT) marked the end of the US expansion plans over Mexican territory. It contributed to political tensions and to the breakout of the American Civil War. The reasons behind the failure of the MOT remain unclear. Twenty-two years later, in 1882, the administration of President Chester A. Arthur signed a commercial agreement with Mexico, which would have benefited the United States in geopolitical and commercial matters. The deal would have given a trade surplus of \$500,000, plus the opportunity to increase exports to Central and South America. Nevertheless, the US Congress failed to ratify the deal again, and reasons remain uncertain. However, US legislators expressed highly negative views of Mexico and Mexicans related to their slavery practices during these decades.

This research aims to find out if the negative perception of slavery in Mexico was a predominant factor in the decision of the US Senate to reject the bilateral agreements with that country. In this regard, the specific questions to answer are how slavery in both countries shaped the US-Mexico political relationship between 1859 and 1910, and to what extent US perceptions of Mexican labor practices contribute to the rejection of the treaties.

I will analyze the social and political assessments of Mexican slavery that the members of the US Congress had regarding the rejection of the bilateral agreements with Mexico. I hope to show that sociopolitical and ideological trends opposing slavery in the United States led some American congressmen to perceive Mexico's debt peonage

system as a going threat to the elimination of slavery in Mexico and the United States and this perception contributed to the failure of the bilateral agreements with Mexico.

In the MOT, the American senators had to vote to control three commercial routes in Mexico in exchange for \$4 million (equivalent to \$120 million in 2018) in 1860. Even though the MOT seemed like a one-sided deal for the United States, the US Senate rejected it. Later, in 1882, the US president, Chester Alan Arthur, intended to approve an agreement with Mexico on reciprocal tariff reductions. It was a substantial gain from the US economic perspective because the trade with Mexico increased and there was a trade surplus with Mexico. Thus, the Reciprocal Trade Treaty was signed in 1882, approved by the Senate, but rejected in the House of Representatives in 1885. My hypothesis suggests that a substantial number of members of Congress had the perception that the bilateral agreements enhanced the practice of slavery in Mexico and encouraged the proslavery forces in the United States. Therefore, as a result, peonage and slavery practices in Mexico weakened the relationship between Mexico and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century.

To test this hypothesis, I will examine historical documents including newspapers from 1850 to 1910, a selection of relevant books by American and Mexican historians, MA theses and PhD dissertations on the MOT, constitutional amendments, and US-Mexico treaties. In addition, I will present crucial information on the voting records and ideological positions of US senators from 1860 through the 1880s, with particular attention to their stands on slavery. Additionally, I will include information on individuals in the House of Representatives during the 1880s, with details revealing their views towards slavery in Mexico.

I will describe the slavery system established in Mexico during the nineteenth century and how its reputation influenced US members of Congress to reject the bilateral relationship with Mexico. Finally, evidence will show that some members of the US Congress had intentions to abolish slavery in the United States and any country related to the United States. I hope to show that the ideology of abolitionism was so intense in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century that it prevailed over some economic interests in the United States. My research will also help us reinterpret and reconstruct history towards slavery on the US-Mexico relationship during the nineteenth century.

Chapter I

The slavery systems in the United States and Mexico had substantial differences. Slavery in the United States had racial, religious, economic, and political components. On the other hand, Mexico based its slavery system on certain indigenous groups working with life-lasting financial debts inherited through generations. Proslavery forces in the United States justified slavery based on race and even religion, while in Mexico, defenders of peonage explained it as a fair labor contract. Both countries had chattel slavery. Slaveholders from the United States and Mexico treated children, women, and men of all ages as tools for the agricultural industry.

The Slavery Systems

The United States had several crucial moments in the fight against slavery before and after the Civil War reflected in the developments between the *Dred Scott* case and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. During this period some aspects of the US political system struggled to turn its democratic system toward civil liberties and the language of human rights. Also, the US democracy had been slowly evolving. For example, years later, it gave the right to vote to African American men and several decades later to women. In contrast, Mexico, after the Mexican Independence, was able to establish laws against slavery faster than the United States after the Civil War. The Mexican Constitution established laws against slavery a decade after Mexico was successfully independent. Mexican legislation considered peonage as an alternative

system for slavery, in which workers were not legally slaves. However, peonage set a debt system that treated workers and their families similarly to way slavery treated Africans in the United States.

Moreover, in the 1900s, the social ladder in Mexico was a rigid hierarchy with Spaniards on top, Criollos next, and the diverse groups of Native Mexicans with Criollos were on the bottom. Criollos were the Spaniards born in Mexico. They had less rights than the Spaniards born in Spain. Down the social ladder lived Mestizos, the children of Criollos or Spaniards with Native Mexicans. Mestizos were below the political and economical of the first two groups, and finally, at the bottom of the pyramid struggled the Black and Native peoples. The Native and Black peoples were commonly very poor and lived under slavery conditions even a century after the beginning of the Mexican Independence in 1810.

One main difference between the United States and Mexico was the source of slaves. The United States got most slaves from western Africa during the nineteenth century. The name for this type of migration is “net internal forced migration.” The net internal number of slaves in the United States from 1790 to 1859 was 845,720.³ However, those slaves had children in the United States, who were also slaves, raising the number to 3.2 million slaves by the end of the Civil War.⁴

In Mexico, there were African slaves as well; however, before the Mexican Revolution of 1910 the primary source of slaves was Native Mexicans. During the

³ Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (Boulder: Basic Books, 2014), Feet 3, Acls Humanities E-book.

⁴ Colin Edward Woodward, “Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army During the Civil War,” 107.

colonial period, the number of African slaves⁵ in Mexico slowly increased between the 1570s and the second half of the seventeenth century. There were public health reasons for the increase of slaves from Africa. Recurrent epidemics annihilated the native population in this period, also called the Century of Depression. After a catastrophic drop in the native community, their numbers began to slowly recover in the 1630s, when a long period of pandemics ended. Consequently, the Native people were again able to perform the work Black slaves did during the preceding century. The number of slaves estimated between 1570 and 1650 in Mexico, including foreign and Mexican-born, is between twenty thousand and forty-five thousand.⁶

There are four theories about what brought Mexican slavery to an end. First, one group of scholars argues that Mexico became abolitionist after 1821 when the War of Independence ended. The Priest Miguel Hidalgo initially drove the social movement that led to Mexico's Independence from Spain. The *Grito de Dolores* symbolizes his movement, which each Mexican president uses to commemorate the Independence of Mexico.⁷ But the original movement was not related to abolitionism nor to the Independence from Spain; it was against France imposing the new king of Spain.⁸ From 1804 to 1814, Napoleon Bonaparte was emperor of France and dominated Europe, including Spain, in which he imposed his older brother, Joseph-Napoleon Bonaparte, as

⁵ Dennis Valdés N., "The Decline of Slavery in Mexico," *The Americas* (Washington. 1944), 2018, Vol.75 (1),167, <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/article/714749>.

⁶ Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650* (Cambridge, MA:Harvard University Press, 2013), 8, <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674181823>.

⁷ Valdés, "The Decline of Slavery in Mexico," 167.

⁸ Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico*, 67.

king.⁹ The spark of the Mexican Independence was in 1810, in the middle of the conflicts between Spain and France.

Secondly, scholars suggest that the Mexican government abolished slavery to deprive Anglo-Texans, of their human labor property by removing them from Texas, at the time that Texas was territory of Mexico.¹⁰ During this period, slavery was economically essential for the stability of the American economy. As we will analyze in another chapter, between 1826 and 1827, there was a long discussion around slavery in the Coahuila-Texas Congress. However, Texas ended seceding from Mexico and then became a state of US territory.

The third argument concentrates on the decline of the need for African workers rather than on the political decision of abolishing slavery. It proposes that African slavery in Mexico became useless as an institution by the early nineteenth century because the native labor force had grown.¹¹ The pandemic that began in the seventeenth century and that mainly affected the indigenous population was over; therefore, Native people replaced African slaves.

A fourth interpretation that seems the most convincing is that Mexican slavery did not end in the nineteenth century. It was rebranded as peonage. But this is not a theory; it is a historical argument. The debt-peonage system had the exact characteristics of owning a worker and their descendants. Sufficient evidence shows that this form of slavery continued in Mexico until after the Revolution in the 1910s.

⁹ J.M. Thompson, "Napoleon Bonaparte, His Rise and Fall," Oxford: B. Blackwell, 244.

¹⁰ Valdés, "The Decline of Slavery in Mexico," 168.

¹¹ Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico*, 67.

However, to fully understand slavery in each country, we will explore the systems from an economic and social perspective. Additionally, evidence will show where slavery came from, its ideology, and the interest behind preserving or ending it. I will also discuss how costly it was regarding human casualties and its financial cost.

The American slavery system

In the United States, slavery was one of the main engines of colonial economic growth. Before the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the number of slaves imported into the British colonies was a few dozen per year. Yet, after the American Revolution, the number of slaves grew constantly for decades, from forty thousand to over two hundred thousand in the 1830s.¹² Customs and laws insisted that children were slaves if their mothers were slaves. Moreover, most Americans assumed that everyone of visible African descent was a slave.

TABLE 1.1. NET INTERNAL FORCED MIGRATION BY DECADE

| IMPORTING STATE | 1790-1799 | 1800-1809 | 1810-1819 | 1820-1829 | 1830-1839 | 1840-1849 | 1850-1859 | TOTALS |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Alabama | -- | -- | 35,500 | 54,156 | 96,520 | 16,532 | 10,752 | 213,460 |
| Arkansas | -- | -- | 1,000 | 2,123 | 12,752 | 18,984 | 47,443 | 82,302 |
| Florida | -- | -- | 1,000 | 2,627 | 5,833 | 5,657 | 11,850 | 26,967 |
| Georgia | 6,095 | 11,231 | 10,713 | 18,324 | 10,403 | 19,873 | -7,876 | 68,763 |
| Kentucky | 21,636 | 25,837 | 18,742 | -916 | -19,907 | -19,266 | -31,215 | -4,173 |
| Louisiana | -- | 1,159 | 20,679 | 16,415 | 29,296 | 29,924 | 26,528 | 124,001 |
| Mississippi | -- | 2,152 | 9,123 | 19,556 | 101,810 | 53,028 | 48,560 | 234,229 |
| Missouri | -- | -- | 5,460 | 10,104 | 24,287 | 11,406 | 6,314 | 57,571 |
| South Carolina | 4,435 | 6,474 | 1,925 | -20,517 | -56,683 | -28,947 | -65,053 | -158,366 |
| Tennessee | 6,645 | 21,788 | 19,079 | 31,577 | 6,930 | 4,837 | -17,702 | 73,154 |
| Texas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 28,622 | 99,190 | 127,812 |
| <i>Decade Total</i> | <i>38,811</i> | <i>68,641</i> | <i>123,221</i> | <i>134,365</i> | <i>211,241</i> | <i>140,650</i> | <i>128,791</i> | <i>845,720</i> |

Source: Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, 1989), 12. Some states not included.

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¹² Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, Feet, 4.

¹³ Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South*. (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press., 1989)12, fig.1.1.

There were two divergent views over slavery in the United States by the middle of the nineteenth century. The Southerners believed that slavery should expand to new territories whereas many Northerners wanted to stop its expansion and eventually abolish it.

Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederate states from 1861 to 1865, believed that Confederates created a government and a region with cultural values in which slavery and white supremacy were the “cornerstone” of the country.¹⁴

Even though he was proslavery, he had the same view as Thomas Jefferson on his forecast that slavery was the most relevant point for the division of the Union. Stephens was convinced that there were substantial differences between races. The Confederacy was based on “the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and moral condition.”¹⁵

Stephens considered the differences between races’ physical, philosophical, and moral truths. He disagreed with the principle of man’s equality, which was one of the central arguments of the North. He believed that by nature, or by the curse against Canaan, the “negro” was destined to remain a slave in the Confederate system. Moreover, Stephens stated that God’s purposes were to make one race different and superior and that White men were endowed with the power to guide social development and scientific advancement.¹⁶

¹⁴ Frank Moore, ed., “Speech of A. H. Stephens,” *Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, Volume I, (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1861): 45.

¹⁵ Moore, “Speech of A. H. Stephens,” 45.

¹⁶ Moore, “Speech of A. H. Stephens,” 46.

The vice president's views on slavery and race were the generalized thoughts of the Confederates. According to them, slavery based on race was how the institutions should work in the United States.

In February 1790, the United States established the requirements to acquire the right to citizenship. The first US Congress decided that any alien who was "a free white person" would be suitable for full citizenship in the United States. On Monday, March 22, 1790, the Naturalization Bill was voted and ready for President Washington's signature. The language used to write the first laws for becoming an American citizen shows that the international slave trade would continue in the United States for years to come.¹⁷

On the other hand, Thomas Jefferson was a key actor to set the basis for emancipation in the United States. In his 1782 *Notes*, Jefferson complained that slavery transformed White people into despots. Although he owned slaves, Jefferson recognized that the selling of humans was acting as Europe's tyrants. Jefferson proposed in 1784 "that after the year 1800 of the Christian Era, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said states."¹⁸ Recent scholarly works have unmasked Jefferson's racial hypocrisy in his *Notes* and criticized him for his lack of political courage. The US Congress agreed to consent, preserve, and expand slavery as part of the social and economic foundation the United States.¹⁹

¹⁷ Robert G. Parkinson, "Manifest Signs of Passion." in *Contesting Slavery*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 49.

¹⁸ Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heh.32823>, 7.

¹⁹ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 9.

Years later, Illinois politician Abraham Lincoln claimed that men who wrote the Constitution were ashamed of slavery. According to Lincoln, the Constitution did not even include the words slave or slavery; instead, the founding fathers shaped it as a “person held for service or labor” (similar to the description of peonage in the Mexican Constitution).

Other voices and minds spoke out against slavery, such as David Rice. He claimed that after the Civil War, incorporating people who used to favored slavery would continue the division in the new republic. Rice was inferring that the unification of the United States after the Civil War included pro-slavery forces. In that sense, the institutions in the United States would be under constant threat by Americans in favor of slavery.

Then in 1789, Congress confirmed that the geo-political unit known as the Northwest Ordinance, which eventually became Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, banned slavery in their territories.²⁰ This legislative action drew a line between Slave states and Free states and was a significant step toward the Civil War in the nineteenth century.

As the United States continued its expansion, several states allowed slavery in their territories. The treatment of African slaves was inhuman. Standard practices included slaves being chained, whipped, raped, and dehumanized in multiple overt and covert ways.²¹ For the next seventy years, generations of slaves remained in these same depraved conditions. Nowadays, with international and national nongovernmental

²⁰ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 14.

²¹ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 25.

organizations fighting for animal protection, pets have more rights than enslaved human beings had in early US history.

Arguments over slavery continued as the US economy was bolstered by expansionist policies and the lucrative rise of the cotton industry in the South. As a result, prices of slaves rose as cotton production increased. For example, the price of a slave (an adult man in New Orleans) climbed from \$697 in 1850 to \$1,451 by 1860.²²In 1849, 200 slaves were used to produce 300 bales of cotton. By 1859, 400 slaves were forced to yield 2,000 bales of cotton in a limited amount of time.²³ This astonishing increase in cotton production per slave reflects the hardening of the measures on their treatment before the American Civil War. During the 1850s, cotton production became highly concentrated among fifteen slave owners whose wealth increased to incredible levels.

Therefore, the wealthiest people and those seeking great wealth in the Slave states were dedicated to continuing slavery.²⁴ They invested and expanded operations rapidly, finding new markets and new sources of credit in the United States and Europe. The demand for slaves rose and the number of slaves available was insufficient for the expanding demand for slavery generated goods. Therefore, the prices of slaves increased substantially. While slave owners were not the majority of White men in the United States by the end of the 1850s, only wealthy White men were in charge of the slavery system and its luxuries.

For Southern US politicians and several Southerners, enslaved African Americans as chattel property symbolized freedom, modernity, and liberal economic life for the

²² Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 359.

²³ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 361.

²⁴ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 367.

White people including those that did not own slaves. Most Southerners believed that they had the right to carry their “property” into a Free state, thereby challenging the divide between Slave states and Free states.²⁵

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 created two states, as its name mentions Kansas and Nebraska. However, the debate in Congress focused on whether to expand or not slavery to those territories. The argument in favor of the expansion of slavery was popular sovereignty. The citizens of each state should decide if they wanted slavery or not. Congress decided in favor of noninterference with slavery, which would allow the state to decide on the issue. This decision led to the fracturing of the two main political parties, the Whig Party.²⁶

After the presidential election of 1852, which eventually finished off the Whig Party, American politicians found new alignments. The Southern Whigs moved to the Democratic Party, while the Northern Whigs joined the new Republican Party. This new party opposed the expansion of slavery on both economic and moral grounds.²⁷

The dissolution of the Whig Party also created another political party called the American Party or the Know-Nothings, which based their platform on anti-expansion of slavery and anti-immigration policies.

Therefore, slavery divided US politics to the point of transforming one of the major political parties. The Republican Party would have more supporters in the Northern states, while the Democrats would have more voters in the Southern states. Thus, the Republicans represented the Free states, and the Democrats drove the proslavery states.

²⁵ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 373.

²⁶ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 372.

²⁷ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 372.

The modifications of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 were another watershed in US politics. Congress enacted the original Fugitive Slave Act in 1793. The new federal laws allowed the capture and return of runaway enslaved people within the US territory (the peonage system in Mexico imposed similar Mexican legislation). The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 added more provisions against runaway slaves and levied severe punishments for interfering in their capture. It increased the penalty for interfering with the rendition process to \$1,000 and six months in jail. Also, the federal and state governments had to support the capture and securing of fugitive enslaved workers. Many free African Americans including some who were not slaves were illegally captured and sold into slavery.²⁸

However, the tipping point at the beginning of the Civil War and eventually ending slavery in the United States was the *Scott v. Sanford* case. On March 6, 1857, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's decision expressed that the Constitution did not intend to include American citizenship for African Americans. Therefore, neither freed nor enslaved Africans could become citizens.²⁹ Also, he stated that Congress had no authority to limit slavery's expansion into the federal territories.

Dred Scott was an enslaved African American taken by his masters from Missouri, a Slave state, into Illinois, where slavery was illegal. Scott sued for his freedom because legally he was no longer a slave in that territory. The case eventually reached the

²⁸ Jonathan Lande, "'Lighting Up the Path of Liberty and Justice': Black Abolitionist Fourth of July Celebrations and the Promise of America from the Fugitive Slave Act to the Civil War," *The Journal of African American History* 105, no. 3, (June 2020): 372, <https://doi.org/10.1086/709135>.

²⁹ Austin Allen, *Origins of the Dred Scott Case: Jacksonian Jurisprudence and the Supreme Court, 1837-1857. Studies in the Legal History of the South* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 1.

US Supreme Court. The court ruled that African Americans like Scott were not included as citizens of the US Constitution and did not have the same rights.³⁰

Taney and the Supreme Court's decision was a significant blow against African Americans and Republicans. The decision reaffirmed one of the most significant traditions in the United States, "the construction of white people's futures on the backs and from the hands of enslaved African Americans."³¹

Former Congressman Abraham Lincoln decided to criticize the manner in which proslavery forces were tightening the legal system over four million human beings. For Lincoln, "the Supreme Court had become an instrument of a slave power conspiracy."³² He also stated that the country could not survive half free and half enslaved.

In the years following racial violence grew drastically in the United States. The slave owners were more aggressive with their slaves and at the same time some slaves began to take revenge on their owners. For example, Kansas's "Black Law" threatened rebellious slaves and their co-conspirators with death penalty. The laws show fear on an uprising of the slaves against their owners. Also, local newspapers reported masters killed by their slaves.³³

Proslavery supporters killed settlers from Free states. Moreover, some slaves killed their masters. Slavery was a divisional issue that was escalating into a vicious cycle.³⁴

³⁰ Allen, *Origins of the Dred Scott Case*, 1.

³¹ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 372.

³² Allen, *Origins of the Dred Scott Case*, 2.

³³ Kristen Tegtmeier, Oertel. "Bleeding Borders :Race, Gender, and Violence in Pre-Civil War Kansas". Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009, 43.

³⁴ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 372.

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected president of the United States. The nation elected a “Black Republican” president, claimed pro-slavery Democrats. They claimed that the Republican victory would be the end of slavery and the handing-over of White women to Black men.³⁵ The election of 1860 ran into two main subjects: race and slavery. The antislavery sentiment prevailed on the votes.

The sentiments over the continuation of slavery were so intense that Southern states called for secession from the United States. Stakes were high from an economic perspective; as a proslavery supporter claimed, slave owners were going to lose “25 hundred million of slave property & to have to lose among us \$4 million of freed Black.”³⁶ The average delegate in the deep South was having a significant loss, considering that the median representative owned from thirteen up to thirty-four slaves, depending on the state.

Lincoln stated that American citizens had spoken and voted for the end of the expansion of slavery. The issues brought the Civil War on April 12, 1861, culminating with the freedom of several million with the cost of seven hundred thousand American lives, plus the massive financial and economic cost of the war. That would represent a third of the price of supporting the war for one year.³⁷

Lincoln’s purpose was not to start a war. He had a plan to compensate the slave owners. He expressed to Senator Orville that states were willing to accept “\$500 apiece

³⁵ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 389.

³⁶ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 390.

³⁷ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 393.

for all negroes” in his belief. There would be gradual emancipation, and slavery would be extinct in twenty years.³⁸

Lincoln proposed to compensate \$400 per slave for the 432,622 slaves in the border states. Lincoln stated that the cost to the federal government was \$173,048,800 to pay the slave owners and achieve emancipation. He calculated that was the cost of the duration of war for around 1,460 days.³⁹

However, war was inevitable with the differences and demands made by both sides. The bloodiest battle in American history occurred during the Civil War, the Battle of Antietam, on September 17, 1862.⁴⁰ Approximately 620,000 soldiers and civilians died of starvation, diseases, or in combat during the four years of war. Later, after the great victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Lincoln spoke to the nation on his Gettysburg Address, which gave hope and “a new birth of freedom.”⁴¹

Finally, Lincoln proclaimed emancipation on January 1, 1863, which abolished slavery in the Confederate States. Lincoln’s decision made foreign powers, such as United Kingdom and France, not to support the Confederates because they had already abolished slavery. These European countries had plans over the cotton production controlled by the Confederates before the Civil War.⁴²

³⁸ William C. Harris, *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 161.

³⁹ Harris, *Lincoln and the Border States*, 165.

⁴⁰ George R. Large, Joe A. Swisher, and Antietam Battlefield Board, *Battle of Antietam: The Official History by the Antietam Battlefield Board* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1998), 9.

⁴¹ Martin P. Johnson, *Writing the Gettysburg Address* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 240.

⁴² Harris, *Lincoln and the Border States*, 187.

On April 8, 1864, the Senate passed the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude. It was ratified by Congress on January 1, 1865, marking the legal end of a dramatic era in US history, but nevertheless the sentiments in favor and against slavery stayed alive for many decades into the future.⁴³ Moreover, it left fear among Northerners that slavery could come back because of the economic interests and ideological commitments of Southerners. Many Whites in the South cultivated the racist mindset of deserving more privileges for having a different skin color.

The Mexican slavery system—peonage

There were different views on slavery in Mexico, from the sixteenth century to its legal abolition in 1810. Many historians infer that the practice of slavery/debt peonage ceased in that year. However, Miguel Hidalgo and other insurgent leaders who urged the end of slavery had only limited control of the territory of New Spain (now Mexico). Moreover, several slave owners never recognized the insurgents as their authority; therefore, they did not obey the insurgents' declaration or the new rules. After Mexico's Independence in 1821, the new government reissued abolition decrees but also compensated the slave owners to respect their "property rights." Nevertheless, far ahead, the executive branch of government was forced to condemn and outlaw slavery in other constitutions, even in the latest Constitution of 1917, indicating that the practice remained through the rest of the nineteenth century and even part of the twentieth century.⁴⁴

⁴³ Alexander, Tsesis, *The Thirteenth Amendment and American Freedom* (New York: NYU Press, 2004), 3.

⁴⁴ Legaspi Olveda, *La abolicion de la esclavitud en Mexico, 1810-1917, Signos históricos*, Mexico: Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana Iztapalapa, 2013, 15(29), 10.

To understand Mexican Independence and its relationship with slavery, we have to identify who was behind the movement, its purposes, and the objective of abolitionism.

Criollos organized Mexico's Independence. Spaniards born in New Spain had fewer rights than Spaniards born in Spain and suffered unfair treatment from the Spanish monarchy peninsular Spaniards. Moreover, in August 1808 Napoleon sent his older brother Joseph-Napoléon Bonaparte to rule Spain thereby adding another layer of political domination over the Mexican population. Miguel Hidalgo, leader of the independence movement, uttered the *Grito de Independencia*, claiming freedom against France, not Spain. However, according to Legaspi Olveda, the purpose of abolishing slavery in Mexico was to weaken the economic control which Spaniards held as they mostly owned all slaves in the country.⁴⁵ Moreover, on October 19, 1910, José María Anzorena promulgated a decree that abolished slavery, almost a month after the rebellion began. The text order the liberation of enslaved people, and those who resisted would suffer the confiscation of their slaves and to punish with the death penalty.⁴⁶ One of the foremost leaders of the first abolitionist movement in Mexico was José Miguel Guridi y Alcocer. On March 25, 1811, he stated at a local session of the Congress of Tlaxcala eight principles:

“First: The commerce of slaves is forbidden and no one after today will be able to sell or buy any slaves. Any purchases will be automatically nulled, and the purchaser is going to lose his investment, setting free the slave.

“Second: In order to respect private property, current slaves will have to keep working to their owners until their debt is free.

⁴⁵ Olveda, *la abolición de la esclavitud en Mexico, 1810-1917*, 11.

⁴⁶ Olveda, *la abolición de la esclavitud en Mexico, 1810-1917*, 12.

“Third: The children of the slaves will not inherit their parent’s status of slaves; they will be born free.

“Fourth: Slaves will be treated as the same as domestic workers. The only difference is that the slave will have to serve the same master.

“Fifth: Slaves will earn a proportionate salary of their work and aptitude, the same as if they were free workers, leaving judgment to national laws.

“Sixth: If a slave can give their master the total amount of what they cost, through savings or other methods of payment, they will be free.

“Seventh: If the slave value is less than his original value because of aging or inability, it will be exhibit to acquire its freedom, if the value of the slave is more than their original Price, the slave will pay its freedom at his original value.

“Eight: If the slave cannot work due to an advance illness, he will not earn any salary, but the master will be obligated to take care of him during his illness it is temporary or perpetual.”⁴⁷

The first principle seems to be a good intention to end chattel slavery in Mexico; however, the second principle reinforced the continuation of slavery. The third principle prohibited slave masters from passing on the debts of slave parents to their children.

There is a similar system to US slavery before the Civil War on the other articles.

However, the Cadiz Constitution of 1812 did not abolish slavery. In article 5, paragraph one, it was specified that "all free men born and residing in the dominions of Spain, and their children" were Spaniards; and in the fifth paragraph it was indicated that also the freedmen who acquired freedom. Therefore, blacks and mulattoes were not

⁴⁷ Erika Pani. ""Actors on a Most Conspicuous Stage": Citizens of Revolution in the United States and Mexico." *Historical Reflections* 29, no. 1 (2003), 163.

recognized as citizens because their origin, along both lines, did not come from these territories.⁴⁸

Guadalupe Victoria —the first constitutional president of Mexico— returned to the issue of slavery. On September 16, 1825, he granted freedom to slaves who could be redeemed with the funds that were gathered for that purpose, and those who voluntarily freed by their owners.⁴⁹He tried to champion abolitionism, but antislavery laws conflicted with property rights. Local congresses discussed the issue. In Chihuahua, legislators claimed that the number of slaves in Mexico was not large enough to affect the interests and property rights of the slave owners; therefore, according to the legislators, the state's compensation had to be covered to set the slaves free.

Later on, during the presidency of Vicente Guerrero, second president of Mexico, the government abolished slavery again on September 15, 1829. Guerrero was of African, Indian, and Spanish heritage. Because of his roots, he fought for the Afro-Mexican and Indigenous people's rights. Some historians have called him the consummator of independence and the Mexican Abraham Lincoln due to his proclamation against slavery.⁵⁰

Guerrero stated that it was time to move beyond racial equality to equality of class. But the Mexican political interest groups did not share Guerrero's vision of democracy and equality for all economic sectors. Additionally, Guerrero declared in 1821, that nine years before, he wanted to make peace with Spain in 1812 and on terms that would have left Mexico a part of the Spanish Empire. However, in 1812 the Spanish

⁴⁸ Olveda, *la abolición de la esclavitud en Mexico, 1810-1917*, 21.

⁴⁹ Olveda, *la abolición de la esclavitud en Mexico, 1810-1917*, 31.

⁵⁰ Theodore Vincent. *The Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President, Vicente Guerrero*. *The Journal of Negro History*, 86(2), 2001, 148.

Empire approved a clause that offered political rights for all of Spain's colonized Indigenous people, Indigenous-White mixed races, and White people while retaining slavery laws for anyone with African heritage.⁵¹ Three months after abolishing slavery, he was kidnapped and executed in February 1831 by reactionaries of his government and new policies.⁵²

Native Mexicans represented a larger population than Africans in colonial Mexico, although Africans were abundant. Africans officially represented 10.2% of the population in 1810, but the estimation is that at least 30% of the Mexican people had some African heritage.⁵³

During his presidency, Guerrero abolished slavery in his decree that those who had previously been slaves were now free. Also, he included that when the Treasury had enough resources, it would compensate the owners of the slaves.

On September 15, 1829, President Guerrero established that "slavery is and shall remain abolished in the Republic" in Article I of that decree. Then Article II mentioned, "In consequence, those who have hitherto been regarded a slave are free."

Finally, Article III explained that the Treasury should indemnify the owners, "[w]hensoever the condition of the treasury shall permit, the owners of the slaves shall be indemnified according to the terms which the law may dispose."

Guerrero's decree reveals several key points regarding slavery and his government:

1. He implicitly recognized that by 1829 there were still slaves in Mexico.

⁵¹ Vincent, *The Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President*, 150. Vincent, *The Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President*, 150.

⁵² Vincent, *The Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President*, 153.

⁵³ Vincent, *The Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President*, 150.

2. He showed that part of the population did not follow the orders of the government of the former president nor the Mexican Constitution.
3. He seemed to respect private property by intending to compensate the slave owner but demonstrated that the government had weak finances and insufficient wealth to fulfill its president's goodwill.

Later, in Article I under the Plan of Toluca or Central Constitution of 1836, President Bustamante reinstated that “[s]lavery is abolished, without any exception, throughout the whole republic.” Also, in Article II, Bustamante reinforced that the owners of slaves had to be paid by the Treasury to set their slaves free. “The owners of the slaves manumitted by the present law, or by the decree of September 15, 1829, shall be indemnified for their interests in them, to be estimated according to the proofs which may be presented of their personal qualities.”⁵⁴ President Bustamante’s legislation of the abolition of slavery on the Plan of Toluca shows that slavery kept running until 1836 and that the Treasury could not indemnify the slave owners in 1829.

On February 24, 1841, Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna signed a treaty with Great Britain against the slave trade and abolishing slavery. The treaty was ratified in 1842 and then endorsed by President Santa Anna in 1843. Both governments instructed their navies to prevent the slave trade from overseas.

The first draft of the Mexican Constitution presented on August 25, 1842, in its Article VII, section 1, established that “[n]o one is a slave in the territory of the republic.” Finally, the Constitution of 1843, article IX, section 1 stipulated that “[n]o one is a slave

⁵⁴ Edward E. Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers* (New York: J.A.H. Hasbrouck & co, 1860), 234.

in the territory of the nation, and whoever is introduced will be considered in the class of free, remaining under the protection of the laws.”⁵⁵

Article XXXI of the Provisional Organic Statute of the Mexican Republic, promulgated on May 15, 1856, stated that “at no point in the Mexican Republic may slavery be established; the slaves of other countries are freed by the fact of stepping on the territory of the nation.” Then, Article II of the Constitution of 1857 specified that “in the republic, everyone is born free. The slaves who set a foot on the national territory recover their freedom, and they are entitled to the protection of the laws.”

Later on, on December 1, 1916, the draft of Article II of the Constitution presented by President Venustiano Carranza established the prohibition of slavery in the United Mexican States.

The constant mention of the prohibition of slavery in Mexican governmental proclamations reveals that the practice continued even after 1917. The drafts and formal Mexican Constitutions through the nineteenth century and even in the twentieth century mentioned the prohibition of slavery. However, the informal system of slavery and the formal peonage system show that slavery in Mexico kept working for over 100 years after the Mexican Independence.

Finally, it even after the Mexican Revolution in the twentieth century that the 1917 Mexican Constitution specified the abolition of slavery.

To explain the early years of African and other forms of slavery in Mexico, it is essential to define demographics. There were three primary groups among slaves in Colonial Mexico, the *Bozales* (African-born Black people), *Negros Criollos* (American-

⁵⁵ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 235.

born Black people), and Mulattoes⁵⁶ (child of Criollo and Bozal or a Negro Criollo). During the sixteenth century, most slaves in Mexico were Bozales. Later on, in the seventeenth century, Negro criollos became the largest group. Finally, Mulattoes were the most significant population among slaves in the eighteenth century.⁵⁷ After the native-born population overcame the pandemic, they became the primary source of slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The White elite in Colonial Mexico treated Black people and Mulattoes with great disparagement. Mexican elite considered Mulattoes to be unruly, combative, disrespectful, and in some way clever: characteristics that made them unfit to be proper slaves. Moreover, wealthy Mexicans regarded Mulattoes as troublemakers, while Black people were considered docile.⁵⁸

On the other hand, Mulattoes' knowledge of local conditions, their ability to adapt, and even their intelligence indicated that they might have made better workers despite the negative qualities projected onto them. But based on these assumptions about mixed race people, the price of Mulattoes was substantially lower than the price of Bozales.

⁵⁶ Valdés, "The Decline of Slavery in Mexico.", 176.

⁵⁷ Valdés, "The Decline of Slavery in Mexico.", 177.

⁵⁸ John Francis Gemelli Careri, *A Voyage Round the World*, in Vol 4 of *Awsham Churchill*, ed., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1704), 85.

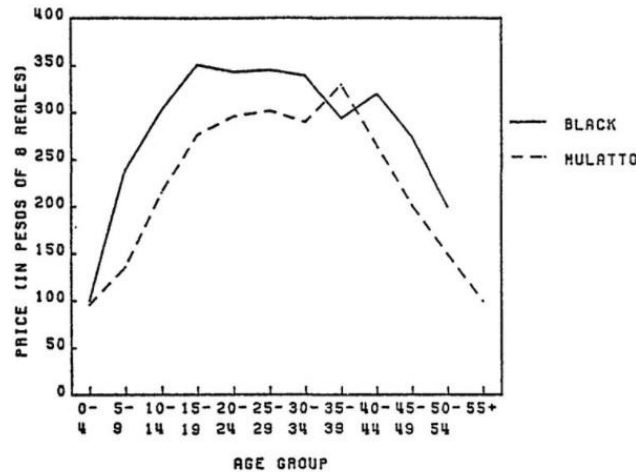


Figure 3.

PRICES OF BLACK AND MULATTO SLAVES SOLD IN MEXICO CITY, 1692-1698

✕ 59

The chart shows that Black people were worth about 20 percent more than mulattoes during their lifetime. Also, it demonstrates that children and people over fifty years old were cheaper, while the most expensive slaves were from a range of fifteen to thirty-five years old.

In the nineteenth century in Mexico, there was a decline in the numbers of African slaves. Then, the Native Americans became the most significant source of slavery at the haciendas which were a similar economic model as the plantations in the United States—large extensions of land owned by a family and produced several kinds of raw materials.

Peonage was the financial system on which the wealth of the haciendas depended. Each hacienda had its servants or slaves who were born, grew, and died within the hacienda limits.⁶⁰ The *hacendados* (owners of the hacienda) used debt peonage to attach

⁵⁹ Dennis Valdes, *The Decline of Slavery in Mexico*, The Americas (Washington, 1944), 178, Figure 3.

⁶⁰ Patrick O' Hea, *Reminiscences of the Mexican Revolution*, México, 1966, 335.

peons to the hacienda for generations. Peonage was a fixed line of credit designed to grow peons' debt constantly. Even the local police obligated the peons to continue working in the hacienda until they fully paid it (similar to the Fugitive Slave Act). If peons tried to escape, the police would locate them and force them to return to work at the hacienda.⁶¹

In peonage, the hacendado gave a salary to the worker, in money coined by the own hacienda. The money was limited to buying food and supplies (such as clothes and medicines) at the *tienda de raya*, the shop owned by the hacendado. The salary was always lower than prices at the shop, so the peon's debt would always grow. The children of the hacendados inherited the peons through their debt to their parents. Also, the sons of the peons inherited their parents' debt, which made them peons for life. Even if the hacendado sold the hacienda, the new owner acquired the peons' debt.⁶² Some historians, such as Edward E. Dunbar, claimed that peonage was supposed to be masked slavery. Still, it was not the same.⁶³ He stated that the peon was completely free to work at any place, without any restrictions; however, there is enough evidence to show that Dunbar had a misconception of peonage.

The haciendas and peonage had some distinct differences among the states in Mexico. For example, in Coahuila, at the Hacienda of the Sanchez Navarro, the control of peons was not only limited to the peons that lived there but also to neighboring towns of Tlaxcaltecan Indians, who worked as temporal workers but were in debt with the

⁶¹ Karl Kaerger, *Agricultura y colonización en México en 1900*, 1a ed. en español. (Chapingo, Mexico, Mexico]: Universidad Autónoma Chapingo: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1986, 409.

⁶² Kaerger, *Agricultura y colonización en México en 1900*, 410.

⁶³ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 247.

hacienda as well. The local police also played an essential role in coercing the peons to keep working at the hacienda, and if peons did not comply, they were considered fugitive peons.

The debt average in the southern states was more extensive than it was in the northern states. In a sample of fourteen haciendas from Oaxaca (state located in the South of Mexico), the average debt was 35.5 pesos per Native person. The general monthly salary at the hacienda was 3.2 pesos. Therefore, the average debt was around eleven months of work.

The system was more coercive in Yucatan (also in the South). Due to amount of their debts, the peons were attached to the haciendas for a lifetime. In addition, Yucatan passed a law in 1943 that reinforced the peonage system. The law established that a hacienda could not hire a peon with a debt with another hacienda, and local police had to enforce the peons to return to work to the hacienda until the peons covered their obligations.

Scholars and reporters documented debt peonage in sisal for the henequen industry, in Yucatan, from 1876 to 1911. In Mexico, the Federal Constitution of 1857 outlawed slavery and debt peonage. However, debt peonage continued operating by state legislation and was enforced by state authorities, particularly in Yucatan, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Chiapas.

Even in other parts of the world, scholars recognized the peonage system as a type of slavery. In his first volume of *Das Kapital* in 1867, Karl Marx described the system of slavery that existed in Mexico. Marx wrote that in some states in Mexico, those governments hid slavery behind the figure of peonage. He added that the debt peonage

that existed in northern Mexico and the US southwest emerged because of the American Civil War.⁶⁴

By 1876, the regional market conditions adapted different systems for the agricultural industry and rural areas. In line with the labor policies of the United States, northern Mexico had free wage labor; debt peonage (light slavery) worked in central Mexico; and coercive debt peonage, similar to United States slavery, was the system implemented in southern Mexico.⁶⁵

In June 1882, the newspaper, the Antislavery Journalist reported rampant slavery in Mexico, the worse in Latin America, much worse than in Brazil except Cuba. Under the peon-debt system, the reporter claimed to have been in a hacienda with two hundred peons. The peons received “miserably low wages of two dollars per month.” The publication concluded that the only way to end this “barbarous treatment” would have been when the United States of America would have included Mexico as part of their territories.⁶⁶

During the 1890s, journalist John Turner tried to explain the difference between Indigenous people in the United States and Mexico. He recognized that there was a problem due to racist attitudes in both countries. In general, Americans believed that Indigenous people in Mexico were similar to those in the United States, classified as savages. As a way to counter this impression, Turner highlighted the achievements of the

⁶⁴ Reséndez, Andrés. “North American Peonage.” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4, December, 2017, 597. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cwe.2017.0084>.

⁶⁵ Sarah Washbrook. “‘Una Esclavitud Simulada’: Debt Peonage in the State of Chiapas, Mexico, 1876–1911,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, accessed October 4, 2021, 368. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150601062910>.

⁶⁶ “SLAVERY IN MEXICO.” *The Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 6, 1882, 173. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-periodicals/slavery-mexico/docview/3052166/se-2?accountid=11311>.

Mayans, a civilization more advanced than the Aztecs or Incas of Peru. He added that Mayans were of low height but firm, which gave them an impression of elegance and grace.⁶⁷

Moreover, Turner reminded his readers about the people suffering during the second half of the nineteenth century in the Southern states. He claimed that the slaves or peons of the Yucatan Peninsula received no payment. They were half-starved, worked almost to death, and beaten. There was no education for their children. Finally, Turner said that if the master wished to kill them, he could do it with impunity.⁶⁸

In March 1891, a decade later, *The Anti-Slavery Reporter* described the peon slavery in Mexico and the mechanisms that operated in a plantation of Tabasco, Mexico. The plantation produced sugar, brandy, mahogany, and rice. According to the newspaper, at the plantation worked ninety-seven slaves, who received a monthly salary of five dollars—sufficient to eat and get drunk.

A man in Mexico got into slavery in two ways: acquiring his father's debts or by his own debts. The workers could receive from the owner of the plantation from five to fifty dollars. However, their debt was higher and commonly increased, and the peons remained slaves "until death release[d] them."⁶⁹

Why was there still a rampant slavery system in Mexico while Mexico, like other Central and South American countries, had abolished it? It was due to a combination of factors: (1) the rise of the demand within and beyond Mexico for tropical products that

⁶⁷ La Botz, "U.S. Socialists & the Mexican Revolution," 5.

⁶⁸ La Botz, "U.S. Socialists & the Mexican Revolution," 6.

⁶⁹ Pawn slavery in Mexico. *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1891, 78. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-periodicals/pawn-slavery-mexico/docview/2998693/se-2?accountid=11311>.

depended on trains and other transportation systems to link the plantations with the markets, (2) a high rate of unemployment which insured a cheap labor supply, and (3) the lack of industry which strengthened insured little competition in the workforce. President Díaz, who ruled Mexico for over thirty-two years, fostered policies which contributed to the enslavement of Mayans and Yaquis Indians and the support of the hacienda system in numerous locations.⁷⁰

Moreover, the delegates and landlords at the 1896 Agricultural Conference claimed that debt peonage was not slavery because there was a civil contract between the worker and the landowner. The workers were not born slaves.⁷¹ However, there was a legal document that proved the debt of the peons. This was similar to the document that demonstrated that someone owned a slave. The system had fixed conditions to repay the debt so that the peons could never pay it back. Also, the peons inherited their debt to their children. Therefore, the children of the peons were technically slaves.

After the Revolution, in December 1912, Luis Cabrera said at the Mexican Congress, “The *tienda de raya* is not a simple abuse of the hacendados, it is the economic requirement for a hacienda to fully work.”⁷² It confirmed that the *tienda de raya* was still the mechanism to indebt the peons and produce high incomes for the hacendados.⁷³

During his trip to Mexico in the 1900s, John Lind, the special representative of Woodrow Wilson and Admiral Fletcher of the American Naval Fleet in Veracruz, witnessed that it was cheaper to buy a slave for forty-five dollars, to let him die of fatigue

⁷⁰ Friedrich Katz, *La Servidumbre agraria en México en la época porfiriana*, Colección Problemas de México. México, 1980, 33.

⁷¹ Washbrook, “Una Esclavitud Simulada”, 372.

⁷² Luis Cabrera, “La reconstitución de los ejidos de los pueblos”, en Jesús Silva Herzog, *La cuestión de la tierra*, II, 296.

⁷³ Kaerger, *Agricultura y colonización en México en 1900*, 543.

and starvation after seven months than to buy a new one. His experience shows that Mexico had a robust slavery system by the twentieth century and similar to the US slavery system before the Civil War.⁷⁴

Lind was invited to visit a sugar plantation in Veracruz owned by Emery Sloane. Both witnessed a landlord with a black whip and a shotgun surveilling slaves, digging a hole at the plantation. The landlord's employees monitored the slaves during the day to fulfill their works, and later at night, they imprisoned the slaves in a shelter. Very typical of US slavery.

Chapter II

Texas and the Slavery Issues in the US-Mexico Relations from 1821-1857

Some scholars perceive that Texas's secession from Mexico was due to slavery and religious issues. While Texans wanted to keep slavery, Mexico prohibited it in its Constitution. Also, Mexico wanted to impose Roman Catholicism on its citizens. In 1836, settlers from the United States who lived in Mexican Texas declared independence. Texas was annexed to the United States in 1845 and became the twenty-eighth state. However, as discussed in Chapter I, politics in the United States fractured over the issue of slavery. Congress debated whether Texas would be admitted to the union as a slave or Free state. Finally, Congress agreed to admit Texas as a Slave state. What follows is a short historical summary of the struggle, on both sides of the border leading to Texas' becoming a slave holding state.

⁷⁴ The archeologist John Lloyd Stephens described that in Chiapas and Yucatan in 1895, the price of a peon was between 200 and 300 pesos. However, in 1900, with the rise of the henequen industry, prices rose to 1,500 and 3,000 pesos per slave.

As we have seen, Mexico's governments made numerous attempts to stop the place of slaver labor in its republic. Texans and other Americans insisted on ensuring that slaves continued to work on their landed estates.⁷⁵ Mexico continued to allow settlers from the United States to bring slaves into the territory as "indentured servants." Moreover, the US slave owners planned to implement the mechanism of Mexican peonage as a mean for protecting chattel slavery.⁷⁶ Slaveholders such as Stephen Fuller Austin and the three hundred American families he convinced to settle into Mexican Texas had another plan for slavery. They wanted to provide legal cover for American slaveholders to continue coming into northern Mexico and the Texas Republic.

Austin's father had received a land grant from the Spanish government before he was awarded a grant of land from independent Mexico. Austin proposed a legal contract that redefined chattel slavery as debt peonage thereby masking the continuation of US slavery practices thereby enabling Americans to import slaves into northern Mexico legitimated by the seal of a notary public from the United States.⁷⁷

Prior to this development, on the other side of the border in the 1820s, legislators from Saltillo and Mexico City demonstrated their commitment to end slavery by passing laws to limit the transportation of new slaves into the northern region. Those actions partially reduced the migration of Americans into the Texan territory, although, Mexican authorities could not stop most Americans from taking their slaves to Mexican Texas.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Andrew J. Torget. *Seeds of Empire*. The David J. Weber Series in the New Borderlands History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015, 61.

⁷⁶ R. Jones Papers, "A Visit to Galveston Island in 1818," Galveston and Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas, 83.

⁷⁷ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 61.

⁷⁸ Kelley Sean. "'Mexico in His Head': Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860." *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 3, 2004, 714.

Additionally, by the 1820s, a global revolution in cotton had remade the US-Mexico border. Cotton production was so tightly interwoven with slavery during the first half of the nineteenth century that disputes over slavery ended defining Texas borderlands. Mexican legislators, specifically from Coahuila, thought that they could outlaw slavery legally, but Anglo leaders and farmers would continue with the practice.⁷⁹

Mexico's Federal Congress was able to legally abolish slavery in April 1837 in the whole country to impact the dependence of the Texas settlements on enslaved labor. Nevertheless, Mexicans believed that the powerful slaveholding interests in the United States engineered the loss of Texas in 1845.⁸⁰

American newspapers often speculated that those Mexican politicians, wanting to destabilize the Texas Republic, actively encouraged slaves to escape. When an Anglo farmer discovered a Mexican near his plantation, he cut off the Mexican's ears and had him whipped for "enticing his slaves to run away with him to Mexico."⁸¹

To grasp the seriousness and dilemma faced by Mexican politicians we turn briefly to the debates that took place in northern Mexico.

The Saltillo Slavery Debates

From 1826 to 1827, crucial debates took place in northern Mexico over the future of slavery in North America. In the city of Saltillo, now the capital of Coahuila, the state legislature formed the state of Coahuila-Texas and a state constitution that envisioned promoting the growth and prosperity for Mexicans and Anglo-American immigrants. The

⁷⁹ Mike Dunning, "Manifest Destiny and the Trans-Mississippi South: Natural Laws and the Extension of Slavery into Mexico." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 2, 11.

⁸⁰ Sean, "Mexico in His Head", 714.

⁸¹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 234.

Constitution would establish strong bonds with the northern neighbor. Also, it would regulate the flow of new immigrants from the United States, integrating them into the Mexican economy. However, the continued practice of debt peonage in the region increased the tension about debates at the state Congress.⁸²

The Mexican Constitution of 1824 did not mention legislation related to slavery. Then the Saltillo legislators had an open discussion on dealing with the issue. A draft of Article XIII was against slavery: “The state prohibits absolutely and for all time slavery in all its territory, and slaves that already reside in the state will be free from the day of the publication of the constitution in this capital.”⁸³ The draft sent a clear message of prohibition of slavery to the Texans whose “property”, both geographical and human, was at risk under the new legislation. As a result, Article XIII became the center of the debate of the Saltillo Congress.

Americans dependent on slaves in their cotton production believed that the continuation of chattel slavery in Mexico was essential for their future well-being. J.B. Austin, brother of Stephen Austin, tried to convince state legislators that the children of enslaved men and women in Texas must continue as slaves. He argued that setting those children free would affect in negative ways the economic and cultural interests of the state and the slaves themselves. He claimed that if children were freed too young, they would grow to commit felonies to survive. Then they would become “a public pest and continually a subject of correction.” He stated that the most humanistic alternative was to enslave children and educate them until they were fourteen. Then, they would become

⁸² Martin Bonnie. *Linking the Histories of Slavery in North America and Its Borderlands*. SAR Press, 2015, 171.

⁸³ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 100.

part of the workforce.⁸⁴ Other legislators proposed keeping children as slaves until they were twenty-five years old.

J.B. Austin explained a concept that he called “sustainable slavery.” He argued that the continuation of slavery would insure the growth of American immigration into the Texas territory. He believed that it was the main reason for the rapid economic growth of northeastern Mexico. His goal was to expand the slavery/cotton industry into northern Mexico and thereby link it to the global cotton market.⁸⁵

Agustín Viesca was the governor of the Mexican state of Coahuila/Tejas in 1831 and an ardent defender of slavery. He led a group of state legislators that prevailed in the economic support of slavery. They supported the cotton trade to expand American immigration and foreign capital into northern Mexico during the 1820s.⁸⁶ Agustín Viesca united forces with J.B. Austin on the fight in favor of slavery.

The Mexican proslavery group softened its stand slightly by arguing for gradual emancipation. This would allow retaining possession of slaves already in the state while outlawing slave trade, and they considered the eventual freeing of the children of slaves.⁸⁷

Dionisio Elizondo, a liberal from northern Coahuila, supported the abolition of the slave trade but was against writing emancipation into the state Constitution. The legal writings of Jeremy Bentham, which proposed gradual abolition, had some influence on Elizondo’s thinking. Elizondo predicted that forcing quick emancipation on the Anglo colonies would produce violence and damage private property rights.

⁸⁴ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 109.

⁸⁵ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 109.

⁸⁶ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 109.

⁸⁷ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 110.

Elizondo recommended Congress pass laws for gradual emancipation and limiting the right of slaveholders to pass slaves down to their heirs. Those kinds of laws would eliminate slavery gradually and peacefully.⁸⁸ In general, legislators agreed that current slaves would remain the property of their masters for life.

The rationale was that shutting down the international slave trade and eliminating those laws that supported the self-reproducing enslaved class by freeing their children would end slavery soon in Texas. The existing generation of slaves in the region would be the last to be enslaved for life. This position challenged Austin's intentions for he knew that he and other American colonists would not be allowed to bring new slaves into Texas. It would be impossible to recruit slaveholders and thereby the increase in cotton production.

Eventually, several US newspapers reported on the uprising of American slaveholders fighting to preserve the future of slavery in northeastern Mexico. Reports in US newspapers promoted an image of the Texas borderlands as an unstable region and highly violent due to the clash between cotton planters and the Mexican government. The media effectively dissuaded American colonists from continuing their migration to Mexico.⁸⁹

In practical terms, Mexico did not require African chattel slavery. In the nineteenth century, most of Mexico's unfree laborers were Mexican Indians or mestizos. Mexicans would be able to keep producing in the haciendas with peons. Therefore, emancipation did not require a sacrifice to Mexico's economy. Under these conditions,

⁸⁸ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 111.

⁸⁹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 111.

Mexicans could continue with peonage, while foreigners would have to free their African their slaves.

From an international perspective, Great Britain championed abolitionism in the world. Additionally, at that time, Great Britain was the hegemonic power and the leading foreign investor in Mexico. Then, there was no advantage in keeping slavery legal in Mexico for most politicians in Mexico City. The only exception was the Mexicans who lived in the Texas borderlands. Northeastern Mexico didn't have a significant Indian population available for labor. This was one of the reasons for the underdevelopment and impoverishment of the region.⁹⁰

Conflicts over slavery produced reactions of independentist movements in Mexico. Stephen F. Austin decided to separate his colony, Fredonia, due to the legal position of Mexico. He convinced his colonists that the insurrection ended with their right to hold slaves in northeastern Mexico. The Fredonian Rebellion soon made its way into the news in the United States. The *Niles' Weekly Register* published that the rebellion was due to "the objection of the Fredonians to the Mexican government was that Mexico would not admit slavery."⁹¹

On January 31, 1827, Mexican congressmen read the final draft of Article XIII: "In the state no one is born a slave and six months after the publication of this constitution in each center of the state the introduction of slaves will not be permitted under any pretext."⁹² The children of slaves would be free, and the importation of slaves would be also forbidden. The supplies of African slaves would end within six months.

⁹⁰ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 71.

⁹¹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 115.

⁹² Coahuila Texas, Political Constitution of the Free State of Coahuila & Texas, Natchitoches (1827), 4, Art.13.

The final version of Article XIII remained unchanged and was published in Saltillo with the completed Constitution on March 11, 1827. On the other hand, the Coahuila-Texas's Constitution implicitly recognized the continuation of enslavement of African people already in the region.

However, the fight over slavery in northern Mexico was not over with the state Constitution of 1827, and antislavery forces kept fighting for emancipation. For example, Coahuila's antislavery legislators passed a law to keep a census of slaved people to surveil pregnant slave women and free their children on schedule. The policy attacked the mechanism of sending pregnant African slave women to the Southern states of the United States, in which children would continue being slaves for life. The fine for exporting pregnant women to the United States was 500 Mexican pesos. Also, if a master died, at least 10 percent of his slaves would be freed by the state.⁹³ These laws reveal the antislavery feeling in northeastern Mexico and the political purpose of slowing American migration to Texas, which worked.

As a result, the Anglo colonists adopted the mechanism of Mexican slavery through peonage to protect chattel slavery. One of the main differences was the source of slaves.⁹⁴ Anglos would eventually have to exchange African slaves for Native Americans. The slaves they had in the United States would have to remain there to be kept as part of their property. Although, they could acquire new "property" in Mexico.

The Congress of Coahuila-Texas was not able to solve issues of slavery and migration and the unyielding pro-slavery practices in Texas through legislation. As a

⁹³ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 128.

⁹⁴ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 129.

result, the US-Mexico borderlands, particularly in Texas, became unstable. Even with the antislavery legislation, American colonization kept growing in Texas in the 1830s.

The outcome was the secession of Texas from Mexico and the establishment of the Republic of Texas in 1836. Then, Texas was a republic of American slaveholders built beyond the borders of the United States. One of the first legal changes in the new republic was to undo the restriction made over slavery in 1827.⁹⁵

Chapter III

US-Mexico Treaties in the Nineteenth Century

In the United States and Mexico, slavery was a substantial issue during the nineteenth century. Mexico was the first country to abolish slavery legally. Mexico did it after its Independence in 1821. In the United States, slavery was legal until December 6, 1865. However, Mexico had a *de facto* slavery system⁹⁶ until the 1910s (the United States also continued with some slavery practices after the US Civil War). On the other hand, there were political pressures of antislavery movements on the US government and in the US Congress after 1865 because of the resistance to emancipation on both sides of the border.

The contrast in views over slavery started the American Civil War; however, those views remained in the main actors and winners of the war. Therefore, the existence of a tolerated slavery system in Mexico presumably affected the future political relationship between both countries.

⁹⁵ Bonnie, *Linking the Histories of Slavery in North America and Its Borderlands*, 191.

⁹⁶ Turner, *Barbarous*, 19.

Bilateral trade agreements are policy instruments to encourage trade between the signatory nations, although history in international trade has shown that trade agreements do not necessarily meet their objectives. Oliver Accominotti and Marc Flandreau analyzed the effects of the treaties of European bilateral relations of the nineteenth century on trade flows. Trade works under the clause of the most favored nation (MFN), which means equal treatment to all countries in a network of trade. The clause of most favored nation generated a vast network extending liberalization in favor of participants, resulting in an expansion of trade. Reciprocity in trade has been a critical feature of trade agreements but has also been a constant inconvenience for protectionism.⁹⁷

Treaty of Transit and Commerce—The McLane-Ocampo Treaty

There were several intents to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Mexico during the second half of the nineteenth century. The most significant was the MOT, which would have given enormous economic and geopolitical advantages to the United States. In reciprocity, Mexico was going to be able to increase its exports and trade with the United States.

The MOT was subscribed to in 1859 by the United States and Mexico presidents. This agreement would have given the United States control, in perpetuity, of three commercial routes located in Mexico that the Mexican government was obligated to protect. Two of them connected the Pacific Ocean with the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, the routes were extraterritorial to the United States. In other words, those commercial routes in Mexico were going to be considered US territory. The MOT included the intersections, Nogales to Guaymas, Matamoros to Mazatlán, and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

⁹⁷ Graciela Márquez Colín. The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883: A lost opportunity? *Historia mexicana*, 61(4), 2012, 1414.

Unfortunately, the US Senate rejected the treaty in 1860, although it represented a significant success to the US expansion plan and provided the United States with substantial economic gains. Since then, several scholars have discussed the reason behind the rejection.⁹⁸

American and Mexican scholars have researched and generated hypotheses of the rejection to ratify the MOT, but this event represents more than an isolated miscarriage of the US-Mexico relations. Scholars from both countries have provided economic, religious, political, and even racial perspectives as the main factors for rejecting the MOT by the US Senate. Still, all of them have dismissed the strong antislavery trends in those US senators and their views of Mexico as a proslavery country.

One of the most renowned Mexican historians of the MOT is Patricia Galeana. She provides an economic perspective, holding that the free trade regime included in the treaty provoked a fierce confrontation between protectionists and free traders.⁹⁹ She claims that the contrast with free trade in the US Senate was the main reason for the rejection of the MOT. In her book, *El tratado McLane-Ocampo*, Galeana explains that the agreement has reciprocity, including free trade between Mexico and the United States, which conflicted with US senators influenced by American manufacturing companies.¹⁰⁰ She also includes a religious perspective. According to her, religion predisposed some American senators to reject the MOT. She mentions that while Mexico is historically Catholic and idealist, the United States is Protestant and pragmatic. Galeana states that the

⁹⁸ Rafael Leonardo Lavallo Maury. "American Abolitionism: The Social Movement behind the McLane-Ocampo Treaty Rejection." Proseminar project, Harvard University, 2018.

⁹⁹ Patricia Galeana, *El tratado McLane-Ocampo: La comunicación interoceánica y el libre comercio*. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2006), 278.

¹⁰⁰ Galeana, *El tratado McLane-Ocampo*, 283.

religious confrontation of Protestants in the United States with Catholics in Mexico was a relevant component of the rejection of the MOT.¹⁰¹

American historian Pearl T. Ponce opposes the idea of the rejection of the MOT being related to “[n]orthern hostility towards expansionism.”¹⁰² Ponce gives a political perspective. She claims that the decision of the Senate relies on the balance of power between the US president and the Senate. According to Ponce, institutional loyalty was also a factor in the Senate’s rejection of the treaty in addition to party politics.

Ponce concludes that the approval of the US Senate, including Democrats, would have given President Buchanan the ability to intervene in Mexico and declare and wage war without congressional consent.¹⁰³ She asserts that the MOT would have decreased the senators’ power over the trade policies of the United States. Ponce concludes that the defeat of the MOT was because of the Democratic Party’s lack of cohesion and their conflicting perspectives on the treaty.¹⁰⁴

American historian Philip Shriver Klein argues that, during the discussion of the MOT, American newspapers claimed that the South favored the treaty. The North condemned it for promoting the power of slavery. As a biographer, Klein based his appreciation on Buchanan’s perspective in favor of slavery and the ideological mission of expansionism to annex Cuba and Mexico. Klein also shows the religious and racial components towards Buchanan’s desire to establish his view of Manifest Destiny: the Anglo-Saxon race was superior to Native Americans, Black people, and Mexicans. Klein

¹⁰¹ Galeana, *El tratado McLane-Ocampo*, 283.

¹⁰² Pearl T. Ponce, “As Dead as Julius Caesar: The Rejection of the McLane-Ocampo Treaty,” *Civil War History* 53, no. 4 (2007): 342. Project MUSE.

¹⁰³ Ponce, “As Dead as Julius Caesar,” 349.

¹⁰⁴ Ponce, “As Dead as Julius Caesar,” 378.

implies that the MOT would increase the establishment of slavery (as part of the Manifest Destiny) in non-Anglo-Saxons races in Mexico and spread it through Latin America.¹⁰⁵

In his master's thesis, American historian Milton Patterson Thompson gives an account of the negotiation of the MOT, including the exchange of diplomatic communications between McLane and Ocampo. He illustrates the bias of several American and Mexican newspapers, in 1860, in favor of or against the MOT based on several issues. Thompson reveals through American newspapers from 1830 to 1860 the robust antislavery movement in the United States.¹⁰⁶ He also provides sources of the allegations of American newspapers denouncing the existence of slavery in Mexico. Thompson concludes that the US intentions on the MOT were to frustrate the powers of Europe to intervene in the internal affair in Mexico. Likewise, he gives an economic perspective on the rejection of the MOT. Thompson says that the MOT was in the middle of a trade war between the North and South on commercial routes. He proposed that New York preferred the Isthmus at Panama due to logistics and connectivity, while New Orleans would have been more interested in the greater use of Tehuantepec.¹⁰⁷

American and Mexican scholars have given several reasons behind the rejection of the MOT; in many cases, they mentioned the existence of the antislavery movement in the United States. However, none of them considered the standpoints of the US senators on the subject of ongoing slavery in Mexico. Scholars have ignored that some US senators perceived that the MOT supported slavery trends in Mexico. Also, these scholars

¹⁰⁵ Philip Shriver Klein, *President James Buchanan, A Biography* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962), 325, Archive.org.

¹⁰⁶ Milton Patterson Thompson, "The McLane-Ocampo Treaty" (Master's thesis, American University, 1965), 114, ProQuest (302171531).

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, "The McLane-Ocampo Treaty," 125-126.

were unaware of the spirit of the Thirteenth Amendment in the US Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment generated the perception the view of US Senators that the United States would support the abolition of slavery in any country, or at least in those that have an agreement or relation with the United States. Additionally, scholars have not considered that in a previous version of the Gadsden Treaty, a bloc of US antislavery senators rejected the annexation of several northern Mexican states because they saw this action as the inclusion of more slave territory.¹⁰⁸ We can infer that the US Senate could have had similar views regarding the MOT and further treaties with Mexico.

On January 1, 1863, during the speech announcing the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln articulated the antislavery ideology that the United States had within its territory and abroad. Lincoln said during his speech, “All persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”¹⁰⁹ Lincoln’s message revealed that the states that had slaves would be against the views and interests of the United States. The United States would consider them rebels on the understanding that they opposed the US government’s freedom policies. Those views over freedom in the United States had the potential to extend to Mexico and thereby undercut its debt peonage system.

Discussion of the US Congress on the McLane-Ocampo Treaty

¹⁰⁸ Cong. Globe, 33rd Cong., 2d Sess. 6-18 (1852).

¹⁰⁹ Abraham Lincoln, *Great Speeches* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991).

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1152485&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Most historians had concurred with several reasons for the rejection of the MOT, from protectionism to balance power between Congress and the president of the United States. One of the few historians that have interpreted its failure as the result of Northern opposition to slavery is Philip Klein. He argues that the treaty favored the South's ongoing domination of slaves, but the North condemned it for promoting the extension and power of slavery.

Moreover, the results of the Mexican war with the United States grasping a huge segment of Mexican territory and potential for the extension of slavery maintained a tense division in Congress between Whigs and Democrats. Also, it intensified differences between Southeastern and Southwestern Democrats.

There was a substantial disparity in the vision over expansionism as well. While one idea was to stop adding more territory to the United States, some Southerners wanted "all Mexico." They felt that the Mexican territory was chaotic and unstable, so it was an opportunity for further expansion. The movement for the legal expansion of slavery energized some Americans to seek the taking of many parts of Mexico from Sonora to Yucatan.¹¹⁰

On May 29, 1860, James Buchanan sent the MOT to the Senate. The Senate discussed the Treaty of Transits and Commerce at the committee between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic, dated at Veracruz, December 14, 1859, and Article VIII's amendment.

Article VIII was the central point for discussion at Congress. It centered around the free trade of products and merchandise in both countries. The article agreed with the

¹¹⁰ Dunning, *Manifest destiny and the trans-mississippi south*, 115.

reciprocity of duty-free or tax fixed on specific products to trade between the United States and Mexico. The agreement added the free transit in perpetuity of products across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It also included the trade from the Gulf of California to the US-Mexico border. Article VIII considered the trade of animals of all kinds, minerals, wood, leather, cotton, meat, vegetables, grains, fruits, printed books, maps, and several types of machines.¹¹¹

Some senators disagreed that the reciprocity clause on those Mexican products would impact local producers in the United States. However, the Senate added an article specifically on the mutual support to return fugitives to their countries. The article mentioned “fugitives from service and from justice.” After the debate, Senators voted in favor of modifying the treaty with two thirds of the Senate.

An article proposed by the Senate was similar to the Fugitive Slave Act that worked in the United States between the Slave states and the Free states. Therefore, senators planned to include the return of fugitive slaves in a commercial agreement with other countries. Complicating the political process, early in 1859, Congress passed an act protecting slave property and forbidding the emancipation of slavers within the limits of the territory.¹¹²

The Senate rejected the pro-slavery modifications and additions to the treaty. The result was twenty-two negatives versus twenty positives. Twenty-seven senators voted against ratifying the MOT, and only eighteen voted affirmatives for the ratification. Those who voted in the affirmative were Bragg, Clingman, Davis, Fitch, Fitzpatrick,

¹¹¹ Dunning, *Manifest destiny and the trans-mississippi south*, 116.

¹¹² Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 18.

Green, Gwin, Hemphill, Johnson from Arkansas, Johnson of Tenn., Lane, Mason, Polk, Powell, Pugh, Rice, Sebastian, and Toombs. The senators who voted against the MOT were Anthony, Bigler, Bingham, Brown, Cameron, Chandler, Clark, Collamer, Doolittle, Fessenden, Foot, Foster, Grimes, Hale, Hammond, Harlan, Hunter, King, Pearce, Seward, Simmons, Slidell, Sumner, Trumbull, Wade, Wilkinson, and Wilson.

The resolution was that the Senate did not advise nor consent to ratify the Treaty of Transits and Commerce (MOT) between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic, dated at Veracruz December 14th, 1859.

However, the question still is why the majority of the Senate voted against the ratification if it was a deal so beneficial to the economic interests of the United States. Dunbar exposed some hints as he interviewed one of the Republican senators that voted against the MOT. Dunbar replied, "But Senator, it is not strange that Republicans should view the treaty with suspicion since the most prominent feature in Mr. Buchanan's administration has been the acquisition of Mexican territory, which they all believe will lead to the extension of slavery in that direction."¹¹³ Dunbar knew that many of the members of the Republican Party believed that Mexico was a Slave territory or would become one at least, as more states were moving in the direction of becoming Slave states.

Dunbar asked the senator directly, "Do you believe it will be practicable to introduce slavery into Mexico?"¹¹⁴ Then the senator answered, "No, sir; we know that we cannot carry our negroes into that country, nor can we enslave millions of its aborigines.

¹¹³ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 14.

¹¹⁴ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 15.

The peon labor is adapted to the country; there is no prejudice against the negro in Mexico. Consequently, there is no profit or safety in slave property in that country.”

His statement reveals that the senator was aware of the peon system imposed over Native Mexicans; however, it also shows that he understood that the slavery of Blacks in Mexico would not be allowed. He knew that the slaves in the United States were not the same race as in Mexico. Therefore, getting Black people to Mexico was risky from a legal view.

The senator added, “I got for the treaty on purely national grounds. The direct effect of the treaty is to extend Northern commerce and manufactures; and the indirect effect is to benefit the South by causing an increased demand for our productions. It is very strange that those Northern men cannot see it in its true light.”¹¹⁵

The Republican senator was aware that the treaty directly impacted the production and creation of jobs, mainly in the North, and consequently, an indirect stimulus to the Southern products that served as supplies for the manufacturing industry in the North. However, the majority of the senators preferred avoiding the extension of slavery issues to having economic growth for the United States.

As we already clarified in chapter one, the enslavement of African people in Mexico nearly died out from natural causes, and in 1829 it was formally abolished by the Mexican Congress. By 1859 the laboring population in Mexico was almost six million. The majority of workers were of indigenous blood and known as peons. According to Dunbar, peonage was cheaper and more efficient than slave labor.¹¹⁶ The MOT opened opportunities for Northern enterprises and their commercial and industrial interests.

¹¹⁵ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 16.

¹¹⁶ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 19.

However, the views of politicians “who, like fungi, have risen from the dark and sickly depths of negro politics” killed the Mexican treaty.¹¹⁷

How one-sided a deal was the MOT for the United States? For the three commercial routes in perpetuity, the United States would have to pay \$4 million, of which \$2 million was indemnity for American citizens on claims against Mexico. If there were no disputes, the \$2 million would be paid to Mexico. Additionally, Mexico would have to assure and protect the commercial routes in cooperation with US authorities. If necessary, Mexico would employ military forces to protect US citizens and property, including postal service, passing over the routes. The US military would have free transit through the trails. Also, Mexico would have to build two ports, one in both ends of the Isthmus.¹¹⁸

President Buchanan’s initial proposal was very ambitious. He sought to annex more territory to the United States during his presidential campaign. He wanted Lower California, Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila, which the Mexican president, Benito Juarez, refused to sell.

During the treaty negotiations, the intermediaries knew that the Mexican government would not give any territory to the United States. Juarez’s government had recently overthrown President Santa Anna, convincing the people that selling these territories to the United States was treason, and could generate profound political instability within Mexico. Consequently, Buchanan reduced his demand and only asked for the territory of Lower California. Mexicans informed Buchanan through McLane that

¹¹⁷ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 53.

¹¹⁸ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 102.

they would not sell any territory to the United States.¹¹⁹ The government of Juarez merely offered commercial routes.

Both Presidents, Buchanan and Juarez, were looking for a political gain on the MOT. Buchanan, working on his reelection, wanted to assure more land to the United States. On the other side, Juarez needed the support of the United States due to the forthcoming French Intervention in Mexico through Maximilian I.

Although the United States had leverage over Mexico, Buchanan decided against acquiring more Mexican territory and accept the commercial routes in exchange. There was a high risk that if Buchanan pushed on the territory, he would not obtain the territory or the routes and suffer a political defeat. However, the commercial roads were extraterritorial, meaning US land in perpetuity. Thus, it was a win-win deal for both presidents: it was more territory for the United States in practice, and Juarez could announce it as commercial routes only and gain US political and perhaps military support against the French.

Moreover, controlling three commercial routes that sliced all Mexican territory was better for commercial and geopolitical purposes than acquiring more borderland. Therefore, the United States would have maritime access to international merchandise through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as it had had in Panama for several decades; as well as two other train lines to transport US products to Central and South America, and cheaper access for US products from the East Coast to the Asian market.

By February 1860, the *New York Tribune* questioned the treaty for spreading slavery and increasing disunion of federal politics. Through the MOT, the argument went

¹¹⁹ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 95.

that the United States would be expanding slavery into Mexico. The newspaper vigorously opposed the MOT and called for action among the Free states to resist the agreement. The *New York Tribune* claimed that the Republican senators must resist. It published, “How the members of the Senate stand in regard to it is not definitely known. The main body of the Republican senators are against it, perhaps all.”¹²⁰

The newspaper added that slavery was a disease that would “fester and putrefy” lower Mexico and the United States. Moreover, the tabloid considered the MOT a hybrid treaty that had no security against peon slavery to gradually get into the Southern United States. Limits between slavery and peon slavery were so vague that the newspaper was concerned that the MOT could be a trigger to raise a hybrid system of slavery.¹²¹

According to the *New York Tribune*, the general view of Mexico was as a territory of chaos, in some cases, to the extreme that Mexico was a “huge, rotten mass of slunk civilization.” Also, it was perceived as “a priest-ridden, mongrel, ignorant, dwarfed, and semi-savage population.” Therefore, in addition to many issues, for many Americans doing agreements with Mexico was harmful.¹²²

On February 28, 1860, there was a two-hour secret session at the Senate in which senators discussed the MOT. Senator Mason opened his arguments by saying that even though Mexico was living in anarchy, the treaty’s benefits for the United States were worth the experiment. Also, there were some objections regarding the instability of Juarez’s government. Additionally, senators did not know when he would be able to assure the Senate that the treaty would be enforced.¹²³

¹²⁰ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 103.

¹²¹ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 104.

¹²² Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 104.

¹²³ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 105.

Moreover, Senator Wigfall denounced that the government of Mexico was not going to be able to make the treaty or carry out its stipulations. He did not want Mexico or its “mongrel population” attached to the United States. According to Wigfall, Juarez and his Indian politicians could not effectively govern themselves, and if they mixed with the American people, the Mexican would contaminate them.¹²⁴

On his side, Senator Pugh objected to some commercial provisions favoring interest groups. Nonetheless, he was willing to vote in favor of some amendments. Pugh’s statements revealed he viewed the MOT as a virtuous opportunity for the United States.¹²⁵

Senator Simmons, representing New England, closed the discussion with arguments against the MOT based on the negative economic effects on his homeland. According to Simmons, the reciprocity of the commercial agreement would destroy American companies’ revenue, negatively affecting taxation.¹²⁶

The discussion concluded in the phrase that “the treaty is dead as Julius Cesar.” Senator Seward was against the treaty because he saw a high risk of it being overturned easily by the successor of President Juarez. Moreover, it could make the United States enter a war to enforce the treaty.¹²⁷

Amendments that favored the United States with three commercial routes in Mexico were rejected by twenty to twenty-six by Republicans. Then, Senator Simmons and Democrats moved to amendments providing the reclamation of slave fugitives into

¹²⁴ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 105.

¹²⁵ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 105.

¹²⁶ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 105.

¹²⁷ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 107.

Mexican territory. However, the senators rejected the treaty, eighteen to twenty-seven votes.

Simmons and Anthony, alone of the Republicans, voted in the affirmative. On the contrary, Hammond, Hunter, Chesnut, Iverson, Johnson, and Wigfall, of the Democrats, went against it. Douglas was not present, though he had been out for several days.¹²⁸

In April 1860, the *Atlantic Monthly* criticized Buchanan's actions regarding the MOT and argued that Mexico was a slave country that would impact local life in the United States. The newspaper mentioned that slaveholders looked at Mexico as a "splendid field for slave-labor" for pecuniary and political motives.¹²⁹

Furthermore, the *Atlantic Monthly* expressed that Mexico was still a "slaveholding country" and that there was proof that American slaveholders wanted to push their industrial system into the country. Additionally, the newspaper described the arguments of the US states with rigid slave codes in which they could not be applied to the enslavement of the Black people and mixed Mexicans in Mexico. US rigid slave codes claimed that people with "darker skins and less enlighten minds were not able to enjoy personal freedom."¹³⁰

The *Atlantic Monthly* compared the slaves in Mexico with those in the United States based on stereotypes of race and culture. Moreover, the tabloid cited that "the White race of Mexico would join with the intrusive race to oppress the mixed races" and that "more than two million of slaves would be added to the servile population of America." The general view was that Mexico shared values with the Slave states in the

¹²⁸ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 109.

¹²⁹ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 128.

¹³⁰ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 128.

United States regarding slavery and that the alliance with largely upper-class White Mexicans would increase the slaveholding states' political power as the United States grew and expanded. Furthermore, the newspaper described the Mexican Indians as sad, superstitious, inert people, on whom "Spanish tyranny has done its perfect work."¹³¹

Frank Blair made a speech in New York on January 25, 1860, in which he claimed that Buchanan's relationship with Juarez was dangerous because the latter was a pure-blooded Indian who had gotten his country into a war of castes because the White Mexicans did not recognize him as an authority. According to Blair, Juarez confiscated the properties of the Catholic Church and was exterminating the defenders of the White race. Frank accused the MOT of supporting Juarez in his attack on the Catholic Church and the White men in Mexico.¹³²

Blair claimed that the *Dred Scott* decision had already diminished the free institutions of the United States and that the MOT was going to carry slavery into the new territory of the system of peonage. Furthermore, a "hereditary servitude of debt" system would extend the power of slavery in the United States.¹³³ Blair believed that Mexico had a robust slavery system based on debt for life.

Moreover, for the Republican Party, the MOT was possibly extending slavery beyond its present limits. In short, the MOT held the potential of stimulating a proslavery party, especially in relation to the territory of New Mexico and the Republic of Mexico.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 128.

¹³² Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 129.

¹³³ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 129.

¹³⁴ Dunbar, *The Mexican Papers*, 134.

US-Mexico Commercial Treaty of 1883

The major second intent to scale US-Mexico relations was during the 1880s with a free trade agreement. During the previous years, the United States and Mexico had intensified their trade relationship. Therefore, it was an intelligent move for both countries from an economic perspective. Several scholars, such as Mexican historian Mabel Centeno, have studied the amount of coffee¹³⁵ that Mexico exported to the United States. Centeno explains that the imports of Mexican coffee were even tariff-free before 1883. She notes that the House of Representatives rejected the commercial agreement but does not clarify the reasons behind the rejection.

Mexican researcher Paolo Riguzzi argues that the “US-Mexican trade relationship is full of examples in which the United States has attempted to influence trade through political means or to use trade to influence the political relationship.”¹³⁶ Riguzzi shows several examples of how the United States used its economic advantage to change political views in Mexico. Genuine abolitionism was one of them.

Moreover, Maria-Aparecida Lopes and Paolo Riguzzi researched the issues of the cattle industries between the United States and Mexico from 1870 to 1947. According to the scholars, the United States imported live animals from its two neighbors—Canada and Mexico. Also, the United States imposed tariffs on other regions to close the door to cattle and meat imported from South America. Their research reveals that there were

¹³⁵ Mabel M. Rodríguez Centeno, “México y las relaciones comerciales con Estados Unidos en el siglo XIX: Matías Romero y el fomento del café,” *Historia Mexicana* 45, no. 4, 1996, 757. <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/25139018>.

¹³⁶ Paolo Riguzzi, *Reciprocidad imposible?: La Política del comercio entre México y Estados Unidos, 1857-1938*, El Colegio Mexiquense: Instituto Mora, 2003, 304.

economic interests to partner with Mexico, but political interests also opposed the bilateral relation.¹³⁷ Both researchers explain the importance of trade with Mexico, but they do not contribute to our understanding of why the US Congress decided not to ratify the free trade agreement.

For the Mexican historian and journalist Lorenzo Meyer, the main issue between Mexico and the United States was Mexico's ability to maintain its territorial integrity and control. He claims two differences between the two countries: religion and the centralized Mexican government versus the republic in the United States. Meyer describes the disparities in their income in the 1810s when the United States had double the income of Mexico. Then by 1845, the US economy was thirteen times larger than the Mexican. According to Meyer, there were various political groups in the United States that, during the 1870s and 1880s, tried to acquire more land from Mexico. However, the large population of Indigenous people in the northern states of Mexico caused them to reject this possibility. In other words, some interest groups saw Mexico as a racial threat to the purity of North American values.¹³⁸ Therefore, the antislavery flag was a political cry for interest groups in the United States to resist the expansion of its political agreements with Mexico. In my view those interest groups influenced the US Congress's negative decisions on treaties with Mexico.

American and Mexican scholars have claimed that national protectionism trends were the reason behind the rejection of the free trade agreement with Mexico in 1885.

¹³⁷ Maria-Aparecida Lopes and Paolo Riguzzi, "Borders, Trade, and Politics: Exchange between the United States and Mexican Cattle Industries, 1870–1947," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92, no.4, 2012, 607. doi: <https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1215/00182168-1727827>.

¹³⁸ Lorenzo Meyer, "Mexico and the United States: The Historical Structure of their Conflict," *Journal of International Affairs* 43, 1990, 252.

Then, do we have to imply that the president and the Senate of the United States were free traders while the House of Representatives was protectionist? Furthermore, there is strong evidence that the issues on the persistent slavery system in Mexico could outweigh the benefits of some commercial treaties.

Discussion of the US Congress on the Commercial Treaty of 1883

The Mexican Treaty of January 20, 1883, was a reciprocity treaty negotiated between Mexico and the United States in 1883 was initially approved by the US House of Representatives, but the US Senate rejected it. The competitive advantage of production on the bilateral relationship US-Mexico and the geographic proximity generated trade flow on both sides of the border, even without the signature of the Reciprocity Treaty. It is clear that signing the agreement would boost both economies and increase the international competitiveness of both countries. Then, why did the US Senate reject a commercial treaty with Mexico again?

On January 20, 1883, the representatives of Mexico and the United States signed the final protocol of the treaty. The Mexican government was interested in promoting a reciprocal trade similar to the United States and Hawaii agreement signed in 1875. Then, in 1877, the Mexican secretary of Hacienda (Department of Treasury), Matías Romero, formed a commission to study the relevance of obtaining the same privileges granted to Hawaii. One of the most significant products in both Hawaii and Mexico was sugar. The commissioners anticipated intense competition from US refiners and argued that “the importation of refined sugar, which is accounted in small quantities today, would keep

representing a small amount of the national consumption in the country.”¹³⁹ The Mexican sugar traders were trying to reduce the fear of Mexican sugar fulfilling the National demand for refined sugar.

In Mexico, sugar producers from the state of Morelos were suspicious and reluctant to sign a reciprocal treaty with the United States. There were uncertain benefits to the Mexican sugar producers and the certain increase in fierce competition due to free US imports of sugar.

However, according to John B. Foster, who served as US Minister to Mexico in 1883, there were misconceptions regarding trade between both countries. Romero believed that reciprocity was ideal for strengthening trade and the economy of Mexico and the United States. He knew about the positive effects of trade agreements between European nations. Based on the European experience, this trade was positive stimulus for the Mexican economy and increased wealth.¹⁴⁰

From the US side, increased trade was essential to deepen the commercial relationship with the Western Hemisphere countries. In 1854, the United States and Canada signed a trade treaty, increasing trade. Unfortunately, fear of annexation of Canadian territory by the United States damaged the renewal of the agreement. Therefore, Canadian legislators rejected it

The US Consul in Matamoros, Mexico, Warren Sutton, championed a trade agreement with Mexico. He claimed that the rapid population growth on the border states and the connections with Mexico through the railway system made it probable that international trade could double or quadruple in the next ten years. Additionally, he stated

¹³⁹ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1416.

¹⁴⁰ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1420.

that the shipping traffic of the leading shipping ports of the United States would also increase drastically and that Mexico was a strategic country for the growth of manufacturing and international trade for the United States.¹⁴¹

Walter LaFeber, American historian, believed that the United States was changing its politics by choosing multilateralism over bilateralism by the 1880s. This change meant the United States could expand international trade with many countries in Latin America, Mexico's most significant strategic partner. That is why President Arthur sent an initiative to Congress to enter into a trade agreement in 1882.

Matías Romero, that was posted as Mexico's plenipotentiary minister in Washington, was the leading promoter in Mexico to fulfill the trade agreement. He convinced the skeptics of the president of Mexico, Manuel Gonzalez, of the benefits of trade and reciprocity with the United States.

The Mexican government appointed Romero and Estanislao Cañedo as representatives for the agreement. On the other side, the US appointees, Ulises Grant and Henry Trescot, had positive views over reciprocal trade. Therefore, both countries named representatives committed to the benefits of this agreement.

The negotiations of the treaty took place in January 1883. After four sessions, both parties approved the treaty since the Mexican representatives were instructed not to modify the initial draft. The protocol established that the United States would accept the importation of thirty products duty-free. In return, Mexico accepted to exempt the duties of seventy-three US products.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1420.

¹⁴² Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1424.

Overall, the Reciprocity Treaty favored the United States at nearly \$500,000. After the four commissioners signed the agreement, they sent it to Congress. It would require the ratification of the US Senate to be formally accepted by the US government. The maximum period for the Senate's ratification process was twelve months.

In February 1883, the US Senate officially received the agreement. Louisiana sugar producers stood in solid opposition to the treaty because they believed that Mexican competition would damage their markets. They argued that the low-quality production of Mexican sugar would hurt sugar prices and the American consumers. Also, the agreement would mostly favor the Southwest railroad companies while at the same time damaging other US industries. Moreover, critics at Congress claimed that Mexico could extend the same benefits to European competitors through the most-favored-nation clause.¹⁴³

In January 1884, even though the Committee of Foreign Relations of the US Senate expressed a favorable opinion for the treaty's ratification, the unified opposition sectors pressed the senators who rejected the treaty by one vote. Consequently, the Senate extended the ratification process for six months, allowing a small margin for ratification through another session for voting the treaty again.

Some modifications were done to the original treaty. Then, the Executive and the Senate approved the treaty on May 18, 1884.¹⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the House never passed the laws of the treaty; therefore, the treaty was never signed.

Moreover, in January 1885, the senator for Vermont, Justin S. Morrill, stated that all reciprocity agreements were impositions of the Executive over the power of Congress.

¹⁴³ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1424.

¹⁴⁴ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1425.

In his view, they violated the Constitution. Morrill counterargued any possible benefits of the treaty with Mexico. In his opinion, the treaty granted exemptions for products that would damage US farmers without gaining anything in return. Morrill's position echoed the sugar producers from Louisiana. He convinced a significant part of the House not to sign any reciprocity agreements with other nations. These critics of reciprocity treaties with other countries such as Spain, the Dominican Republic, and Hawaii strengthened the opposition to the treaty with Mexico.¹⁴⁵ Other legislators, such as William Cotter Maybury, presented unfavorable opinions on the impact of the Reciprocity Treaty because they considered it more gainful for Mexico than for the United States.

Congressman Abram Hewitt, on his side, tried to convince the House of the benefits of the treaty. He even argued that the negative impact on sugar production was not relevant because it was an industry on decline. However, his speech was not enough to convince the majority of the House.

By 1887, President Cleveland urged Congress to pass the laws to make the Reciprocity Treaty effective four years later. By May 1887, the deadline of the second extension of the treaty discussions passed closing any possibilities to implementing the accord.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, trade integration between Mexico and the United States was extraordinary. Even without the treaties, companies from both countries found a way to increase trade and investment in each other.

According to Walter LaFeber, by 1860, trade between Mexico and the United States was about \$7 million. Then, thirty years later, by the 1890s, it had quadrupled. By

¹⁴⁵ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1428.

¹⁴⁶ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1430.

1900, US-Mexico trade reached \$64 million.¹⁴⁷ The potential loss of not ratifying the trade treaties was substantial for both countries.

After the second failure of signing a commercial treaty with Mexico, trade policy became a target for local politics. As a result, trade is targeted today by protectionist forces in the United States and by US politicians, blaming trade as the main issue for the loss of jobs and economic decline. Nevertheless, US and Mexican companies have dodged bilateral politics, increasing trade, investment, and wealth between countries for the last 150 years.

Chapter IV

US Politics and the Institution of Slavery

To understand the relevance of slavery between the United States and Mexico, first we have to explore how deep and problematic slavery was in US politics; then, understand the arguments from the Free states to end slavery and the statements of the slaveholders to preserve and expand slavery to new territories. The significant power of proslavery forces in the early American republic translated into a slave system that was going to be combative, solid, and extremely difficult to transform.

The public arguments over slavery persisted for thirty years in the United States. From 1831 to 1861, Americans spent resources, lives, and time convincing the other party to preserve and extend slavery or end with the system. Historians agree that the politics of slavery brought sectionalism, racism, disunion, and war to the United States.

The US Constitution granted slaveholders substantial political power that allowed them to protect their institutions. After thirty years of implementing the Constitution,

¹⁴⁷ Colín, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1883*, 1430.

Southerners built the US government into a country for slaveholders. In addition, the Southerners were able to expand the territories that allowed slavery while solidifying their political reach and control over some social and political institutions of the United States.

In 1819, the United States was composed of eleven Free states and eleven Slave states, creating a balance in the US Senate. Adding Missouri to the United States was a breakthrough in slavery politics because one side would have a decisive vote in the Senate. The arguments of some senators to defend slavery centered on fairness. The claim was that the new state should have the freedom to decide. Then, the solution known as the Missouri Compromise was to accept Missouri as a Slave state while admitting Maine as a new Free state to maintain balance at the Senate. Also, slavery would exclude all the new states of the Louisiana Purchase.

By the 1850s, slavery politics were a boiling pot to US stability. In the House of Representatives, Orin Fowler declared that the Constitution forbade them from interfering with slavery in states, as it is the jurisdiction of each state of the Union. The position of the slaveholders was that their slaves were private property.

Supporting Fowler, Coronel George Mason from Virginia said that slavery discouraged arts and manufacturers. He noted that “[e]very master of slaves is born a petty tyrant.” The attacks against slavery by the Free state representative was made largely on moral grounds and these critiques increased exponentially during the 1850s to the 1860s.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Fowler, Orin, and United States. President. Slavery in California and New Mexico: Speech of Mr. Orin Fowler, of Massachussetts, in the House of Representatives, March 11, 1850 : In Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, on the President's Message Communicating

There were economic arguments in defense of the proslavery states. The chart of the *Congressional Globe* shows that from the US total production, 67 percent of the domestic exports of the United States came from Slave states, exclusively. It shows that slavery represented a big boost for US industry overall but was more significant in the South than in the North. On the contrary, Free states' arguments, due to its lack of slaves, arguments against it were largely based on human rights and religious bases, as all men are created equal.

Some scholars have tried to tie slavery with the Republicans, the Democrats, or even the Whigs. However, that issue is not of relevance for this study. Instead, the vital subject reveals the division caused by slavery in party politics in the United States.¹⁴⁹

After the Civil War, the cost to end slavery practiced through compensation to the slave owners was enormous and Abraham Lincoln faced the challenge to fulfill the financial needs for it, with the vision of unifying the country. Lincoln made a financial plan to compensate the slaves in the border states by \$400 per slaver. He multiplied 432,622 of the remaining slaves living in the states, and the cost for the federal government was \$173,048,800 to finance emancipation.¹⁵⁰ Beyond this financial attempt at a solution, there was a political attack on Southern slaveholders. Senator Wilson from Massachusetts said in his speech that slaveholders were more criminal than common murders. He asked that proslavery slaveholders would not receive any compensation, no

the Constitution of California. Slavery and Anti-slavery: a Transnational Archive. Washington, D.C.]: Buell & Blanchard, Printers, 1850, 10.

¹⁴⁹ Hammond, John Craig, and Matthew. Mason. *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation*. Jeffersonian America. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011, 5.

¹⁵⁰ Harris, William C. *Lincoln and the Border States*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2014, 163.

cooperation, and no patronage for them. In addition, he insisted that a tax of sixty dollars to be paid by any slaveholder in possession of a “negro” after July 4, 1863.

All this shows that the expenses of the Civil War were the American lives lost and the cost of the war, in addition to the postwar costs of reconstructing the country and paying slave owners to free their slaves.

US Politics and the Mexican Slavery

After the MOT rejection, there was a significant concern about the long-term effect of peonage/slavery established in Mexico during the French intervention, from 1861 to 1867.

Maximilian I tried to reinforce slavery and cultivated a relationship with the Confederate groups. In 1861, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom invaded Mexico to pressure the Mexican government to settle its debts and control the country. The three countries imposed Austrian Archduke Maximilian to rule in favor of a pro-French Mexican monarchy.

According to the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, Maximilian approved legislation in Mexico to reinforce the importation of chattel slavery from African colonies into Mexico as a way to support the Confederate groups in the United States.¹⁵¹

The official press of the French Empire, *Diary of the Empire*, published the laws on September 9, 1865, and sent them to William H. Seward, a commercial appointee of

¹⁵¹ Chávez Orozco, Luis. Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 1865-1866. 1. Ed. Oficial] ed. Archivo Histórico Diplomático Mexicano. 2. Serie ; Num. 13. México: Secretaría De Relaciones Exteriores, Dirección General De Prensa Y Publicidad, 1961, 14.

the United States in Mexico. The document serves as testimony to show that the Mexican Empire had the intention to invite American slave owners into Mexico to reestablish the chattel slavery of African Americans. Additionally, the Mexican Empire had the intention to give free land to the slave owners to produce goods in Mexican territory.

William Seward attached documents in which he highlighted some essential concepts regarding equality among men and races. First, it was a human right that the United States would keep defending and promoting in the continent.¹⁵² Second, Mexico advertised itself to the Confederated forces as a New Virginia in the tropical land of Moctezuma. Third, laws were lookalike as in the Southern states of the United States before the Civil War.

Seward stated that Maximilian intended to establish a slavery system in Mexico that could create the same struggles as in the United States. Also, he mentioned that if his assumptions were accurate, it was urgent to notify the Black population in the South of the United States.¹⁵³

Under the Law of Colonization signed by Emperor Maximilian on September 1865, according to Article III, the slave owner was obligated to take care of the slave's children; in case of death, those children would inherit the slave status until they were twenty-five years old. That type of legislation continued under the evolution of Mexican slavery as peonage.¹⁵⁴

Maximilian appointed Matthew Fontaine Maury, an American astronomer and naval officer, as Mexico's Imperial Commissioner of Colonization. He invited all nations

¹⁵² Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 15.

¹⁵³ Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 84.

¹⁵⁴ Galeana, Patricia La legislación del Segundo Imperio, Ciudad de México: Secretaría de Cultura : Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de las Revoluciones de México, 2016, 487.

to immigrate to Mexico, especially citizens from Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, looking for a new residency. Maury promoted Mexico as an incredible land for agriculture in which investors could harvest three times per year. He argued that cotton, tobacco, coffee, sugar, and many types of grain flourished in the northern states of Mexico.¹⁵⁵

Maury also advertised Mexico as being open to slavery by stating that Confederate Generals Hardeman and Terry, judges, and even American church leaders lived in Mexico and preserved the benefits of slavery as in the United States before the Civil War.¹⁵⁶ He compared the Southern states of the United States with Mexican states for having similar conditions of climate and fields to promote investment and the status quo of slave owners.¹⁵⁷

On December 14, 1865, the US Congress sent a resolution to the secretary of the US Department of State asking the president of the United States to provide any information regarding the reestablishment of slavery in Mexico through Maximilian's executive order (from September 5, 1865), and to inform Congress of the position of the United States related to the issue.¹⁵⁸ The concern of Congress was that the documents issued by the Mexican Empire were inviting US farmers to emigrate to Mexico with their slaves. The first article of the Law of colonization stated that all black people were free by settling on Mexican soil. However, other articles on the same legislation mentioned that Black people that came into Mexico with contracts of slavery would work under the peonage system, in other words, the Mexican form of slavery.

¹⁵⁵ Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 115.

¹⁵⁶ Oficina de Colonización, núm. 13, San Juan de Letrán, noviembre 18 de 1865.-M. F. Maury.

¹⁵⁷ Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 116.

¹⁵⁸ Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 138.

As General Attorney of the United States, James Speed, sent all the concerns of Congress to Mexican representatives. As representative of Maximilian, Maury answered that the new legislation intended to invite the American citizens that did not agree with the consequences of the Civil War and were not willing to recognize the authority of the new US government. The Maximilian's government wanted to admit all those US citizens producing in the Southern states for decades under specific working conditions. However, according to the Mexican authorities, the laws of Maximilian were not slavery.¹⁵⁹ Slaves would transform into peons, and the slave owner called now *patrón* (boss) would make a five-to-ten-year contract with his peon to limit his work under that period. The *patrón* will be obligated to feed them and provide them with clothes and shelter. Mexican authorities were trying to justify that their system was different from chattel slavery.

On November 2, 1865, William Seward responded to the Mexican Empire that freeing the slaves was essential to the US government. Equality among men of all races was a policy that the United States would be practicing with strength and persistence in the years to come.¹⁶⁰ He argued that Black slaves or peons would live under slave laws with or without their consent under the recent Mexican decree. Also, Seward said that US lawyers had analyzed the regulation and showed that Black workers would inevitably be working under slave conditions in Mexico.

On December 20, 1865, President Andrew Johnson sent a message to the House of Representatives in response to the request for information on the reestablishment of slavery in Mexico. The demand included "what action [against slavery], if any, has been

¹⁵⁹ Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 145.

¹⁶⁰ Chávez, Maximiliano Y La Restitución De La Esclavitud En México, 147.

taken by the government of the United States in reference thereto.”¹⁶¹ The document shows the exchange of communications between both governments. It reveals the concerns of American legislators that, even though the Mexican laws forbid slavery, there was a peonage system that was a disguised form of slavery.

The American legislators described how the peonage system worked, having even children and women as slave workers under Mexican regulations. Also, the legislators showed their concerns that the continued practice of a form of slavery in Mexico would create a vicious circle in the United States because the old master would enter the United States with their “industrious negroes.”¹⁶² Other US legislators defined slavery in Mexico as not a racial issue but slavery without any ideological reasons. Inferring that the US had beliefs of a superior race or religious arguments in which other races were considered animals or humans without souls. On the contrary, Mexico had only economic purposes. However, American legislators were only trying to be morally superior, but on both countries the economic drives prevail over other arguments.

Years after the end of the fall of the French Empire, General Porfirio Díaz established a thirty-two-year dictatorship in Mexico. Díaz would keep policies supporting peonage in Mexico for all his regime.

During the 1876 US presidential election, the candidates coined the term “Mexicanization” as a disorganized and weak government. The candidates claimed that American citizens did not want the government to be “Mexicanized,” meaning associated

¹⁶¹ *Correspondence Relative to the Present Condition of Mexico, Communicated to the House of Representatives. Department of State* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1862, 2.

¹⁶² *Correspondence Relative to the Present Condition of Mexico*, 4.

with a new form of human servitude.¹⁶³ People also associated the term with the potential of returning slavery to the United States. The contradiction in Mexico of having a type of slavery gave some Americans fears that another civil war could break out.¹⁶⁴

The media, politics, and companies in the United States related to Mexican slavery

John Turner exposed in his book of 1911, *Barbarous Mexico*, the slavery system that had operated in Mexico at least for the last twenty-four years and its relationship with the United States. He described a country where peonage was the rule for millions of people where actual chattel slavery continued as an informal institution.

He professed that men, women, and children, primarily Indigenous people, were bought and sold like mules that belonged to their masters for as much as \$1,000 a person. He blamed Mr. Edward Herbert Thomson, the American consul in Yucatan, for owning slaves under inhuman conditions. The American consul replied that the whole story of Turner was false. Moreover, Turner added that Wall Street and President Díaz were business partners. According to Turner, the American press, financed by Wall Street, suppressed the truth and maintained a lie about Díaz and Mexico. Even more, he accused Attorney General Wickersham, brother of President Taft, of being a substantial stockholder in the National Railways of Mexico. Also, Turner stated that President Taft worked behind the scenes to crush the Mexican Revolution in order to maintain the slavery system in Mexico.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Gregory P. Downs, "The Mexicanization of American Politics: The United States' Transnational Path from Civil War to Stabilization," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 2, 2012, 387.

¹⁶⁴ Downs, "The Mexicanization of American Politics", 391.

¹⁶⁵ Turner, *Barbarous*, 391.

Turner wrote the article “The American Partners of Díaz” and published it in 1910 during the Mexican Revolution as “The United States is a partner in the slavery of Mexico.” He argued that American people were not President Porfirio Díaz’s partners as they would not support slavery. Turner insisted that the dictator’s chief political and economic partners were the US government and the US corporations. He accused the Morgan-Guggenheim copper merger, the Standard Oil Company, the American Sugar Trust, the Continental Rubber Company, Well-Fargo, E. N. Brown of the National Railways of Mexico, Harriman, and the Southern Pacific Railroad of being partners of Díaz in the promotion of slavery.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, he reported a conspiracy between the Mexican government and the US corporations to keep chattel slavery for the benefit of revenues. Turner’s publications gained American supporters who supported the revolution of 1910-20’s to overthrow Díaz.

Turner reached three main conclusions: first, the United States is partially responsible for the extension of a system of slavery in Mexico; second, it the determining force in the continuation of that slavery; third, he claimed there was evidence that proves US involvement with Mexican state entities and companies operating an ongoing slavery system.¹⁶⁷

Claudio Lomnitz has a similar view as Turner on the bilateral relationship of Mexico and the US during the Porfiriato. President Díaz attracted investment from the

¹⁶⁶ La Botz, Dan. "U.S. Socialists & the Mexican Revolution." *Against the Current*, Nov, 2010, 4, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/magazines/u-s-socialists-mexican-revolution/docview/807522534/se-2?accountid=11311>.

¹⁶⁷ Turner, *Barbarous*, 4096.

US and Europe, giving private concessions to both powers. As a result, Díaz balanced economic and political groups in Mexico, generating stability.¹⁶⁸

According to Lomnitz, the Díaz regime made Mexico attractive and cultivated US mining, railroads, and agriculture investors. The Mexican publicity campaigns in the United States succeeded at attracting US investments for Mexico. The Mexican diplomat Matías Romero along with other investors promoted the new image of Mexico in New York, Philadelphia, and other major cities of the United States.¹⁶⁹

By 1896, President Díaz energetically enforced coercive peonage in several southern states, such as Chiapas. He warned Colonel Francisco León (governor of Chiapas from 1895–1899) that the predominantly Mexican Indian labor force was too uneducated for a free market. Free wages were for more developed populations. Therefore, he told the southern governors that he would not allow the abolition of debt peonage in their states.¹⁷⁰

During the *Porfiriato*, peons in Chiapas suffered the worst treatment as slaves. In 1885 Miguel Utrilla (governor of Chiapas from 1879–1883) admitted that a system of slavery had been ongoing.¹⁷¹ He blamed the peons for being slaves due to their laziness: they were uneducated and insubordinate. Hence, those were the reasons for Indians never being able to repay their debts. The places of cacao production, implemented daily

¹⁶⁸ Claudio Lomnitz, “Chronotopes of a Dystopic Nation: The Birth of ‘Dependency’ in Late Porfirian Mexico”, Stanford University Press, 2009, 106.
<https://doi.org/10.11126/stanford/9780804760201.003.0005>.

¹⁶⁹ Lomnitz, “Chronotopes of a Dystopic Nation”, 107.

¹⁷⁰ Washbrook, “Una Esclavitud Simulada”, 369.

¹⁷¹ Washbrook, “Una Esclavitud Simulada”, 396.

corporal punishment and meager salaries ensuring that the peons would never be able to pay off their ‘debts’ for many lifetimes.¹⁷²

However, from an economic point of view, Díaz developed a growing economy. He measured progress and modernization with metrics in miles of railroad tracks installed and the amount of crop exports. Based on the metrics, Mexico’s progress was positive during Díaz’s administration. The financial capital for Mexico’s economic expansion was fed from foreign sources. The US investors financed the Mexican railroad system and became shareholders. By the 1910s, US companies owned considerable land in Mexico.¹⁷³

When did the slavery system end in Mexico? Scholars differ on the exact year, but they consider a significant tipping point after the Mexican Revolution in 1917. The Revolution reduced the power of the *Porfirian* landholding elite, and many of their peons were able to gain freedom from their masters. In some cases, peons either joined the revolutionary armies or escaped from the haciendas and their debts. Revolutionaries fought a significant part of the revolution in northern Mexico where peonage was undermined and reduced. On the other hand, the southern region of Mexico that was less involved in the revolutionary movement partially maintained debt peonage for a couple of decades.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

¹⁷² Washbrook, “Una Esclavitud Simulada”, 396.

¹⁷³ Alston, Lee J., Shannan Mattiace, and Tomas Nonnenmacher. “Coercion, Culture, and Contracts: Labor and Debt on Henequen Haciendas in Yucatán, Mexico, 1870–1915.” *The Journal of Economic History* 69, no. 1. 2009, 107. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022050709000357>.

¹⁷⁴ Reséndez, “North American Peonage.”, 612.

The views of several senators and the US media by 1859 revealed that slavery in Mexico was a significant issue for trade agreements between both countries. Evidence shows from the discussion in Congress that US senators were aware and had proof that Mexico used its peonage system as a form of slavery.

The US Congress' rejection of the MOT was because this treaty with Mexico would strengthen slavery in four aspects. First, the states that were going to have the most economic benefits were the border states and the Gulf states of the United States. Second, the proximity and interaction with Mexico were more significant for the Southern states, which favored extending slavery in the United States' territories and other countries. Allowing the South to strengthen through trade with Mexico and thereby give slavery more strength was simply too threatening to a number of legislators in the months leading up to the US Civil War.

Third, most senators perceived the MOT as a mechanism to extend slavery or combine both the Mexican peonage system and the chattel slavery of the South. Signing the agreement would strengthen both slavery systems because both regions depended substantially on their type of slavery. Moreover, the lack of physical barriers between the United States and Mexico and the long border between both countries made it easy for chattel slavery to operate and extend throughout the borderlands. As I have demonstrated, supporters of slavery in the South promoted Mexico as a land of opportunity for them to continue with the benefits of slavery. Also, it was clear to many US legislators that the commercial routes that cut through US territory under the MOT would be channels to transport and move not only goods but also slaves through and into Mexico.

The fourth reason for rejecting the MOT was that it would boost the Mexican economy. Therefore, the peonage system would solidify and extend to other regions as a productivity model. The commercial trade with the United States would increase Mexico's exports, which would continue with Mexico's policies on slavery. The commercial routes with US goods and slaves were also a strategic mechanism to expand slavery to Central and South America.

Debt peonage flourished in Mexico and the Southwest United States in the 1850s and 1860s. Some politicians with liberal views in Mexico after its Independence and in the United States after the Civil War attempted to curb this system of coerced labor. However, it had different results in both countries. In Mexico, debt peonage became a driver for production in the haciendas until the Mexican Revolution. In the United States, peonage was a system to reconstruct the South after the Civil War.¹⁷⁵ However, historian Alan Knight argued for at least two distinct forms of debt peonage. The one based on market incentives, in which workers were free to come and go, was primarily practiced in the United States. The other one relied on corporal punishments, restriction of workers' movements, and pursuit of runaway workers, commonly used in the Mexican haciendas.¹⁷⁶ There is evidence that former US politicians and numerous companies owned haciendas with slaves in Mexico, even up to the early years of the twentieth century.

On the Reciprocal Trade Treaty of 1883, evidence shows that protectionism was the main reason for its rejection. US key industries, such as sugar, pressed and requested

¹⁷⁵ Andres Resendez, "North American Peonage." *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 7 (4), 2017, 597. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cwe.2017.0084>.

¹⁷⁶ Resendez, "North American Peonage,"601.

US senators and House Representatives to oppose the treaty with Mexico primarily to protect them from foreign competition. Thus, we can infer that slavery was less of a threat to US local politics and interest groups during those twenty years after the American Civil War.

There is enough evidence to assure that peonage in Mexico continued through the end of the nineteenth century and at least the first fifteen years of the twentieth century.

The United States ended slavery through its constitution and used the freedom flag on its international image. However, some researchers reveal that Black men labored without compensation, were repeatedly bought and sold, and were forced through beatings and physical torture to do the bidding of White masters for decades after the official abolition of American slavery.¹⁷⁷

Some in the US media criticized countries that kept allowing the institution, such as Mexico, even as new forms of labor oppression toward Blacks continued in the United States. Both politicians and media expressed concern about continuing slavery in Mexico even in the twentieth century.

However, US companies continued doing business with Mexico, increasing investment and trade. Moreover, there is proof that several American Southerners moved to Mexico to adapt their production to peonage.

Several US companies invested substantially in mining, railroads, and agriculture, using slaves in their processes. Mexican authorities protected these companies. So then,

¹⁷⁷ Douglas A, Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name : the Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. First Anchor books edition. New York: Anchor Books, a division of Random House, Inc, 2009, 444.

while local politics and American citizens were against slavery, some US companies took advantage of Mexico's dictatorship.

After the Díaz regime, slavery ended in a significant part of Mexico. However, southern Mexican states that were not deeply involved with the Revolution kept using peonage for two decades. By the second half of the twentieth century, peonage was finally over in Mexico.

It took almost a century—until the 1990s—to achieve an agreement between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Then, North America finally worked as an integrated region. A trade agreement, known as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement, now USMCA), was achieved when Mexico became a truly free country.

However, the region remains with enormous challenges for millions of people living in poverty and working under forced labor, even in the United States.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, many migrants from other countries move to North America (the United States, Mexico, and Canada) to improve their quality of life but they are involved in human trafficking and suffer from exploitation under inhumane conditions.¹⁷⁹

Definition of Terms

American abolitionism: The movement was chiefly responsible for creating the emotional climate necessary for ending the slave trade and chattel slavery in the United States.

Passionately advocated and resisted with equal intensity in the United States, it appeared

¹⁷⁸ Louise I. Shelley, *Human Trafficking : a Global Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 268.

¹⁷⁹ Human Rights and Human Trafficking, Fact Sheet No. 36, United nations, New York and Geneva, 2014, 1.

as late as the 1850s to be a failure in politics. Yet by 1865, it had succeeded in embedding its goal in the Constitution, at the cost of a Civil War.¹⁸⁰

Bilateralism: It is the cooperation between two countries. The United States was able to sign several bilateral agreements with many countries during the nineteenth century.

However, Mexico and the United States could sign bilateral trade agreements until the twentieth century. Bilateral agreements generally generate wealth and reduce cost productions between two nations.¹⁸¹

Chattel slavery: Type of slavery in which people are seen as property. In chattel slavery, slaves were considered by their owners as part of their private property. Slaves are sold or are in debt to the slave owner for their whole life.

Debt peonage: A debt in a worker's account often resulted in a coercive relationship. But in some cases, such debts reflected exactly the opposite: workers' ability to extract credit from employer and gain immediate access to goods. Sometimes there was a mix of cases. For example, in Yucatan, laborers with large debt were not permitted to leave the hacienda, while other workers with smaller debts were free to come and go as they pleased. Coercive debt peonage existed throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in Mexico.¹⁸²

Free country: A government provides human freedom through the rule of law encompassing personal, civil, and economic freedom. A free country is the absence of coercive constraints in its population.

¹⁸⁰ "United States Abolitionism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/place/United-States/An-age-of-reform#ref612661>.

¹⁸¹ Alexander Thompson and Daniel Verdier, "Multilateralism, Bilateralism, and Regime Design," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (March 2014), 15.

¹⁸² Resendez, "North American Peonage," 601.

Gadsden Treaty: A treaty that followed the conquest of much of northern Mexico by the United States in 1848. It assigned to the United States nearly 30,000 additional square miles of the Mexican northern territory, now southern Arizona and southern New Mexico, in exchange for \$10 million.¹⁸³

Human trafficking: Trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transportation, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.¹⁸⁴

Manifest Destiny: In US history, the supposed inevitability of the continued territorial expansion of the boundaries of the United States westward to the Pacific and beyond. Before the American Civil War (1861–1865), American politicians used the idea of Manifest Destiny to validate continental acquisitions in the Oregon Country, Texas, New Mexico, and California.¹⁸⁵

Mexicanization: The term was born during the 1860s and spread rapidly after the US election of 1876. The expression in US politics referred to the instability of American democratic institutions. The term was related to slavery and dictatorial policies.

Mexicanization suggested the absence of a strong central authority to restrain violence in

¹⁸³ “Gadsden Treaty,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Gadsden-Purchase>.

¹⁸⁴ Human Rights and Human Trafficking, Fact Sheet No. 36, 2.

¹⁸⁵ “Gadsden Treaty,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Manifest-Destiny>.

politics or control the country's peripheries. Americans interpreted Mexicanization as a state of mind of the lack of constitutionalism or republicanism.¹⁸⁶

Multilateralism: The term is related to international cooperation among several countries. During the nineteenth century multilateral agreements and interactions were almost null. The United States had several bilateral agreements. The institutions that worked under multilateralism were created after World War II in the 1950s.¹⁸⁷

Peonage: Peonage provided the labor needs for haciendas or large ranches in Mexico for a long. Mexican peons consistently became indebted to their masters for a room, medical care, clothing, among others. They became tangled to the land as they worked endlessly to pay off their debts. While supposedly free, these men and women lost control of their labor and their freedom, and often the lives of their extended families.¹⁸⁸ Although the Mexican government refused to authorize slavery, it tolerated it tacitly and recognized it under a different name for several decades.¹⁸⁹

Slavery: The institution of slavery allowed White people to buy and sell Black people as a possession, in which the owner could order the enslaved person any requests under the rule of law. Moreover, the federal courts were not simply neutral judges for slavery in the

¹⁸⁶ Gregory P. Downs, "The Mexicanization of American Politics: The United States' Transnational Path from Civil War to Stabilization," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 2 (2012): 387-409.

¹⁸⁷ Jochen Prantl, ed., *Effective Multilateralism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013), 1.

¹⁸⁸ R. Jones Papers, "A Visit to Galveston Island in 1818," Galveston and Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas, 83.

¹⁸⁹ Dania López-Córdova, "Peonage and Slave Labor in Mexico during the Porfirian Age." *Review Fernand Braudel Center* 35, no. 3/4 (2012): 193. <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/43631670>.

United States. The Supreme Court, in particular, was structured to protect slavery before the US Civil War.¹⁹⁰

Transatlantic abolitionism: The term helps understand the intersection of free-trade ideology and abolitionism around the world. It reveals the transatlantic connections between Victorian free-trade ideology and abolitionism that influenced many countries in the nineteenth century, including the United States. British Cobdenite George Thompson¹⁹¹ aid both the anti-Corn law and antislavery movement in the United States. He gave several speeches emphasizing the moral connections between Anglo-American free trade and abolitionism.

¹⁹⁰ James Reist Stoner, Thomas W. Merrill, and Alan Levine, *The Political Thought of the Civil War*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2018, 52.

¹⁹¹ Marc-William Palen, “Free-Trade Ideology and Transatlantic Abolitionism: A Historiography,” *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 37, no. 2 (2015): 291–304. doi:10.1017/S1053837215000103.

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