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Devon T. Lyons 18 April 2012

Navigating the New Frontier: Woodrow Wilson, Frederick Jackson Turner, and World Politics

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An abstract of
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Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of History

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Abstract

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This thesis attempts to understand the underlying foundation of Wilson's desire to engage the United States in world affairs on the political and economic level. The historiography of Wilsonian thought has generally centered on his political thought and has categorized him as an idealist. This thesis explores the possibility that Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis provided an intellectual foundation for Wilson's goal of involving the United States in a greater international role. Not only did Turner's work provide a causal reason to engage in world affairs, but it also led Wilson to act in a realistic, as opposed to idealistic, fashion when dealing with other nations. Wilson was simply not the democratic idealist he has often been characterized as. This thesis takes a broad view chronologically of Wilson, but it mainly focuses on Wilson's relationship with Turner and his interactions with South America and Europe; the two greatest recipients of Wilson's time and energy. The historiography on this issue has been largely neglected by historians of Woodrow Wilson. Consequently, an examination of Wilson's acceptance of the importance of the frontier in American development and Wilson's foreign policy actions is overdue.

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Acknowledgements

In the Name of Allah, the Abundantly Merciful, the Eternally Merciful.

I am truly blessed to have been given an opportunity by the Emory History Department to participate in this historical exercise.

Throughout my time at Emory University, my advisor Dr. Fraser Harbutt was committed to assisting me. I greatly appreciate his assistance in helping me craft my thesis. Dr. James Roark deserves substantial credit for aiding me in choosing history as my major; a decision I believe was the most appropriate choice for me. I would like to thank Dr. Judd Owen for his invitations to engage me in political philosophy readings outside of the classroom. I want to acknowledge Colin Reynolds for aiding me with his attentive and thoughtful suggestions. I would also like to thank Terry Ray Anderson for reading over my paper.

My wife deserves generous credit for assisting me in editing and refining my papers throughout my career at Emory. She has always been incredibly supportive of me in all aspects of my life.

I would like to recognize and thank my parents for their plentiful love and support throughout my life. They were integral to my intellectual and emotional development. They also provided great assistance to me in the scholarship process that eventually helped me to attend Emory. I love them both dearly for their efforts.

Contents

Many historians have focused on President Woodrow Wilson's political thought. They discuss his insistence on a League of Nations to create security and a stable peace in the post-World War I world. They focus on self-determination and other aspects of his political philosophy. What is seldom discussed, however, is that Wilson cared deeply about American economic prosperity and sought to extend and protect it in his foreign policy. At the same time, Woodrow Wilson's acceptance of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis has also been overlooked by historians. The implications of the thesis would lead Wilson to push for a more active American role internationally. Woodrow Wilson was deeply affected by Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis, and it caused him to seek a more realistic, as opposed to idealistic, role for the United States in world affairs. This led Wilson to focus extensively on economic matters rather than strictly political objectives. Few historians have elaborated on the extent to which Wilson was influenced by Turner in thought and deed. However, it can be categorically shown through Wilson's speeches, writings, and actions as president that Turner's views greatly shaped his world outlook and policies.

The Foundations of Wilson's Economic Thought

In order to understand Wilson's blend of ideological beliefs, it is imperative to discuss the foundations of his views. Wilson came of age at a transformative time in American history. The bustling factories were turning out many new goods and the economy was expanding quickly. However, not everyone shared in this growing wealth. Mark Twain aptly described it as the Gilded Age. Despite this, Wilson observed the nature of American commerce and began to reflect on the role of the economy in politics. It must be made clear that in his early years, he

did not systematically think about economics. In fact, the initial seed of learning about economics may have been a byproduct of his readings on Edmund Burke and William Gladstone.[1] William Gladstone was one of his favorite politicians in his younger years. Wilson also read *The Nation* while he was a teenager, likely exposing him to laissez-faire economics and theories that history tends to progress toward individual liberty. [2] He even once applied for a staff position at *The Nation*.[3]

In 1875, Woodrow Wilson began his studies at Princeton University and continued his intensive readings. It was here that he began to develop his skills as an orator and practice constitutional engineering. He joined many debate societies, and he also devised constitutions for different organizations, including the Johns Hopkins House of Commons.[4] Some of these early activities would be beneficial preparation for the drafting of the Pan American Pact and the covenant of the League of Nations. Most importantly, however, was his narrow focus on the political workings of institutions without real concern for economic matters.[5]

Even at this early stage, Wilson explicitly stated goals for attaining political greatness. It was clear he felt he was preparing for a greater calling than academia. Wilson wrote a letter from his graduate school, Johns Hopkins, detailing his intentions of study:

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[1] William Diamond, *The Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), 20.

[2] Clifford Thies and Gary M. Pecquet, "The Shaping of a Future President's Economic Thought," *The Independent Review* 15, No. 2 (Fall 2010): 260.

[3] Thies and Pecquet, "The Shaping of a Future President's Economic Thought," 261.

[4] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 19.

[5] Politics in relation to Woodrow Wilson in this paper includes constitutional mechanisms, establishing diplomatic relations, advancing a particular mode of government, etc. Economics is a focus on trade, increasing wealth, tax policies, etc. Wilson only began to focus on economics in a more systematic way at Johns Hopkins.

> What I have wished to emphasize is the object which I came to the University: to get a special training in historical research and an insight in the most modern literary and political thoughts and methods, in order that my ambition to become an invigorating and enlightening power in the world of political thought and a master in some of the less serious branches of literary art may be the more easy of accomplishment.[6]

He wanted to be an "enlightening and invigorating power" in political thought, and he certainly had a strong ambition. At the same time, it was at Johns Hopkins that Woodrow Wilson received his first dose of economic education. One professor Wilson particularly enjoyed was Lyman Atwater. Atwater taught that "competition is the law of freedom and it is the master of power in society."[7] Wilson would later echo and expand this belief. Like Atwater, he would argue that government intervention in many aspects of the market would cause more harm than good.

However, Wilson also received some instruction that would challenge his concept of laissez-faire economics. Professor Ely would lecture and justify "an ad hoc approach to economic policy in order to benefit the poor and working classes and fulfill the state's 'divine' mission."[8] His work would dispute more classical economic theories. It was because of Professor Ely that Wilson may have begun to doubt his strong stance on laissez-faire and modified it.

While he may have been influenced by Ely during his time at "The Hopkins," he maintained his previous economic beliefs publicly for many years. He did not believe that institutions, government or otherwise, could enact positive change. His public disdain for

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[6] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Ray Stannard Baker, ed., *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1927), 1:168.
[7] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 21.
[8] Thies and Pecquet, "The Shaping of a Future President's Economic Thought," 266.

general governmental intervention carried into 1908, when he decided there could be a role for the government in the economy. His exact intentions are unknown. He might have believed in a greater a role for the government in the economy for a long time while keeping it secret to maintain conservative support in the Democratic Party. It could have resulted from an attempt to be an alternative to William Jennings Bryan. Wilson may have even altered his beliefs to ride the tide of progressives into office. Whatever his reasons, Wilson still espoused a conservative view of economics. He acknowledged that Edmund Burke had a profound influence on his thought.[9] He did not want massive change and the change he advocated was not radical. His views first and foremost dealt with the establishment of a competitive market. Given this fact, he concluded government intervention to restore competition was vital.

Turner, Wilson, and the New Role of the United States

It was Wilson's interactions with Frederick Jackson Turner that had the most profound impact on his intellectual development. Although Wilson was older than Turner, Wilson still gained much information from the budding scholar. Turner's paper *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* was published in 1893, and only after this time do we see a marked change in Wilson's writings. Previous to this publication, Wilson was particularly focused on political thought. From an early age, he focused on political figures and how government should be run politically. The titles of his works also reveal a change in focus. Before 1893, Wilson's politically-oriented publications included *Congressional Government, Cabinet Government in*

[9] Woodrow Wilson to Caleb Thomas Winchester, Princeton, NJ, 13 May, 1893, in Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* 69 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964-1994), 8:211.

the United States, and *The State.* After 1893, the titles have a different focus: *Democracy and Efficiency* and *A History of the American People* (5 vols.). His strict political focus changed and broadened into economic concepts of efficiency and a concern with the holistic development of the United States.

Wilson transitioned from the "germ theory" to the Frontier Thesis in a relatively short amount of time. The germ theory was based on a belief that heredity, not environment, was essential in human history. Historian Frederick Jackson Turner, and friend of Wilson, advanced the contrasting idea that the frontier was the fundamental driving force in American history and its "foreign policy." The frontier experience should be described as "foreign policy" because it encompassed lands that did not belong, or belonged only in paper, to the United States. The reality of the frontier was that there were multiple tribes that did not accept land purchases in which they had no say. Therefore, the issue should be thought of as a foreign policy issue, even though it has generally been described in the historiography as domestic policy. Turner, in his writings, almost completely neglected the role of Native Americans in the West. Turner simply viewed the Native Americans as a retarding force against the "advance of civilization."[10] In Turner's view, the Native American's role in the frontier was to "compel society to organize and consolidate in order to hold the frontier."[11] Turner's statement is immensely significant in demonstrating that Turner himself had to realize the United States expansion across the continent had an element of foreign policy. The fact that the United States would expand and have to "organize" and "consolidate" to protect frontier holdings shows that Turner, at least

[10] Ray Allen Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 454.

[11] Frederick Jackson Turner, quoted in Ray Allen Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner*, 454.

implicitly, understood the expansion of the United States needed to deal with the external threats of Native Americans much like any nation would be required to "organize and consolidate" newly conquered territories against the threat of the peoples already present. Hence, Wilson's application of the Frontier Thesis to world affairs would be understandable, given that the thesis already had expandable elements within it.

Turner began his thesis with an alarming quote to stir the emotions of the reader. He quoted a census bulletin which declared that there had been a frontier up to and including 1880, but "there can hardly be said to be a frontier line" anymore.[12] Turner then pronounced, "Up to our day American history has been in large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West," and that "the existence of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."[13] His entire work stressed the importance of the frontier in developing American economic power and institutions of democracy. The frontier had been a breeding ground for "intellectual traits of profound importance," and its disappearance posed a real threat to the economic and political development of the United States.[14]

Turner's Frontier Thesis held that the geopolitical position of the United States and its unique access to "open land" on the frontier was instrumental in the development and nurturing of the American democracy. The frontier, in Turner's view, held vast opportunities economically and helped to furnish the American character. He wrote:

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[12] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in Frederick Jackson Turner, ed., *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), 1.
[13] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 1.
[14] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 37.

> American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character.[15]

In Turner's opinion, the primitive frontiersmen sought new economic opportunities and, in the process, fashioned a democratically engaged and vigorously independent populace on the frontier.

Turner's focus on economic factors throughout the Frontier Thesis is quite prevalent. In his introduction, he bemoaned the historiography of the "frontier" because it focused too much on "warfare" and it was not considered a "serious field of study of the economist and the historian."[16] He highlighted in his work the advancements of technology and its effects commercially in aiding the expansion of the frontier, the discoveries of natural resources for economic exploitation, and transportation. He also quoted economists to lend credence to his work.[17] The frontier not only held opportunities for merchants to export goods from the west to the east, but also from the east to the west. Turner observed that "the frontier created a demand for merchants" in New England.[18] The trade between the "frontier" and "civilization" helped to create "a composite nationality."[19]

In Turner's view, the growth and stability of the American democracy directly depended on the trade that the frontier offered the United States. He declared, "The growth of nationalism and the evolution of American political institutions were dependent on the

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[15] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 1.
[16] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 2.
[17] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 6.
[18] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 14.
[19] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 14.

advance of the frontier."[20] The vitality of the frontier, as Turner described, depended on trade. The "pioneers needed the goods of the coast" and the coast later needed the frontier as well as a new market.[21] This is significant in relation to Wilson because trade was necessary to secure a vibrant frontier, and a vibrant frontier was needed to establish robust democratic institutions. Woodrow Wilson's solid focus on trade in his presidency was not only, then, for economic benefit, but also democratic engagement.

Wilson and Turner conversed over the influence of the frontier in American history at Johns Hopkins. Wilson finally came to emphasize the American frontier as the basis of a distinct democratic nation over a supposed link to the first Teutons who had a "fierce democratic temper." Wilson came to believe that the frontier produced 'a new epoch…a new nation had been born and nurtured in the self-reliant strength in the West.'"[22] Action, as opposed to heredity, was the key to economic expansion and democracy.

In 1895, Wilson openly endorsed the Turner's Frontier Thesis in an article for *Forum*. He explained that American history had largely been written by New England men and held many weaknesses. In this work, Wilson romanticized greatly the experience of the first Pilgrims. He remarked, "They built homes, and deemed it certain their children would live there after them. But they did not love the rough, uneasy life for its own sake. How long did they keep, if they could, within sight of the sea! The wilderness was their refuge; but how long before it became

[20] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 15.
[21] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 15.
[22] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal Internationalism During World War I* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1991), 5.

their joy and hope!"[23] The frontier was so essential to American development, according to Wilson, that "the nation's life ran through it."[24] If the nation's life ran through the frontier, and the frontier had been cut off in 1890 as the census declared, the nation would have to find new frontiers to maintain its economic and political vibrancy.

In fact, in 1901, Woodrow Wilson openly referred to the Philippines and other Pacific acquisitions as "new frontiers."[25] He believed this expansion was similar to the revolution itself in importance.[26] This was an early indicator of his inconsistency on the issue of imperialism. He spoke out against oppression and imperialism, but in practice, Wilson was ever ready to act in realistic ways to secure American interests. Expansion, according to Wilson, was a "natural and wholesome impulse."[27] In his understanding, the "natural and wholesome impulse" to expand also included a desire to educate lesser peoples. Later, when the Philippines revolted against America, Wilson took a professorial tone. He insisted "they must first take the discipline of law, must first love order and instinctively yield to it…we are old in this learning and must be their tutors."[28] One has to contrast his anti-imperialist rhetoric with these beliefs. How can a belief in the right of people to determine their own affairs be reconciled with the belief that the United States stood as necessary teachers on moral high ground, gaining "new frontiers?" His advocacy

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[23] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," *Forum* 19 (1895): 548.
[24] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 556.
[25] Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideals of America," 26 Dec., 1901, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:215-216.
[26] Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideals of America," 26 Dec., 1901, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:215-216.
[27] Woodrow Wilson, "The Reconstruction of the Southern States," *The Atlantic Monthly* 87, no. 519 (Jan. 1901): 15.
[28] Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideals of America," 26 Dec., 1901, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:222.

of an Open Door policy with China also appears suspect, given that it would unduly aid the Americans who might lose influence and wealth to European nations.

Wilson believed the closing of the frontier would require the United States to increase its global presence in the twentieth century:

> The stage of America grows crowded like the stage of Europe. The life of the new world grows as complex as the life of the old. A nation hitherto wholly devoted to domestic development now finds its first task roughly finished and turns about to look curiously into the tasks of the great world at large. A new age has come which no man may forecast. But the past is the key to it; and the past of America lies at the center of modern history.[29]

Wilson articulated his strong belief in projecting the Frontier Thesis in this passage. He asserted that the closing of the frontier had roughly completed one stage in the development of the United States and now expansion beckoned. He masked the explicit language of foreign policy by describing the expansion of the United States as domestic development. His statement also showed a link to his belief in a progressive history. The "new epoch" heralded a new point in a progressive history to Wilson. The idea of a progressive history greatly influenced Wilson's foreign policy. His beliefs culminated in a linear view of history much like his concept of Christianity. His views also rejected cyclical and pessimistic interpretations of history.[30]

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[29] Woodrow Wilson, "The Significance of American History," 9 Sep., 1901, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:184.

[30] The idea of progressive history was related to Wilson's views of race as well, which had influence from Social Darwinism. Wilson believed the "most notable" achievements in civilization came from the "Aryan and Semitic" races, while other races continued to live in a barbaric state. This progressive, evolutionary nature in history from savagery to complex civilization would be a facet to Wilson's strong belief in a liberal-internationalist order that would replace imperialism. His Christian beliefs also reinforced a progressive linear view of history. Wilson asserted, "Let no man suppose that progress can be divorced from religion."

Wilson did not see any end to America's expansion. He said in reference to the great growth of the United States in 1901:

> That increase, that endless accretion, that rolling, restless tide, incalculable in its strength, infinite in its variety, has made us what we are, has put the resources of a huge continent at our disposal; has provoked us to invention and given us mighty captains of industry. This great pressure of a people *moving always to new frontiers* [emphasis added], in search of new lands, new power, the full freedom of a virgin world, has ruled our course and formed our policies like a Fate. It gave us, not Louisiana alone, but Florida also. It forced war with Mexico upon us, and gave us the coasts of the Pacific. It swept Texas into the Union. It made far Alaska a territory of the United States. Who shall say where it will end?[31]

According to Wilson, the United States was expanding as if by some act of Providence. Expansion "ruled the course" of America in his view. Wilson's lingering question, "Who shall say where it will end?" demonstrates a subtle yet provocative notion of an imperialistic America. His views were connected to Turner's conclusions on the expansion of the United States. Turner stated, "He would be a rash prophet who should assert that the expansive character of American life has now ceased. Movement has been its dominant fact, and, unless this training has no effect upon a people, the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise."[32] In fact, Wilson agreed with Turner's premise that expansion was so natural for Americans, it was basically forced upon them.[33] Turner's thesis had come a long way in redirecting Wilson's focus on constitutional mechanisms to more pressing and realistic concerns.

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[31] Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideals of America," 26 Dec., 1901, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:215.

[32] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 24.

[33] See Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 23-24.

In 1902, Woodrow Wilson strongly endorsed Frederick Jackson Turner as the best historian in the United States. One editor wrote to Wilson and asked "Who is the coming man in American history?" Wilson replied emphatically that "no man who knows the field need hesitate a moment for the answer. He is Professor Frederick J. Turner." Wilson added, "Both in knowledge and in the gift of expression he is already first class. He has not yet published a book. When he does various other writers in the country will be willingly accorded a backseat."[34] With this letter, Wilson unequivocally demonstrated his belief that Frederick Jackson Turner was unquestionably the nation's most talented historian, and when Turner would publish a work, everyone else would willingly recognize his intense prowess in the field of history.

Near the end of Wilson's life, a reporter asked Wilson how much Frederick Jackson Turner influenced him in his interpretation of American history. Woodrow Wilson replied, "All I ever wrote on the subject came from him."[35] This is a truly striking quote from Woodrow Wilson, demonstrating the reliance he had on Turner. Hence, Wilson was profoundly impacted by Frederick Jackson Turner on an intellectual level.

Not only was Woodrow Wilson affected by Frederick Jackson Turner on an intellectual level, but he was at times emotionally affected by Turner. Even when Wilson spoke about Turner to professional audiences, he used intimate vocabulary. For example, he described

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[34] Woodrow Wilson to Joseph Benson Gilder, Princeton, NJ, 30 Jan., 1902, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:264.

[35] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in William A. Williams, "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy," *Pacific Historical Review* 24, no.4 (1955): 388.

Turner as a man who ought to "be loved and supported."[36] This intimate language gives some measurement of Turner's strong influence on him. Wilson also believed that Turner was a man who could easily gain the "affection of every student of history" for his great analysis and eloquence.[37]

Wilson also endeavored to bring Turner to teach at Princeton while he was the president of the University.[38] He attempted to persuade Turner to move from Wisconsin to Princeton by dangling an opportunity of a chair in American History. The position would command a $3,400 salary at least, with the possibility of being $4,000. This would have been a handsome raise from Turner's $2,500 salary, especially given that Turner's wife was "sickly."[39] However, Wilson's efforts to bring Turner to Princeton failed, mainly due to Turner's Unitarian beliefs. The university establishment was considerably opposed to bringing a Unitarian into the university. Wilson openly and earnestly showed great remorse over the whole affair. He wrote to Turner that he was "the most mortified and chagrined fellow on this continent."[40] Wilson's words demonstrate like no other the affection he felt for Turner personally and professionally. The relationship was reciprocal. Turner once wrote to Wilson about the death of two of his children within one year's time. Turner confessed, "The loss of my little girl and my little boy

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[36] Woodrow Wilson, "Remarks on a Historical Paper," 31 Dec., 1896, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 10:90.

[37] Woodrow Wilson, "Remarks on a Historical Paper," 31 Dec., 1896, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 10:90.

[38] Woodrow Wilson to Frederick Jackson Turner, Princeton, NJ, 30 Nov., 1896, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 10:61.

[39] Allan Bouge, *Frederick Jackson Turner: Strange Roads Going Down* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1998), 152-153.

[40] Woodrow Wilson to Frederick Jackson Turner, Princeton, NJ, 31 March, 1897, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 10:201.

inside of a year has made havoc with my hopes and joys."[41] The two men confided with each other using warm language, demonstrating their strong connection.

It is obvious that Wilson was affected in thought and feeling by Turner's thesis. However, a more striking conclusion would be that Wilson's policies as president had significant roots in Turner's influence, perhaps more than many other factors. If this was the case, one would expect Woodrow Wilson to seek opportunities for the economic expansion of the United States and reference it to a desire to expand democracy, much as Turner had explained the American experience as the United States expanded across the continent. As historian Ray Allen Billington observed, "Wilson was so dedicated a convert [to Turner's views] that he was willing to out-Turner Turner in preaching the frontier interpretation."[42] How would this dedicated convert act on the world stage as president? Wilson's new borderlands in the world, in whatever form they might be, would be an excellent ground for the United States to do good abroad while maintaining its own democratic character and economic prowess.

The Presidential Campaign of 1912: A Call to Expand the Frontier

During the presidential campaign of 1912, Wilson struggled to find an issue to define his candidacy. His campaign could even be characterized as "stumbling."[43] With the frontier now closed, Wilson believed a "new epoch" would begin in America.[44] He settled on economics as a way to distinguish himself from other candidates. During campaign speeches, he consistently

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[41] Frederick Jackson Turner to Woodrow Wilson, Madison, WI, 12 March, 1900, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 11:506.

[42] Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner,* 188.

[43] Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: A Brief Biography* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1963), 58.

[44] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 551.

highlighted his interest in expanding exports, eliminating tariffs, creating a graduated income tax, and establishing related reforms to the economic system to expand American economic power. He would unleash competition; the "New Freedom."[45] This campaign also showed his economic theory and how he thought the United States could be successful domestically and internationally.

Wilson maintained a major emphasis on American commercial exceptionalism in many of his campaign speeches. He decried the laughter of foreign nations when Americans would boast about the size of their country. He replied, "Men are just as big as the things they dominate, and we have dominated a continent and therefore have reason to be proud of its size." He used strong language to describe the United States as a dominating power. He added, "Our greatness, the elasticity of our institutions, the adaptability of our life, is measured by the scale of the continent. Having covered that continent with happy homes and successful institutions, we have the right to be proud of its size."[46] In his analysis, the American people had great adaptability to be able to dominate an entire continent. That adaptability, which held roots in the frontier, was key to Wilson's belief that America would become a strong global power.

According to Woodrow Wilson, the ability of the United States to be a dominating factor relied upon economic policies. He stated the American constitution was "set up in order that

[45] "New Freedom" was the collective term for his economic proposals.
[46] Woodrow Wilson, "Political Address in Nashville," 24 Feb., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:192.

there might be free trade." [47] This sentiment would fit well with the ideas he received from Turner, of a healthy "frontier" which could be replicated abroad. He added that without free trade, the states could not have existed and that the expanding frontier provided a basis for an exchange of imports and exports. He utilized the idea of free trade between the states of America as a model for free trade among the nations of the world. Hence, the first points of the Fourteen Point speech during World War I are significant. Points two and three read:

> 2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.
> 3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.[48]

Like the Founders, Wilson was modeling the framework for peace to set up free trade. He postulated that one of the greatest purposes of the American Constitution was to establish free-trade, and he took strong steps to ensure that post-war agreements would guarantee it as well.

He argued during the campaign that tariffs made prosperity for Americans exceedingly difficult. He believed tariffs could also bring retaliatory measures from other nations against American goods. Wilson asked, "How are you going to bring the ships of the world here when the currents of trade are shifting, shifting, shifting in spite of you." He added challengingly, "Tell your politicians to let you alone to the enjoyment of your false security when you are not

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[47] Woodrow Wilson, "Political Address in Nashville," 24 Feb., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:192.

[48] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to a Joint Session of Congress," 8 Jan., 1918, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 45:536-537.

secure at all."[49] He argued that protective tariffs were providing a false security, and they would eventually hurt American economic interests. After all, the frontier was closed in the United States and it would be hard to continue economic expansion without a stronger global presence; in essence, a new "frontier."

Presidential candidate Wilson would mix his conception of a burgeoning American economy with his disdain for tariffs. In vivid descriptions, he rejected tariffs as a viable means to expand and protect American economic interests:

> You have got, in order to relieve the plethora, in order to use the energy of the capital of America, to break the chrysalis that we have been in. We have bound ourselves hand in foot in a smug domestic helplessness by this jacket of a tariff we have wound around us. We are not about to change the tariff because men in this country have changed their theories about the tariff. We are going to change it because the conditions of America are going to burst through it and are now bursting through it.[50]

By using descriptions of a "jacket" binding the United States and a "bursting" economy ready to enter the world stage formally and triumphantly, Wilson hoped to gain voter confidence that he alone could be the leader in this transitional time as the United States expanded its "frontiers." His positive love of expansion was not new to the campaign, but a previous development. As Wilson had stated in 1895, "our national history has its own great and spreading pattern."[51]

Wilson also explained in his campaign speeches the importance of increasing production in American manufacturing. He argued that grain was a principal export, but that it was rapidly

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[49] Woodrow Wilson, "An After Dinner Address," 27 Jan., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:87.

[50] Woodrow Wilson, "An After Dinner Address," 27 Jan., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:87-88.

[51] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 544.

being consumed domestically. He argued that the increase in exports of manufactured goods created "an absolutely new situation for America. We have got to do what we never did before. We have got to know and take possession of foreign markets."[52] His statement was a command to expand American involvement with other nations to an immense degree. Wilson believed that America would have to focus on exports since there was no longer a domestic outlet (frontier) in which goods could be exchanged. The new involvement of the United States would be an action to expand the frontier. Noted historian William A. Williams suggested Wilson used Turner's thesis to apply it "almost literally to the problems of the new corporation order."[53]

The concept of expanding trade to foreign markets, certainly then, appears to stem from a concept of economic expansionism and Wilson's acceptance of the Frontier Thesis. In one address, Wilson suggested, "We have been so complacently content with the domestic market…we must broaden our borders and make conquest of the markets of the world."[54] Wilson used very loaded language in this statement through his peculiar choice of the word "conquest." Wilson realized that, as Turner had pointed out by quoting the census bulletin, the American "frontier" was closed. Historian Lloyd E. Ambrosius stated that "in Wilson's view, the closing of the frontier required the United States to project its influence abroad."[55] Wilson sought out a new frontier beyond the American borders. A new "conquest" was in order.

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[52] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in Philadelphia to Periodical Publishers of America," 2 Feb., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:125.

[53] William A. Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1961), 411.

[54] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address at a Farmer's Picnic at Washington Park," 15 Aug., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 25:38.

[55] Ambrosius, *Wilsonian Statecraft,* 25.

Wilson argued that America "is now so productive of almost anything that the human race uses that she has got too much to sell to herself."[56] At the very beginning of his first term as president, Wilson began to expand American economic and political interest in Latin America through his efforts in establishing a Pan-American Pact. As Wilson once remarked about the expansion westward, "Every step in the slow process of settlement was but a step of the same kind as the first, an advance to a new frontier."[57] His ideas and call to action were connected to Turner's view that Americans rightfully focused on "incessant expansion."[58] Wilson would later act decisively in a new direction by attempting to integrate the Western Hemisphere in an agreement that would fulfill the same purpose of the American Constitution, namely, the extension of free trade.

Domestic Economic Policy and its Relation to Foreign Policy

Wilson's economic reforms in the early years of his presidency were impressive, and they relate directly to his foreign policy goals. Wilson's principal ideas about domestic economic policy were extended into his ideas about world trade. His "New Freedom" policies at home were meant to be held as a bulwark for a world system. As his background and campaign promises suggest, Wilson pursued a policy to restore competition in the American economy while upholding the great driving force of free trade.

Many of Wilson's reforms in the early years of his presidency can be seen as a continuation of "trust-busting." In contrast to Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson made it very clear he

[56] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address at a Farmer Picnic at Washington Park," 15 Aug., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 25:38.
[57] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 548.
[58] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 37.

was against all monopolies, regardless of whether they were "good" or "bad." Roosevelt's position on the issue of monopolies allowed room for the existence of a "good" monopoly. Wilson would argue to great lengths against non-competitive markets, seemingly realizing the "welfare loss" to society that results from monopolies.[59] It is important to note he was not against big-business, only monopolies and trusts:

> A trust is an arrangement to get rid of competition, and a big business is a business that has survived competition by conquering the field of intelligence and economy. A trust does not bring efficiency to the aid of business; *it buys efficiency out of business*. I am for big business, and I am against the trusts.[60]

Wilson even believed that monopolies attack the foundation of democracy. He said, "With monopolies there can be no industrial democracy. With the control of a few, of whatever kind or class, there can be no democracy of any sort."[61] Wilson's disdain for monopolies and trusts was very similar to his disdain for imperialistic actions since imperialistic nations exploit economically and politically while stifling competition. He was opposed to overbearing political and economic exploitation of nations, at least ideologically. Wilson declared, "I will not help any man buy a power which he ought not to exercise over his fellow human beings."[62] However, he was very willing to assist in economic ventures within these certain moral limits.

The Federal Trade Commission was established early in Wilson's presidency. While he had previously opposed many commissions, he recommended this one. Historian William

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[59] William Colander, *Microeconomics*, 8th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill Irwin, 2010), 347.
[60] Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom: A Call for the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1913), 180.
[61] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in Billings Auditorium," 11 Sep., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 63:174.
[62] Woodrow Wilson, "A Fourth of July Address," 4 July, 1914, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 30:251-252.

Diamond commented, "It was symbolic of Wilson's shift of emphasis from a moral to an institutional basis for economic maladjustment."[63] Though Wilson's support for the Federal Trade Commission may have been politically expedient, it nevertheless showed that Wilson considered institutional corrections to the economy were at least possible. In the Pan American Pact and the League of Nations framework, Wilson believed the respective institutions could protect nations' economic rights since they would uphold free trade without exploitation. This political side of his thought was in line with his concept of American history. The frontier was not some disconnected wild economic endeavor by a few individuals, but it was politically connected to the United States.

Combination of Economics and Politics in Foreign Policy

Even though Wilson was considerably interested in politics and governance, it would be wrong to neglect the role of economics in his thinking. He once remarked that protectionists were "damnable heretics."[64] If he was not interested in economics, he would not have used such strong words. Wilson blended economics and politics in foreign policy, which makes it quite difficult to sort out which statements were purely political in nature. Wilson spoke at length about political issues without mentioning economics specifically, but he often implied the topic. There are many cases in which Wilson demonstrated his unique blend of economics and politics. In his assessment, a goal of America's economy was to spread the political and

[63] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 112.
[64] Woodrow Wilson to Charles Talcott, University of Virginia, VA, 11 Oct., 1880, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 1:684.

moral ideals of America far and wide. In an address to businessmen in Detroit, Wilson demonstrated his mix of economic and political objectives:

> This, then, my friends, is the simple message that I bring you. Lift your eyes to the horizons of business; do not look too close at the little processes with which you are concerned, but let your thoughts and your imaginations run abroad throughout the whole world, and with it the inspiration of the thought that you are Americans and are meant to carry liberty and justice and the principles of humanity wherever you go, go out and sell goods that will make the world more comfortable and more happy, and convert them to the principles of America.[65]

Wilson's words shed light on his characteristic blending of political and economic thought. He preached to businessmen as though they were economic missionaries bringing prosperity, liberty, and justice to all. Reminiscent of his religious foundation, he called on the businessmen to "convert" the world to the "principles of America" while they were selling their goods to make others "comfortable and happy." His mobile, missionary businessmen were connected to the great frontiersmen. As he wrote in 1895, "That openness to every thought of enterprise or adventure, that nomadic habit which knows no fixed home and has plans ready to be carried any whitlier,[has] all the marks of the authentic type of 'American'."[66] When he asked in his speech to businessmen to "lift [their] eyes to the horizons," he harkened back to frontier imagery. In the conclusion of an article about the importance of the frontier and the question of "What do we do now?" Wilson suggested:

> Let us resume and keep the vision of that time: know ourselves, our neighbors, our destiny, *with lifted and open eyes* [emphasis added]: see our history truly, in its great proportions: be ourselves liberal as the great principles we profess; and so be the

[65] Woodrow Wilson, "A Luncheon Address in Detroit," 10 July, 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 37:387.

[66] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 548.

> people who might have again the heroic adventures and do again the heroic work of the past. 'Tis thus we shall renew our youth and secure our age against decay.[67]

America would have to expand its reach since the American frontier closed and it was "the great determining movement of our history."[68] Renewal was a prominent message throughout Wilson's presidency, and its basis was in the frontier experience. Hence, without a renewal of expansion, America risked decay and stagnation.

Wilson's foreign policy can be misconstrued based on his denunciation of the Taft administration's Dollar Diplomacy. Wilson was more concerned with the ends, not the means of the policy.[69] He maintained economic statecraft was useful in "promoting what he believed to be the appropriate foreign policy goals of the country."[70] Wilson explained his "progressive" views on the role of economics in relation to foreign nations in an address in 1914:

> If American enterprise in foreign countries, particularly in those countries which are not strong enough to resist us, takes the shape of imposing upon and exploiting the mass of people of that country it ought to be checked and not encouraged. I am willing to get anything for an American that money and enterprise can obtain except the suppression of rights of other men.[71]

Wilson rejected strong exploitation, but he did clearly favor the role of American trade in foreign relations as a way to "enhance economic welfare" and a "means of pursuing the political and ideological goals of peace and democracy throughout the world."[72] However,

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[67] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 559.
[68] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 548.
[69] David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 93.
[70] Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft,* 94.
[71] Woodrow Wilson, "A Fourth of July Address," 4 July, 1914, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 30:251.
[72] Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft,* 94.

Wilson was quick to change policy to achieve more realistic goals when the idealistic speech was not enough, especially when dealing with Latin American nations.

Wilsonian Interest in the Americas

Latin American nations and the United States had many troubles and conflicts before Woodrow Wilson's presidency. There had been a great deal of interference by the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine was widely felt as an institutionalized provocation. Many South American nations looked at it with discontent, but it was certainly useful to them at times in stemming European incursions. Wilson accepted the benevolent interpretation of the doctrine which showed a promise of territorial integrity guaranteed by the influential United States. Wilson admitted that he could never be able to fully explain the Monroe Doctrine, but he believed the best analogy to explain the United States role would be that of a protective "big brother."[73] A less positive interpretation held that the doctrine existed to confirm and protect the hegemony of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

Despite these issues, Woodrow Wilson believed he could repair and strengthen relations between all nations in the Western Hemisphere. In 1895, Wilson predicted that American involvement in the Western Hemisphere would increase because of the closing of the frontier. He stated:

> The westward march has stopped, upon the final slopes of the Pacific; and now the plot thickens… With the change, the pause, the settlement, our people draw into closer groups, stand face to face, to know each other and be known; and the time has come for the East to learn in her turn: to broaden her understanding of political and economic conditions to the scale of a hemisphere, as her own poet bade. Let us be sure that we

[73] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in the Spokane Armory," 12 Sep., 1918, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 63:230.

> get the national temperament; send our minds abroad upon the continent, become neighbors to all the people that live upon it, and lovers of them all.[74]

In this passage, Wilson laid out the foundation for his political and economic involvement with the Western Hemisphere; the closing of the frontier. However, his statement about becoming lovers of all neighbors in the Western Hemisphere would actually mean economically dominating them and frequently interfering in their internal affairs. Wilson was by all accounts the most "trigger-happy" president in Latin American affairs, almost constantly in some military engagement in the hemisphere throughout his presidency. He intervened militarily in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and twice in Mexico. In his presidency, he also sent troops to the battlefields of Europe, Russia, and Siberia.[75]

In one incident, infamous in the eyes of South Americans, Woodrow Wilson acted almost recklessly in a strong use of force over an insult to the American flag in Veracruz. Wilson ordered forces to seize a customhouse in the city, but the troops ended up occupying the entire city. After this, Wilson changed his goals to end what he saw as an unfavorable revolution in Mexico. The leader, Victoriano Huerta, had to flee from Wilson's aggression. The occupation led to the deaths of over 200 Mexicans and damaged the reputation of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. Wilson utilized standing international law of reprisals to his advantage and acted realistically in attempting to secure a favorable government in Mexico. Historian Frederick Calhoun suggested, "In Wilson's mind, upholding American honor legitimized the intervention, even as, conveniently, the intervention itself allowed him to pursue policies and

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[74] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 558.

[75] Frederick S. Calhoun, *Uses of Force and Wilsonian Foreign Policy* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1993), 1.

other uses of force."[76] This event is one case in which Wilson acted in a classic *realpolitik* way. He attempted to "fix" a neighboring country and utilized American forces under the banner of legitimate reprisal over an insult to the American flag. Like the stories of the frontier with the Native Americans, the United States under Wilson's leadership acted on perceived threats or attacks with strong reactions that went beyond a simple reprisal to correct a minor injustice.

Wilson's interest in the hemisphere was also grounded in cold, hard economic interest. Executive director of the Pan American Union John Barrett stated, "Although the volume of our trade at the present time with Latin America is only a small part of our total foreign trade…no section of the world…offers greater opportunities for development in the future.[77] The following table outlines the growth of American commercial activity in the world and in Latin America:

[76] Calhoun, *Uses of Force*, 40.

[77] John Barrett, quoted in Mark Gilderhus in *Pan-American Visions: Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 3.

Year	Annual Export Value ($)	% of Exports Going to Europe	% of Exports Going to North and South America	Manufactured/Agriculture Ratio
1900	1,394,000,000	75%	13.5	35.3/39.8
1910	1,745,000,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
1913	2,466,000,000	60%	25.0	48.8/20.7

Figure 1. American Exports[78]

It is quite apparent that American trade was increasing in value and increasing steadily in the Americas. The table demonstrates the decreasing percentage of exports to Europe and the increasing percentage to South America. President Wilson was aware of this fact. The steady rise in manufactured exports also would explain Wilson's firm belief in the right of Americans to trade manufactured goods during neutrality, given its immense importance to the American economy.

By tracking American corporate investment, another interesting picture forms. The following table shows American corporate investments in various countries and regions:

[78] Emory R. Johnson et al., *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1915), 2:90-92.

Nation/Region	Canada	Mexico	Europe	Caribbean Islands/ Central America	South America	All others
Total Investment (c. 1914, in millions)	618	587	573	371	323	150
% of Total Investment	23.5	22.4	21.9	14.1	12.3	5.7

Figure 2. American Corporate Investment Around the Globe.[79]

Very interesting conclusions can be drawn from this table. There was an immense amount of business investment in Latin America circa 1914. In fact, over 70% of all the United States corporate investments globally were in the Western Hemisphere.[80] Clearly, Americans were very interested economically in the Latin American markets, and Wilson's desire to form a Pan American Pact coincided with this immense increase of trade to Latin America. By simply following the money, Wilson's intentions seem to be clear.

The American economic interest in the Americas was growing, and Wilson understood the need to protect and extend that interest. He not only wanted to expand commercial interests for the sake of gaining prosperity, he wanted to sever any European claim to Latin

[79] Burton I. Kaufman, *Efficiency and Expansion: Foreign Trade Organization in the Wilson Administration, 1913-1921* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974), 6-7.

[80] See Figure 3, Appendix.

America. As Frederick Jackson Turner stated, "economic power secures political power."[81] This desire to cut off Europe in the Western Hemisphere derived not only from Wilson's desire to maintain political sovereignty for Latin American nations, but also to maintain and further develop the United States economic and political hegemony in the region. We must also realize that Wilson supported the War with Spain that effectively ended their significant influence in the Western Hemisphere. His actions show a man who was quite realistic in outlook and in action, but spoke with idealism in his rhetoric.

The Pan-American Pact

Wilson once remarked, "It would be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs."[82] Wilson, prior to the battles over the League of Nations, attempted to establish a similar body in the Western Hemisphere. He sought a Pan-American pact that guaranteed political and territorial rights along with free trade among the states of the hemisphere. The body, in Wilson's hopes, would resolve political crises which could erupt and establish greater economic integration in the hemisphere. Wilson outlined his conception of how nations should interact with each other at the Pan-American Financial Congress:

> There is only one way in which we wish to take advantage of you and that is by making better goods, by doing the things that we seek to do for each other better, if we can, than you do them, and so spurring you on, if we might, by so handsome a jealousy as to excel us. I am so keenly aware that the basis of personal friendship is this competition in excellence, that I am perfectly certain that this is the only basis for the friendship of nations, this handsome rivalry, this rivalry where there is no dislike, this rivalry in which

[81] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 20.

[82] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 131. Wilson's concept of expansion was a serious issue to him, and was of an utmost domestic concern. What Wilson means by this statement is a political and diplomatic engagement beyond expanding economic prowess.

> there is nothing but the hope of common elevation in great enterprises which we can undertake in common.[83]

In this address, Wilson visibly articulated his position in world relations. He argued that the world needed competition without exploitation. In Wilson's view, healthy economic competition in the world without debilitating wars would be in the best interests of the United States. He cared deeply about having many good trading partners for the United States.

Wilson attempted to establish a Pan-American entity to complete one aspect of his world vision and took decisive steps towards that end early in his presidency. In 1913, Wilson decided to modify policies towards Latin America. He stated the United States would not support any special interest, and that it would not support a government which seized power by forceful action. He indicated, "We have no sympathy for those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition."[84] He also ordered, perhaps halfheartedly, that Latin America must be shielded "from injustice or exploitation at the hands of Americans."[85]

Wilson believed trade could advance American ideals along with providing economic growth. Historian William Diamond noted, "Wilson did not stress foreign trade in terms of self-interest alone. Trade with other peoples was one of the means by which America was to accomplish its peculiar mission to spread the ideals and institutions of democracy among the

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[83] Woodrow Wilson, "A Welcome to the Pan-American Financial Conference," 24 May, 1915, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 33:245-246.

[84] Woodrow Wilson, "A Statement on Relations with Latin America," 12 March, 1913, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 27:172.

[85] Bryan to Blanchard, Washington, DC., 19 Dec., 1914, in U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942-1947), 371.

less advanced peoples of the world."[86] This sentiment was much like Turner's conception of the frontier; an economically stimulating and democratically engaged environment. One cannot deny the obvious paternalistic views Wilson also held, especially given his belief that the Monroe Doctrine was a force for protection, not intervention. Paternalist and racist sentiments were pervasive in the Wilson administration. Colonel House once remarked that he did not mind the increasing German population in South America. He revealed, "It would probably be of benefit to the Americas rather than a detriment, for the German population would be in every way preferable to the population now in the majority of the South American countries."[87] The concept of inferior peoples in South America could have been enticing to Woodrow Wilson. Turner defined "the frontier" as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization."[88] The term "frontier" was used quite elastically by Turner, and hence, it is not surprising that Wilson took a broad view of the word as well.[89] Wilson's military interventions were also in locations that he felt were politically backward and could use American tutoring in governance. His fascination with less-developed countries in South America could be connected to his understanding of the Frontier Thesis. Perhaps he was facilitating a new "frontier" by bringing "civilization" and "savagery" together.

In 1914, before the Wilson had begun to articulate the Pan-American Pact formally, Frederick Jackson Turner addressed graduates at a commencement and highlighted the great

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[86] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 136.

[87] Edward House, in U.S. Department of State, *The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920,* 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), 2:486-487.

[88] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 2.

[89] For a history of the word "frontier," see John T. Juricek "American Usage of the Word Frontier from Colonial Times to Frederick Jackson Turner," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110, no. 1 (Feb. 18, 1966): 10-34.

importance of the frontier in keeping the nation vibrant, specifically calling for greater involvement in South America. He stated that the efforts to have a sisterhood with South America and the great investments of Americans in the region were the new ways of American development. Turner, however, was apprehensive. He did not know if the "President of Scotch Presbyterian stock, born in the State of Virginia" would be successful with this new course of action.[90] He was perhaps more optimistic of Western civilization completing its circle in China and the Pacific countries, places which Wilson had already described as "new frontiers."[91] Wilson's attempts to form the Pan-American group and later the League of Nations also fell in line with some of Turner's suggestions on how to navigate the world. Turner argued that Americans could certainly break new ground both domestically and internationally. He suggested that "The ideal of discovery, the courageous determination to break new paths, indifference to the dogma that because an institution or condition exists…must remain."[92] Wilson was never intimidated by the newness of pursuing free trade and political engagement through a political body, and he realized the United States had to expand its influence in the world or risk inevitable stagnation.

While the intentions in forming a Pan American group seemed altruistic in Wilson's words, Americans did have a specific interest in Latin America in relation to commerce. Wilson believed that Americans absolutely needed trade not only to expand American wealth, but also to keep the nation from floundering economically. He surmised America's surpluses "must have an outlet in foreign fields, or else there will be congestion which will operate calamitously upon

[90] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The West and American Ideals," in *The Frontier in American History,* 227.
[91] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The West and American Ideals," 228.
[92] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The West and American Ideals," 235.

the economic conditions of the country."[93] Not only would the United States grow in wealth from such a venture, but they would also be able to squeeze out foreign influence in the hemisphere. Arguing in favor of a Pan-American pact, he concluded that Americans could replace England and Germany in the hemisphere.[94] His intentions in this matter were quite realistic. He also stated in an address to Congress that the United States must fill the Latin American demand for goods. Wilson also endeavored to altruistically tie global and American interests together as one in the same:

> Here are the markets which we must supply, and we must find the means of action. The United States, this great people for whom we speak and act, should be ready, as never before, to serve itself and to serve mankind: ready with its resources, its energies, its forces of production, and its means of distribution.[95]

Wilson's attempt at establishing a new body separates him from the Manchester School from which he derived many of his economic views. That school of thought focused mainly on free trade and the like and it did not involve the necessity of political organizations. Wilson's emphasis on a political body was not prevalent in the school, but it was in Wilson's thought since he combined politics and economics. Hence, the formation of a Pan American Pact would be necessary in order to protect territorial integrity and facilitate trade agreements. The Frontier Thesis, interestingly, held that trade was a major driving force of American democratic civilization. Turner believed trade with Native Americans "pioneered the way for civilization." He added that one of the primary reasons for the success of the United States was the

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[93] Woodrow Wilson, "A Political Address in Nashville," 24 Feb., 1912 in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:194.

[94] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 136.

[95] Woodrow Wilson, "Foreign Trade and Ship Building: An Address to Congress," 8 Dec., 1916, in Albert Bushnell Hart, ed., *Selected Addresses and Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2002), 57.

"economic consolidation of the country."[96] Wilson thought that the United States involvement in the hemisphere would not only be beneficial to American commercial interests, but beneficial in "serving" South American countries in their progression towards civilization.

Reasons for Failure: Wilsonian Interventions, Chilean Objections

Why would the Pan-American Pact fall apart if it was truly beneficial for all parties as Wilson suggested? The fact is, it was largely a concept originating from the United States and it mainly benefitted their interests. The concept was received ambivalently by Latin American nations and the actions taken by the United States during the negotiations illustrated their insincerity in protecting political and territorial sovereignty. It is hard to imagine harmonious relations when Wilson was deep in the process of teaching South Americans "to elect good men."[97] Woodrow Wilson was involved in more armed interventions globally than any other president.[98] Consequently, it is difficult to see how Wilson can be characterized as an idealist fighting for the self-determination and respect of all peoples when he was ever ready to violate other nations' territorial rights. Many of these armed interventions took place during Wilson's first term as president while he was trying to establish the Pan American Pact.

In 1916, Francisco Villa attacked Americans in Columbus, New Mexico. Woodrow Wilson felt he had to act to resolve the crisis and demonstrate American force. When he decided on his course, he dispatched General Pershing to attack Villa's forces in Mexico. However, this

[96] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 8.
[97] Woodrow Wilson to Sir William Tyrell, Washington, D.C., 22 Nov., 1913, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* 28:574-575.
[98] Calhoun, *Uses of Force*, 1.

unilateral decision irreparably harmed the concept of the Pan American Pact.[99] Wilson's decision set off a massive debate over the rights of "hot-pursuit" and damaged relations with other Latin American countries.[100] In fact, Secretary of State Lansing was afraid of this possibility and warned, "all Latin America" would view the incursion as "extremely distasteful."[101] Despite this, "as Pershing chased Villa across northern Mexico, Wilson [was] determined to clean up the rubble of revolution."[102] Wilson thought he could unilaterally solve problems and fix other nations' ills, perhaps showing how naïve he was at times.

Wilson believed he was solving problems and at the same time showing that the United States was in fact benevolent. The professor was not afraid to "teach [South Americans] to elect good men." Wilson ordered Pershing to act "with scrupulous regard to the sovereignty of Mexico."[103] Interestingly, he did not fully grasp the irony of his order, given the fact that the Mexican government was against the Pershing expedition. As Walter McDougall suggested, perhaps he felt he was imitating Jesus, bringing not peace, but a sword to the Latin American peoples.[104] Wilson asserted his military interventions against Villa, and previously Huerta, were fully justified. The administration knew it would have to defend its intervention in Mexico on the grounds that their border security was ineffective and that it led them to take protective actions.[105] He viewed the problems in Mexico as a stumbling block for the Pan American Pact.

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[99] Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions*, 74.
[100] Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions*, 75.
[101] Robert Lansing, quoted in Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions*, 76.
[102] Calhoun, *Uses of Force*, 40.
[103] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Calhoun *Uses of Force*, 41.
[104] Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 146.
[105] Lansing to Wilson, 21 June, 1916, in *Foreign Relations, The Lansing Papers,* 2:558-59.

True to his concern for economics, Wilson's previous incursion in Mexico to oust Huerta from power was coupled with his desire to "exert every influence…to secure Mexico a better government under which all contracts and business concessions will be safer than they have been."[106] While praising the concept of creating a government that would be responsible to the Mexican people, Wilson also wanted to make sure the government would be responsible to American economic security. Hence, the purity of his democratic ideals was blunted by his realistic policy of economic expansion. Frederick Jackson Turner had stated in his Frontier Thesis that "the frontier army post, serving to protect settlers from Indians, had also acted as a wedge to open the Indian country, and had been a nucleus for settlement."[107] Wilson's decision to intervene militarily to protect Americans and their commercial interests in Mexico while using idealistic rhetoric appears to mimic the frontier experience of the United States. While he did not act solely to "pull bankers bonds out of the fire" in either of his interventions in Mexico or in the decision to enter World War I, we have to truly consider how close to the truth that phrase is.[108] Surely, his justification to involve the United States in the affairs of other nations in order to secure business contracts casts doubt on the notion that he acted altruistically for the rights of other nations.

Not only did Wilson's military interventions cause discord, Chilean territorial ambition in Tacna and Arica, Peru also hindered any possibility of a formal pact. Chile was apprehensive over the wording of the pact and how it could affect their newly gained territory. They were

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[106] Woodrow Wilson to Sir William Tyrell, Washington, D.C., 22 Nov., 1913, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* 28:574-575.
[107] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 10.
[108] McDougall, *Promised Land,* 130.

also generally distrustful of the United States intentions. Historian Mark Gilderhus concluded that the "Pan American treaty died aborning, the victim of wishful thinking, miscalculation, and the outright refusal to take Chilean objections very seriously."[109] Despite Wilson's attempts to establish relationships of cooperation in the hemisphere, the plans were rejected by the Latin American countries.

Wilson's actions during this struggle align very well with Turnerian views that combined economics and politics. Wilson struggled to enforce democratic purity and free trade. William A. Williams stated, "Earlier Americans had taught the Mexicans the meaning of Manifest Destiny and Dollar Diplomacy. Later, in the midst of revolution, the Mexicans seemed to forget American ideas about constitutional government and property rights. Wilson stepped in and became an enthusiastic tutor in moral imperialism."[110] Wilson did not try to hide his "moral tutoring." When American forces occupied the Dominican Republic, Wilson showed his schoolhouse disciplinarian attitude:

> If I cannot retain my moral influence over a man except by occasionally knocking him down, if that is the only basis he will respect me, then for the sake of his soul I have to occasionally knock him down.[111]

Wilson continued in the speech to describe his role in disciplining a boy to get his attention to act better morally. This type of discipline is also related to his description of the Monroe Doctrine as a sibling mentorship. The big American brother was ever ready to knock others down when the situation called.

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[109] Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions*, 77.
[110] William A. Williams, "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy," 388.
[111] Woodrow Wilson, "Remarks to National Press Club," 15 May, 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* 37:48.

Woodrow Wilson and his close advisors had all looked to the formation of the Pan American Pact with optimism and were disappointed by its failure. Many in the administration believed it could form the basic model that would encompass the entire world. Colonel House advised the president early on that "he [Wilson] might or might not have an opportunity to play a great and beneficent part in the European tragedy." However, he could "inaugurate a policy that would weld the Western Hemisphere together" and it could serve as "a model for the European nations when the peace is at last brought about."[112] In other words, the relationship between Latin America and the United States could serve as a brilliant model for all nations against the backdrop of world strife. However, very few recognized the irony in this sentiment, given the numerous military interventions in the Latin America before and during the presidency of Woodrow Wilson. His forceful "tutoring" of Latin Americans in how to "elect good men" fell on deaf ears, but Wilson's belief in an inevitable triumph of democracy and free trade remained. This time, however, he sought to involve the whole world.

Wilson's Pursuit of Neutrality to Protect American Commercial Interests

Wilson pursued a conservative course upon the outbreak of war. He did not desire to act rashly based on European balance of power politics. He instead focused on America's role in the mediation of a political peace while justifying neutrality as a way to gain prosperity and reconstruct Europe economically. Wilson stated in defense of neutrality, "I am looking forward with the greatest ardor and interest to peace and to the services which this country may render

[112] Edward House, "From the Diary of Colonel House," 16 Dec., 1914, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* 31:469.

the rest of the world in the times of peace and healing and restoration which will undoubtedly follow this great struggle."[113] He believed it was not only necessary to prepare the nation's defenses for war, but also to "mobilize the economic forces of this country…for the service of the world."[114]

Wilson realized the importance of Europe in the foreign trade of the United States. At the outbreak of war in Europe, Wilson made it clear that he would not "interfere with the flow of American goods and credits [not loans] to Europe."[115] Wilson argued forcefully for the rights of Americans to continue the flow of goods to Europe:

> We have a right to send food to peaceful populations wherever the conditions of war make it possible to do so under the ordinary rules of international law. We have a right to supply them with our cotton to clothe them. We have a right to supply them with our manufactured products.[116]

Notice how Wilson tied altruistic goals of feeding and clothing populations to "the right" to send them manufactured goods. His quasi-religious appeals to send all goods, including lucrative manufactured goods, were quite common. Wilson pursued this general principle of maintaining neutrality in order to stand on moral high ground and gain prosperity. Wilson objected to loans in principle, since it would seem to contradict neutrality. He also rejected any plans for an embargo since the United States had a "moral obligation" to "keep free the courses of our commerce and of our finance."[117] This reflects Wilson's characteristic masking of his

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[113] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to Business Men's League of St. Louis," 3 Feb., 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 36:111.

[114] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to Business Men's League of St. Louis," 3 Feb., 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 36:111.

[115] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 155.

[116] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address on Preparedness in Topeka," 2 Feb., 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 36:93.

[117] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address on Preparedness in Topeka," 2 Feb., 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 36:93.

realistic concerns with idealistic rhetoric. Such an embargo would likely result in economic turmoil at home. Wilson was keenly aware that America's economy was essentially linked with Europe. He explained, "If only in our self-interest, we must help the people overseas. Europe is our best customer…there is no such thing as letting her go to ruin without ourselves sharing in disaster."[118] His description of Europe as a "customer" demonstrates his emphasis on American prosperity and his belief that men are motivated by economics.

In Wilson's attempts at mediation, he used economics as a factor in negotiation. His representative in Europe, Colonel House, reflected in his diary the importance of stressing commercial welfare:

> My purpose is to try to show the Emperor that if he will consent to take the initiative in the matter I have in mind, it will rebound greatly to Germany's commercial and material welfare…An understanding with Great Britain and the United States will place him in a position to curtail his naval program and open up a wider field for German commerce, besides insuring the peace of the world.[119]

House's writings show the combined political and economic objectives of the Wilson administration. House clearly gave priority to commercial interests as opposed to political interests, demonstrated by the emphasis of commerce in much of his writing and a cursory statement about world peace at the end.

America Enters the War After Violations and Threats to American Commerce

It was only after threats to American commerce that the United States entered the war. Germany had pushed hard with its unrestricted submarine warfare to drive American goods out

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[118] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to Congress," 8 Aug., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 62:217.

[119] Edward House, quoted in N. Gordon Levin Jr., *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 23.

of the hands of the Allies. The Russian Revolution was also in its early stages. This meant, for Germany, the possibility of instability on the Eastern Front and a possible peace agreement in the future, but it was still unclear what would happen. After Germany had torpedoed several American merchant ships, Wilson asked for a declaration of war. Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, who was also Wilson's son-in-law, later remarked that Wilson would have likely gone to war earlier if it weren't for the Allied governments' commercial policies.[120] Wilson stated, "The present German submarine warfare against commerce is warfare against mankind."[121] Again, Wilson showed his tendency to combine economics and high-minded principles. He asserted that threats to commerce threatened all mankind, but in reality, threatened American commercial interests.

There is also a possibility that America went to war to "rescue debts that American bankers had arranged, symbolizing the willingness and ability of 'Merchants of Death' to lead the nation to war for reasons of profit."[122] In fact, Wilson was keen on intervening militarily when American banking or corporate interests were threatened. In his intervention in Haiti, Wilson proposed that American financiers supervise Haitian customs and kept forces on Haitian soil to maintain control. Undoubtedly, the forces also remained to secure the land against the possibility of foreign control of Haitian finances, something Secretary of State Bryan found unacceptable.[123]

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[120] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 159.
[121] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to a Joint Session of Congress," 2 April, 1917, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 41:520.
[122] Jeffry A. Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Rise and Fall in the Twentieth Century* (New York: W.W. and Norton Company, 2006), 132.
[123] Calhoun, *Uses of Force,* 26.

As the war in Europe raged on, a new threat to the Wilsonian vision of the world developed and rose to power, Bolshevism. Lenin theorized that the war was simply a conflict of capitalist powers for possession of undeveloped lands.[124] Lenin equated the Allied and Central powers as two sides of the same coin. As N.G. Levin clarified, "Bolshevism demanded neither a liberal peace nor a liberal war, but called instead for socialist revolution throughout Europe. In so doing, it posed a total challenge to the Wilsonian worldview."[125] Wilson had focused on the threat of strong imperialism from the right, but this new threat of worldwide revolution emerged from the left.

As the civil war in Russia wore on, Wilson continued to reject the legitimacy of the Bolsheviks. He believed they did not represent the Russian people. He felt the deposed moderate-liberal faction, the side he was more aligned with ideologically, was the true embodiment of what the Russian people desired. His fear of the Bolsheviks would lead to intervention in northern Russia and Siberia, where he supported anti-Bolshevik forces. The Bolshevik threat attacked the foundations of his liberal-internationalist thought, which led him to act. Wilson's focus on order harkens back to his "tutoring" theory of Philippine subjects. They needed order to establish a proper and wholesome democracy; why should the Russians be any different? In one use of force, Wilson sent troops into Russian territory to aid anti-Bolshevik forces. However, as historian Michael H. Hunt has argued, it could have been the general aversion to revolution in an American foreign policy ideology that guided Wilson's actions.[126]

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[124] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics*, 47.
[125] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics,* 48.
[126] Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 113-116.

Wilson's contempt for Bolshevism, like that of all Allied governments, would become pronounced at the Paris Peace Conference.

The Wilsonian Goals of Expansion at the Paris Peace Conference

The League of Nations, while political in nature, had many economic facets. Wilson outlined his goals of peace and economic prosperity in January 1918 with his famous Fourteen Points speech. In his first point, he mentioned the need for open diplomacy. He believed secret treaties and dealings were a major factor in the outbreak of war. After this, he immediately mentioned two economically related issues, freedom of the seas and the elimination of barriers to trade.[127] These two guarantees would be essential if the burgeoning American economy was to continue to expand. Wilson stated that arms were only a temporary way to conquer nations and that trade was a more lasting way to conquest. He said, "The only thing that conquers is the sort of service which can be rendered in trade, intercourse, and friendship."[128] He advocated these policies, believing in the supremacy of American businessmen and manufacturers. When he pushed for the elimination of tariffs domestically, he believed Americans would triumph in the competition and become more efficient in the process. Hence, his emphasis on free trade was in the best economic interest of the United States. Europe, after all, was America's "best customer."

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[127] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to a Joint Session of Congress," 8 Jan., 1918, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 45:536-537.

[128] Woodrow Wilson, "Remarks at the Capitol [Rome, Italy]," 3 Jan., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 53:602.

Wilson's conquest of this frontier would require free-trade, just as the original United States needed free-trade to expand. The emphasis on free trade related back to the American experience with the frontier. The East was invigorated by the frontier experience, where trade and exploitation of natural resources were made easy. An international system in which free trade would reign would provide an adequate frontier whereby the United States would be rejuvenated economically by the new frontiers of other nations. The United States was in the best position with its growing exports to call for free trade thereby taking "possession of foreign markets," his ultimate goal in his 1912 campaign.[129] The "binding jacket" was loosened and it was time to exploit the new frontier.

Wilson had an aversion to war, at least in rhetoric, which may also somewhat explain his strict neutrality. His concept of a new league would also address the way in which nations could be punished. He believed economic strangulation was an effective way to end aggression quickly:

> I want you to realize this war was won not only by the armies of the world. It was won by economic means as well. Without the economic means the war would have been much longer continued. What happened was that Germany was shut off from the economic resources of the rest of the globe and she could not stand it. A nation that is boycotted is a nation that is in sight of surrender. Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force.[130]

Wilson's concept of an economic boycott would basically replace the necessity of war. He explained how the economic boycott fixture of the League framework would be an effective way to quickly end aggression:

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[129] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in Philadelphia to Periodical Publishers of America," 2 Feb., 1912, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 24:125.

[130] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in the Indianapolis Coliseum," 4 Sep., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 63:23.

> If any member of that League, or any nation not a member, refuses to submit the question at issue either to arbitration or discussion by the Council, there ensues automatically by the engagements of this Covenant an absolute economic boycott. There will be no trade with that nation by any member of the League. There will be no interchange of communication by post or telegraph. There will be no travel to or from that nation. Its borders will be closed. No citizen of any other state will be allowed to enter it, and no one of its citizens may leave it. It will be hermetically sealed by the united action of the most powerful nations in the world.[131]

Wilson's replacement for war would be arbitration and economic boycott, keeping to his tradition of blending politics and economics. However, his conception seems quite utopian given the nature of European realities at the time. In theory such a boycott could replace war, but such a new political system would have a hard time fixing the realities of the complex political issues of Europe. However, Wilson believed in using economics to get his way, much as he had done in numerous circumstances including his attempt to bring Frederick Jackson Turner to Princeton. He was realistic in believing that men were motivated by self-interest economically, but perhaps he turned it into an ideal at times with his strict adherence to the issue.

During the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference, Woodrow Wilson behaved quite shrewdly on numerous occasions, and he acquiesced to imperialistic demands from various powers over the territorial rights and aspirations of subjugated peoples. He notably allowed many land grabs, for example, guaranteeing Orlando the Brenner frontier.[132] Wilson was very clear that he would attempt to take into consideration the aspirations of various peoples for their own homeland, but would not do so to the overall detriment of a peaceful Europe. He stated, "All well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can

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[131] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in the Indianapolis Coliseum," 4 Sep., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 63:23.

[132] Allen Lynch, "Woodrow Wilson and the Principle of 'National Self-Determination': A Reconsideration," *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 2 (April 2002):427.

be accorded to them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently the world."[133] Hence, Wilson would not blindly follow an idealistic desire for national self-determination; rather, he acted realistically in only allowing some peoples to have their own land. His goal was only to allow the most compelling cases to have an opportunity. All others that could cause antagonism would have to wait. Remember, Wilson believed a peaceful Europe would be a good Europe to do business with. What better way to act as a realist, knowing that "well-defined national aspirations" would be controlled for in the post war order?[134]

A proper understanding of the Paris Peace Conference would be incomplete without describing the role of Bolshevism. The governments that participated in the Conference were joined in their fear and hatred of Bolshevism, and plans to combat its rise were a central theme.[135] The debates about how to reintegrate Germany into the postwar order were largely centered on the fear of Bolshevism. Wilson fought hard at the conference for a strong reintegration in order to prevent revolutionary socialism from spreading. This task was quite difficult for Wilson since the Allied governments were pushing for a vengeful peace.[136] There was a consensus in the Wilson administration that reintegration would be necessary to prevent the growth of Bolshevism. Wilson's secretary, Joseph Tumulty, expressed his concern to Wilson

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[133] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to a Joint Session of Congress," 11 Feb., 1918, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 46:323.

[134] An alternate interpretation would be that Wilson was simply acting in a racist fashion by denying other peoples' right to their own government. See Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-5,216-225.

[135] Diamond, *Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, 174.

[136] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics,* 152-153.

that socialism would spread if Wilson's moderate-liberal reforms were rejected.[137] Secretary of State Lansing also maintained that anti-imperialist goals were "inextricably fused with Wilsonian anti-Bolshevik effort."[138] Herbert Hoover attempted to combat revolutionary socialism with food-relief and argued for a strongly reintegrated Germany.[139] Wilson believed that such actions would benefit the United States economically and morally. [140] In fact, Wilson did not consider his post-war plans an idealistic fancy, but that they were in the cold, hard interests of America. He stated, "I have sometimes heard gentlemen discussing the questions that are now before us with a distinction between nationalism and internationalism in these matters. It is very difficult for me to follow their distinction."[141] He attempted to erect barriers to the growth of Bolshevism; an ideology opposed to his own.

Such a reintegration of a democratic Germany would facilitate better economic relations. This sentiment was connected to the Frontier Thesis in its relation to Turner's thoughts on the small democratic states of the United States interacting at the frontier in commercial ways, expanding the democratic nature of the United States. In Wilson's world outlook, he saw nations moving in a linear way to democracy and prosperity.

Despite Wilson's insistence on the economic facets of the League, such as free trade and free navigation of the seas, he made it very clear at the conference that economic interests alone should not guide action. Wilson believed all nations should be "willing to pay the price"

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[137] Joseph Tumulty, "Secretary Notes," Paris, 16 Jan., 1919 in U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942-1947), 3:583-584.

[138] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics,* 135.

[139] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics,* 139.

[140] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics,* 148.

[141] Woodrow Wilson, "A Luncheon Address to the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce," 5 Sep., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 63:33.

when it came to settling a just peace. In his view, the price that every nation would pay was "impartial justice in every item of the settlement, no matter whose interest is crossed; and not only impartial justice, but also the satisfaction of the several peoples whose fortunes are dealt with."[142] Wilson believed economic interests could only be accommodated if they were not severely oppressive. This rhetoric was prevalent in his foreign policy, but his actions did not align with his words. For example, there was a strong desire to punish and control Germany in a post war settlement that would seem to go against Wilson's strong words on exploitation. His system of mandates also cuts across the spirit of self-determination. N.G. Levin mentioned, "Wilson was opposed more to the form than to the substance of the existing economic and political hegemony of the West in the international arena."[143] This appears to be supremely true, as Lansing once remarked that Wilson was "more and more impressed that 'white civilization' and its domination over the world rested largely on its ability to keep this country intact as we would have to build up the nations ravaged by war."[144] Hence, the rhetoric of Wilsonian international coexistence was never meant to mean substantial economic and political harmony and advancement for all, rather it was a means to protect Western interest in the world. Wilson constantly reassured American audiences that America's power to direct its "internal" affairs, through preservation of the Monroe Doctrine, would remain despite the League of Nations framework.

Most notably, the policies of freedom of the seas and the elimination of barriers to trade would assist the industrialized United States in its expansion. As Wilson said in 1919,

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[142] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in the Metropolitan Opera House," 27 Sep., 1918, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 51:129.

[143] Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics,* 249.

[144] Robert Lansing, *War Memoirs of Robert Lansing* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), 212.

"who is going to check the growth of this nation…America is going to grow more and more powerful."[145] He believed that American involvement with the world was necessary, or the United States would become "bankrupt" financially.[146] Wilson advocated that America's involvement was positive morally, even if objective outside observers would claim hypocrisy, as many leftists did. Wilson argued that if America was not seen as a morally positive force, other nations might seal their markets to United States, claiming American products "taste bitter." He asked the audience, "Do you think that would be profitable?" After all, "you can make more money out of friendly traders than out of hostile traders."[147] By using the word "traders," Wilson implicitly illustrated frontier images. Hence, Wilson believed that friendly relations would be in the economic interests of America, but they were not an end in and of themselves.

Interestingly, Frederick Jackson Turner reached out to his old friend President Wilson to offer suggestions on the postwar order. Woodrow Wilson took with him the Paris Peace Conference a small paper by Frederick Jackson Turner on how to organize the post war order. The paper must have gone from Turner to Wilson directly given that it had corrections with Turner's handwriting. Wilson had a team of advisors, and yet he also took with him a paper written by Turner to aid him in shaping the world after the most destructive war anyone at the time could imagine. If Wilson did not think very highly of Turner, why would he take Turner's reading material to what he believed was the most consequential event of his presidency?

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[145] Woodrow Wilson, "At Opera House, Helena, Montana," 11 Sep., 1919, in Ray Stannard Baker and William Dodd, eds. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 6 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1925-1927), 6:119.

[146] Woodrow Wilson, "At Opera House, Helena, Montana," 11 Sep., 1919, in Baker and Dodd, eds. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 6:127.

[147] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in the Coliseum in Sioux Falls," 8 Sep., 1919, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 63:115.

Wilson went to Paris in the first place because he did not fully trust his subordinates to accomplish his great vision. Wilson needed all the energy and concentration he could muster going to the conference and yet he felt it was imperative to have Turner's opinions. This was the most significant and consequential event in Wilson's presidency, and he found it necessary to have Turner's intellectual suggestions in his magnum opus; the League of Nations.

Turner suggested that it was essential to look at American history when organizing the world. The American experience had powerful geographical "sections" which would be "analogous" to the current situation with nations.[148] The fact that Turner believed he could make analogies between the world and the American experience demonstrated his belief in the adaptability of his historical interpretation. Thus, Wilson's application of some of the Frontier Thesis' implications was not aberrant.

Turner wrote that stronger economic integration would be helpful in creating binding forces, but it would not be enough by itself. He believed in a system of international parties to stabilize the postwar environment and provide a check against rampant nationalism, which was thought to be a cause of the war. Wilson did not necessarily push for this provision, but his goal at the conference was to establish the League, not to organize every facet. Perhaps the issue of parties could be a later development, but Wilson did not appear to act on this suggestion. The American rejection of the League and Wilson's death did not leave any possibility for Turner's party suggestion to gain fruition.

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[148] Frederick Jackson Turner, "International Political Parties in a Durable League of Nations." The work was published for the first time in William Diamond, "American Sectionalism and World Organization by Frederick Jackson Turner," *American Historical Review* 47, no. 3 (April 1942): 545-551.

Turner most notably maintained that it was a dire necessity to stop the advancement of Bolshevism into the rest of Europe. Turner stated that it was absolutely imperative to "keep the Bolsheviki serpent out of the American Eden," and to keep the Bolsheviks out the "Eden's everywhere."[149] It is interesting to note that Wilson's actions at Paris focused strongly on repelling Bolshevism in all areas. Turner also suggested the importance of economic sanctions as a use of force, something that Wilson found expedient.

Turner's most striking influence on Wilson can be seen is his two essential suggestions: That the new international body must be carefully established so as not to destroy itself by its very "radical" and new nature, and that the legislature of the body must have real powers.[150] Wilson was ever careful to make sure the League of Nations was secured, even if it meant letting others have territorial gains in a typical imperialistic fashion. He also debated to the bitter end the necessity that the League have real and significant powers. This had been one of Turner's main suggestions, and Wilson was quite stubborn about it, especially over the issue of Article 10.

Wilson had some deep ideological concerns at the conference, and these reflected Turner's ideas about the American West. Turner concluded in 1896:

> It is important to bear this idealism of the West in mind. The very materialism that has been urged against the West was accompanied by ideals of equality, the exaltation of the common man, of national expansion, that makes it a profound mistake to write off the West as though it were engrossed in mere material ends.[151]

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[149] Frederick Jackson Turner, "American Sectionalism and World Organization," 550.
[150] Frederick Jackson Turner, "American Sectionalism and World Organization," 551.
[151] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Problem of the West," in John Faragher, ed., *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 69.

In fact, Wilson may have fit the frontiersman image that Turner had in mind. Substitute Woodrow Wilson for "the West" and an interesting picture emerges. Strikingly, much of Turner's frontiersman matches Wilson. Turner said, "The frontiersman's dream was prophetic…he dreamed dreams and beheld visions. He had faith in man, hope for democracy, belief in America's destiny, unbounded in confidence in his ability to make his dreams come true."[152] Wilson practically guaranteed another war without the ratification of the treaty, believed in the dream that the war was to "make the world safe for democracy," and refused to allow his dream to be tampered with by American senators' objections.

Conclusion

Wilson, then, epitomized the great frontier democrat of Frederick Jackson Turner's vision. His unique blend of a missionary spirit, bold action, and a love of freedom all fall in line with Turnerian thought. Only one other historian besides Turner of that period saw the importance of the frontier and the need to extend the American model of expansion, Brooks Adams. However, Adams did not have much of an effect on Wilson personally or professionally. His thoughts were far closer to *realpolitik* than to Wilson's democratic expansionism. Adams' strong emphasis on expanding the United States through direct territorial means was far too classically imperialistic for Wilson or Turner. However, Wilson wholeheartedly endorsed the concept of force to coerce others. He declared, "If a man will not listen to you quietly in a seat,

[152] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Problem of the West," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner,* 69.

sit on his neck and make him listen."[153] Wilson was not afraid to resort to strong force if he felt it was necessary given the proper conditions. Hence, he was more realistic than idealistic.

Despite Wilson's vigorous attempts to establish a stable world order, the ultimate settlement was a failure. The treaty did have many features that were Wilsonian in nature, but numerous compromises tainted the overall settlement. The Treaty of Versailles harshly punished Germany, but it did not keep Germany from becoming a major threat. Henry Kissinger identified that the "terms were too onerous for conciliation, but not severe enough for subjugation."[154] Historian Walter McDougall argued that despite his failure to procure a similar order in Latin America, he naively attempted to establish a similar super-national body for the world. It is difficult to see how such an order could be established given European conditions, but it is just as hard to see Wilson pursuing any other course. He was stubbornly convinced that his model had to be maintained thoroughly, even if it went against his advisor's opinions. Secretary Lansing realized this fact. He believed Wilson may have been too stubborn and that the treaty had flaws, but that ratifying it was "a duty to humanity."[155]

Ultimately, Wilson could not convince his nation to participate in the eventual League of Nations structure, a body that closely epitomized his thought. Frederick Jackson Turner thought Henry Cabot Lodge's confrontation with Wilson on the issue was abhorrent. He regarded Lodge as a person who was "little and spiteful and plays great issues as pawns in a game for the

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[153] Woodrow Wilson, "Remarks at the National Press Club," 15 May, 1916, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 37:48.

[154] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 242.

[155] Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 276.

satisfaction of his own wounded vanity."[156] Turner would likely have ill feelings towards him as Lodge attempted to undercut the heart of the treaty in Article 10. Both Wilson and Turner felt that the new League had to have real power to bring the United States and the world political and economic stability.

Turner's works argued that for democracy to thrive, society must have many economic opportunities for its individuals, and this greatly influenced Wilson. Historian Martin Ridge stated, "Turner's views about the epochal nature of the closing of the frontier-the elimination of the frontier line in the 1890 census- are worth remembering…because they emphasize as nothing else can that a society must always afford economic opportunity for its members or risk the loss of democratic institutions."[157] Ridge believed that Turner's works held an underlying argument of economic expansion to secure democracy. Wilson understood this, and thus, was not just working to expand American commercial interests, but he was expanding in a hope to save American democracy. After all, "the nation's life ran through it [the frontier]."[158] The American past was the "key to the future".[159] With the "life" now gone, Wilson felt he had to find a new one on the world stage.

Wilson's attempt to establish the League was fully in line with his acceptance of the Frontier Thesis and his economically-oriented realist thought. Woodrow Wilson did not see any conflict in establishing a world order centered on free-trade and the national interests of the

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[156] Frederick Jackson Turner, quoted in Allan Bouge, *Strange Roads Going Down* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 340.

[157] Martin Ridge, *Frederick Jackson Turner: Wisconsin's Historian of the Frontier* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 11.

[158] Woodrow Wilson, "The Proper Perspective of American History," 556.

[159] Woodrow Wilson, "The Significance of American History," 9 Sep., 1901, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 12:184.

United States. In fact, he considered such a blend was in the best interest of America. His foreign policy remained largely unchanged throughout his presidency. He fused America's economic and political interests as one in the same, and he endeavored to make the world safe and prosperous for Americans.

Wilson could only implicitly act on the Frontier Thesis' implications. Any explicit mentioning of it as a guide would be far too risky politically for a man already demonized as a disconnected intellectual. The thesis itself was not accepted by all, and Wilson was too shrewd to mention Turner. Hence, it is only at the end of his life that he admitted that Turner's thoughts influenced his interpretation of American history, declaring, "All I ever wrote on the subject came from him."[160]

The Frontier Thesis is not, to be sure, the sole and exclusive way of explaining Woodrow Wilson and his desire to engage in world affairs. If it was, historians would have thoroughly dissected it by now. However, it is the best way to understand the causes which drove Wilson to push for an active American role in Latin America and in world affairs. It also shows a man who was greatly affected by the historical profession. Wilson's colleague Frederick Jackson Turner had convinced him of the importance of the frontier in building a strong economy and a democratically active state. Woodrow Wilson built upon this line of thought and sought a new order in the Western Hemisphere, and later the world, that he hoped would lead to a politically and economically stable environment. Only in this climate could nations truly prosper. Wilson stated, "There is no man who is more interested than I am in carrying the enterprise of

[160] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in William A. Williams, "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy," 388.

American businessmen to every quarter of the globe."[161] Wilson's efforts to form international organizations perfectly reflect and demonstrated this desire. The frontier experience had convinced Wilson to act in world affairs like no other president before him. He saw the necessity of dealing with other nations on realistic terms, similar to what had been done with the numerous tribes of the American West. However, his frontier idealism of furthering the cause of democracy and equality were present as well. Historians may debate Wilson's actions and their merit, but they should acknowledge that it was Frederick Jackson Turner's thoughts on the frontier that provided a primary influence on Wilson as he endeavored to increase American involvement in world affairs. To Wilson, the "frontier" was now the world, and he believed his plan, which was interconnected with the Frontier Thesis, was the best way to navigate it.

[161] Woodrow Wilson, "A Fourth of July Address," 4 July, 1914, in Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 30:251.

Appendix

Year	Annual Export Value ($)	% of Exports Going to Europe	% of Exports Going to North and South America	Manufactured/Agriculture Ratio
1900	1,394,000,000	75%	13.5	35.3/39.8
1910	1,745,000,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
1913	2,466,000,000	60%	25.0	48.8/20.7

Figure 1. American Exports (In text)[162]

Nation/Region	Canada	Mexico	Europe	Caribbean Islands/ Central America	South America	All others
Total Investment (c. 1914, in millions)	618	587	573	371	323	150
% of Total Investment	23.5	22.4	21.9	14.1	12.3	5.7

Figure 2. American Corporate Investment Around the Globe (In text)[163]

Region	North and South America	Europe and Globe
% of Total Investment (c. 1914)	72.3	27.7

Figure 3. American Corporate Investment, Western and Eastern Hemispheres[164]

[162] Emory R. Johnson et al., *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1915), 2:90-92.

[163] Burton I. Kaufman, *Efficiency and Expansion: Foreign Trade Organization in the Wilson Administration, 1913-1921* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974), 6-7.

[164] Kaufman, *Efficiency and Expansion,* 6-7.

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