

Doyle, Don. H., ed. *American Civil Wars: The United States, Latin America, Europe, and the Crisis of the 1860s*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

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American Civil Wars is the product of a 2014 University of South Carolina conference. Directed toward teachers and students, this anthology of eleven papers reflects a push to internationalize the Civil War by centering on slavery, republicanism, and European involvement in Latin America.¹ Editor Don H. Doyle declares the war so intertwined with other struggles “that we cannot understand any one part . . . in isolation from the larger web of conflict and imperial ambition that pervaded the Atlantic world in the 1860s” (3).

To start, Jay Sexton judges “the Civil War . . . instrumental to the realization . . . of U.S. national

¹ Thomas Bender links the Civil War to a broader debate over freedom and nationality, while Stephen Berry suggests that current-day globalization has led historians to reconsider the significance of political boundaries. See Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 122; Stephen Berry, “Predictions,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (2012): 6-7, <http://journalofthecivilwarera.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Final-Berry.pdf>. Note Berry's footnote listing several recent conferences with related themes. Doyle has published a study of public opinion in *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), and a series of articles dedicated to “Crises of Sovereignty in the 1860s” was featured in the December 2017 issue of *The Journal of the Civil War Era*.

power . . . the social, political, and economic relationships” facilitating Confederate defeat and territorial expansion (15). The Monroe Doctrine developed into an assertion of United States sovereignty, while Latin American republicans anxious over European pretensions championed it as a rejection of monarchy. Due to American antistatism, the Union effort had relied on cooperation among state and non-state actors, and Sexton positions this as the basis for late nineteenth-century U.S. foreign policy. Howard Jones finds that the Battle of Antietam and ensuing Emancipation Proclamation did not immediately discourage European involvement. The French believed a divided United States would permit their installation of a monarchy in Mexico, while the British – alarmed at the war's financial and human costs – considered intercession. The status quo changed a month later, as both powers recognized that embracing emancipation strengthened the Union cause. Though the French pondered Confederate recognition, the British looked forward to the destruction of slavery by the North. Ultimately, fear of a hostile Union discouraged the two states from pursuing intervention. Patrick J. Kelly emphasizes “the South's fundamental weakness in the Americas” (60). To attract allies, it renounced antebellum rhetoric about spreading slavery through conquest. Negotiations with European monarchies achieved little, however, and angered Latin American republics uninterested in working with beleaguered, aggressive rebels. Wary of growing French power in Mexico, the Confederates pondered forming an alliance with the Union to expel the European newcomers, followed by a peace settlement to end the Civil

War. They turned to the Monroe Doctrine, hoping to establish a collaborative foreign policy to safeguard the New World.

Richard Huzzey stresses “tensions between British anxieties to preserve dominion . . . and pluralist pressures on the boundaries of race, territory, and authority within the . . . Empire” (99). For example, the British were intent on ending the slave trade, yet stopped searching vessels near Cuba because such behavior reminded infuriated critics of conduct that precipitated the War of 1812. While they crushed a Jamaican slave rebellion, the British accepted white Canadian self-governance to accelerate their development. Stève Sainlaude contends that Napoleon III established a Catholic monarchy in Mexico to challenge the U.S. on political and religious levels. He wished to position France as the preeminent Latin nation, and ally with the Confederacy at the expense of the Civil War-stricken United States. Concern over facing a large Union force ended French support for the Mexican project, and its collapse left “the United States . . . the undisputed master of the future in the North American continent” (120). Christopher Schmidt-Nowara explains that Spain re-annexed Santo Domingo to strengthen its hold on Cuba, convinced that the war-torn U.S. could not enforce the Monroe Doctrine. Lincoln’s example, Union emancipation, Anglo-American pressure on the slave trade, Cuban instability and the growing profitability of the Philippines all worked to increase momentum for abolition. Consequently, Spanish rulers and Cuban planters accepted industrialization and other labor forms.

Anne Eller claims that Santo Domingo welcomed re-annexation to quell political strife and thwart the United States’ interests. Spain’s modernization effort failed because of restrictive civil codes, unequal treatment of Dominican soldiers, inadequate funding, and callous attitudes. Rebels enjoyed support throughout the Americas, driving out the Spanish during the Dominican War of Restoration. Erika Pani notes that a monarchy seemed implausible for Mexico because it had suffered from unstable authoritarian rule. She maintains, however, that “the outbreak of civil war in the United States and French commitment to military involvement . . . [made] . . . the old, discredited project of reestablishing a Mexican empire . . . viable” (174). Conservatives envisioned a balanced government that drew investors, but its collapse led Mexico to adopt secular republicanism. Hilda Sabato writes that republican ideals in Spanish America suffered when imperialist European powers emboldened conservatives, and the U.S. conflict sowed doubts among liberals. Debates over military organization followed. While citizen-soldiers had resisted despotism by supporting rival politicians, nations emerged from revolution partially reliant on regulars. The War of the Triple Alliance furthered military professionalization among these states.

Matt D. Childs observes that “the U.S. Civil War . . . paired . . . warfare with emancipation, which made slavery seem less secure on . . . Cuba” (205). American and Spanish slave trading with the island ended due to the Lyons-Seward Treaty of 1862 and growing domestic abolitionism, respectively. As the labor system ended throughout Latin America, Cuban planters

turned to Yucatan Indians and Chinese coolies, while slaves gained freedom by serving as rebel soldiers during the Ten Years' War. Rafael Marquese purports that "the United States became a sort of protective wall for . . . Brazilian slavery in the world-system until the early 1850s" (222). The Civil War changed this dynamic, as Brazilians fearful of national schism pointed to the prosperous, post-slavery United States to pass a free-womb law. The country's inability to compete in sugar and cotton led to increased coffee production to match American demand, and this shifted slavery to the south, signaling the institution's lessening national significance.

American Civil Wars convincingly demonstrates how Europeans and Latin Americans enacted conquest, liberation, and transformation while the divided United States failed to pursue its Monroe Doctrine. The range of topics, though, justifies more explanatory material to enhance the book's teaching utility. Innovative rather than comprehensive, this contribution illustrates just how much work remains to produce a more complete assessment of the Civil War's global significance. Concerning the transnational turn in recent scholarship, Stephen Berry wrote that the newfound ability to "look back into the past and see global flows of connections and consequences . . . is a *new way of seeing*."² The authors here chart a path for others to follow and by employing different methodologies (e.g. cultural, military, social), they may see much more than prior generations of historians have revealed.

² Berry, "Predictions," 7.