# The French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization

# Dialectics of the Global

Edited by
Matthias Middell

## Volume 5

# The French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization

Edited by
Megan Maruschke and Matthias Middell

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# Preface

Ever since the 1990s, "globalization" has been a dominant idea and, indeed, ideology. The metanarratives of Cold War victory by the West, the expansion of the market economy, and the boost in productivity through internationalization, digitization (this should be changed for the whole series description, not done book by book) and the increasing dominance of the finance industry became associated with the promise of a global trickle-down effect that would lead to greater prosperity for ever more people worldwide. Any criticism of this viewpoint was countered with the argument that there was no alternative; globalization was too powerful and thus irreversible. Today, the ideology of "globalization" meets with growing scepticism. An era of exaggerated optimism for global integration has been replaced by an era of doubt and a quest for a return to particularistic sovereignty. However, processes of global integration have not dissipated and the rejection of "globalization" as ideology has not diminished the need to make sense both of the actually existing high level of interdependence and the ideology that gave meaning and justification to it.

The following three dialectics of the global are in the focus of this series:

Multiplicity and Co-Presence: "Globalization" is neither a natural occurrence nor a singular process; on the contrary, there are competing projects of globalization, which must be explained in their own right and compared in order to examine their layering and their interactive composition.

Integration and Fragmentation: Global processes result in de- as well as reterritorialization. They go hand in hand with the dissolution of boundaries, while also producing a respatialization of the world.

Universalism and Particularism: Globalization projects are justified and legitimized through universal claims of validity; however, at the same time they reflect the worldview and/or interest of particular actors.

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Megan Maruschke and Matthias Middell

# 1 Explaining Revolutionary Upheaval: From Internal Societal Developments to Global Processes of Respatialization

For generations, historians, fascinated by the French Revolution, have added new depth to our understanding of this historical moment. To be more precise, each generation of historians has uncovered new facets by pushing aside the dimensions prioritized by their predecessors. This process of renewal sustains a long and controversial history of historiography of the events between the meeting of the Estates General in 1789 and Napoleon's seizure of power (and beyond).[1] Even before the 200th anniversary of the revolution, the multitude of books was insurmountable. The boom around the bicentennial enabled a considerable number of historians to continue tirelessly to publish on the topic.[2] However, by the end of the twentieth century, those who had predicted that interest in the revolution would fade soon found their fears dispelled.[3] Not only were minor details clarified, but also completely new narratives of the French Revolution were tested. Why is this well-trodden historical topic still fascinating?

The answer probably lies in the event itself. The revolutionary decade left historians with extensive material, which was also organized in an exemplary fashion in a new archival system. These archives have remained enticing to

**1** J.N. Ducange, *La Révolution française et l'histoire du monde. Deux siècles de débats historiques et politiques 1815–1991*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2014; S. Desan, "What's after Political Culture? Recent French Revolutionary Historiography", *French Historical Studies* 23 (2000) 1, pp. 163–196; R.L. Spang, "Paradigms and Paranoia: How Modern is the French Revolution?", *American Historical Review* 108 (2003) 1, pp. 119–147; G. Kates (ed.), *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, (1997) 2005; P. Davies, *The Debate on the French Revolution*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006; J.B. Shank, "Is it Really Over? The French Revolution Twenty Years after the Bicentennial", *French Historical Studies* 32 (2009) 4, pp. 527–530; P.R. Hanson, "Political History of the French Revolution since 1989", *Journal of Social History* 52 (2019) 3, pp. 584–592.

**2** D. Le Monnier and M. Vovelle (eds.), *Les Colloques du Bicentenaire: répertoire des rencontres scientifiques nationales et internationales*, Paris: Société des Etudes Robespierristes, 1991; S.L. Kaplan, *Adieu 89*, Paris: Fayard, 1993; M. Vovelle, *La bataille du Bicentenaire de la Révolution française*, Paris: La Découverte, 2017.

**3** J.R. Censer, "Commencing the Third Century of Debate", *American Historical Review* 94 (1989) 5, pp. 1309–1325.

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each generation of historians. They do not need to fear that there will be nothing new to discover. At the same time, the upheaval invited contemporaries of all political stripes to comment on the course of events. In turn, we witness how generation after generation use these events to reflexively evaluate their society, followed accordingly by diachronic comparisons. However, seemingly new proposals trace their origins back to one question: how can we best organize society and its participatory structure? This question has sustained a continuous discourse since the first eighteenth-century proposals and attempts to base state sovereignty on popular will.

Consequently, as each new generation in society reinterprets the challenge of popular sovereignty, historians also are inspired to reflect on the French Revolution and its interpretation. This is true for the discovery of "the people" as a central historical actor in the mid-nineteenth century, reflected in the historiography of Jules Michelet, which became the basis for the shift towards the social history of revolutionary transformation. This approach can be traced back to Jean Jaurès and his *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française* – if we cannot already see its origins with Antoine Barnave, who argued as early as 1792 that social tensions caused the revolution.[4] At almost the same moment, Alphonse Aulard stimulated historical interest in the cooperation of the political institutions in a republican state system. In the first decades of the twentieth century, however, an entire school of Russian historians, from Nikolai Kareev to Nikolai Lukin, were occupied with the question of how to integrate peasants into a society still in the early stages of industrialization. Anatolij Ado later employed these perspectives to reconstruct a prehistory of the Revolution of 1848.[5] Calling Russian Bolsheviks the "Jacobins of the twentieth century" reformulated old questions in a new context about the relationship between elites and lower classes as well as between political and social revolutions, all of which had already been posed by François Noël Babeuf in 1796.[6] This was followed by a productive research phase that closely examined the *sans-culottes* and their political representatives.[7]

This "history from below" turned away from a historiography focused primarily on "great men" and instead examined the concerns and needs, the

**4** A. Rigney, *The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

**5** A. Ado, *Paysans en révolution: Terre, pouvoir et jacquerie 1789–1794*, Paris: Société des Etudes Robespierristes, 1996.

**6** T. Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins: Itinéraire des analogies*, Paris: Payot, 1989.

**7** A. Soboul, *Les sans-culottes parisiens en l'an II. – Mouvement populaire et gouvernement révolutionnaire (2 juin 1793–9 thermidor an II),* Paris: Librairie Clavreuil, 1958; W. Markov, *Jacques Roux. Le curé rouge*, Paris: Libertalia, 2017 (German original in 4 vols, 1967–1970).

hopes and goals, as well as the behaviour and the environment of the ordinary people.[8] These studies also picked up on older ideas from a history of emotions and mass panic and paved the way for the history of mentalities.[9] In addition to these more cultural-historical studies of the *journée révolutionnaire* (the insurrection of 10 August 1792), social history also played an important role. Using mass sources, historians more systematically studied property distribution and the weight of feudal burdens in different regions of France.[10] Scholars drew different conclusions from this material, ranging from a perspective inspired by anarchism/Trotskyism, which traced the highly anticipated class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie back to the epoch of the revolution,[11] to a historicization of the conflicts between egalitarians and liberals.[12]

In a constructivist turn in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the overly linear arc from the French Revolution to the present day became itself the subject of the historiography of the revolution. At that time, the master narratives of Marxism and modernization theory were also in crisis and eroded under post-modernism's lens. In his essay collection *Penser la Révolution française*, François Furet asked, was the revolution, instead of being the product of stark social contradictions, rather the result of an increasingly excessive "Manichaean cursing of opponents" by the revolutionaries who came successively to power?[13] However, a conclusive

**8** F. Krantz (ed.), *History From Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé*, Montréal: Concordia University, 1985.

**9** G. Lefebvre, *La Grande Peur de 1789*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1932; G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848*, New York: Wiley & Sons, 1964; M. Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris: Seuil, 1978.

**10** A. Soboul, *La Civilisation et la Révolution française. vol. 1: La crise de l'Ancien Régime*, Paris: Arthaud, 1978; for a well-informed summary of the debates since the 1960s on the crisis of the Ancien Régime and the economy during the revolution, see G. Lemarchand, *L'économie en France de 1770 à 1830. De la crise de l'Ancien Régime à la révolution industrielle*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2008.

**11** D. Guerin, *La lutte des classes sous la Première République, 1793–1797*, 2 vols, Paris: Gallimard, (1946) 1968. See also the shorter second edition under the title *Bourgeois et brasnus, 1793–1795*, Paris: Gallimard, 1973.

**12** A. Cobban, *The Debate on the French Revolution, 1789–1800*, London: Nicholas Kaye, 1950; A. Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964; E. Le Roy Ladurie, H. Neveux, and J. Jacquart, *Histoire de la France rurale, Vol. II: L'âge classique des paysans. De 1340 à 1789*, Paris: Seuil, 1975.

**13** F. Furet, *Penser la Révolution française*, Paris: Gallimard, 1978. On the autobiographical background of his turn away from Marxist perspectives, see F. Furet, *Le Passé d'une illusion. Essai sur l'idée communiste au XX^e siècle*, Paris: Robert Laffont and Calmann-Lévy, 1995, and M. S. Christofferson, "François Furet between History and Journalism, 1958–1965", *French History* 15 (2001) 4, pp. 421–447. On the potential of the constructivist approach, see

narrative of the chain of events did not follow from this thoroughly inspiring question on its own.[14] A subsequent attempt to narrate this thesis of how the revolution derailed (*dérapage*) under the Jacobins also did not lead anywhere because the political and intellectual context had again begun to change.[15] Furet's thesis – being that France had taken a 200-year detour from the North American "normal" path due to the Jacobins' interventions and was just beginning to revert back – proved to be less than convincing. A revival of French self-assertiveness and global ambition may have played a role here. Furthermore, at the moment of the West's triumph at the end of the Cold War by a single remaining superpower, Shmuel Eisenstadt's counter thesis of multiple modernities gained recognition in international social sciences.[16]

Finally, in the context of the bicentennial, historical comparative analysis entered a new phase. Comparative studies focused less on the deviance of a case from an underlying norm (which often led to a comparison of real and "ideal types", to express this in Max Weber's terminology) and more on the empirical study of two or more cases, that is, two real types without detouring through a normatively charged ideal type.[17] The results of this comparative research made it much more plausible to begin from very different paths of social transformation at the turn of the nineteenth century.[18] These questions were barely dealt with in the important accounts published for the occasion of the bicentennial, which instead focused overwhelmingly on what was happening inside the "natural boundaries" of the Hexagon.[19] The effort to better integrate the international dimension of the revolution remained, for the time being, reserved for the major conference at the Sorbonne in July 1989 and for numerous

K.M. Baker and D. Edelstein (eds.), *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.

**14** For a conventional (liberal-conservatively oriented) narrative, see F. Furet and D. Richet, *La Révolution*, Paris: Fayard, 1965.

**15** F. Furet, *La Révolution française. Vol. II: Terminer la Révolution: De Louis XVIII à Jules Ferry, 1814–1880*, Paris: Hachette 1982.

**16** S.N. Eisenstadt. "Multiple Modernities", *Daedalus* 129 (2000) 1, pp. 1–29.

**17** M. Middell, "Kulturtransfer und Historische Komparatistik. Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis", *Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 10 (2000) 1, pp. 7–41.

**18** M. Kossok, *Ausgewählte Schriften, Bd. 3: Zwischen Reform und Revolution. Übergänge von der Universal- zur Globalgeschichte*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2009.

**19** For a strong emphasis on the international impact of the revolution, see M. Vovelle, *La Révolution française. Images et récit*, 5 vols, Paris: Messidor, 1986.

conference proceedings initiated in different countries of the world.[20] At the same time, there had already been an energetic push for a more consistent international interpretation of the revolution.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Robert Palmer and Jacques Godechot (though with different emphases) argued that the idea of an Atlantic revolution was not just a response to the rise of comparative Jacobin research in Europe's East.[21] They wanted to make clear that the epochal context of the revolution was not limited to a single country. However, their ideas were, at that time, not very successful. They riled up both Gaullists and communists in France as their thesis downplayed the central importance of France and constructed, potentially, a pre-history of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These accusations were not relevant in the early 1990s and so their thesis returned without any major objections.[22] However, this was only a prelude to the fundamental reorientation of the historiography of the revolutions of circa 1770–1830. These

**20** M. Vovelle (ed.), *L'Image de la Révolution française*, 4 vols, Paris et al.: Pergamon Press, 1989; M. Kossok and E. Kroß (eds.), *1789 – Weltwirkungen einer großen Revolution*, 2 vols, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1988.

**21** J. Godechot and R.R. Palmer, "Le problème de l'Atlantique du XVIIIième au XXième siècle", in: Comitato internazionale di scienze storiche (ed.), *Congresso internazionale di scienze storiche*, Rome, 4–11 September 1955. Relazioni 5 (Storia contemporanea), Florence 1955, pp. 175–239; R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, (2 vols 1959–1964) 2014; J. Godechot, *La grande nation: l'expansion révolutionnaire de la France dans le monde de 1789 à 1799*, Paris: PUF, 1956; J. Godechot, *L'Europe et l'Amérique à l'époque napoléonienne (1800–1815)*, Paris: PUF, 1967; J. Godechot, *Les Révolutions, 1770–1799*, Paris: PUF, 1963 (English: *France and the Atlantic Revolution of the Eighteenth Century, 1770–1799*, New York: Free Press, 1965). Parallel to the idea of an Atlantic revolution as the origin of modern Western democracy, the idea of radical democracy emerged, which was the origin of the phalanx of Jacobins across the world. Among others, see K. Benda, *A magyar jakobinusok iratai*, 3 vols, Budapest, 1952–1957; B. Lesnodorski, *Polscy Jakobini*, Warsaw, 1960; W. Markov, "I giacobini dei paesi absburgici", *Studi Storici* 3 (1962), pp. 493–525; W. Grab, *Norddeutsche Jakobiner. Demokratische Bestrebungen zur Zeit der Französischen Revolution*, Frankfurt a. M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1967; M. Kossok, "Das Salz der Revolution. Jakobinismus in Lateinamerika. Versuch einer Positionsbestimmung", *Universalhistorische Aspekte und Dimensionen des Jakobinismus*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1976, pp. 124–159; H. Scheel, *Süddeutsche Jakobiner Klassenkämpfe und republikanische Bestrebungen im deutschen Süden Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980.

**22** W. Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*, New York: New York University Press, 2009; P. Serna (ed.) *Républiques soeurs. Le Directoire et la révolution atlantique*, Rennes: PUR, 2009; M. Albertone and A. de Francesco (eds.), *Rethinking the Atlantic World. Europe and America in the Age of Democratic Revolution*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; T. Bender and L. Dubois, *Revolution! The Atlantic World Reborn*, New York: New York Historical Society, 2011.

revolutions, which seemed to criss-cross the Americas and Western Europe, appeared to be interrelated and integrated in a larger scheme of multiple revolutionary cycles.[23] Until that time, this perspective had only been common in comparative research stemming from the interdisciplinary dialogue between history and historical sociology.[24]

A dramatic shift in the study of the revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries developed. This fundamental transformation, in turn, had different causes and contexts. This shift was a consequence of the general social interpretations that resulted from the new centrality of the concept of globalization. By understanding the world after the Cold War as a globalizing world, historians' search for the causes of social change shifted from a focus on the internal factors that had hitherto been at the forefront of both Marxist and modernization theory to an interest in the relations between societies and their inevitable global integration. Immanuel Wallerstein had, of course, already done substantial preliminary work on such a viewpoint in his volumes on the capitalist world-system.[25] Notwithstanding, his conclusion that, in this world-system, various regions of the world were irrevocably assigned to the centre or periphery proved, by the 1990s, to be too static to explain China's unexpected rise.[26] However, the decisive influence on the development potential of individual societies, derived from their position (as well as their positioning strategies) in the world economy and in the international system, found more and more followers.

With regard to the French Revolution, several authors argued that the expropriation of church property and the elimination of feudal burdens were

**23** In contrast to the arguments made by Palmer and Godechot, more recent versions of the Atlantic history thesis also integrate the Southern Atlantic: J. Adelman, "An Age of Imperial Revolutions", *American Historical Review* 113 (2008) 2, pp. 319–340; J. Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009; D. Armitage and S. Subrahmanyam (eds.), *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

**24** J.A. Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory", *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001), pp. 139–187; M. Kossok, *In Tyrannos. Revolutionen der Weltgeschichte*, Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1989.

**25** I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 1: *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York and London: Academic Press, 1974, vol. 2: *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750*, New York: Academic Press, 1979, vol. 3: *The Second Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730–1840s,* San Diego: Academic Press, 1989.

**26** A.G. Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

a reaction to the relative losses of the French crown in its competition with the British Empire since the Seven Years' War, which was followed by national bankruptcy.[27] These gains allowed France to continue this competition and resume military conflict through to 1815. The major changes in social relations, political institutions, and the cultural basis of legitimacy appear, in this perspective, to be a result of the French elites' strategy to restore their (ultimately financial) competitive edge in the race for global hegemony. In his analysis of the National Assembly, Jeremy Whiteman empirically comes closest to reconstructing how an awareness of the global condition – that is to say, the primacy of integration in global contexts compared to local, regional, and (proto-)national frameworks – emerged among revolutionary actors.[28]

A second context, which is quite connected to the developments outlined above, also played an important role: France was no longer the centre of historiographical innovation. Since the 1920s, various generations of the Annales school had repeatedly set new methodological and theoretical trends, and in doing so they effectively positioned themselves as trendsetters. American historians, in contrast, very explicitly demarcated themselves from Eurocentric traditions and promoted a global historiography that incorporated the momentum of post-colonialism as well as the diverse expertise derived from area studies.[29] That this "turn" was neither as new nor as radically post-colonial as claimed does not matter here.[30] Rather, it is precisely this conceptual shift in general historiography that has been linked with a crucial reassessment of the events that took place outside the Hexagon in the history of the revolutions of the late eighteenth century.

In the context of the bicentennial, French "overseas possessions" were indeed examined in more detail than before, but they remained in the background and only played a minor role in explaining the dynamics of the revolution. More or less, it was the French revolutionary message that sometimes reached the

**27** B. Stone, *The Genesis of the French Revolution: A Global Historical Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

**28** J. Whiteman, *Reform, Revolution and French Global Policy, 1789–1791*, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003.

**29** P. Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; for the historiography focusing on the revolutionary era, see K.M. Baker and J. Zizek, "The American Historiography of the French Revolution", in: A. Molho and G.S. Wood (eds.), *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, pp. 349–392.

**30** K. Naumann, *Laboratorien der Weltgeschichtsschreibung. Lehre und Forschung an den Universitäten Chicago, Columbia und Harvard 1918 bis 1968*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018.

colonies, but not the other way around. However, this kind of historical consideration found itself on the defensive in comparison to entangled or connected history approaches.[31] It was still more focused on French influence than on understanding how these ideas were actually taken up in other contexts. In contrast, entangled history suggested that the different places in a network deserved equal consideration and interdependent analysis.

This also inspired a new search for relevant sources to tell the history of the whole French Empire. Saint-Domingue stood out for two reasons. First, it was the economic powerhouse of the French Empire during the second half of the eighteenth century. Second, the liberation of slaves – first on the island, followed by empire-wide emancipation – radically raised the question of agency beyond the metropole. Today, library shelves are filled with literature about the events in Saint-Domingue, their resonance in France, including their impact on the other French colonies and even across North and South America.[32] This study of the upheaval in the colony, decisive for France's trading elites, has sparked new ideas and questions in the comparative history of empires.[33] On the one hand, the teleological narrative "from empire to nation-state" was called into question and along with it the confusion (or rather oversimplification) between early modern empires (composite states) with the empires of the

**31** M. Espagne, "Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle", *Genèses* (1994) 17, pp. 112–121; S. Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997) 3, pp. 735–762.

**32** G. Bonacci and D. Béchacq (eds.), *La Révolution haïtienne au-delà de ses frontiers*, Paris: Karthala, 2006; P. Cheney, *Cul de Sac: Patrimony, Capitalism and Slavery in French Saint-Domingue*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017; L. Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804*, Chapel Hill NC and Williamsburg VA: University of North Carolina Press, 2004; L. Dubois and J. D. Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789–1804: A Brief History with Documents*, Boston MA: St. Martins Press, 2006; D.L. Garraway, *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press 2008; D. P. Geggus and N. Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009; P. P. Girard, *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian War of Independence, 1801–1804*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011; J. Popkin, "Saint-Domingue, Slavery, and the Origins of the French Revolution", in: T. E. Kaiser and D. K. van Kley (eds.), *From Deficit to Deluge: The Origins of the French Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 220–248.

**33** J. Burbank and F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010; U. von Hirschhausen and J. Leonhard, "Zwischen Historisierung und Globalisierung. Titel, Themen und Trends der neueren Empire-Forschung", *Neue Politische Literatur* 56 (2011) 3, pp. 390–402.

later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[34] On the other hand, the French Revolution as the historical moment in world history in which the nation-state was born was severely called into question. These studies reminded us that the revolution had set in motion parallel processes of nationalization and imperialism, which can also be observed in many other parts of the world beyond France.

The open question is now how these processes can be reset analytically if the old categories of empire and nation-state – which have moved from concrete historical descriptions as real types to elements of theory formation in the social sciences – seem increasingly unconvincing and problematic. In this volume, we argue, by means of a heuristic model to reinterpret modern history through the lens of processes of respatialization, that the revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century represented a fundamental process in the development of new spatial formats for societal organization as well as in the modification of existing spatial formats. Thus, these revolutions paved the way to a new spatial order.[35]

It is already well known that the reorganization of space was one of the central concerns of French legislation from 1789 onwards. The National Assembly introduced departments and cantons in the Hexagon as one of its first priorities to rework administrative space. Yet, soon they also dealt with the reorganization of the French Empire as well as the organization of the many areas occupied by France since the start of the revolutionary wars. This demonstrates the direct relationship between political change – based on the newly established legitimacy of popular sovereignty – and social transformation, on the one hand, and processes of spatialization, on the other hand. Two hitherto unexplained questions are, first, what knowledge did French revolutionaries reference in their fundamental transformation of social relations, the redesign of spatial formats, and the transformation of the entire spatial order, and, second, how was this repertoire adopted in other revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic through the 1820s.

**34** J. Esherick, H. Kayali, and E. van Young (eds.), *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006; U. von Hirschhausen and J. Leonhard (eds.), *Empires. Die Krise der Vielfalt im 19. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015; J.M. Fradera, *The Imperial Nation: Citizens and Subjects in the British, French, Spanish, and American Empires*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

**35** S. Marung and M. Middell (eds.), *Spatial Formats under the Global Condition*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019.

The breadth of experiences to which contemporaries of 1789 referred date back to the beginning of the eighteenth century and included various attempts to reform traditional empires in India, in the Americas, and in France itself. These experiences and observations were collected, arranged, and circulated through the various media of the Enlightenment.[36] It is undoubtedly worth rethinking the usual view of the French Enlightenment, often regarded as the origin of modern political thought, by reversing this perspective and examining to what extent the French Enlightenment reflected and processed experiences drawn from other imperial contexts.[37]

At the same time, a synchronic comparative perspective that incorporates the many revolutionary shocks of this period on both sides of the Atlantic – but also observes shifts in the Indian Ocean and sub-Saharan Africa – brings to light the emergence of at least one new spatial format. This new format involved a mix of nationalization and territorialization in the metropole with modernized imperial structures at the colonized fringes of such states, which we would call a "nation-state with imperial extensions", or a nation-state cum empire.[38] Domestic dynamics were undoubtedly important in the development of this format, but global interdependencies were equally important, which indicates the beginning of a global condition still in statu nascendi.[39] The reorganization of the (now) national space with an imperial space of extension represented an adaptation to a crucial structural change of the world economy while at the same time offered the empire a more suitable framework than the old imperial format did. The year 1789, in this perspective, no longer represents the beginning of an often teleological history of the nation-state's triumph as

**36** D. Bégot (ed.), *Guide de la recherche en histoire antillaise et guyanaise*, Paris: CTHS, 2011; F. Régent, *La France et ses esclaves. De la colonisation aux abolitions, 1620–1848*, Paris: Grasset, 2007; F. Régent, J.-F. Niort, and P. Serna (eds.), *Les colonies, la Révolution française, la loi*, Rennes: PUR, 2014.

**37** H.-J. Lüsebrink, "Discrediting Slavery: From the Société des Amis des Noirs to the Haitian Revolution – Ideological Patterns and Anthropological Discourses", in: H.-E. Bödeker, C. Donato, and P.H. Reill (eds.), *Discourses of Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Enlightenment*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, pp. 153–169; N. Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press 2008; D. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

**38** M. Middell, *Raumformate – Bausteine in Prozessen der Neuverräumlichung*, SFB 1199 Working Paper (2019) 14, https://research.uni-leipzig.de/~sfb1199/publication/workingpaper_14/, (accessed 2 May 2019).

**39** C. Bright and M. Geyer, "Benchmarks of Globalization. The Global Condition 1850–2010", in: D. Northrop (ed.), *A Companion to World History*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 285–302.

the most efficient and legitimate form of societal organization. This narrative has further lost importance in recent years. While previous historiography explained societal circumstances by looking at internal conditions and contradictions, recent historiography is more interested in the interconnections and interdependencies between different societies. In short, we have transitioned from methodological nationalism to a transnational or global-historical perspective.

International research on the French Revolution has been slow to adapt to this change. Neither the older Marxist-inspired social-historical interpretation nor the revisionist school of François Furet, who dominated the field during the bicentennial in 1989, found an answer to the challenge posed by global history. It was only about a decade ago that the connection between revolution in the metropole and the slave emancipation on Saint-Domingue became the starting point for a renewed historiography that sought to anchor the French Revolution in global historical debates. This transition has not been without objections, as evidenced by two different articles from David Bell and Jeremy Adelman.[40] After reading their works, one may have the impression that the short heyday of global historical optimism is over for the French Revolution[41]; historiography will once again take up the boundaries of the nation-state.[42] But, of course, the story will not be so simple. The sceptics are also convinced that what we need is to adopt a more dialectical perspective: "In short, we need narratives of global life that reckon with disintegration as well as integration, the costs and not just the bounty of interdependence."[43]

This raises the question of what place the French Revolution of 1789 has in a renewed global history. In addition to a long-standing discussion of the manifold worldwide effects of 1789 and 1793 and the rich source material documenting the failures, enthusiasm, or disillusionment with revolution, historians are searching for new ways to position the revolution in global history. One focus is on the multiplication of independent states around the turn of the century, representing the first expansion of peoples' right to self-determination. David Armitage holds the United States Declaration of Independence up as a document

**40** D.A. Bell, "Questioning the Global Turn. The Case of the French Revolution", *French Historical Studies* 37 (2014) 1, pp. 1–24; J. Adelman, "Is Global History Still Possible, or Has it Had its Moment?" *Aeon*, 2017, online: https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment (accessed 24 April 2019).

**41** S. Desan, L. Hunt, and W.M. Nelson (eds.), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

**42** For an analysis of the circumstances under which a global perspective became attractive in North America and now faces growing resistance, see: P. Cheney, "The French Revolution's Global Turn and Capitalism's Spatial Fixes", *Journal of Social History* 52 (2019) 3, pp. 575–583.

**43** Adelman, "Is Global History Still Possible?"

that inspired future constitutions adopted during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[44] In this perspective, 1789 continues to represent the long historical transformation from empire to nation-state. The French revolutionary historian, Pierre Serna, formulated a counterproposal that emphasized the birth of anti-colonial republicanism, which, however, was only gradually able to free itself from its internal contradictions.[45] Accordingly, this perspective brings the emancipation of slaves to the foreground, which accordingly rereads the independence of France's peripheries. However, a reversal of perspectives seems necessary in two respects.

First, the dominance of methodological nationalism in French historiography has led to empirical and theoretical interest in the effects of the ideas produced as well as events in France. This perspective remains diffusionist, in that it is less interested in the reception of non-French experiences, thereby systematically denying the possibility that ideas and actions in France are themselves influenced by external developments. There are, however, many convincing accounts of how France acted as a European hegemonic power. These include descriptions of France's participation in the increasingly global conflicts of the eighteenth century. Yet, there is no doubt that further research is needed on where France's elites found inspiration for reforming their empire and for the subsequent solution revolution provided to the problems of empire that could not be dealt with by reform alone. Early modern empires – as composite states managing very different traditions and access to resources and power – had been faced with the problem of how to deal with increasingly territorial forms of organization.[46] On the one hand, they profited from the concentration of power and the professionalization of governance that went hand in hand with this process. On the other hand, the homogenization of statehood and administration undermined the principle of composite states, since local elites as well as ordinary people became aware of the enormous differences in rights and the resulting distribution of resources.

Territorialization has not led directly to the nation-state, as older historiography has often postulated.[47] Rather, it was possible to combine a nationalizing

**44** D. Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

**45** P. Serna, "Toute révolution est guerre d'indépendance", in: J.-L. Chappey (ed.), *Pour quoi faire la Révolution*, Marseille: Agone, 2012, pp. 19–49.

**46** C.S. Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.

**47** A good example that demonstrates this contradictory connection between territorialization and imperial reform is the Habsburg Empire: F. Hadler and M. Middell (eds.), *Handbuch einer*

and territorializing metropole and (albeit reformed) imperial tendencies into a spatial format in which the formation of the nation in the metropole was combined with an imperial space of expansion. At a first glance, we can recognize the interplay of these two processes and their progression. However, we still know too little about the different underlying political, constitutional, administrative, economic, and social conditions in these societies and how principal ideologies legitimated these processes.[48] Stuart Elden shows how the relatively young concept of territoriality was formulated only at the turn of the seventeenth century. It was only then slowly transferred, in a contradictory manner, into legal and state practices.[49] This resulted in growing tensions with traditional forms of imperial rule, characterized by different privileges for individual populations and hierarchical access to resources (particularly evident in the overseas territories).

The impetus to adjust imperial forms of rule accordingly stemmed from the Mughal Empire's reforms at the turn of the eighteenth century and the attempts at "enlightened absolutism" in the 1770s. These reforms were not only about creating a new internal balance of power but also about maintaining and/or regaining (trans)regional or, more generally, global competitiveness.[50] States involved in this competition had to reorganize their resource management in order to free the necessary bullion to assemble armies and navies, to secure outposts, and to support alliances with Native populations, even during periods of peace. The fiscal-military state was probably the inescapable consequence of this hunger for resources, but it required the societal reorganization of resources.[51] If one considers the revolution in France (and the previous French reform

*transnationalen Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas, Vol. I. Von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017.

**48** Of course, the historical literature on empire is growing (see footnotes 33 and 34), but it is often focused on the question of how and why certain imperial features survived and continued as imperialist strategies until today, while most other disciplines remain under the impact of the idea that states are nation-states (failing ones included). To move the debate from a historical account of examples to a theoretical level is obviously not that easy, in particular because the transformation took shape differently in various world regions.

**49** S. Elden *The Birth of Territory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

**50** D. Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754–1763*, Harlow: Pearson Press, 2011; S. Externbrink (ed.), *Der Siebenjährige Krieg (1756–1763). Ein europäischer Weltkrieg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008; M. Füssel, *Der Siebenjährige Krieg. Ein Weltkrieg im 18. Jahrhundert*, München: C. H. Beck, 2010.

**51** P.K. O'Brien, "Fiscal and Financial Preconditions for the Rise of British Naval Hegemony 1485–1815", Working Paper LSE Department of Economic History (2005) 91/05, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/22326/ (accessed 2 May 2019).

attempts from Maupeou via Turgot to Calonne) in this context, then the question is not whether there have been variants of enlightenment outside of Europe but how the Enlightenment in different parts of Europe mobilized, filtered, or ignored non-European knowledge regarding the need to reform of empire in the face of territorialization.[52]

Second, another need to shift perspectives concerns the fact that research on France as an empire, despite recent progress, is still masked by the idea of France as an early territorial state comprising an advanced political system and a nationalized population. However, France was undoubtedly becoming a global player in international affairs only because, in addition to its hegemonic claims on mainland Europe, it also had an extensive colonial empire. Even after the revolution and Napoleon's (ultimately) failed expansionist policy, France remained an empire, surrounded by other empires with strong nationalization tendencies. Empire persisted despite the fundamental changes in France's state organization and its legitimacy as well as the (temporary) abolition of slavery in the Constitution of 1793. It remained an empire even though nationalization in the metropole created new tensions with the colonies, which lasted until decolonization and beyond. It is only the recent revival of comparative research on empire that has demonstrated this fact productively, even if it remains partially overshadowed by the overwhelming research stemming from the renewal of British imperial history as part of the general movement towards global history.[53] This, in turn, raises the question of the revolution's exceptionalism in France: how does revolutionary upheaval fit into the broader spectrum of transformation processes triggered by the military destabilization of at least the entire Atlantic Ocean region and parts of the Indian Ocean? In other words, what effects did the solutions found in France reveal regarding the connection between spatialization and global processes?

In relation to both shifts in perspective, we find many paths forward in the current methodological discussion and a lot of material in the recently renewed

**52** H.-J. Lüsebrink (ed.), *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006; D. Tricoire (ed.), *Enlightened Colonialism: Civilization Narratives and Imperial Politics in the Age of Reason*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

**53** J. Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire*, London: Allen Lane, 2007; J. Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. On the French case in particular: K. Margerison, "French Visions of Empire: Contesting British Power in India after the Seven Years War", *English Historical Review* 130 (2015) 544, pp. 583–612; M. Thomas (ed.), *The French Colonial Mind*, 2 vols, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

handbook literature on the Ancien Régime and the French Revolution.[54] There is, however, a research gap in terms of analysing the revolutionary period from the perspective of a spatial order within which these events occurred – a spatial order that the revolution changed so dramatically. This volume is a first attempt to collect different perspectives in order to begin to tackle this research gap. We do so from a specific point of departure, that is the hypothesis that the French Revolution was a decisive moment in the transformation of the Atlantic spatial order.[55] We are very grateful to the participants of a workshop held in Leipzig and a panel at the European Congress of World and Global History in Budapest, both in the fall of 2017, for the discussions that ensued. Together, we discussed the diversity of events and experiences across the boundaries of imperial and regional studies. These discussions continued and resulted in the contributions to this volume, which we hope will inspire us and others to produce future publications representing the multitude of changes to the Atlantic spatial order.

The first section of this volume shows the value of widening the scope of the French Revolution by incorporating both topics and actors not previously part of the study of the French Revolution. The section also investigates respatializiation in shifting geopolitical contexts and therefore moves beyond a pure French imperial focus to include transregional and transimperial perspectives. In this vein, Manuel Covo's chapter opens this volume by asking why France wanted Louisiana back. He considers the shifting imaginations and strategies of French imperialism over the course of the French Revolution and early years of Napoleonic rule, focusing specifically on reterritorialization strategies as imperial administrators began to rethink France's "no territory" policy in its colonial endeavours. His chapter not only examines the shifting Franco-American relationship, but also includes a wider view of inter-imperial competition with Britain, Spain, and relations with Indigenous nations and actors. Actors operating on multiple scales reconsidered the relationship between France's shifting governing regimes and the organization of its Caribbean empire, its foreign policy in Europe, and the challenge of new independent states in the Americas.

**54** W. Doyle (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancien Régime*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012; P. McPhee (ed.), *A Companion to the French Revolution*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2012; J. Swann and J. Félix (eds.), *The Crisis of the Absolute Monarchy: France from Old Regime to Revolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; D. Andress, *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015; A. Forrest and M. Middell (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History*, London: Routledge, 2015; P. McPhee, *Liberty or Death: The French Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

**55** As an overview, see N.P. Canny, "Atlantic History and Global History", in: J.P. Greene and P.D. Morgan (eds.), *Atlantic History. A Critical Appraisal*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 317–336.

His chapter shows how actors on the ground reacted to and influenced shifting French imperial strategies, culminating in a plan to get the Louisiana territory back.

In a different ocean basin, Damien Tricoire argues that projections of French colonial rule in Madagascar can hardly be characterized by the territorialization projects evident elsewhere in the French Empire during the 1790s, most notable in the departmentalization of the Hexagon and the subsequent inclusion of French colonies as departments. From the perspective of the Indian Ocean, this respatialization emanating from the Hexagon looked quite different, if even nonexistent. Plans and proposals often failed to take into account the political context on the island. Furthermore, these plans referenced British imperial tactics and, even then, failed to materialize. Respatialization, then, did not occur in relation to the shifting French elites' ideas developed in the metropole but instead to the changing geopolitical considerations following conquests.

In her contribution, Jane Landers expands the scope of the French Revolution not only in content but also in terms of archival sources. Using Spanish sources, she examines how the rebels on the entire island of Hispaniola shaped the changing geopolitical spaces they inhabited before, during, and following the Haitian Revolution. Together, these chapters show the value in widening the scope of questions, sources, actors, and places from which to study the French Revolution.

Through the lens of respatialization, the following section of this volume explores the impact of the French Revolution in contexts and perspectives not typically associated with the revolution's effects. Christian Ayne Crouch questions the circulation of knowledge of the French Revolution in Indian Country in North America. In revolutionary history, Indigenous peoples have long been neglected or portrayed as passive actors affected by the American Revolution. Yet, they were active participants in the Atlantic world's economy and politics. Crouch therefore situates respatialization as a "conceptual rearrangement" that poses new questions about the contours of the French and Haitian revolutions and their reception in Indian Country. This chapter, moreover, illustrates the shape of French imperialism in the 1790s and its problematic remembrance today.

Ernesto Bassi takes this volume to the Caribbean region, which he understands as a space connected by sailors who transcended imperial claims. In doing so, they bring with them news, evidenced in this chapter by the dissemination of the Haitian Revolution's key events and ideas. Subsequently, Bassi analyses plans in Spanish New Granada to reconfigure the Caribbean and Atlantic plantation economy by shifting the loss of Haiti's sugar production as a local opportunity for planters, statesmen, and reformers. Together, they envision a different position for New Granada in the Atlantic economy. He therefore looks at respatialization not only as the social production of space through the

lived geographies of sailors but also as a project to alter economic geographies and imagine new realities. Bassi's chapter considers, therefore, the Haitian Revolution's impact on the polycentric emergence of capitalism.

José Damião Rodrigues' contribution examines the Azores in the Portuguese Empire. When the Portuguese royal court moved to Brazil to escape Napoleonic invasion in 1807/08, other forms of imperial organization were altered, too. Amidst the political turmoil, local political and social actors in the Azores retained and gained local authority, evading intended reforms for tighter central controls over the islands.

Antonis Hadjikyriacou examines another island context, Cyprus, during the Age of Revolutions and asks how perceptions of insularity and its connection to larger economic, social, and political structures shifted, particularly in relation to the Napoleonic occupation. Prior to this occupation, the Ottomans attributed little value to the island, which shifted during the Napoleonic period as the political economy of insularity transformed. Moreover, Hadjikyriacou shows how this moment of respatialization is only one of several similar moments, including other occupations, that constitute a longer process of shifting Ottoman perceptions of Cyprus and its role in Ottoman political, economic, and social structures.

These contributions illustrate the larger impact of the French Revolution in terms of immediate geopolitical and economic consequences. They also highlight the role of actors as well as projects and shifting imaginations about how to organize the politics and economies of societies. They further question the centrality of the French Revolution as a singular moment in the respatialization processes they describe; indeed, it is one of several moments that led contemporaries to reassess the spatial organization of their societies.

The third section of this volume focuses closely on the respatialization of societies. Alan Forrest illustrates the spatial reorganization of French society over the course of the French Revolution. He notably discusses the intricacies of the new administrative space enacted in 1790, which divided and unified France through the creation of departments. This demarcation, along with the new principles of citizenship, shaped the lives of French men and women for generations to come, but locals – peasants, hunters (poachers), colonial traders, colonists, (former) slaves, and lawyers, for example – all shaped the contours and meanings of the departments and their use overtime. These revolutionary structures of local government and justice shifted from democratic administrative divisions to instruments of Napoleonic imperialism. Yet, these structures have continued to sustain French society today.

Andreas Fahrmeir continues the discussion on the spatial transformation of France by identifying the spatial elements of French citizenship during the French Revolution. He first recounts the state of citizenship regulations in

Ancien Régime France and then discusses to what extent citizenship has been respatialized. He argues that while new ideals regarding the rational spatial organization of citizenship were prevalent in revolutionary thought and policy, there were limits in implementing these reforms consistently, such that local affiliations maintained their significance for many European societies, including France, through the nineteenth century. Importantly, his chapter does not stop there but considers the continued influence of French revolutionary reforms of citizenship in relation to space in later conceptions and implementations of citizenship, concluding, "many issues related to the revolutionary respatialization of citizenship are still with us." The transformation of administrative space and its impact on society and citizenship did not only occur in metropolitan France but in France's empire, as Forrest shows in his aforementioned chapter in relation to France's colonies in the 1790s.

Laura di Fiore further explores the departmentalization and transformation of institutions and citizenship in Napoleonic Europe through the example of Italy, a topic that has only recently become a point of interest to scholars of Italy's "French decade". She shows that the departmentalization process in Italy, though it borrowed from many of the same French principles implemented in 1790 in the Hexagon, was not only dictated from above but involved the complex input from many local social actors. The French respatialization of the Italian peninsula had to take into consideration the prior multiple efforts to reform the various and fragmented political territories on the peninsula. Local actors were not passive recipients of the new reforms and demarcations; they sought not only to generate compromised, hybrid solutions but also to appropriate some of the new ideals of societal organization for their own aims. This chapter is therefore useful to understand the place of Italy in the French Empire as well as to understand the foundations of spatial knowledge and practices that underpinned the empire's organization as it expanded.

Federica Morelli grapples with the respatialization of (independent) Spanish America, which developed at least indirectly as a result of Napoleonic invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and the ensuing crisis of sovereignty in Spanish America. Furthermore, this impact – Spanish American independence – took place after the experience and ideas of the American, French, and Haitian revolutions had spread throughout the Atlantic and after the constitutional reforms of the Cortes of Cádiz. Filling the power vacuum left by the Spanish king's abdication meant local communities were left to deal with how to bring citizenship meaningfully together with administrative, political, and economic spaces – in short, the same issues that the aforementioned chapters on France and Italy had to grapple with. Morelli argues that examining respatialization during the Age of Revolutions is much more complicated than

searching for the dissemination of a French model. In the Spanish American context, citizenship and national belonging were articulated in local communities and municipalities, which were, at least until the mid- to late nineteenth century, given room to determine who belonged to the nation. Citizenship, therefore, was not imposed top-down but stemmed from local affiliations. Local communities remained the key political actors in independent Spanish America.

Of course, these selected case studies only highlight a few of the ways in which the Atlantic spatial order was altered by the French Revolution. More research should amend and enrich what we have demonstrated in this volume. Taken together, the combination of these chapters highlights the careful interplay between the dynamics of the French Revolution and other causes of this shift or endurance of spatial formats. This volume includes an overview of how actors imagined space, how they implemented new ideas of societal organization, and how they mobilized older practices and concepts. In doing so, it also brings more actors and societies into the discussion than is usually the case. Moreover, this volume looks at the unintended consequences of the French Revolution and the way in which distant societies were, or were not, impacted. We hope that the perspectives elaborated here can be read as the latest contributions to the generational re-evaluation of the French Revolution and its significance and, more specifically, to the impact that the French Revolution has had on the spatial order of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and its enduring consequences.

# Part I: **Expanding the Scope of the French Revolution**

Manuel Covo

# 2 Why did France want Louisiana Back?

## Imperial Schemes, Political Economy, and Revolutionary Ventures in a Caribbean Borderland

What is a republican empire?[1] This was a question revolutionary France could not escape as it was fighting a world war for its survival in the 1790s. The Constituent Assembly recognized that all peoples had the right to self-determination, and under the impact of the Haitian Revolution, the National Convention abolished slavery, a central feature of European colonialism. The rule of law was supposed to prevail on a global stage. But the creation of sister republics in Europe and the Egyptian expedition of 1798 called into question the political meaning of the *Grande Nation*'s territorial expansion. Geopolitical realities reflected a more familiar international order in which a French centre dominated subordinate foreign peripheries in the name of "civilization". Did revolutionary France continue the Ancien Régime's imperial trajectory or was it guided by new messianic principles based on a republican ideology?

In this chapter, I address this classic historiographical topic by asking a simple question: why did France want Louisiana back? This focus might seem unconventional, since the colony, ceded to Spain at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1762, was acquired by First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte only in 1800, before being sold to the United States in 1803.[2] Historians have long known that Napoleon renounced Louisiana after his defeat by Haitian troops during

**1** I want to thank Megan Maruschke, Matthias Middell, Gilles Havard, and Rafe Blaufarb for their feedback on previous drafts of this chapter. I am particularly grateful to Pernille Røge for her insightful comments. The research for this chapter would not have been possible without the support of the Huntington Library.

**2** The diplomatic negotiations preceding the Louisiana Purchase caught the attention of many historians during the first half of the twentieth century. The major proponent of the "frontier thesis", Frederick Jackson Turner, was one of the first to explore the question. Since the 1970s, however, the topic has become somewhat "unfashionable". See F.J. Turner, "The Policy of France toward the Mississippi Valley in the Period of Washington and Adams", *American Historical Review* 10 (1905) 2, pp. 249–279; M.S. Fletcher, "Louisiana as a Factor in French Diplomacy from 1763 to 1800", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17 (1930) 3, pp. 367–376; A.P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795–1803: A Study in Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy*, New York, London: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934; E.W. Lyon, *Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759–1804*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934; A. DeConde, *This Affair of Louisiana*, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1976.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110619775-002

the War of Independence (1802/03), marking the end of his imperial ambitions in the Americas.[3] Haitians have been credited with indirectly paving the way for the Louisiana Purchase, but the impact of the French Caribbean on the history of Louisiana runs much deeper.[4] French imperial endeavours in North America were shaped by the political and economic circumstances of the West Indies, framed by British-French rivalries. Bonaparte himself had been pursuing a Caribbean policy that had been conceived by preceding regimes. Accordingly, analysing earlier plans for the retrocession of Louisiana opens a window into French imperial imaginations in the revolutionary decade.[5]

First, I argue that these projects were intended to serve the French West Indies and above all Saint-Domingue, the economic powerhouse of the Atlantic world. Because of the failure of the French-American alliance, Louisiana was envisioned to develop into the hinterland of the Antilles, becoming a military base as well as granary for the islands. In other words, it was to be the colony of colonies. From the end of the Seven Years' War to the outbreak of the French Revolution, the French monarchy had intentionally refocused the colonial empire on its island holdings and actively departed from its prior strategy of continental conquests. Yet, during the French Revolution, the French Republic broke with this "no territory" policy and pursued a reterritorialization agenda in order to consolidate its control over the circulation of goods and resources in

**3** David Geggus, however, pointed out that the risk of British invasion played a significant role. Among the more recent contributions on the topic: R.L. Paquette, "Revolutionary Saint Domingue in the Making of Territorial Louisiana", in: D.B. Gaspar and D.P. Geggus (eds.), *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 204–225; L. Dubois, "The Haitian Revolution and the Sale of Louisiana; or, Thomas Jefferson's (Unpaid) Debt to Jean-Jacques Dessalines", in: P.J. Kastor and F. Weil (eds.), *Empires of the Imagination: Transatlantic Histories of the Louisiana Purchase*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009, pp. 93–116; D.P. Geggus, "The Louisiana Purchase and the Haitian Revolution", in: E. Dillon and M. Drexler (eds.), *The Haitian Revolution and the Early U.S.: Histories, Textualities, Geographies*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, pp. 178–202.

**4** Cécile Vidal has recently unearthed the historical depth of that influence: C. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans: Empire, Race and the Making of a Slave Society*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

**5** This chapter builds on François Furstenberg's remarkable work. While Furstenberg examines the complex interaction between France and Louisiana to better understand the consolidation of the early American Republic, I analyze its impact on the history of the French Empire in the revolutionary decade; see F. Furstenberg, "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History", *The American Historical Review* 113 (2008) 3, pp. 647–677; F. Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation*, New York: The Penguin Press, 2014.

the empire.[6] Since Louisiana was described by the revolutionary elite as fundamentally French, this expansion was justified according to the notions of popular sovereignty and self-determination.

Second, I demonstrate that France's Louisiana policy was decentralized: administrators in the Caribbean, adventurers on the trans-Appalachian borderland, and Amerindian representatives participated in debates about political economy as well as the appropriation of revolutionary principles.[7] These actors contributed to defining French imperial objectives and strategies. I suggest that Foreign Minister Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand Périgord, who negotiated Louisiana's retrocession in 1800, was only the tip of the iceberg. He was the most visible spokesman in a complex policy-making process that included a multitude of other players and factors. This chapter, by challenging the chronological divide between a period of revolutionary fervour and a moment of counter-revolutionary backlash, situates the first French republican experience in a longer and broader colonial history.[8]

Since the end of the Seven Years' War, the French government had always regarded North America as secondary to its Caribbean interests. The treaty negotiations over colonial territories, following Britain's victory, and the resulting shifts in sovereignties made France's position very clear. Versailles abandoned Canada to the British for the surrender of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Louisiana was promised to Spain as a result of the new 1761 "Family Compact", which led the Bourbon monarchy into war against Britain.[9] Because the plantation economy in Louisiana had never really taken off, the French government perceived the colony as more expensive than profitable. Although the size of the claimed territory had been immense, the non-Indigenous population of French Louisiana had never exceeded 12,000 individuals – a pale figure compared to the 1.6 million free inhabitants of New England.[10] For the same

**6** For an analysis of Choiseul's "no territory" policy, see F.-J. Ruggiu, "India and the Reshaping of the French Colonial Policy (1759–1789)", *Itinerario* 35 (2011) 2, pp. 25–43.

**7** For the notion of "adventurer" in the borderlands, see D. Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire: The Struggle for Mastery in the Louisiana-Florida Borderlands, 1762–1803*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

**8** See, e.g., P.R. Girard, "Rêves d'Empire: French Revolutionary Doctrine and Military Interventions in the Southern United States and the Caribbean, 1789–1809", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 48 (2007) 4, pp. 389–412.

**9** Wilson, *Louisiana in French Diplomacy*, pp. 13–35.

**10** G.C. Din, "Empires Too Far: The Demographic Limitations of Three Imperial Powers in the Eighteenth-Century Mississippi Valley", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 50 (2009) 3, pp. 261–292, at p. 266.

reasons, the Spanish government was not very eager to take possession of a colony that was more likely to become a financial burden than an economic boon. However, Madrid saw this territory as a potential buffer and a barrier that would protect Mexico from an expanding British Empire. London accepted France's cession of Louisiana to Spain in exchange for Eastern Florida.

If the loss of Canada and Louisiana allowed Louis XV to preserve France's sovereignty over the sugar colonies, then it also raised a pressing question: how to supply islands whose needs for foodstuffs increased alongside their economic and demographic growth? Indeed, the French Antilles, and especially Saint-Domingue, thrived in the aftermath of the war. The western part of Hispaniola was not only the leading producer of sugar in the world but in 1767 it also exported 15.6 million pounds of coffee, twice as much as it had before 1756.[11] The island's growth in population made this economic expansion possible. Although many migrants came from France, the demographic increase was mostly due to the massive deportation of enslaved people from West Africa. Local crops such as yam and manioc as well as imports from France might have sufficed to feed the workforce in peacetime, but the French government, preparing itself for another war with Britain, viewed peace as an interlude. Since the powerful British navy was capable of cutting the West Indies off from Europe, the colonies needed regional sources of food.[12] Despite the outrage of metropolitan merchants, it was obvious that the hexagon would be unable to supply its West Indian colonies. In the past, Canada had helped meet the needs of the French Antilles, but this resource was no longer an option.[13] The islands had to rely on the consistent contraband trade from New England and the Dutch Caribbean, while irregular imports from France were ill-suited to local needs.[14]

These economic and geopolitical anxieties stimulated a great debate on the colonies among a variety of thinkers, including physiocrats. Was holding onto colonies less profitable than trading with foreign partners? Was slavery the

**11** T. Burnard and J. Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine: Atlantic Capitalism in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, p. 167.

**12** B. Mandelblatt "How Feeding Slaves Shaped the French Atlantic: Mercantilism and Food Provisioning in the Franco-Caribbean during the 17th and 18th centuries", in: P. Røge and S. Reinert (eds.), *The Political Economy of Empire in the Early Modern World*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2013, pp. 192–220.

**13** J. Mathieu, *Le Commerce entre la Nouvelle-France et les Antilles au XVIIIe siècle*, Montréal: Fides, 1981.

**14** D.B. Goebel, "The 'New England Trade' and the French West Indies, 1763–1774: A Study in Trade Policies", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 20 (1963) 3, pp. 332–372; W.G. Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998.

most cost-efficient form of labour? Should monopolies be abolished altogether?[15] The French debate on the political economy of empire was part of a global transformation that affected most of the Atlantic world after the Seven Years' War. Major changes in commercial regulations, driven by pragmatic concerns, took place simultaneously in all three major European empires. No government implemented unrestricted "free trade"; instead, London, Madrid, and Versailles granted privileges that relaxed specific aspects of their commercial legislations. Britain adopted the Free Port Act (1766), and Spain eventually reduced its monopoly with its Free Trade Act (1778).[16] The changes were not meant to implement some kind of *doux commerce*, a "gentle" form of commerce that, according to philosopher Montesquieu, was supposed to civilize people, make them more reliable, thrifty, and peaceful. In fact, the selective liberalization of trade had predatory aims. In each case, the real purpose was to provide cheap external resources and protect monopolies from foreign rivals. Just like its other European counterparts, the French *exclusif mitigé* (a moderate form of trade protectionism established in 1767) relied on the assumption that the monopoly remained the guardian of global trade.[17] The new legislation permitted the import and export of several minor products, such as timber or cod, whereas the foreign trade of sugar, coffee, indigo, and flour was prohibited.

Preserving French sovereignty over the West Indies and ensuring their protection and provisioning were the main reasons for the Franco-American alliance of 1778.[18] By breaking up the British Empire into rival powers, France made Saint-Domingue less vulnerable to conquest. In addition, through Article 11 of the treaty, the United States committed to "guarantee" the French possessions

**15** P. Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 168–194; A.F. Terjanian, *Commerce and its Discontents in Eighteenth-Century French Political Thought*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; P. Røge, "A Natural Order of Empire: The Physiocratic Vision of Colonial France after the Seven Years' War", in: Røge and Reinert (eds.), *The Political Economy of Empire*, pp. 32–52; C. Oudin-Bastide and P. Steiner, *Calcul et morale: Coûts de l'esclavage et valeur de l'émancipation (XVIIIe–XIXe siècle)*, Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2015.

**16** F. Armytage, *The Free Port System in the British West Indies, a Study in Commercial policy, 1766–1822*, London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1953; N. Hunt, "Contraband, Free Ports, and British Merchants in the Caribbean World, 1739–1772", *Diacronie* 1 (2013) 13 [Online]; R.L. Woodward, "Spanish Commercial Policy in Louisiana, 1763–1803", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 44 (2003) 2, pp. 133–164, at p. 148.

**17** J. Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime: l'évolution du régime de l'exclusif de 1763 à 1789*, Paris: PUF, 1972.

**18** M. Covo, *Commerce, empire et révolutions dans le monde atlantique: la colonie de Saint-Domingue, entre métropole et États-Unis (ca. 1778–ca. 1804)*, Diss. Paris, EHESS, 2013, pp. 80–142.

in the Americas. The new country was to become the breadbasket of the French Antilles, providing them with all kinds of foodstuffs. From this perspective, the United States was perceived as a client state subordinated to French colonial interests. France would avoid bearing the costs of direct administration and the emerging country would be able to meet Saint-Domingue's food needs. For this reason, the minister of foreign affairs, Charles Gravier de Vergennes, did not take any steps to recover Louisiana. The United States served France's colonial policy better than a costly French colony could. The revised *exclusif mitigé* (1784) was supposed to assimilate the new American Republic into the French colonial system. The French government hoped to maximize profit without jeopardizing metropolitan interests. A greater variety of goods could be legally imported into and exported from the French West Indies, but sugar, coffee, cotton, and flour remained out of foreign hands.[19]

This arrangement gradually crumbled for a variety of reasons. American traders were not content to exchange only authorized commodities. They smuggled on a large scale the most desirable and lucrative goods produced on the islands. Although the French colonial state was unable to ensure a steady flow of provisions to the islands, Versailles refused to implement a policy of "colonial neglect", which had been predominant in the previous centuries. The king had consented to relax this legislation, but the law was still enforced. The outcry of the French Chambers of Commerce against "American ingratitude" popularized the idea that Louis XVI had squandered the state's money on the American Revolutionary War. France had financed the independence of the United States and shed its blood for American liberty in vain; now the unthankful republic was looting France's wealth.[20]

It was in the light of this disappointment that the real possibility of Louisiana's retrocession surfaced for the first time. French diplomats and consuls in the United States were the first to articulate such a plan. They had witnessed the booming American contraband trade with the Antilles after the war, and they could only acknowledge their helplessness in preventing it from happening. In

**19** M. Covo, "Baltimore and the French Atlantic: Empires, Commerce, and Identity in a Revolutionary Age, 1783–1798", in: D. Pretel and A. Leonard (eds.), *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 87–107.

**20** P. Hill, "La suite imprévue de l'alliance: l'ingratitude américaine, 1783–1789", in: C. Fohlen and J. Godechot (eds.), *La Révolution américaine et l'Europe*, Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1979, pp. 385–398; A. Potofsky, "The Political Economy of the French-American Debt Debate: The Ideological Uses of Atlantic Commerce, 1787 to 1800", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63 (2006) 3, pp. 489–516; S. Marzagalli, "The Failure of a Transatlantic Alliance? Franco-American Trade, 1783–1815", *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008) 4, pp. 456–464.

1789, the French ambassador to the United States, Eléonor François Élie de Moustier, wrote a long memorandum arguing for a French Louisiana. The main motive was the protection of the kingdom's economic interests in the Caribbean. "As long as France is in possession of the islands", he explained, "it will be important for her to supply them as cheaply as possible, to open new markets for their commodities, and to exclude smuggling." The "embouchure of the Mississippi" could accomplish these three aims. Not only did Louisianans consume great quantities of sugar, coffee, and molasses, but their crops, Moustier emphasized, also met the needs of the French West Indies. In case of retrocession, "timber" and "cattle, horses, mules, sheep, salted beef, poultry of all kinds, form, corn, beans, peas, vegetables" would flow into Saint-Domingue, Martinique, and Guadeloupe.[21] Instead of importing flour from Philadelphia or Baltimore illegally, the French Antilles would find in New Orleans a convenient source for provisioning. This line of argument became the guideline of the Louisiana policy in the revolutionary decade.

Yet, the idea that a French Louisiana would be in a position to feed the Antilles is curious, to say the least. The trade between the French West Indies and Spanish Louisiana had already been legal since Madrid issued a *cédula* (royal decree) "granting new privileges for the encouragement of commerce" in 1782, but at no point did New Orleans export foodstuffs to the islands. The opposite was actually more often the case, since substantial quantities of French flour were re-exported from the Antilles to New Orleans.[22] Under French rule, Lower Louisiana had partly depended on external produce for its subsistence, either from the Illinois country (Upper Louisiana), the British colonies, or the metropole – in the rare years when French ships unloaded cargo in this imperial backwater. Although Louisiana imported goods from Saint-Domingue and Martinique and exported timber, corn, peas, and rice for some years, it was unable to return the trade in flour.[23] After Spain took over the colony, its dependence on external trade had remained a major feature of Louisiana's economy. While its production of tobacco tripled, Pennsylvanian foodstuffs fed its ever

**21** This quote and the following ones are translated from French, see Ministère des Affaires étrangères (MAE), Etats-Unis, supplément 7, fo. 279.

**22** The French West Indies were the main trading partners of New Orleans in 1786: 56 vessels entered the port that year, see J.G. Clark, *New Orleans, 1718–1812: An Economic History*, London: Pelican Publishing, 1970, p. 228.

**23** For a detailed account of the French Louisiana trade with the French West Indies, see: N.M. Miller Surrey, *The Commerce of Louisiana During the French Régime, 1699–1763*, New York: University of Columbia Press, 1916, pp. 367–387. For a focus on New Orleans: S. Lee Dawdy, "La Nouvelle Orléans au XVIIIe siècle: Courants d'échange dans le monde caraïbe", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 62 (2007) 3, pp. 663–685.

growing population.[24] Dozens of American merchants established themselves in New Orleans to conduct that trade. Although yearly wheat production in the Missouri country might have been between 7,600 and 9,000 barrels of flour, half of which reached New Orleans, this level was inadequate to feed the 8,000 inhabitants of New Orleans alone.[25] In commercial terms, the southern Mississippi Valley looked more like an embryonic West Indian colony than a thriving Mid-Atlantic state.

In fact, the geographic, political, and economic realities behind the region described as "Louisiana" were complex and heterogeneous. The 900,000 square miles of land claimed by Spain were significantly underpopulated: the non-Indigenous population never exceeded 40,000 people, a huge contrast to tiny Saint-Domingue and its 650,000 inhabitants.[26] But Louisiana was also an ill-defined borderland, in which Native Americans, Europeans, people of African descent, and settlers from the United States coexisted.[27] Most of these groups had overlapping loyalties and shifting allegiances in a context of constant imperial uncertainty.[28] For that matter, French diplomats could hardly ignore the multiethnic and multicultural demographics of the gigantic Mississippi basin. Since 1763, few Spaniards had migrated to what was supposed to be a buffer for New Spain, a vast territory whose boundaries were contested. Most white inhabitants were of French descent, a group that increased with the arrival of almost 3,000 Acadians between 1765 and 1786.[29] On the east bank of the Mississippi

**24** But tobacco production collapsed after the Spanish monarchy prohibited imports from Louisiana in 1789, see B. Coutts, "Boom and Bust: The Rise and Fall of the Tobacco Industry in Spanish Louisiana, 1770–1790", *The Americas* 42 (1986) 3, pp. 289–309.

**25** Clark, *New Orleans,* pp. 204, 210–212.

**26** Since the borders of the territory were contested by the British and the Americans, it was unclear whether Western Florida was part of "Spanish Louisiana". For the "Florida issue" and the multiple change of sovereignties, see J. Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999, pp. 69–70. For the demographic calculation, see P. LaChance, "The Louisiana Purchase in the Demographic Perspective of its Time", in: Kastor and Weil (eds.), *Empires of the Imagination,* pp. 143–179, p. 151.

**27** D.H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

**28** The best synthesis on the complex politics of Spanish Louisiana is S. Hilton, "Spanish Louisiana in Atlantic Contexts: Nexus of Imperial Transactions and International Relations", in: C. Vidal (ed.), *Louisiana, Crossroads of the Atlantic World*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, pp. 68–86.

**29** There was a significant number of colonists of German and Swiss descent as well. For the relocation of Acadians, see C. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765–1803*, p. 91; C. Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 195.

River – a territory disputed by Spain, Britain, and the United States – the loose confederations of Chickasaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and numerous "*petites nations*" were demographically powerful, but divided. Their total population might have been "in the neighborhood of 60,000 at the end of the eighteenth century".[30] The slave-based plantation economy was expanding at a slow pace, especially around New Orleans. Almost 8,000 enslaved people were deported from the Caribbean to Louisiana between 1783 and 1792 – a small figure compared to the 250,000 slaves who disembarked in Saint-Domingue between 1781 and 1790.[31] The fur trade and tobacco production, albeit in decline, remained dominant in the Attakapas country. Under Spanish rule, the most striking change was the considerable influx of American settlers from Kentucky and Tennessee, especially in Natchez County, where the population almost doubled between 1788 and 1795 (from 2,700 to 4,900).[32] The Spanish government partly encouraged this migration to counter British claims on the region, but it was rapidly overwhelmed by the magnitude of the phenomenon.[33] Well aware of this transimperial knot, the French government did not engage in any action that could bring about the retrocession of Louisiana.

But France's political climate changed in 1792. The Girondins, who now dominated the National Assembly, were particularly sensitive to the global dimension of the revolution and were looking for ways to dismantle the Spanish Empire.[34] As tensions with Madrid rose, a number of revolutionary "entrepreneurs" drafted secessionist plots involving French-speaking residents and settlers from the United States.[35] The major motive for Louisiana's retrocession, they all emphasized, should be the provisioning of the French Caribbean. A citizen of Kentucky, Captain Gilbert Imlay, proposed, for example, to launch a French invasion of the Spanish colony with the support of the United States in exchange for free navigation on the Mississippi. Louisiana was the "key

**30** Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question*, p. 68; E. Ellis, "Petite Nation with Powerful Networks: The Tunicas in the Eighteenth Century", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 58 (2017) 2, pp. 133–178.

**31** J.-P. Le Glaunec, "Slave Migrations and Slave Control in New Orleans", in: Kastor and Weil (eds.), *Empires of the Imagination*, p. 209.

**32** Clark, *New Orleans*, pp. 206–212.

**33** G.C. Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy in Louisiana and the American Penetration, 1792–1803", *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76 (1973) 3, pp. 255–276.

**34** M. Dorigny, "Brissot et Miranda en 1792: ou comment révolutionner l'Amérique espagnole", in: M. Dorigny and M.-J. Rossignol (eds.), *La France et les Amériques au temps de Jefferson et de Miranda*, Paris, Société des études robespierristes, 2001, pp. 93–105.

**35** I. Olivares, "Projets d'occupation des colonies hispano-américaines (1792–1793)", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* (1992) 288, pp. 201–221.

entry to Spanish possessions", he explained, and New Orleans could become the cradle of French privateering in the Gulf of Mexico.[36] François Lyonnet, who had spent many years in Louisiana, predicted that New Orleans would be in "several centuries, the most commercial city in the world". Maize, rice, and salted meat were to be transported from Ohio and Cumberland to the mouth of the Mississippi. Control of waterways was crucial to an effective imperial plan: the French would then be able to feed the West Indies. Therefore, "[t]he nation, which has been forced to abandon the provisioning of its islands to the Americans, might one day, with the help of Louisiana, do it herself".[37] The American "cosmopolitan patriot", poet Joel Barlow, designed a similar plan entitled "How to recover Louisiana without costing anything to the nation".[38] The "facility of provisioning the islands in all kinds of supplies and timber" was Louisiana's most appealing feature.[39]

In all of these writings, the plot was supposed to be implemented easily since "all *Louisianais* were French" – they were its "abandoned children".[40] Because of their Frenchness, explained the "Creole from Louisiana", Auguste de La Chaise "the planters in the Antilles will find among their generous Louisiana compatriots advances and facilities that they cannot expect from greedy and ungrateful Americans".[41] These revolutionary conspirators claimed that their sense of national belonging to the motherland had never faded since the revolt of 1768, when French-speaking merchants opposed the territory's cession to Spain and the implementation of its commercial monopoly.[42] "Thirty years of habit under a government foreign to their hearts has

**36** MAE, Correspondance Politique (CP), Espagne, 634, fo. 462.

**37** MAE, CP Etats-Unis supplément 7, fo. 11.

**38** For Barlow and his involvement in the French Revolution, see P. Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Patriots: Americans in Paris in the Age of Revolution*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010, pp. 64–87.

**39** MAE, CP Espagne 636, fo. 391, 3 frimaire Year 2.

**40** MAE, CP Etats-Unis supplément 7, fo. 17.

**41** MAE, CP Espagne 637, fo. 344.

**42** C. Vidal, "De Province à colonie et de Français à Louisianais", in: C. Vidal (ed.), *Français? La nation en débat entre colonies et métropole*, XVIe–XIXe siècle, Paris, Éditions EHESS, 2013, p. 77–104. The Frenchness associated with the colony not only survived the Louisiana Purchase, but also grew more salient after its annexation by the United States, see P. J. Kastor, "'They Are All Frenchmen'. Background and Nation in an Age of Transformation", in: Kastor and Weil (eds.), *Empires of the Imagination*, pp. 239–267; F. Weil, "The Purchase and the Making of French Louisiana", ibid., pp. 302–326.

not weakened their attachment to their mother country", Lyonnet explained. He further stated, "[d]o we want to irk a child or punish him, just call him Spanish."[43]

This rhetoric of Frenchness had become a compelling argument because it incorporated the revolutionary principle of self-determination. Indeed, the National Assembly regarded Louis XV's cession of Louisiana to Spain as the epitome of monarchical despotism. When discussing the status of Corsica in relation to France, Deputy Charles Alexis Brûlart de Sillery lamented that the abandonment of North America, this "dismemberment", had happened "without the consent of the nation".[44] Popular sovereignty was no longer compatible with older patterns of treaty-making. The inalienability of French territory should now include the colonies as integral parts of the kingdom. The revolutionary government did not completely discard the idea that this legal principle could induce some retroactive effect. In the aftermath of the annexation of Avignon by local referendum in September 1791, the "return" of Louisiana within the political community of a regenerated France now appeared legitimate.[45] This sense of national belonging and its recognition as a valid principle challenged the long history of European colonialism.

The plan eventually took shape after the outbreak of the French-Spanish war, with Edmond Charles Genet's posting to the United States in 1793. The young ambassador, famous in American history books for his flamboyant speeches and his impetuous decisions, enthusiastically embraced the proposal for undertaking a military expedition.[46] Petitions from French-speaking residents and the creation of a local Jacobin Club emboldened Genet to take action. The ambassador received a number of intrigants who had many ideas to offer on the topic. The merchant from New Orleans Charles de Pauw, the officer Auguste de La Chaise, and the adventurer George Clark plotted the secession of the colony.[47] Striking Louisiana, Spain's weakest point, would accelerate the expected disintegration of its empire. Genet circulated an inflammatory pamphlet from "the Freemen of France to their brothers in Louisiana", hoping to rally behind him as

**43** MAE, CP Etats-Unis supplément 7, fo. 15.

**44** *Archives parlementaires*, vol. 12, 30 November 1789, p. 336.

**45** E. Kolla, *Sovereignty, International Law and the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 84–120.

**46** The bibliography on Genet is immense, for the most recent account and specific references, see Furstenberg, *When The United States Spoke French*, pp. 286–348.

**47** E. Liljegren, "Jacobinism in Spanish Louisiana, 1792–1797", *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 22 (1939) 1, pp. 47–97, esp. pp. 49–59. The more recent scholarship has made the case that the enthusiasm for the French Revolution was less widespread than previously thought.

many supporters as possible. Clark was to launch an attack, which nearly materialized in early 1794, but like almost all of Genet's attempts, the plan failed miserably.[48] First, the United States federal government, after hearing of the plan, prevented the raising of American troops due to fear of getting embroiled in an undesired war with Spain. Second, Governor Francisco Luis Hector de Carondelet strengthened Spain's military defence of the colony and cracked down on Jacobin activists. Third, after the elimination of the Girondin faction in France in June 1793, the new Montagnard government condemned Genet's activities in North America.

Yet, new geopolitical circumstances made Louisiana relevant again for French imperial interests. Alliances shifted in 1795: the so-called backward Iberian monarchy reluctantly entered into the French orbit and the American "sister republic" came short of being labelled as an enemy. Not only was Spain defeated by republican France and forced to make peace in Basel, but it also became enmeshed in the global war against Britain as a result of the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1796). At the same time, the Franco-American alliance gradually disintegrated: although George Washington had issued a proclamation of neutrality, he negotiated a treaty with Great Britain – the Jay Treaty (November 1794) – which confirmed the rapprochement between the early American Republic and its former "motherland". To make things worse for France, federalist John Adams defeated Francophile Thomas Jefferson during the presidential elections of 1796. Moreover, the relationship between Spain and the early American Republic was warming up after years of tacit enmity. In spite of French grievances, Manuel Godoy, the Spanish chief of government, relented to American pressures, ceding the east bank of the Mississippi to the United States and legalizing free navigation of the river. Access to New Orleans' entrepôt promised to further expand US commerce in the Gulf of Mexico. This trend was enhanced by the opening of Spanish colonies to neutral trade two years later. As a result, vessels under US and British flags swarmed Spanish ports in the Americas at an unprecedented level.[49]

**48** F.J. Turner, "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas", *The American Historical Review* 3 (1898) 4, pp. 650–671; Furstenberg, *When The United States Spoke French*, pp. 303–309.

**49** B. Perkins, *The First Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1795–1805*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955; A. DeConde, *Entangling Alliance: Politics & Diplomacy under George Washington*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1958; A.J. Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007; R. Woodward, "Louisiana Commercial Policy", p. 158.

Under these regional circumstances, the rationale for the retrocession of Louisiana transformed under the French Directory (1795–1799). The republican government became increasingly concerned about the growing power of what it called a "British-American league". The aim of retrocession was no longer the creation of a pro-French independent republic allied to the United States and hostile to Spain. Now the French worried about an Anglo-American invasion of the continent since French political and diplomatic elites all strongly believed that the Spanish Empire was about to collapse. The Black Legend was alive and well in most officials' reports: Spanish weakness stemming from their inherent "indolence" and "laziness", they wrote, could offer little resistance to enterprising and greedy Americans. The irony is that Spanish Louisiana had eventually boomed after decades of stagnation under French rule, but that growth was mostly due to the influx of American settlers. The suspicion that minutemen collaborated with British diplomats to scheme for the invasion of Louisiana from Canada was well-founded. A senator from Tennessee, William Blount, had conspired to do just that. Yet, French intelligence unveiled the plot, leading to the politician's impeachment.[50] In fact, Foreign Minister Charles Delacroix was more worried about a softer form of Anglo-imperialism, characterized by two non-military features: the spontaneous migration of American settlers from Kentucky and what he called "the power of the English language". Yet, France's early success in the European wars also fuelled bombastic rhetoric. "Of all the maritime powers", Delacroix boasted, "France alone, allied with Spain, can oppose a counter-weight to England, stop the progress of the English language and the Anglo-American influence."[51]

The major push for retrocession came from the republican administrators in the French West Indies, especially Saint-Domingue. Indeed, France's policy on Louisiana could not be disentangled from the course of the Haitian Revolution and its broader commercial and political consequences. In 1789, US vessels had flocked to Saint-Domingue's ports, taking advantage of rapidly decreasing imports of foodstuffs from a metropole in the grip of a devastating grain crisis. The slave insurrection of 1791, and, even more significantly, the outbreak of maritime war with Britain in 1793, established the hegemony of US commerce on Saint-Domingue. While the British occupied part of the island between 1793 and 1798, the French republican government struggled to secure the necessary provisioning of the colony. They had to face many challenges: the revolution shattered the economic infrastructure of the plantation complex; the abolition of

**50** D. Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, pp. 234–241.
**51** MAE, CP Etats-Unis 45, fo. 186.

slavery in the fall of 1793 decreased the plantations' workforce as many of the "newly free" enrolled in the military; and sugar production was destroyed while coffee exports decreased significantly. The republicans proved unable to exchange colonial products equivalent to the value of food imports from the Americans. Dependency on US trade was all the more unbearable as American merchants preferred trading with the parts of Saint-Domingue occupied by the British, where slavery was still enforced.[52]

The French authorities who had to deal with this commercial dependency clamoured for a Louisiana solution. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax and Etienne Polverel, the civil commissioners who proclaimed the abolition of slavery in Saint-Domingue, acknowledged their own helplessness in August 1794. They were fleeing Port-au-Prince under British siege when they wrote one of their final reports:

> The territory and the inhabitants of Louisiana were ceded by our old despots, as an owner would sell his estate and the cattle attached to it. The inhabitants of Louisiana still have the French soul and regret more than ever their old country. This colony is in a position to supply our West Indies with all the objects of subsistence which they now derive from America. Without this competition, our West Indies will inevitably be delivered to the exclusive trade of the United States.[53]

The commissioners employed the now common "Frenchness argument", but, more pointedly, they warned against the emergence of an informal American empire based on de facto exclusive trade. French Louisiana, by opening other sources of supply, would thwart the monopolistic ambitions of the United States. Most colonial administrators and diplomats who had to coordinate the provisioning of the colonies embraced this policy. Jean-Antoine Joseph Fauchet and Pierre Auguste Adet, Genet's successors in Philadelphia, both called for retrocession. Adet, a former member of the Colonial Bureau in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, was particularly sensitive to the issue: he himself had been part of the first civil commission sent to Saint-Domingue in 1791. He appointed a former governor of Guadeloupe, Victor Collot, to explore the feasibility of a Louisiana annexation in 1796.[54] Donatien de Rochambeau, who had been the governor in Martinique and who would later play an infamous role in the Haitian War of Independence, also hoped that Louisiana would "help

**52** M. Covo, "Commerce, empire et révolutions", pp. 508–547.

**53** Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM), CC9a 9, "Rapport de Polverel et Sonthonax", 13 August 1794.

**54** V. Collot, "General Collot's Plan for a Reconnaissance of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, 1796", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 9 (1952) 4, pp. 512–520.

restore the colonies".[55] In short, the chorus of colonial officials almost unanimously encouraged retrocession.

Ministers in Paris heard their subordinates and endeavoured to recover Louisiana through diplomatic means. During the negotiations with the Spanish in Basel, Delacroix asked Godoy for the west bank of Mississippi, but only acquired the eastern part of Hispaniola, Santo Domingo.[56] This underpopulated colony provided Saint-Domingue with cattle, an essential commodity; yet it could not supply much more by itself.[57] The Spanish trade with the French West Indies, either legal or illegal, had always existed, but it could not compare with and substitute US provisioning. The government postponed the actual annexation of Santo Domingo for fear of creating new problems with a colony that had responded quite unenthusiastically to the Haitian Revolution.[58] But because Louisiana was out of reach for the time being, the secretary of the navy insisted that the Spanish alliance should be taken advantage of: alternate sources of supply could be found in Puerto Rico and Caracas.[59] The government hoped that trade flows would expand. However, republican authorities were met with hostility from the Cuban governor, while Spanish merchants showed little interest in trading with republican Saint-Domingue for political and commercial reasons.[60] On the one hand, they did not really want to help consolidate an abolitionist colony; on the other hand, they preferred exchanging goods with Americans or British captains, whose trade was more lucrative.[61] Cuba, the eastern part of Saint-Domingue, and Puerto Rico did provide convenient ports for French privateering, but they did not open reliable trade routes

**55** MAE, CP EU 45, fo. 72, Rochambeau to the government, 3 pluviôse an IV (23 January 1796).

**56** A.P. Whitaker, "Louisiana in the Treaty of Basel", *The Journal of Modern History* 8 (1936) 1, pp. 1–26.

**57** F. Franklyn, "Juxtaposition et interaction des deux colonies française et espagnole à la veille de la révolution", in: A. Yacou (ed.), *Saint-Domingue espagnol et la révolution nègre d'Haiti*, Paris: Karthala, 2007, pp. 71–79.

**58** I. Olivares-Iribarren, "La cession de Santo-Domingo à la France (1795–1802)", *Mélanges de la Casa de Velazquez* 30 (1994) 2, pp. 49–75; Y. Benot, "Comment Santo Domingo n'a pas été occupé par la République française en 1795–1796", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* (1998) 311, pp. 79–87. On the relationship between both parts of the island during the Haitian Revolution, see G. Nessler, *An Islandwide Struggle for Freedom: Revolution, Emancipation, and Reenslavement in Hispaniola, 1789–1809*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016, pp. 23–133.

**59** ANOM, CC9a 14, Truguet to Delacroix, May 1796.

**60** For the context of that relationship with Cuba, see A. Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 31–145.

**61** ANOM, CC9a 14, Rondineau to Truguet, 5 messidor Year IV.

for the hungry republican *département* (department).[62] The Spanish alliance was doomed to disappoint in the long run. As stated in a memo to Director Jean-François Reubell: "We may regret that instead of the Spanish part of Saint-Domingue, we have not asked for Louisiana."[63]

But what would this retrocession mean for French republicanism and the revolution that the Directory attempted to consolidate? The answer to this question sparked much more controversy. Foreign Minister Delacroix asserted that the "commercial independence" provided by retrocession would reinforce and feed off the "general emancipation of blacks". The combined effects of these radical measures would provide France with "great power" in the "Mexican archipelago" and the "capacity to open or close all ports to Americans, at all times".[64] In that sense, revolutionary fervour was clearly viewed as an imperial and pragmatic tool. But the French emissary to Santo Domingo, Philippe Rose Roume de Saint Laurent, pointed out the many political and even constitutional difficulties that a Louisiana retrocession would create. Roume, a native of British Grenada, had been governor of French Tobago in the 1780s and a special envoy to Saint-Domingue in 1791: his long colonial résumé gave him authority in all things related to the Caribbean. In 1796, he authored a report that analysed whether France should attempt to exchange Santo Domingo for Louisiana, balancing the pros and cons. Roume listed the usual arguments in favour of retrocession – the economic incentive and the supposed Frenchness of the colony. He also mentioned that Louisiana could facilitate French smuggling with other parts of the Spanish Empire and spark revolutions around the Gulf of Mexico.[65] Yet, according to him, the counterarguments should prevail. If a general insurrection happened "sooner than necessary" in Spanish America, "it would entirely turn to the advantage of England and the United States" because French merchants would not be in a position to compete with Anglo-American rivals. National interest required "that Spain keeps this gigantic domain of the New World as long as possible". Roume also pointed out how damaging the move could be for French republicanism. Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution of Year III (1795) had made colonies integral parts of the republic as French departments and prohibited the cession of any territory considering that colonies were to be legally "assimilated" to the metropole. Stationed in

**62** M. E. Orozco-Melgar, "Cuba et les îles sous-le-vent : la course comme facteur identitaire", in: Ch. Lerat (ed.), *Le monde caraïbe: défis et dynamiques. Géopolitique, intégration régionale, enjeux économiques*, Bordeaux: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, 2005, pp. 97–116.

**63** MAE, CP Etats-Unis 45, fo. 343–344.

**64** MAE, CP Etats-Unis 45, fo. 186.

**65** MAE, CP Etats-Unis supplément 7, fo. 28–29.

Madrid before being sent to Santo Domingo, Roume had better knowledge of the Spanish Empire's sociopolitical realities and was one of the only officials who looked beyond the cliché of "pro-French Louisianans". He observed that the colony was politically incompatible with republican Saint-Domingue. The planters, he emphasized, were "strongly infatuated with all European and colonial aristocracies. They consider the enfranchisement of the African people as a crime of property [*crime de lèse-propriété*], and since the beginning of the revolution they have hanged and broken hundreds of blacks, suspected of wanting to rebel".[66]

Roume made an important point: the French and Haitian revolutions made many white Francophone residents more amenable to Spanish rule, while the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and the abolition of slavery were an inspiration to people of African descent, who were well-connected with unofficial networks of information.[67] As France had decreed the abolition of slavery for the entirety of its empire, the annexation would threaten a bustling economy increasingly based on sugar and cotton.[68] Although the Directory and West Indian officials wanted the colony to become the granary of the islands, local elites envisioned a completely different future for Louisiana. This tension materialized with the influx of refugees from Saint-Domingue who were fleeing the insurrection. At this point, most white colonists had chosen to move to Atlantic seaports in the United States and only several hundred people resettled in Louisiana, but this number was significant in a sparsely populated colony. Most were active participants in New Orleans' Francophone culture yet were hostile to French republicanism.[69] Planters came with unwelcome enslaved people, *los negros franceses* (the French blacks), who, according to Spanish authorities, threatened to incite rebellion. The Haitian Revolution could potentially destabilize the fabric of an already volatile society.

The *cabildo* (the municipal council), which hoped to keep Saint-Domingue's radicalism at bay, lobbied the governor to prohibit the entry of slave trading ships from the Caribbean and prevent the "infestation" of local slaves by subversive ideas. Indeed, two aborted slave revolts in the Pointe Coupée parish had created

**66** MAE, CP Etats-Unis supplément 7, fo. 29–30.

**67** J. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*, New York: Verso, 2018.

**68** Garretson, *New Orleans, 1718–1812*, pp. 217–218.

**69** The bulk of refugees arrived in 1809, but those who were there in the 1790s already played an important cultural role: they had a theatre, their own newspaper, *le Moniteur de la Louisiane*, etc. See A. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1988, pp. 46–47, 67–68.

much anxiety. The planters blamed the revolution for the slave conspiracy of 1795, which was rapidly thwarted and brutally repressed.[70] Free people of colour, whose legal and economic circumstances differed substantially from those of the enslaved, were also suspected of being "infected" with French revolutionary ideas. Free *pardo* Pierre Bailly, a member of the local militia of African descent, was indicted twice for pro-French and radical sympathies: once in September 1791 and again in May 1794.[71] Bailly was eventually sentenced to spend several years in a Cuban prison. Governor Carondelet shrewdly utilized these incidents to foster a paranoid propaganda thriving on constant rumours of unrest. Although most French officials paid little attention to these diverging perspectives, it is rather unsurprising that local responses to revolutionary ideas and French imperial schemes differed across social and racial lines.

Taking into account the relationship of Amerindian polities to the French Empire adds additional layers of complication. Choctaws, Chickasaws, Osages, Upper and Lower Creeks, and many other *petites nations* were not equally affected by European endeavours. They did not share the same interests, pursuing different agendas in a variety of geographical settings. Most groups, though, had to play a risky game with the imperial powers competing for dominance over the Mississippi Valley. They attempted to reshape the terms of their existing treaties with the Spaniards but were also losing ground in their ability to contain American settlers' invasion into their lands. Interest in negotiating was originally mutual: the Spanish had attempted to replicate the older French system of alliances with Amerindians in order to combat common enemies, either British or Americans. But the Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795) between Spain and the United States had devastating consequences on Indian nations as Madrid relented to American claims on the northern borderlands of West Florida (today's Alabama and Mississippi). Amerindians had not been invited to international negotiations although they lost most of the rights and guarantees they had obtained from Louisiana's governors. After ceding territories to

**70** Historians are still debating the breadth of the conspiracy and the role of the Haitian Revolution in the revolt. See J.D.L. Holmes, "The Abortive Slave Revolt at Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, 1795", *Louisiana History* (1970), pp. 341–362; G.M. Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth-Century*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995, pp. 343–380; G.C. Din, "Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves: Louisiana in 1795", *Louisiana History* 38 (1997) 1, pp. 5–28.

**71** K. Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties: The French Revolution and Free People of Color in Spanish Louisiana", *Louisiana History* 34 (1993) 1, pp. 5–33, at p. 23.

the United States, the Cherokees, for instance, started migrating westward and made a request for Spanish lands west of the Mississippi.[72]

As their options decreased, French ambitions for Louisiana offered Indigenous communities a glimpse of hope and even an opportunity to reverse the tide. This was the major motive of François Tastanegy, the "great chief of the Creek nation", when he "crossed the seas" "to fetch enemies to Americans and friends to France".[73] Speaking in the name of the *sauvages* (savages), he submitted a series of plans to the French revolutionary governments and managed to play a decisive role in shaping Talleyrand's Louisiana policy.[74] Before being conferred a Creek name, Jean-Antoine Leclerc de Milfort (or Louis Milfort) was born in Ardennes in 1752. At the age of 23, he had migrated to North America in search of adventure, but unlike Gilbert Motier de Lafayette, he did not sympathize with the cause of the American patriots. Instead, he started living among the Upper Creeks in the north of current day Montgomery, Alabama, and even took part in Creek expeditions against the English and the Americans. The most consequential event in Milfort's life was his encounter with Alexander McGillivray, whose father was Scottish and whose mother was half Creek and half French but who was regarded as fully Creek in this matrilineal society.[75] McGillivray's exceptional diplomatic skills propelled him to become the uncontested leader of the Creek confederation by carving out a space for a nation surrounded by American settlers in Georgia and Tennessee, Spaniards of Louisiana, and English colonists. Thanks to his feats on the battlefield and, more importantly, to McGillivray's influence, Milfort had been named "Great War Chief" (or Tastanegy) after a meeting held by the assembly governing the

**72** S. Hilton, "Spanish Louisiana in Atlantic Contexts", p. 85.

**73** MAE, CP Etats-Unis Supplément 7, fo. 135.

**74** Tastanegy first met with Fauchet, the French ambassador in Philadelphia in 1795. He crossed the Atlantic and started lobbying the Committee of Public Safety, future Consul Jean-Jacques Régis de Cambacérès, Minister Delacroix, and afterwards Minister Talleyrand. He was even named "brigadier general". He wrote a semi-autobiographical pamphlet, whose purpose was to remind Bonaparte of Louisiana in 1802. Although the document contains a significant number of mistakes, it remains a great source of information on Creek life in the late eighteenth century. It was republished in C. Buchet, *Chef de guerre chez les Creeks*, Paris: France-Empire, 1994.

**75** C. Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 67–89; K. Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*, New York: Random House, 2015, esp. pp. 24–34.

Creek confederation.[76] Although his trajectory might sound extraordinary, Milfort was actually just one of the numerous "Indianized" French people who embraced a lifestyle away from European societies.[77] This phenomenon had been frequent in French North America and did not entirely end with the cession of 1762. Yet, the prominence of Tastanegy in such a powerful Amerindian polity was more remarkable. McGillivray had led a war against Georgia and negotiated treaties with the Spanish governor, but he passed away in 1793. Tastanegy, who was the widower of McGillivray's sister and whose influence probably suffered, now had to take a chance with the French. Although Tastanegy certainly meant to advance his career, his plan should not be discarded as merely opportunistic. There is some level of uncertainty as to the legitimacy of his claims as a formal Creek representative, but being a broker between two worlds, he was particularly well-positioned to serve his adopted people's interests.

Using "we" to alternatively describe the French and the Creeks, he encouraged the Directory to claim Louisiana and stop United States' commercial and territorial expansion, not only in North America but more pressingly in the West Indies. Tastanegy's plan connected Amerindians' interests with those of Saint-Domingue and republican France. Like many others before him, he warned that the trade of the American Republic, if unchecked, would irreversibly "submerge the French Antilles", whereas Louisiana could supply timber, cattle, and mules. More originally, he made the prescient suggestion that the "twenty thousand" white refugees who had poured into US cities from Saint-Domingue should resettle in Louisiana and contribute to its economic growth. "A healthy policy", he wrote, "should not allow great white owners to return to our islands where they made war on blacks. An eternal enmity will divide colours that have fought each other; the result of this enmity will be an interminable war, which the blacks themselves will never forgive."[78] Tastanegy believed that the French Republic could pursue a coherent humanitarian and economically wise policy by striking up an alliance with Indians. Regardless that some

**76** This uncommon title revealed the transformation of the Creek regime into a more centralized polity at the end of the eighteenth century, see J. Swanton, *Forty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1928, pp. 40–41.

**77** The "Indianization" was not necessarily complete: in most cases, it involved what Gilles Havard calls "multi-identity" and a "flexible sense of cultural belonging". See G. Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660–1715*, Sillery: Les éditions du Septentrion, 2003, pp. 545–548.

**78** In that regard, Tastanegy could not be more prescient: after the end of the Haitian War of Independence, Saint-Domingue's refugees migrated in droves to Louisiana.

Creeks, including McGillivray, had many black slaves,[79] he viewed the Creek-French alliance as the counterpart of the abolition of slavery. Again, very prophetically, he ended his letter to the Directory with a warning: the United States "base their prosperity on the total destruction of the true owners of America". Tastanegy's proposals received laudatory reviews from multiple ministers. Laurent Truguet, the secretary of the navy, expressed his enthusiasm for a plan that not only promised "the future prosperity of our trade and our colonies, but also great means of opposing the brazen ambition of the London court and the better disguised one of the American government".[80]

Tastanegy's project reflected an expectation shared by many Native groups in North America. Nostalgia for the "French alliance" had been a predominant feature of Indian politics since the loss of Montreal in the early 1760s. The French, who had the same colonial ambitions as their European rivals, had by no means been disinterested benefactors, but because of their dependence on their Native allies and their demographic inferiority, they had also developed relationships that were less unequal and less destructive than their British counterparts. "Don't abandon your children", implored countless Native leaders in the Illinois country.[81] This explained why the rumour of *Onontio*'s return sparked much enthusiasm in the Great Lakes region in 1798 and 1799, as the news of French-Spanish negotiations on the retrocession circulated across North America. *Onontio* (the "Great Mountain") had been the designation of New France's governor.[82] The new foreign minister in Paris, Talleyrand, who had spent several years in Philadelphia as a political exile and a land speculator, was well aware of Amerindians' inclinations and paid close attention to Tastanegy's offer.[83]

Talleyrand, however, was an unlikely proponent of the retrocession. In the past, he had made repeatedly clear that the independence of American colonies was not only inevitable but would also prove to be profitable to European metropoles. While in London in 1792, before moving to the United States, he expounded on "the true principles of public wealth". To his mind, the "two empires" should sign a convention "which must have the goal of the

**79** D. Littlefield, *Africans and Creeks*, Westwood: London Greenwood Press, 1979, pp. 26–31.
**80** MAE, CP Etats-Unis 45, fo. 221, 18 ventôse Year IV.
**81** G. Havard and C. Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française*, Paris: Flammarion, 2008, pp. 677–678.
**82** R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 450–451.
**83** Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French*, pp. 235–238, 252–253.

independence of their respective colonies". In addition, he thought that Britain and France should "gather their common efforts" to facilitate the independence of Peru and Mexico.[84] As we know, this alliance never came to fruition, but four years later, back in France, he still believed that the greatest commercial revolution should happen. As a member of the Institut national des sciences et des arts, in the "political economy" department, he delivered several speeches regarding the future of *colonisation nouvelle* (new colonization) in the Age of Abolition. According to him, France should turn to Africa, break away from a labour regime founded on slavery, and embrace a policy that did not necessarily involve territorial occupation.[85] In his *Mémoire sur l'histoire des relations commerciales des Etats-Unis avec l'Angleterre*, he acknowledged that the political independence of the United States did not hurt British economic interests in any way. Cultural ties, not legal monopolies, were the real foundations of a global trade based on credit and "trust". The "English language" was a more powerful commercial tool than conquest or prohibitive regimes.

Therefore, it might sound surprising that Talleyrand strongly supported the retrocession, since Louisianans were supposed to be French at heart and probably keener to trade with France. Yet, Talleyrand also believed that the former colony, if it remained under Spanish tutelage, would be demographically, if not militarily, invaded by their ambitious neighbours; the retrocession was to prevent the hegemony of an Anglo-American empire. The "Americans want to dominate alone in America and to exert a preponderant influence on the political system of Europe".[86] At the same time, the French representative assemblies were debating the future of the French colonial empire and in particular its commercial regime. After months of bitter deliberations, deputies passed the Law of 1 January 1798, which reaffirmed the validity of the abolition decree and re-established the *exclusif colonial* (the colonial monopoly).[87] Once again, Americans were legally excluded from the French West Indian trade. Talleyrand and the Legislature came to the same conclusion but through very different routes. On the one hand, the minister wanted to experiment with *colonisation nouvelle* and prevent an Anglo-American hegemony; on the other

**84** MAE, CP Angleterre 585, fo. 181.

**85** P. Røge, "'La clef de commerce' – The Changing Role of Africa in France's Atlantic Empire ca. 1760–1797", *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008) 4, pp. 431–443.

**86** MAE, CP Espagne 652, fo. 335, prairial an VI.

**87** B. Biancardini, "L'opinion coloniale et la question de la relance de Saint-Domingue 1795–1802", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* (2015) 382, pp. 63–80.

hand, the Councils advocated a monopolistic approach.[88] Both branches of government, however, agreed on one point: France needed Louisiana.

After years of stalemate, the pace of diplomatic twists and turns accelerated. These last chapters, during which the metropole increasingly lost control over American affairs, are better known. The relationship with the United States deteriorated even more due to the republican administrators' privateering activities in the Caribbean. Commissioners in Saint-Domingue and Guadeloupe raided American commerce in unprecedented ways, in spite of Talleyrand's repeated calls for moderation. After the corruption scandal of the XYZ Affair, the animosity turned into a "quasi-war".[89] Faced with the rise of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his alliance with John Adams in 1799, the government made the retrocession of Louisiana its priority.[90] For years, this plan had come to naught because the Spanish were still clinging to their colony, and the French were unwilling to antagonize their reluctant allies; the reversal of Madrid's policy in October 1800 could not have been more timely. The Spanish government secretly agreed to the cession after the Constitution of Year VIII (1799) had established that the colonies would be governed through *des lois particulières* (particular laws), which made the preservation of slavery in Louisiana legally possible. The official retrocession of Louisiana occurred in 1803 after the colony had been sold to the Americans. Many years of debates and tergiversations resulted in the short-lived French sovereignty, which evaporated in just three weeks. The Louisiana dream dissolved at the Battle of Vertières (18 November 1803) when Haitian armies defeated Bonaparte's troops and chased the French out of North America. But Saint-Dominguan refugees would massively migrate to American Louisiana in the coming years, especially after their expulsion from Cuba in 1809 – a result of Napoleon's invasion of Spain.[91] This refugee population would leave a deep imprint on Louisiana during the nineteenth century and beyond.

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**88** On the idea of "colonisation nouvelle", see B. Gainot, "La Décade et la 'colonisation nouvelle'", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* (2005) 339, pp. 99–116; M. Dorigny and B. Gainot, *La colonisation nouvelle (fin XVIIIe–début XIXe siècles)*, Paris: APECE, 2018.

**89** The bibliography on these events is enormous but dated. See, e.g., U. Bonnel, *La France, les États-Unis et la guerre de course (1797–1815)*, Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, 1961; A. DeConde, *The Quasi-War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1797–1801,* New York: Scribner, 1966; W. Stinchcombe, *The XYZ Affair*, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1980.

**90** On the alliance, see R.A. Johnson, *Diplomacy in Black and White: John Adams, Toussaint Louverture, and Their Atlantic World Alliance*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014.

**91** N. Dessens, *From Florida to New Orleans: Migrations and Influences*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2010; A. White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 166–202.

## Conclusion

Why France desired the retrocession of Louisiana was not self-evident. For years, the French monarchy had paid little attention to the colony it had abandoned in 1762, but this neglect ended with the French Revolution. First, with the encouragement of the Girondin government and at the request of many intrigants, Genet fell short of carrying out a military expedition in support of a pro-French secession of the territory. Then, the Directory took consistent diplomatic steps to recover the colony from its new – and reluctant – Spanish ally, although the strategy only paid off when Bonaparte became first consul. The principle of self-determination justified the French claim over Louisiana: its people were supposed to be constitutively French and to wish for annexation by France. Among a significant fraction of the population, these feelings of national belonging, albeit fluid and ambivalent, were real. Republicanism too was meaningful to a variety of Louisianans.

Yet, the political economy of empire drove France's Louisiana policy. Establishing an anchor on the continent would, officials imagined, break Saint-Domingue's commercial dependence on the United States, which was increasingly seen as a hostile offshoot of the British Empire. This priority stemmed from demands articulated on the ground: diplomatic personnel in the United States and colonial administrators in the West Indies played a decisive role in the process. They were the ones who had been dealing with the food dependence of the Antilles for more than a decade. Although they were searching for urgent remedies related to their survival, they also looked back on a French imperial golden age that had never existed, an elusive time of self-sufficiency. For the same reason, nostalgia for the French-Indian system of treaties re-emerged, as Native Americans sought new allies to contain United States encroachment.

Whether the reterritorialization of empire would consolidate or weaken French republicanism remained unclear, since a French Louisiana could expand the revolution on the continent or trigger a counter-revolutionary push-back. In this sense, the history of the French colonial empire during the revolutionary decade is that of a laboratory that cannot not be reduced to a simple clash between colonialism and anti-colonialism. This period of "new colonization" replayed age-old ideas in an ever changing geopolitical context. An imperial obsession, however, was left hanging in the air: Saint-Domingue, the source of wealth and power, that never disappeared from revolutionary imaginations, with or without slavery.

Damien Tricoire

# 3 The French Revolution as a Period of Territorialization of the Colonial Empire? A Southern Indian Ocean Perspective

Usually, the French Revolution is described as the beginning of something: of modern France, of human rights, and of French centralization. The French Revolution is supposed to have created the French nation and the French territorial state. According to the old story, the Ancien Régime experienced numerous contradictions, which were solved by the French Revolution. The French Revolution is considered to have unified Frenchmen and homogenized its territory.

There is some truth to this story. The territories ruled by the French king were far from being homogeneous before 1789, and centralization and homogenization were critical aims during the French Revolution.[1] The overseas "establishments" – as they were mostly called – had a very different character. Some were only trading posts, others were plantation colonies with a large slave and freemen population, and still others comprised vast territories with substantial Native population. The southern Indian Ocean encompassed two plantation colonies on rather small islands: the Mascarene Islands, that is the Île Bourbon (now Île de La Réunion) and the Île de France (now Mauritius). It also comprised the vast island of Madagascar, where the French had trading posts on the east coast and where they repeatedly tried to build colonies with a Native and imported slave population.

It can also hardly be denied that the first French Empire was familiar with a series of inconsistencies and contradictions. Overseas possessions were considered a part of France and, at the same time, mere instruments of the mother country, subjugated to its interests and not equal to other provinces. These territories were governed by governors and *intendants* like any part of France; they had no autonomous rights and French laws simply applied. But, on the other hand, the Code noir (the code governing the treatment of the black population) was not compatible with French law, which provoked a series of conflicts. Last but not least, there was a gap between the pretension of the crown to govern

**1** M. Ozouf, "La Révolution française et la perception de l'espace national: fédérations, fédéralisme et stéréotypes régionaux," in: J.C. Boogman and G.N. van der Plaat (eds.), *Federalism*, Den Haag: Nijhof, 1980, pp. 217–241.

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these territories like any other and the great autonomy of local actors who lived in countries so distant from Versailles and Paris that the power of the king and his ministers was in fact much more limited than would first appear.[2]

Did the French Revolution, however, solve these contradictions and territorialize the French Empire? The abolition of slavery in 1794, arguably the most important innovation of the revolutionary area in the realm of overseas history, points in this direction. As Matthias Middell shows, this law and the Constitution of 1795 suppressed legal peculiarities and "completed the process of territorialization by making the colonies an integrated part of the nation".[3] However, this is only one half of the story. In fact, the abolition of slavery in 1794 and the integration of colonies into the French nation in 1795 were largely legal fictions for three reasons. First, some territories were conquered by the British by that time; so the new laws never applied. For example, Martinique, one of the most important plantation colonies, came under British rule in February 1794. Second, the control of overseas territories was virtually non-existent in the revolutionary era. In Saint-Domingue, it was men like Toussaint, Rigaud, and Pétion who exercised political power. On the Mascarenes, the commissioners of the National Convention were expelled and the law abolishing slavery was never applied; and, in 1810, these islands were conquered by the British. Third, even in the territories where slavery was abolished, a kind of serfdom was introduced.[4]

Exploring the history of the French colonial empire in the revolutionary era, we have to ask was this period the dissolution, rather than the territorialization, of the French colonial empire? The French revolutionaries surely endeavoured to create a unified space comprising the motherland and the

**2** For an overview on the organization of the French colonial empire and its history, see P. Haudrère, *L'Empire des rois: 1500–1789*, Paris: Denoël, 1997. For insights into the way royal power was challenged. see C. Frostin, *Les Révoltes blanches à Saint-Domingue aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Haïti avant 1789*, Paris: L'École, 1975. For the tensions between the Code noir and French law in the motherland, see S. Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

**3** M. Middell, "France, the Abolition of Slavery, and Abolitionisms in the Eighteenth Century", in: D. Tricoire (ed.), *Enlightened Colonialism: Civilization Narratives and Imperial Politics in the Age of Reason*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 247–268.

**4** O. Gliech, *Saint-Domingue und die Französische Revolution: Das Ende der weißen Herrschaft in einer karibischen Plantagenwirtschaft*, Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2011, pp. 468–508; F. Régent, *La France et ses esclaves: de la colonisation aux abolitions (1620–1848)*, Paris: Grasset, 2007, pp. 213–262; C. Wanquet, *La France et la première abolition de l'esclavage, 1794–1802: le cas des colonies orientales, Ile de France (Maurice) et La Réunion*, Paris: Karthala, 1998.

colonies, but did they succeed? In historiography, it has long been recognized that the overseas dominions were largely torn apart in the late eighteenth century, and the distinction between a "first" and a "second" French colonial empire is very common.[5] These dissolution tendencies in the empire, stemming both from revolts and British conquests, highlight central features in the history of the French Revolution overseas: conflicts over legitimacy of political power and the disparity between projects and realizations. In the overseas colonies, political power largely collapsed in the late 1780s and the 1790s. For this reason, the projects formulated by French imperial elites were usually very hard to realize.[6]

This chapter briefly explores two topics. First, it casts light on the policies and political projects towards Madagascar in the revolutionary era. It highlights the lack of consensus in political discussions and of coherency in political planning during this period. For the French in the Indian Ocean and in France, it was not clear what kind of space the French establishments on Madagascar did and should constitute. Second, it describes very briefly processes of respatialization that actually did take place on Madagascar in the early nineteenth century. It shows that these were only loosely connected with French imperial policy.

## The Malagasy Kingdoms and the French Assimilationist Dream

In order to understand respatialization processes around 1800, it is necessary to bear in mind that the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries experienced the formation of large kingdoms on Madagascar. On the west coast, Sakalava princes founded kingdoms that were often integrated into Muslim and European trade, especially that of Boina. On the north-east coast, partly in reaction to Sakalava expansion, a prince named Ratsimilaho, son of English pirate Tom Tew and a Malagasy princess, created the Betsimisaraka Kingdom (*betsimisaraka* meaning "the many unified"). Ratsimilaho had

**5** See, e.g., the Encyclopedia Universalis: J. Bruhat, s.v. "Français, empire colonial", *Encyclopedia Universalis*, http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/empire-colonial-francais/ (last modified 1 August 2018) or the two separate articles on Wikipedia: *Wikipedia*, "Premier empire colonial français", https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premier_empire_colonial_fran%C3%A7ais (last modified 26 July 2018) and *Wikipedia*, "Second empire colonial français", https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_empire_colonial_fran%C3%A7ais (last modified 23 July 2018).

**6** See, e.g., the numerous projects under Napoleon: Y. Benot, *La Démence coloniale sous Napoléon*, Paris: La Découverte, 2006.

served under the king of Boina, but then he unified local princes of the east coast with the Zana-Malata (Malagasy-European mestizos) in order to offer protection against the Sakalava. His success was partly due to a synthesis of Malagasy and foreign military techniques. The Betsimisaraka Kingdom also gained significance because it became the main trading partner of the French colonies of the Mascarenes.[7] Although these kingdoms were significant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they did not last until modern times. Some were conquered by the Merina Kingdom in the early nineteenth century, while others – like the Betsimisaraka Kingdom – had already disappeared by that time, destroyed by internal conflicts. Eventually, their capital cities lost significance or even disappeared.

In the late Ancien Régime, the French had diverse and contradictory policies towards Madagascar. They were present in two parts of the Malagasy east coast: the Anosy region in the south-east and the Betsimisaraka region from Mahavelona to Angontsy, along the entire north-east coast. The Versailles governments ordered the creation of several establishments in these regions. They expected the French officials on Madagascar to have peaceful relations with the Malagasy princes and to develop commerce rather than trying to conquer the island. This policy was often linked with the expectation that the contact between the French and the Malagasy would lead to an acculturation – a "civilization" – and even to an assimilation of the latter – a "francization". This project was officially endorsed by Governor Maudave during his colonization attempt of Anosy around 1770.

According to Maudave, the colonization of Madagascar with "soft means" was an easy undertaking. All was needed was the offering of protection to a local king, and the "chiefs" would compete to gain the French's favours. News of commercial opportunity as well as French justice and superior society would propagate quickly throughout Madagascar, and many Malagasy would join the French colony. These Malagasy would live in peace and become Frenchmen.[8] According to the governor, the reason why this project was so easy to achieve was the superiority of European civilization, which the Malagasy would naturally acknowledge:

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**7** H. Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar*, Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1960, pp. 92–127; R. Kent, *Early Kingdoms in Madagascar 1500–1700*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970; S. Randrianja and S. Ellis, *Madagascar: A Short History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, pp. 77–98; G.M. Berg, "The Sacred Musket: Tactics, Technology and Power in Eighteenth-Century Madagascar", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (1985) 2, pp. 261–279.

**8** Archive nationales d'Outre-Mer (hereafter cited as: ANOM), C $5^{A}$ 2, No. 25, [Maudave] to Dumas and Poivre, undated; ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 2, no. 48, Report of a Clerk of the Minister of the Navy about Maudave's Project, 19 March 1768; ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 2, no. 63, Maudave to Praslin, 30 August 1768; ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 2, no. 66, fol. 10, Excerpts from Maudave's diary, undated.

> Although the Malagasy have in almost all respects a high opinion of themselves, they have a surprising tendency to think of themselves as naturally submitted to the white men. This superstition comes from our real superiority, which they cannot fail to notice when they compare their miserable social organization [*police*], their unhappy and restless lives and the rudeness of their arts with that what they have seen from our mores, our industry, and our way of life. They admire us and say that they are animals in comparison to us.[9]

Maudave's strategy was thus to demonstrate the moral and technical superiority of the French in order to foster imperial expansion. Because of that, he bought cattle that the princes wanted to donate him in order to demonstrate his munificence. He stated that all Malagasy were deeply impressed by the bust of Louis XV that sat in the governor's house. Maudave continually thought of new ways to gain the Malagasy's respect and admiration. He proposed creating a cavalry corps, building a new grand governor's house and new fortifications, and using cattle to plough the fields.[10]

Maudave was not alone in propagating assimilationist ideas. During the creation of an establishment in the Bay of Antongila in the early 1770s, commander Móric Beňovský also referred to the project of a "soft" imperial expansion owing to the demonstration of civilizational superiority and the resulting civilization and assimilation of Malagasy people. Beňovský told his superiors and the European reading public the story of successful and humane colonization. He gave very little information about real events in the French-Malagasy encounter. Instead, he created a largely fictional narrative in several steps. In his reports to the minister of the navy, he claimed to have soon realized what Maudave had only projected, that is to say to have submitted significant parts of Madagascar to French rule, civilized its inhabitants, and built towns and roads. On 22 March 1774, only five weeks after his arrival in the Bay of Antongila in north-east Madagascar, Beňovský announced to the minister of the navy that he had dried the swamps around the colony he had founded, Louisbourg, and built a great range of facilities. Impressed by this, the "chiefs

**9** Muséum d'histoire naturelle (hereafter cited as: MHN), Ms. 3001, 27, excerpts from Maudave's diary: "Ce qui est étonnant, c'est que quoiqu'en général, ils aient presque sur tous les points assez bonne opinion d'eux mêmes ils se condamnent à une soumission naturelle envers les blancs. Ce préjugé est fondé sur la supériorité réelle que nous avons sur eux et qui n'a pas pu leur échapper quand ils comparent leur misérable police, leur vie errante, malheureuse et agitée, la grossièreté de leurs arts avec ce qu'ils ont pu voir jusqu'à présent de nos moeurs, de notre industrie et de notre manière de vivre en tombant dans l'admiration et ils disent qu'en effet ils ne sont que des bêtes comparés à nous."

**10** Ibid., fol. 11, 29, 39, 43, 63.

of this part of the island" had sworn allegiance to the king of France.[11] Five months later, in September, he claimed to have built a new colony on a healthy inland plain.[12] The "submitted chiefs" were all enthusiastic about the *douceur* (softness) of French rule, and they voluntarily placed troops under the governor's command. According to Beňovský, the manners and customs of the Natives had already changed for the better. They had stopped betraying and poisoning each other and no longer killed small children born on "unlucky days". The other Malagasy begged to live under such a good government.[13] A few months later, he reported that all the chiefs of northern Madagascar had recognized his authority[14] and that the Natives now paid great tributes.[15] In May 1775, Beňovský asserted that he had subdued the mighty Boina Kingdom in north-west Madagascar without having led a war. The Malagasy, who loved the French, had exerted pressure on the king, who had accepted to pay a huge tribute.[16]

Beňovský claimed to have established French rule on the whole northern half of Madagascar only with the "soft means" of persuasion and good example. According to him, the Malagasy came from all the parts of the island in order to enjoy a happy existence under such a just government.[17] Even when he acknowledged that he had waged war on a local population, Beňovský always underlined his humane and just behaviour. For example, he wrote that while besieging the Sakalava, he had provided them with food and drink.[18]

According to the texts penned by officers like Maudave and Beňovský, the Malagasy would voluntarily become Frenchmen in the long run, French laws would be applied, and violence would be unnecessary.[19] These officials, and the employees and ministers supporting them, dreamed of a territorialized French Empire. However, there was often a disparity between the official policy endorsed by Versailles and the policy of French actors living on the ground. The commander of the Anosy colony, Maudave, tried first to apply the civilizing programme, but soon realized that he was politically impotent and was barely tolerated by the king of Anosy. For that reason, he did not manage to impress

**11** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 4, no. 55, fol. 1–2.
**12** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 4, no. 35, fol. 105.
**13** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 4, no. 36, fol. 47, 48, 49.
**14** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 5, no. 26.
**15** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 5, no. 28.
**16** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 5, no. 41; AMAE, Asie 4, no. 57, fol. 131–132.
**17** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 5, no. 96, fol. 1.
**18** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 3, no. 14, fol. 86.
**19** D. Tricoire, *Der koloniale Traum. Imperiales Wissen und die französisch-madagassischen Begegnungen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Köln: Böhlau-Verlag, 2018, pp. 107–114, 137–140, 155–163.

and influence Anosy society. In view of such meagre results, he considered other, less peaceful means: he announced his intention "to keep a tight rein on [the Malagasy] through terror and animate them through brandy".[20] For his part, Beňovský apparently never endeavoured to "civilize" or "assimilate" the inhabitants of north-east Madagascar. He simply tried to conquer the region, in which he failed. His narratives had thus little to do with his activities and experiences on the spot.[21]

With regard to the core of the Betsimisaraka Kingdom, the region of Mahavelona (Foulpointe), French imperial elites had a somewhat different policy. Some imperial agents in the southern Indian Ocean – both on the Mascarenes and Madagascar – tried to exercise political influence by supporting certain Betsimisaraka factions against others in the numerous wars of succession. In the early 1770s, the governor of the Île de France (present-day Mauritius) allied, without informing his superiors in Versailles, with Malagasy noblemen and a French adventurer called La Bigorne (who was married to a Malagasy woman) in order to install a client on the throne of the Betsimisaraka Kingdom, Queen Betia.[22] In 1780, the administrators of the Madagascar establishment again supported noblemen opposed to the reigning king of the Betsimisaraka, with the help of a French-Malagasy adventurer called Diard, who was La Bigorne's foster (or perhaps biological) son. They helped these noblemen to create their own "republic" (as it is called in French sources) while Diard soon tried to seize power in the Betsimisaraka Kingdom.[23] In this way, some colonial officials and French-Malagasy actors tried to control the east coast. Their aim was not to establish an official colony of the French crown like the plantation islands were since the seventeenth century, or the trading post in India had become after the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), but instead an informal domination.

Undoubtedly, not only this policy was never official, but it was unknown in Versailles and Paris that the governors of the Mascarene Islands tried to gain influence over the Betsimisaraka Kingdom by such means. According to the instructions of the minister of the navy, the administrators of the Mascarene were supposed to have good relations with the king of the Betsimisaraka and

**20** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 2, no. 66, fol. 2, 9, excerpts from Maudave's diary: "Nous les contiendrons par la terreur et nous les exciterons par l'eau de vie."

**21** Tricoire, *Der koloniale Traum*, pp. 122–126, 140–151.

**22** These facts are only known through a letter by *intendant* Pierre Poivre to the minister of the navy: ANOM, E 184, personnel file of Filet, called La Bigorne, Poivre to the minister of the navy Boynes, 12 February 1772.

**23** ANOM, C $5^{A}$ 7, no. 8, fol. 12, 16–17, Diary of Bellecombe and Chevreau, 177; ANOM, E 133, personal file of Diard, fol. 3, "Copie du mémoire justificatif de la conduite de Diard".

develop commercial ties. For this reason, the governors of the Mascarene never mentioned their policy of indirect rule in official reports. Rather, they tried to give the impression that they fostered peaceful relations between France and the Betsimisaraka king. The stories involving French-Malagasy adventurers show that through intermarriage and other kinds of personal ties a French-Malagasy milieu had emerged during the eighteenth century. This milieu had its own dynamics and could inspire policies on the ground, diverging markedly from the concepts and projects of the ministry of the navy. The autonomy of imperial agents, even of the official representatives of the crown, was de facto substantial.

In the 1790s, there was a further gap between the official policy and violent complex conflicts on the ground involving as well Malagasy as French actors. In 1791, the National Legislative Assembly named commissioners for the East Indies. One of them was Daniel Lescallier, who arrived in August 1792 on the Île de France and visited Madagascar's north-east coast for a week. On the Île de France, Lescallier received information on Madagascar from Cossigny, a neighbour and friend of former Governor Maudave. Cossigny was a famous plantation owner and scholar who held very similar views on Madagascar as Maudave. As a result, Lescallier took over the assimilationist dream. He became convinced that white men had a natural authority and should "civilize" the Malagasy. The French could make a colony out of Madagascar and turn the Malagasy into Frenchmen only on the basis of the prestige that their civilizational superiority allegedly conferred on them instead of resorting to violence.[24] Lescallier was convinced that white men had an *ascendant naturel* (natural authority) over the simple-minded Malagasy people.[25] For this reason, he believed it was possible to "conquer all the island through friendship and affection".[26]

**24** ANOM, C 4 107, fol. 118–120, Lescallier to the minister of the navy, August 13, 1792; ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 233 512, copies of letters and documents by Lescallier, 24–26: "Instructions pour M. Gosse", undated, 25; Y. Sylla, "La côte orientale de Madagascar et la Révolution française: une situation paradoxale et imaginaire", in: C. Wanquet and B. Jullien (eds.), *Révolution française et Océan indien*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996, pp. 181–188; Y. Sylla, "Un envoyé de l'Assemblée nationale à Madagascar en 1792: La mission de Daniel Lescallier", in: G. Jacob (ed.), *Regards sur Madagascar et la Révolution francaise*, Antananarivo: Édition CNAPMAD, 1990, pp. 63–69.

**25** ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 233 512, copies of letters and documents by Lescallier, pp. 24–26: "Instructions pour M. Gosse", undated, p. 25.

**26** Copy of a letter by Lescallier to the minister of the navy: ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 233 512, copies of letters and documents by Lescallier, p. 29, Lescallier to the minister of

While on Madagascar, Lescallier interpreted the audience he had with the king of the Betsimisaraka, Zakavola, according to this theory. Lescallier asserted to have turned the Betsimisaraka Kingdom into a French protectorate, which was in his eyes the first step towards colonization, civilization, and francization of Madagascar. According to him, King Zakavola had recognized the authority of France and the Betsimisaraka Kingdom had become part of the French Empire, which he wrote to the minister of the navy and the National Legislative Assembly. However, the result of the audience was quite different. Zakavola had only expressed his willingness not to judge the Frenchmen committing crimes but to deliver them to the French authorities instead. Each group was to be judged according to its country's laws. This was already customary and had nothing to do with an alleged recognition of French authority. Furthermore, Zakavola did not even attend the ceremony renewing the alliance with the French and did not take any oath.[27]

In fact, Zakavola did not recognize any French superiority. But he needed the alliance, or at least the neutrality, of the French because his own authority was contested. Indeed, the Betsimisaraka Kingdom was at the eve of a civil war. In the next years, French merchants were regularly robbed or even killed. In the 1790s, the Betsimisaraka Kingdom collapsed.[28] Things had not developed as Lescallier had expected. Accordingly, there was a substantial divergence between Lescallier's dream of expansion and authority of the French colonial empire, on the one hand, and the complex political circumstances on Madagascar's east coast, on the other hand.

## Francization or Creation of Places of Relegations?

During these years, the political situation had also changed radically in France. Lescallier's friends had lost power. The new National Convention was dominated by other men than the Législative. It adopted a new plan for Madagascar: convinced by the member of parliament of the Île de France, the physician and Montagnard (a member of the political group *La Montagne*) Benoît Gouly, it

the navy, St. Anne, Seychelles, 7 September 1792: "le plan de conduite, qui peut nous faire conquerir pour ainsi dire par amitié et affection toute cette Isle".

**27** ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 233 512, copies of letters and documents by Lescallier, Procès verbal des opérations faites à Madagascar par Mr. Lescallier.

**28** J.-C. Hébert, "Les remous du bouillonement révolutionnaire sur nos postes de traite à Madagascar (1792–1803)", in: Wanquet and Jullien (eds.), *Révolution française et Océan indien*, pp. 167–180, at pp. 167–172.

decided in November 1793 to make a convict colony out of Madagascar's south-east. Establishing a completely different idea for this part of the colonial empire, this region was to be a place of relegation for beggars and criminals. Of significance is the fact that the local population was totally absent from the reflexions of the author of the law – he simply did as if the region were empty. When an employee of the Ministry of the Navy raised the question of how the Natives would react, Gouly simply asserted that he could not imagine that they would have any problems. In his view, south-east Madagascar belonged to the French since the seventeenth century and the Natives would acknowledge this fact.[29] Gouly's aim was not an integration of Madagascar into a territorialized French colonial empire. Following his ideas, in the law creating a convict colony, Madagascar was not considered a part of France *in spe*; there was no aim of territorialization, civilization, or assimilation. Gouly's inspiration was not the French Enlightenment, but instead likely the British convict colony in Botany Bay in Australia. Like in Gouly's project, in south-east Australia, prisoners were settled and a colony was created with no idea of civilizing or in any way incorporating the Natives.[30]

Although the National Convention voted the law into effect, the convict colony was never established. However, other plans were also inspired by British policies at that time. After the abolition of slavery in 1794, the French elites discussed the idea of turning Madagascar into a kind of French Sierra Leone: Madagascar would be a colony for freed slaves. This project was appealing to both the proponents and the opponents of the abolition of slavery because nobody wanted a significant population of free "coloured" people in the French colonies. Not only Étienne Burnel, the commissioner of the National Convention who had been tasked with the application of the abolition law on the Mascarenes, endorsed it, but also Gouly, the representative of the planters. Depending on the authors, the new colony was conceived either as a place where "people of colour" would be wholly free or as a place of relegation. This diversity of projects demonstrates that the idea of francizing Madagascar was not totally abandoned in the late eighteenth century. Some authors linked the project of a Malagasy Sierra Leone with the old idea of an assimilationist policy. Whereas anti-abolitionist Gouly imagined Madagascar as a place of relegation for freed slaves, not as a part of a territorialized French Empire, Burnel had

**29** ANOM, C 4 108, fol. 163, "Paris, le 14 frimaire, an 2e de la republique. Le représentant du peuple Gouly au citoyen adjoint de la 5e division de la marine", 4 December 1793.

**30** Wanquet, *La première abolition de l'esclavage; Gazette nationale*, Sunday, 3 November 1793, 386; ANOM, C 4 108, fol. 344–345. For more details see Tricoire, *Der koloniale Traum*, pp. 191–193.

a very different vision of the French Sierra Leone *in spe*. For him, the immigration of freed and already francized slaves to Madagascar would help to civilize and assimilate the indigenous population. Burnel pursued an ideal that, like Lescallier's, maintained continuity with the Ancien Régime Enlightened ideas that had been so influential in Versailles.[31]

Lescallier, for his part, continued to promote the idea of an assimilation policy on Madagascar after his return to France under the Directory. Significantly, Lescallier had not gathered any new intelligence about Madagascar after this week-stay on the island in 1792. In the late 1790s and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he still asserted that he had created a protectorate on Madagascar's east coast.[32] This is astonishing since not only the Betsimisaraka Kingdom (which the French allegedly protected) had collapsed in the 1790s, but also the French trading post in Mahavelona had been destroyed by the British in 1796, which the Ministry of the Navy had been informed of.[33] This surprisingly wide gap between political planning and realities on the ground shows how poorly the French elite designing the colonial policy was informed about the Indian Ocean world. Indeed, Lescallier was far from having a marginal position. Lescallier was, as director of the Bureau des Colonies, one of the most influential figures in colonial policy around 1800. Furthermore, although the main project of colonial policy was the "reconquest" of Saint-Domingue, the Indian Ocean in general and Madagascar in particular were viewed as important regions for world politics. For this reason, Lescallier convinced several ministers of the navy to send agents to Madagascar in order to realize his assimilationist plans. As a result of his projects, the French government planned to build on a colony and a kingdom that both did not exist anymore.[34] Rather than a lack of attention to Madagascar, the problem seems to have been the way the French government received information about the "Great Island", relying to a great extent on the alleged expertise of a few men like Lescallier, with few contacts to the French living or having lived on the island – not to speak of Natives.

**31** A. N., D/XXV/130, dossier 1019, no. 5, "Projet d'un mode d'exécution du décret du 16 pluviose an deuxième, envoyé par les citoyens Besnard, Serres et Gouly, membres de la Convention le 14 fructidor an troisième aux assemblées coloniales des isles de France et de la Réunion", 31 August 1795, see articles 12 and 13; É. Burnel, *Essai sur les colonies orientales*, Paris, undated [1797], pp. 19–20; Wanquet, *La première abolition de l'esclavage*, pp. 83–91.

**32** D. Lescallier, "Mémoire relatif à l'île de Madagascar, 1801", in: J. Valette, *Lescallier et Madagascar, Bulletin de Madagascar* 243 (1966), pp. 877–897.

**33** Hébert, "Les remous du bouillonnement révolutionnaire", pp. 167–172.

**34** ANOM, C 4 113, fol. 124.

Around 1800, the French elite did not share a common vision of Madagascar; imperial concepts were no more coherent than a few years before. Premier Consul Napoléon Bonaparte had a different vision of Madagascar than Lescallier: like Gouly, he saw the island as a future place of relegation, both for convicts, who were to be brought to southern Madagascar, and for freed slaves, who were to be brought to northern Madagascar. Bonaparte wanted to forbid racial "miscegenation". He did not think at all about civilizing and assimilating the indigenous population. Like in the law of the National Convention, these were totally absent from his project. Bonaparte planned to send 300 "white" and 100 "black" soldiers as well as 400 convicts to Anosy. He envisioned deporting all the criminals of southern France to this region. In the north of Madagascar (i.e. in the Bay of Antongila and the Mahavelona regions), Bonaparte thought to deport "all black and coloured people from Saint-Domingue, Martinique, Guadeloupe, the Île de France and the Île de la Réunion whom we do not know what to do with them", which would be controlled by sending some 400 French and 200 Polish soldiers.[35]

## Respatialization on Madagascar in the Early Nineteenth Century

Like many others, Lescallier's, Gouly's, and Bonaparte's projects remained a dead letter. Again, there was a substantial divergence between French political plans and the reality on the ground. Lescallier, Bonaparte, and the Frenchmen drawing up imperial projects in the motherland seem to have largely ignored the new political situation on Madagascar. The early nineteenth century was undoubtedly a period of radical respatialization on Madagascar, and every French political project could not avoid these facts if it was to have chances to be realized.

The first major political change occurred among the Betsimisaraka: on the ruins of the Betsimisaraka Kingdom, new political actors seized power. Around 1800, Jean René became king of Toamasina (Tamatave), the most important commercial port on the east coast. Jean René had a French father and a Malagasy

**35** Napoléon Bonaparte, "Notes sur l'expédition de Madagascar, par Bonaparte, premier consul: Pièce inédite tirée des minutes des Archives nationales, carton 3325–1173", *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de l'Est* 5 (1883), p. 499: "déporter de Saint-Domingue, de la Martinique, de la Guadeloupe, des îles de France, de la Réunion tous les noirs et hommes de couleur dont on ne saurait que faire".

mother. Nonetheless, he first allied with the British (who had conquered the Mascarenes), not with the French.[36] This contributed to making all French expansion projects of the past years unrealistic.

Second, Andrianampoinimerina, the king of the modest principality of Ambohimanga, unified parts of the highlands in the late eighteenth century, creating the Merina Kingdom. He moved his residence to Antananarivo. This kingdom became more and more powerful in the early nineteenth century, and Radama I, who became the king of the Merina in 1810, subsequently conquered the east coast in the late 1810s and early 1820s, and then around two-thirds of Madagascar. He created the Kingdom of Madagascar, which existed until the French invasion at the end of the nineteenth century. This huge success partly had to do with European politics: like Jean René, Radama allied with the British, who helped him to equip his army. He created new forts on the coast, like Fort Manda in Mahavelona, the former residence of the Betsimisaraka kings. The alliance with the British, however, led to economic crisis and was abandoned in the second half of the 1820s. The creation of the Kingdom of Madagascar, nevertheless, went hand in hand with major political, demographic, and economic respatialization. It contributed to a further centralization of trade and crafts in the Merina lands, with urban centres growing and important industrial centres appearing in the highlands.[37]

In this context, the French during the Bourbon Restoration period (1814–1830) gave up any project of expansion on the Malagasy mainland and retreated instead to the small island of Nosy Boraha (Sainte-Marie). The founding father of the Nosy Boraha colony, commercial agent Sylvain Roux, had a very different concept than the Enlightenment assimilationism that had been influential during the French Revolution. He thought the Malagasy were not able to learn. According to him,

> contrary to the assertions of journalists and modern philosophers, it is useless to endeavour to teach to the Malagasy to do anything useful for us. If they watch us working and being successful for a very long period of time, then perhaps will some of them try to imitate us. But only time can make such a miracle. [. . .] I have tried to convince them to take

**36** Jean René played the French and British against each other and received support from both sides: MHN, Ms. 3001, Jean-René to Lord Farquhar, 1813; Randrianja and Ellis, *Madagascar*, pp. 121, 123, 275; G. Campbell, *An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar, 1750–1895: The Rise and Fall of an Island Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 69.

**37** Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 59–111.

> over some of our most simple techniques [*arts*], but I have not succeeded in convincing them that they would have some advantages if they did it.[38]

Roux depicts the Malagasy as one of the people of the world with the most blind attachment to traditions. He strongly doubted that they were capable of any innovations. He also believed that the "white" and the "black" "races" were incompatible and would always fight each other. In his view, this explained the failure of previous French establishments on Madagascar. Not the "putative tyranny" of the Frenchmen but the "eternal hatred of the 'whites' by the 'blacks'" was the real cause of the massacres that the Malagasy perpetrated against French people in Anosy or the Betsimisaraka Kingdom. Accordingly, the only way to establish colonies on Madagascar was to buy land from Native princes and to expel the inhabitants, with violence if necessary.[39] Roux thus put directly into question the project of an imperial expansion through civilization and assimilation of the Natives. With him, racist concepts replaced Enlightenment colonialism.

As a matter of conclusion, if it is in my view doubtful whether the French Revolution was a period of territorialization in the Caribbean, it surely was not in the southern Indian Ocean. First, the revolutionary era brought rather a dissolution of the colonial empire in this region. Second, in those years, French elites had no coherent vision or policy towards this island. Some members of the French imperial elites perceived the Malagasy peoples of having a future part in the French nation and Madagascar of being a part of France *in spe*. They believed in an assimilation of foreign lands and their inhabitants. Others, however, saw in Madagascar rather a place of relegation for unwanted persons, such as beggars and freed slaves. For them, Madagascar was to remain a world apart even if the French succeeded in dominating this island. These were clearly diverse and partly contradictory projects, and this heterogeneity of French political planning came partly from the fact that French elites were

**38** ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 6 14, "Observations faites par l'agent commercial de Madagascar dans l'exploration de la côte orientale de cette île, ordonnée par son excellence le ministre de la marine, et exécutée à bord des flutes de Sa majesté Le Golo et le Lys en septembre, octobre, novembre et décembre 1818" pp. 30–31: "Il est inutile, malgré tout ce qu'en disent nos publicistes et nos philosophes modernes, de rien gagner sur ces peuples, pour les faire servir à notre besoin. Peut-être qu'à force de nous voir travailler et réussir dans nos entreprises quelqu'uns deux [sic] chercheront à nous imiter; mais c'est au tems seul à opérer cette merveille: j'ai eu l'occasion de beaucoup fréquenter les malgaches, j'ai cherché à leur faire adopter quelqu'uns de nos arts les plus communs, jamais je n'ai pu parvenir à leur faire même convenir, qu'ils y trouvaient de l'avantage."

**39** ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 715, Roux to the minister of the navy, 20 August 1810.

influenced by ideas from across the Channel. Undoubtedly, many imperial projects of the French Revolution towards Madagascar were very British. Third, all these projects brought little concrete results. Respatialization came not from ideas of the French elite, but instead from British and Merina conquests.

Jane Landers

# 4 Black Rebels and Royal Auxiliaries Before, During, and After the French Revolution

The French Revolution launched the so-called Age of Revolutions, and a rich and ever-growing literature examines the alterations in political boundaries or respatialization that resulted. One of the most dramatic of the Atlantic revolutions, the first successful slave revolt in the western hemisphere erupted in 1791 on the divided island known by the French as Saint-Domingue and by the Spanish as Santo Domingo. After bloody years of fighting, France claimed the whole in 1795. This chapter examines how enslaved rebels on that island shaped the changing geographic and political spaces they inhabited before, during, and after that revolution.[1]

Scholars of this world-changing event base much of their research on French and, to a lesser extent, on English sources, thus focusing their perspectives on the last phases of the revolt, but Spain first claimed the island they called Española in the fifteenth century and held two-thirds of it until the nineteenth century. Spain's centuries-long occupation of Española generated extensive, but underutilized, documentary and material evidence that I deploy in this chapter.

Africans, free and enslaved, formed part of the earliest Spanish settlements on Española, and the enslaved who fled bondage found refuge in the island's rugged hinterlands. These Maroons controlled the island's vast interior for more than three centuries, as Europeans competed to control the northern and southern coasts.[2] As early as 1503, Española's Spanish governor, Nicolás de Ovando, complained that runaway slaves could not be retrieved from the Bahoruco Mountains of the interior, and he charged that they were teaching

**1** I would like to thank organizers Megan Maruschke, Matthias Middell, Julia Stählin and the Collaborative Research Centre 1199 of Leipzig University for inviting me to participate in the "French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization" conference. An earlier version of this chapter appeared in J. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

**2** J. Landers, "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Societies", in: L.M. Heywood (ed.), *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 227–241.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110619775-004

the Native Taíno Indians "bad customs".[3] In fact, these two groups made common cause against their oppression at the hands of the Spaniards. Disease, war, and overwork largely decimated the Indigenous populations of Española, and Spaniards introduced African slaves to do the hard work the thinned Indigenous populations could not.[4] In 1519, a number of these enslaved Africans joined the forces of the Taíno chief, Enriquillo, in a fierce and protracted war against the Spaniards. Although Enriquillo eventually signed a peace treaty with the Spaniards and resumed his life among them, the African rebels had no interest in returning to the hard labour of sugar and remained in their Bahoruco redoubts.[5]

With Enriquillo's war ostensibly ended, despite their fears and tenuous control, Española's planters demanded ever more slaves, and by mid-sixteenth century one report estimated the island's black population at 25,000–30,000, the white population at only 1,200, and the Maroon population at 2,000–3,000.[6] It was a demographic moment in which a Maroon victory seemed possible and in the 1540s a series of great Maroon leaders came down from the Bahoruco Mountains to wage what Spaniards called the "Maroon Wars". Famous warriors, such as Diego Guzman, Diego Ocampo, Juan Vaquero, and Lemba, led their Maroon bands in attacks on Spanish haciendas and sugar *ingenios* (factories) and generally contained Spaniards to the capital city of Santo Domingo on the southern coast.[7]

As Spaniards struggled to contain Maroon activity in the interior mountains, they faced additional challenges along Española's northern coast, where escaped slaves found foreign corsairs eager to trade for their turtle meat, cattle

**3** Governor Ovando to the Crown, *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar* V, Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1882–1932, pp. 43–45.

**4** For the most accurate research on early African imports into Española, see D. Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

**5** J. Landers, "Central African Presence"; E. Woodruff Stone, "America's First Slave Revolt: Indians and African Slaves in Española, 1500–1534", *Ethnohistory* 60 (2013) 2, pp. 195–217; I. Altman, "The Revolt of Enriquillo and the Historiography of Early Spanish America", *The Americas* 63 (2007) 4, pp. 587–614.

**6** Alonso de Castro to the Council of the Indies, 26 March 1542, in: J.L. Sáez, *La Iglesia y el negro esclavo en Santo Domingo: Una historia de tres siglos*, Santo Domingo: Patronato de la Ciudad Colonial de Santo Domingo, 1994, pp. 273–274. Many Spaniards had departed the island seeking quicker fortunes in the fabled mines of New Spain and Peru.

**7** L. Guitar, "Boiling It Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530–45)", in: J. Landers and B.M. Robinson (eds.), *Slaves, Subjects and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006, pp. 39–82.

hides, tobacco, and other products.[8] Spanish governors were determined to eradicate both threats and mounted expeditions against the Maroons and their French and English customers on the offshore island of Tortuga.[9] Finally, in 1605 and 1606, in a move the Spaniards referred to as "the devastations", Governor Antonio de Osorio removed all Spanish subjects closer to the southern capital, thus leaving the northern coast open to occupation by French buccaneers.[10]

In 1679, the Treaty of Ryswick finally granted France the western third of Española. French planters soon established what became a flourishing, as well as destructive, sugar regime in Saint-Domingue. More than half of the slaves sweating in their cane fields were Central Africans, and some began escaping across the new international border to nearby Spanish territory. Some of the fugitives undoubtedly found refuge among the long-established Maroon communities of the Bahoruco Mountains. Others, however, claimed religious sanctuary in Spanish Santo Domingo. Following earlier precedents, in 1679 the Spaniards established the refugees in a satellite town of their own, San Lorenzo de los Negros de Mina, across the Ozama River from the Spanish capital. There they were supposed to become good Catholic subjects. Although parish registers designate most of the residents of San Lorenzo as either Mina, Bran, or Arará, Congos also lived at San Lorenzo, and one, García Congo, served as the sergeant of the town's newly established militia, along with a captain of the Bran nation and a Mina lieutenant.[11]

By the mid eighteenth century, French Saint-Domingue had become the "Pearl of the Antilles" and France's most lucrative colony. Over 400,000 enslaved Africans laboured on the island's plantations, producing 40 per cent of the Atlantic world's sugar, 50 per cent of its coffee, and 40 per cent of France's overseas trade.[12] David Geggus's careful study of plantation records from the north coast found that 60 per cent of the slaves were designated as Congos, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database confirms that most of the imported

**8** The corsairs made the offshore island of Tortuga a stronghold. K.E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500–1750*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998, pp. 97–102.

**9** C.E. Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros: Esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo*, Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1989, pp. 64–66.

**10** C.E. Deive, *Tangomangos: Contrabando y Piratería en Santo Domingo, 1522–1606*, Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1996, pp. 207–217.

**11** J. Landers, "Central African Presence". The militiamen of San Lorenzo all served as witnesses at the marriage of free blacks, Simon and Juana, on 31 May 1682, Archivo General de la Arquidiócesis de Santo Domingo, Matrimoniales (marriage register), 1674–1719.

**12** D.P. Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793–1798*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, p. 6.

slaves were Central Africans.[13] John Thornton argues that at least some of them may have had military training that they could employ in their subsequent American battles.[14]

The captives leaving Luanda were destined for the massive sugar fields of Española's northern coast to labour in a crop and an environment with which they were unfamiliar. Those profitable sugar plantations hovered above a coastal shelf on which the French built the luxurious city of Le Cap Français. This was a dramatically different space inhabited by at least some of the more "privileged" of the enslaved. On Sundays and feast days, the more acculturated, and trusted, house slaves, overseers, coachmen, and sugar masters often descended from the sugar plantations to the bustling city below to awaiting markets and taverns. There they witnessed newly imported Africans being unloaded from slave ships that crowded the harbour, like the Marie Séraphique, which unloaded hundreds of Angolans to be bought by awaiting planters.[15]

Some of the newly imported slaves quickly fled to join earlier fugitives in the rugged hinterlands where they joined long-lived Maroon communities. Spanish officials in Santo Domingo feared the influx of African *bozales* (unacculturated Africans) and Spanish governors sent out regular military patrols to police the countryside and, when they actually captured escaped slaves, they took them into Santo Domingo for interrogation. One group of 13 men questioned in 1770 included 6 men who identified themselves as Congo, Congo Mondongo, or Mondongo. Bucú, who could speak neither Spanish nor French, must have communicated through an African interpreter. One man was unable to say how long he had been on the run but reported that as soon as he got off the slave ship he ran for the Spanish side – which seems to suggest that (as in the Florida example about which I have written earlier) captives quickly learned to read the geopolitics of their day. Several other captured Congo men had already been branded by their French owners and were able to give some

**13** D.P. Geggus, "The Demographic Composition of the French Caribbean Slave Trade", in: P. Boucher (ed.), *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* 13/14 (1990), pp. 14–30; Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/ (accessed 12 February 2019).

**14** D.P. Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790", *Slavery and Abolition* 6 (1985) 3, pp. 112–128; J.K. Thornton, "African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution", *The Journal of Caribbean History* 25 (1991) 1/2, pp. 58–80.

**15** La Marie Séraphique was a well-documented and artistically rendered slave ship from Nantes that unloaded 340 slaves from Angola at Cap Français in 1772. Watercolour by unknown artist, in Musée du Chateau des Ducs de Bretagne, Nantes, France. Published in: E.D.C. Campbell and K.S. Rice (eds.), *Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991, plate 6, p. xv.

information about their Christian names, those of the owners, and the names of the sugar estates from which they had escaped. Several reported they had been fugitives for up to four years before being captured on the Spanish side.[16]

Meanwhile, other Africans left behind on French sugar plantations ran to form Maroon communities in the mountains of the French interior. Jean Fouchard identifies a number of them in his study of runaway advertisements in Le Cap's French newspaper. Several who were later key figures in the slave revolt were among them, including the famed Mackandal and Jean-François.[17] Others remained in place for the time being or engaged in *petit marronage* (running away for a short period) until the slave revolt that led to the creation of the first black republic in the hemisphere began on 14 August 1791.

The revolt began when 200 *commandeurs* (commanders) from 100 nearby estates met at the Lenormand de Mézy plantation on Saint-Domingue's northern plain. Saint-Domingue's French planters did not think it unusual: they customarily permitted gatherings of trusted slaves on Sunday for feasts and drumming. This time, however, the slaves met not to dine together but to plan an uprising that would change history. Presiding at that gathering was Boukman Dutty, the allegedly colossal slave driver/coachman for the Clément estate, who some thought to have been possibly a Muslim and/or a Vodou priest.[18] Fragmentary accounts of the meeting state that a "mulatto or quadroon" read an announcement of amelioration legislation passed by the French king and the National Assembly in Paris, after which the assembled slave leaders debated whether to wait for expected French troops or take independent action.[19] This was not the first or the last political debate the rebels would have among themselves, and both political and geographical positions shifted frequently with the tides of revolution and war.

On 22 August, at the place called Bois Caïman (the Forest of the Crocodile), on the Choiseul plantation in Petite-Anse, the plotters met again. After

**16** Landers, "Central African Presence". The men who identified as Congo were Bucú, Bautista, Bautista Fransua, and Agustin. Andres called himself Congo Mondongo, and Antonio identified simply as Mondongo. Interrogation by royal notary Francisco Rendon Sarmiento and Don Juan Tomati, 2 July 1770, Santo Domingo, 1101, Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Seville.

**17** J. Fouchard, *Les marrons de la liberté* [The Haitian Maroons: Liberty or Death], A. Faulkner Watts (trans.), New York: Edward W. Blyden Press, 1981.

**18** D.P. Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 84; C.E. Fick, "The Saint-Domingue Slave Insurrection of 1791: A Socio-Political and Cultural Analysis", *The Journal of Caribbean History* 25 (1991) 1/2, pp. 1–40.

**19** L. Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: Havard University Press, 2005, ch. 4.

sacrificing a black pig and drinking its blood, the participants took snatches of its hair to insert in protective amulets, swore a sacred oath, and Boukman launched the full-blown revolt. Among the other slave leaders attending that eventful ceremony were Georges Biassou, Jeannot Bullet, and Jean-François Papillon. Toussaint L'Ouverture, already a freeman, waited at the Bréda plantation to see what would transpire.[20] Within hours, several thousand risen slaves attacked surprised and outnumbered whites, set fire to their great houses and the cane fields, and smashed the sugar refining equipment and tools associated with their brutal labour. Soon, more than 1,000 plantations across the northern plain were reduced to ashes.[21]

From Le Cap, the French Governor General Philibert Blancheland frantically requested troops and assistance from his Spanish counterpart across the border. Governor and Captain General Joaquín García responded that Spain was required to remain neutral, but fearing the rebellion would spill over the illusory border, the Spanish governor also requested military aid from Spain.[22] Frightened refugees from the chaos on the French side soon began appearing at the Spanish city of Bayajá (Fort Dauphin to the French), requesting asylum, which Governor García granted.[23] Meanwhile, despite the official policy of neutrality, Spanish colonists and soldiers alike routinely traded guns and supplies to the rebels across the line.[24] John Garrigus has traced the trade routes that long connected Santo Domingo and Le Cap through which the rebels acquired

**20** After carefully analysing the main primary accounts, David Geggus has shown that scholars have mistakenly collapsed two meetings into one: the famous Bois Caïman ceremony took place on 22 August 1791. D. Geggus, "The Bois Caïman Ceremony", *The Journal of Caribbean History* 25 (1191) 1/2, pp. 41–57. For a detailed discussion of contemporary ritual practices performed at nighttime gatherings, see G. Deben, "Assemblées nocturnes d'esclaves a Saint-Domingue (La Marmelade, 1786)" [Night-Time Meetings in Saint-Domingue (La Marmelade, 1786)], J. Garrigus (trans.), *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 44 (1972) 208, pp. 273–284, https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/1205/2016/02/voodoo.pdf (accessed 12 February 2019).

**21** Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp. 94–97.

**22** Joaquín García to Governor General of Guarico, 31 August 1791, AGI, Santo Domingo, p. 954. Blanchelande also requested aid from Havana's Captain General Luis de las Casas, who, much later, did send some troops.

**23** Letters from French refugees from San Luis de Jeremias, requesting sanctuary and lands in Cuba, 1 November 1791. Asuntos Politicos, Leg. 4, N. 35, Archivo Nacional de Cuba (ANC).

**24** D.P. Geggus, "The Arming of Slaves in the Haitian Revolution", in: C. Brown and P. Morgan (eds.), *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 209–232.

badly needed guns and supplies as well as apparently spoiled food.[25] This contraband trade effectively kept the struggling slave rebellion afloat.

The earliest phase of the revolt in the north was, by all accounts, the bloodiest: confusion and terror reigned as various rebel bands fought for territory, supplies, and supremacy. The insurgents established a series of camps in Grand-Rivière, south-east of Le Cap, and a week after the fires started, 10,000 slaves were said to have formed into "three armies, of whom seven or eight hundred are on horseback and tolerably well-armed". If poorly armed, many slaves seemed animated by the belief that pig hairs and other charms would protect them. Only weeks after the revolt began, French officials executed a captured rebel who jeered at and mocked his captors. One soldier reported that the man "gave the signal himself and met death without fear or complaint". Hidden in the dead man's clothing were "pamphlets printed in France, filled with commonplaces about the Rights of Man and the Sacred Revolution". Around his neck he wore a "sack full of hair, herbs, and bits of bone".[26] Both might have been considered protective amulets. This syncretism of French political ideology and African *gris-gris* (a protective amulet) was emblematic of the mixed messages and contradictory positions of the insurgents over the next years.[27]

One of the early leaders of the revolt was Georges Biassou, a sugar master who attended the gathering at Bois Caïman and under whom Toussaint eventually served. Biassou described Toussaint as "one of my confederates [. . .] in whom I have total confidence" and as a "man who knows well his God and his religion and a man of the Church living on the Bréda plantation above Guarico (the Spanish name for Le Cap)".[28] Their friendship may have been formed through their connections to the Fathers of Charity in Le Cap, where Biassou's mother, Diana, worked in one of their two hospitals. David Geggus and Madison Smartt Bell believe Biassou was probably a slave driver on the Fathers' sugar plantation near Haut de Cap, where his father, Carlos, may have

**25** J. Garrigus, "'Le secret qui règne parmi les nègres': Revisiting the Testimony of Makandal and his 'Accomplices', 1757–1758", workshop paper for "Les resistances à l'esclavage dans le monde atlantique français à l'ère des Révolutions", 3–4 May 2013, Montreal.

**26** Fick, "The Slave Insurrection of 1791", p. 23; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*.

**27** Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp. 102–109.

**28** Jorge [Georges] Biassou to Captain General Joaquín García, 15 July 1793, Guerra Moderna (GM), 7157, no. 7, Archivo General de Simancas (AGS); Toussaint to Biassou, 4 October 1791 and 25 October 1791, cited in M.S. Bell, *Toussaint Louverture: A Biography*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2007, pp. 24–25. In the first example, Toussaint closed, "I wish you the most perfect health and am for life your friend."

also worked.[29] The later correspondence of both Biassou and Toussaint was conducted through secretary/scribes, but the interesting political and literary allusions as well as the references to Catholic devotion found in their letters and proclamations also suggest that Biassou and Toussaint may have been influenced by their connections to the Fathers of Charity.[30]

Their correspondence offers interesting insights into the character and actions of other leading figures in the revolution, such as the dapper runaway Jean-François, whom Biassou described as a man "of grand projects, many words, and few deeds".[31] Toussaint ridiculed Jean-François for the fanciful titles and colourful uniforms he adopted and the Cross of Saint Louis with which he decorated himself, yet most historiographic accounts have Jean-François assuming general command of the rebellion on Boukman's death.[32]

Early in the uprising, M. Gros, a French lawyer and chronicler of the slave revolt, was captured by the "monster" Jeannot (whom he called Johnny), and he later published an account of the two months he spent in the rebels' upland camps. Gros witnessed and later described Jeannot's horrible torture and executions of his fellow captives, but he described other rebel leaders, like Biassou, somewhat more favourably. After Jean François ordered Jeannot executed, Gros spent time in Biassou's Grand Rivière camp at Dondon, and he was pleasantly surprised by the "iron discipline" he maintained. Against the odds, Biassou had organized a polyglot and untrained mass into a formidable fighting force that he commanded for almost four years as general of the "Conquered Territories of the North". Biassou's fearful reputation may have been a useful tool. Gros wrote, "The well-known Character of Biassou filled me with Dread; though I was agreeably surprised at seeing him extremely disposed to Peace".[33]

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**29** Communications from Madison Smartt Bell, 25 September 2005 and from David Patrick Geggus, 15 September 2008. I am indebted to both for their assistance, their friendship, and their fine scholarship. An older account claims that the godfathers of Biassou and Toussaint were both slaves at the Providence Hospital of the Fathers of Charity and places Biassou at the Bréda plantation for some time. S. Alexis, *Black Liberator, The Life of Toussaint Louverture*, London: Macmillan Company, 1949, pp. 12–13, 30.

**30** Bell, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 64–65. The beloved Jesuit, Father Pierre Boutin, like Father Sandoval and Father Claver in Cartagena, was noted for his efforts to evangelize Africans and learn African languages. M. de Saint-Méry, *A Civilization That Perished: The Last Years of White Colonial Rule in Haiti*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1985, pp. 116–117, 120.

**31** Jorge [Georges] Biassou to Captain General Joaquín García, 15 July 1793, GM 7157, no. 7, AGS.

**32** Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, p. 106; Fick, "The Slave Insurrection of 1791", p. 24.

**33** M. Gros, *An Historick Recital, of the Different Occurences in the Camps of Grand-Rivière*, Baltimore, MD: Adams, 1793, pp. 22–23, 40, 42. Two of Toussaint's letters to Biassou from this period are signed Médecín General, but Madison Smartt Bell points out that the language

Meanwhile, in that fateful summer of 1791, rebellion had also broken out in the southern and western provinces of Saint-Domingue. Mulattoes who had once lived among white Frenchmen now rose against them, joined by unknown numbers of Maroons from the Bahoruco Mountains. Among the most notable of the southern rebels was Romaine Rivière, a free black coffee planter born in Spanish Santo Domingo. Terry Rey describes Romaine's transformation from planter to rebel and his even more amazing transformation into Romaine-la-Prophétesse. Claiming to receive messages and instruction from the Virgin, the Prophétesse commanded great loyalty from his forces encamped at Trou Coffey. Driven by religious and revolutionary fervour, Romaine's forces destroyed the French city of Léogane, in the western province, as their counterparts were also burning Le Cap in the north.[34]

Following these major assaults by the rebels, the French National Assembly declared amnesty for all free persons for "acts of revolution" and sent three revolutionary commissioners to try to establish some order in Saint-Domingue. When a copy of the amnesty proclamation reached Biassou's camp, he had it read aloud to his troops (to whom, actually, this decree would not have applied because they were slaves). Apparently the slaves understood this and declared their determination to continue the war, but Toussaint had the proclamation read a second time and then gave a speech that allegedly so moved the masses that they seemed willing to return to their plantations.[35] But the rebels of the south burned Port-au-Prince that October.[36]

In November, only three months after the start of the rebellion, and not long after Jean François's execution of the sadist Jeannot, French forces killed the famed Boukman, but many other lesser-known rebels still commanded a network of military encampments across the northern plain. The rebels at Biassou's camp at Dondon did not hear of Boukman's death until a month later, and then Gros wrote, "[I]t was impossible to describe the Effect it had upon the Negroes", who believed he had been "killed in one of the justest [sic] of all Causes: the Defence of his King".[37]

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reflects an equality of one to another. This familiar tone might derive from their long acquaintance. Toussaint to Biassou, 4 October 1791 and 15 October 1791, from the private collection of Gérard Berthélemy, cited in Bell, *Toussaint*, pp. 24–25.

**34** T. Rey, *The Priest and the Prophetess: Abbé Ouvière Romaine Rivière, and the Revolutionary Atlantic World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

**35** Fick, "The Slave Insurrection of 1791", p. 29.

**36** John Carter Brown Library, "The Haitian Revolution, 1791–1792", https://library.brown.edu/haitihistory/6.html (accessed 29 March 2019).

**37** Gros, *Historick Recital*, p. 34.

The rebellion had lost two powerful leaders but another was emerging. Sometime during this period, Toussaint allied himself to his old friend, Biassou, becoming his aide and camp physician (Medecín General). Despite his lesser title and customary modesty (or some might argue, secrecy and guile), Toussaint shaped the rebels' subsequent negotiations with colonial authorities.

After months of fierce fighting, and recognizing their material limitations, the northern rebel leaders began negotiations to try to secure amnesty.[38] On 4 December 1791, in a move C.L.R. James describes as "Judas work", Biassou, Jean-François, and Toussaint sued for peace and offered to return the rebellious slaves to their plantations in exchange for their own freedom and political rights and those of their families and officers.[39] Jean-François bluntly told the chronicler Gros, who was by that time serving as his secretary, "In taking up Arms, I never pretended to fight for the General Liberty of the country". Gros credited Toussaint with persuading Biassou to accept a reduced number of pardons in the offer.[40] Biassou and Jean-François sent two letters to the newly arrived French commissioners, but the reactionary planters of the Colonial Assembly of Saint-Domingue rudely, and unwisely, rejected their offer to lay down arms in exchange for the freedom of their families and some of their troops, and so the war raged on.[41]

In January 1792, as Governor Blanchelande massacred hundreds of women, children, and elderly camp followers at Platons, Biassou led several spectacular raids on Le Cap, including one on the Providence Hospital of the Fathers of Charity, where his mother had once served. Jean-François also had success in capturing Ouanaminthe on the Spanish border (known in Spanish sources as Juana Méndez), which would become his headquarters.[42]

Meanwhile, influenced by Abbé Grégoiré and the Amis des Noirs (Friends of the Blacks), the French National Assembly voted, in April, suffrage for free people of colour. Once again, the obdurate Colonial Assembly stood firm and

**38** The leaders had to hide their plans from the black masses they had mobilized and whom they feared they could not control. Gros, *Historick Recital*, pp. 40, 47.

**39** Jean-Francis and Toussaint both recognized that they were betraying their compatriots, L. Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp. 125–128; C.L.R. James, *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, London: Allison & Busby, 1980, pp. 104–106.

**40** Gros, *Historick Recital*, p. 42.

**41** Ibid., pp. 44–47.

**42** I had followed other historians in believing Biassou raided the hospital to rescue his mother, Diana, allegedly slaying patients on his way out, but David Geggus points out that letters written to Biassou before that time sent regards to his mother and sister (Personal communication, 15 September 2008).

ruled slavery perpetual.[43] At this impasse, the National Assembly dispatched 6,000 troops and a second set of commissioners to Saint-Domingue. Hoping for a better result than that they had earlier received, in July the "Chiefs of the Revolt" wrote another lengthy statement to the Colonial Assembly and the new French commissioners, proclaiming the justice of their rebellion and their equality with the "avaricious" whites who had oppressed them.[44]

In August, the National Assembly deposed Louis XVI and declared France a republic, although that news did not reach Saint-Domingue until October. Meanwhile, although half of the French army had quickly died of disease, the remaining troops, under Etienne Laveaux, energetically pursued the rebel forces, engaging in a series of battles on the northern plain outside Le Cap. But even as thousands of black royalists fought in his name, Louis XVI went to the guillotine and the rebels were left without a king to defend.[45]

In February 1793, England and Spain declared war on France and both powers began courting the black rebels of the northern plain. British forces, based at the port city of Saint Marc, concentrated their efforts in the west and south of Saint-Domingue and were not as directly involved with the northern insurgents, who rejected their overtures to accept those of Spain.[46] Information about the revolution circulated with lightning speed across the Caribbean and triggered powerful reactions everywhere, but accurate information about the dramatic events engulfing them were hard for any of the participants, black or white, to come by.[47] It is hard to say what the rebels knew of the British system and what it could offer, but the French colonial devil they did know.

In June, fierce fighting broke out between the French governor of Saint-Domingue, a native who sided with the local planters, and the forces of the radical French commissioners who had declared the slaves free. Le Cap was soon in flames and panicked whites, many accompanied by their slaves, fled the city for ships bound for Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, and New Orleans and Santiago (Cuba). Many more also sought refuge among the nearby Spaniards.[48]

**43** Bell, *Toussaint*, p. 38.

**44** Ibid., p. 27.

**45** Ibid., p. 41.

**46** On the British engagement with the insurgents, see D.P. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793–1798*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

**47** J. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*, New York: Verso Books, 2018; D.P. Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789–1815", in: D.B. Gaspar and D.P. Geggus (eds.), *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 1–50.

**48** Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp.157–160.

In an overture to the Spanish across the border, Georges Biassou wrote Governor García to ensure his position as leader of the black royalists: "I am the chief of the Counter-Revolution [. . .]. I began the war, almost without arms, without munitions, without supplies, and almost without resources on 23 August 1791, a time that will always be remembered among the most magnificent of the Universe [. . .] signed Jorge [Georges] Biassou, General of the Conquered Territories of the North of Santo Domingo, 15 July 1793".[49] For additional support Biassou also produced a statement from Toussaint addressed to the Spanish king from Dondon on 15 July 1793, acknowledging Biassou as "our true General [. . .] who we have always recognized as such" and recommending the title of Generalissimo be conferred on him "to do otherwise would be unjust since it is his by right".[50]

Thereafter, conflicts between the already competitive Biassou and Jean-François only deepened. From his camp at San Miguel, Biassou continued to bombard the Spanish governor with proofs of his leadership and demands that he recognize it. Biassou repeatedly attacked Jean-François as "vain" and his presumptions to leadership as "absurd". He pointed out that his rival only held the town of Juana Méndez (Ounaminthe), wheras thousands had surrendered to him. He added, "[T]here is not an obligation that he [Jean-François] does not owe me".[51]

Other rebel leaders tried to mediate the differences between the two squabbling rebels. Commandant Jean Guiambois wrote Biassou from his camp Cebert on the Artibonite Plain. Addressing Biassou as "dear brother" and "dear General", he argued that if he and Biassou and Jean François united forces and hearts, they would save lives: "We are three chiefs, but one heart." He continued that there was more glory in peace than in further bloodshed and that past evils should be forgotten and vengeance foresworn.[52] Toussaint was also

**49** Jorge [Georges] Biassou to Captain General Joaquín García, 15 July 1793, GM 7157, no. 7, AGS. This document is also signed by Field Marshall Belair.

**50** Jorge [Georges] Biassou (from San Miguel) to Captain General Joaquín García, August 24, 1793, GM 7157, no. 7, AGS.

**51** Jorge [Georges] Biassou (from San Miguel) to Captain General Joaquín García, 15 July 1793, GM 7157, no. 7; 23 August 1793, GM 7157, no. 8; 24 August 1793, GM 7157, no. 6; 25 September 1793, GM 7157, no. 13; Captain General Joaquín García to Jorge [Georges] Biassou, 29 October 1793, GM 7157, no. 15, AGS.

**52** In his letter to Biassou, Guiambois included a letter sent him by Lambert that also deplored the bloodshed and destruction and urged him to end the horror of war and bring peace, schools, and manufacturing to their beautiful island. In doing so, Lamberts wrote he would be known as "Major Guiambois, Savior of the New World", rather than "Avenger of the New World". Comandante Guiambois to General Biassou, 5 August 1793, GM 7157, no. 11, AGS.

worried and issued a call for unity, liberty, and equality, signing himself for the first time as "Toussaint Louverture, General of the armies of the king [of Spain]".[53]

Despite the bickering, Spain's black allies made gains during the fall of 1793 and Governor García kept the crown well informed of the desperate battles fought on the northern plain. Jean François took Dondon, but the French forces retook it, with serious losses on both sides. Toussaint was finally able to regain Dondon and raise the Spanish flag over the much-contested camp. Toussaint also took Marmelade on his second attempt, leading Governor García to praise his "sagacity" in the latter battle.[54]

Perhaps in response to these victories, in August 1793, the French Commissioner Léger-Félicité Sonthonax took the initiative to offer the northern rebels freedom and alliance in the name of the French Republic, but he did so independently and Saint-Domingue's Colonial Assembly would have none of it. The rebel leaders Biassou and Jean-François allegedly responded, "Since the beginning of the world we have obeyed the will of a king. We have lost the king of France but we are dear to him of Spain who constantly shows us reward and assistance. We therefore cannot recognize you until you have enthroned a king".[55] They even convinced the commissioners' Kongo-born envoy, Macaya, to join them. Macaya later proclaimed, "I am the subject of three kings: of the king of Congo, master of all blacks; of the King of France, who represents my father; of the King of Spain, who represents my mother".[56]

Opting for monarchy, and with no French king to claim their loyalty, Biassou, Jean-François, and Toussaint finally accepted the Spanish offer of alliance. In November 1793, at the border town of San Raphael, the Spanish Governor Joaquín García, ceremoniously decorated Biassou, Jean-François, and Toussaint with gold medals bearing the likeness of the King Carlos IV, and he presented them with documents expressing the gratitude and confidence of the Spanish government. Toussaint actually received the medal meant for Hyacinth, a young Vodou priest who had once tried to persuade his followers that the French soldier's bullets were water and who had been assassinated

**53** Bell, *Toussaint*, pp. 18–19.

**54** Comandante Joaquín Garcia from San Rafael on the French attack on San Miguel, 22 July 1793 and 12 August 1793, SGU 7158, pp. 38–45, AGS.

**55** R. Blackburn, "'The Black Jacobins' and New World Slavery", in: S.R. Cudjoe and W.E. Cain (eds.), *C.L.R. James, His Intellectual Legacies*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, pp. 81–97, 86; James, *Black Jacobins*.

**56** Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp. 160.

shortly before. The crown also gave 12 silver medals to selected lieutenants, such as Benjamin, who served under Jean-François.[57]

Spain designated its new armies of risen slaves the "Black Auxiliaries of Carlos IV", a much more formal title and affiliation than earlier or later black militias ever received.[58] There is uncertainty about their troop strengths since neither Biassou nor Jean-François kept exact records, but each claimed leadership of between 5,000 and 6,000 men.[59] Newly supplied and under a Spanish flag, the forces of Biassou, Jean-François, and Toussaint fought many bloody battles against the French. One of the rebels' primary supporters, Father Josef Vásquez, himself a mulatto, wrote from Dajabón that "if divine Providence had not favoured us with the blacks [allies], we would have been victims of the fury of the savage masses". He added that although the Spaniards did not fully trust the new allies who fought back the slaves, "it is they who have taken prisoners, they who have given the King 200 slaves, and they who have fought the campaign".[60]

In February 1794, Jean-François successfully attacked the French camps of Pierrot and Petit Tomas at Port Margot, returning afterwards to Bayajá with 20 prisoners from Pierrot's forces. Captain General Joaquín García quickly dispatched the French enemies to prison in Puerto Rico, but he granted sanctuary to 44 French refugees fleeing the violence. García also sheltered another French group of 160 persons from Le Cap, who escaped to Bayajá by boat in fear of the mulatto General Villate, who command the capital. In reporting these events to his superiors, García included a list of the 16 camps between Bayajá and the French capital of Le Cap, giving details about the leaders and their troop strengths, their arms, and the defences of each.[61]

By early 1794, Spain's black troops controlled the entire northern plain, but the ongoing disputes among the leaders of the Black Auxiliaries had become so worrisome that King Carlos and his Council of State met to discuss how they should be reconciled. Both were convinced that Biassou's three white

**57** The three chiefs swore submission and vassalage to the Spanish king in the house of Don Matias de Armona on 8 November 1793. Estado (ES)13, AGI. Captain General Joaquín García to the Duque de la Alcudia, 18 February 1794, ES 14, doc. 86, AGI. On Hyacinthe, see Geggus, "The Arming of Slaves in the Haitian Revolution", pp. 209–232.

**58** On the long tradition of black military service for Spain, see J. Landers, "Transforming Bondsmen into Vassals: Arming the Slaves in Colonial Spanish America", in: Brown and Morgan (eds.), *Arming Slaves*, pp. 120–145. And for French precedents in Saint-Domingue, see D. Geggus, "The Arming of Slaves in the Haitian Revolution", in: Brown and Morgan (eds.), *Arming Slaves*, pp. 209–232.

**59** Ibid.

**60** Father Josef Vásquez to the Vicar of Santiago, 12 December 1793, ES 11, no. 98, AGI.

**61** Governor Joaquín Garcia to the Duque de Alcudia, 20 February 1794, 14, no. 77, AGI.

secretaries, the Frenchmen Cavaux de Franqueville and LaPlace and the Canary Islander, José de los Reyes, were behind Biassou's torrent of complaints, and they ordered them summarily arrested and sent to prison in Puerto Rico.[62]

Biassou's petulance may have triggered Toussaint's surprising attack on his childhood friend and former leader at Ennery in March 1794 (however, I have not yet found explanatory evidence for this puzzling event). The Spanish commander at San Raphael, General Juan Lleonart, was able to broker a rapprochement between Toussaint and Biassou the following month and it is clear from his reports that he regarded Toussaint as the more dependable of the two allies. He wrote, "It is on him that we can count for his judgement, prudence, loyalty, and piety".[63]

But Lleonart's trust in Toussaint's loyalty was betrayed. The French General Laveaux reported that Toussaint "placed himself under the banner of the Republic on May 6th". Perhaps to put a better spin on what Biassou called a "Faustian bargain", Toussaint later claimed to have transferred his service to the French Republic only in June in response to its emancipation proclamation.[64] Scholars theorize that Toussaint's defection from the Spaniards was in part motivated by his own ambition and that he felt his advancement within the Spanish camp was blocked by Biassou and Jean-François.[65]

Before long, his former allies were losing battles against Toussaint, who surprised and defeated Spanish forces at San Raphael on 6 May 1794. David Geggus describes that event as a "massacre", and San Raphael's commander must have rued his earlier positive assessment of Toussaint's "loyalty and piety". The violence suffered by Spain's Black Auxiliaries at San Raphael may have triggered subsequent violence.

As Spain's position weakened, on 7 July 1794 Jean-François forces massacred more than 1,000 French men, women, and children, who had accepted Spanish offers of protection at the border town of Bayajá. Eyewitness accounts by the Spaniards describe Jean-François's forces arriving on horseback to surround the town and Spanish attempts to get as many women and children on boats before the attack started. When it did, the Spaniards, holed up in their

**62** King Carlos IV, 1 March 1794, GM 7159, no. 11 and no. 14; Council of State, September 26, 1794, GM 7159, no. 61, AGS.

**63** Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, pp. 119–136.

**64** Ibid.

**65** T.O. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789–1804*, Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1973, pp. 83–84; C.E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990, p. 184; Bell, *Toussaint*, p. 92. The exact date of Toussaint's *volte-face* is still debated among scholars.

houses with as many of those French still left behind as they could save, described the pitiful sounds of the massacre that followed. Before leaving, Jean-François forces emptied the government warehouse of all the guns, uniforms, and other supplies they could carry. They also took the military treasury of 1,600 pesos. Lengthy Spanish investigations followed and produced detailed reports of the losses.

Although contemporaries and scholars agree that Jean-François was in charge and responsible for Bayajá, Jean-François tried to divert attention to Biassou and his men, whom he accused of similar atrocities. Jean-François claimed that "although General Viasou [sic] made war under the same banners as we, my conduct, the direction of my troops, their discipline, and their military operations have always been better." Jean-François argued that if "disorders" occurred after Biassou's troops arrived on the scene and he should be found culpable, Biassou should be punished as required by the law.[66] Although Spaniards were also involved in the killings, the Spanish governor of Bayajá, the Marqués of Casa Calvo, later referred to the incident as a "cruel crime" that "inspired in the sanguinary hearts and entrails [of the blacks] the reckless belief that they had retaken the town and saved the Spanish garrison from a plot against them by the French émigrés".[67] If the black troops actually believed that the returning French planters, who had rejected their freedom, plotted to overturn the Spaniards, who had accepted it, then their actions become more explicable, if no less bloody. C.L.R. James writes that Jean-François had spent the morning in the confessional with Father Vásquez and that it was the priest, in fact, who gave the command to commence the slaughter. If true, the actions of Biassou and Jean-François on that horrible day at Bayajá may have been sanctioned by their own beloved priest and counsellor.[68]

In 1795, the Directory of the French Republic finally concluded a peace with Spain, and the Treaty of Basel ceded western Hispaniola to the French, thereby respatializing the island once again. Spain also agreed to disband the Black Auxiliaries of Carlos IV. Scarred by the "crimes" of Bayajá, Governor Casa Calvo recommended that the crown abolish black military employment and titles immediately. Bothered by the auxiliaries' "pretensions to superiority", he argued that he had seen evidence of their fury at Bayajá, and "although they paint themselves with other colours, they are the same who murdered their

**66** Jean-François to Captain General Luis de Las Casas, 12 January 1796, ES 5-A, no. 28, AGI.
**67** The Marqués of Casa Calvo to Captain General Luis de Las Casas, 31 December 1795, ES 5-A, no. 23, AGI.
**68** James, *Black Jacobins*, pp. 151; Geggus, "Slavery, War and Revolution"; Scott, "The Common Wind".

owners, violated their wives, and destroyed all those with property". He also warned that some of the Black Auxiliaries thought the abandonment of their property would excuse their crimes and be proof of fidelity but that their sacrifices were only "illusions" and were made in their own self-interest. Governor Casa Calvo told Biassou, Jean-François, and the other military leaders they would have to evacuate Española because the French Republic did not find their presence "compatible", but he urged the "simple soldiers" to remain as they had been offered freedom by both the French Republic and Spain. The former would need labourers to restore the burned plantations.[69]

The black armies wanted, instead, to maintain their units, ranks, salaries, and rations and to embark together for some designated place where they should be given lands to cultivate and be permitted to form a town. They had not given up everything to return to their former states. They argued that they would then constitute a ready force, able to fight for the king of Spain wherever he should care to send them. There was, in fact, royal precedent for this; only decades before, the militia of the town of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose in Florida, also composed of former slaves, was evacuated en masse to Cuba in 1763, granted homesteads together, and allowed to retain their militia titles and perquisites.[70]

The governor and captain general of Santo Domingo, Joaquín García, who had once written glowing reports about the exploits of the "valiant warriors" now urged their deportation to Havana. García was already under serious pressure from angry Spanish citizens who were also being forced to evacuate the island and were urging Spanish troops to mutiny and renounce the treaty with France. In such a volatile situation, García did not even allow the black troops time to dispose of their property or settle family affairs before leaving.[71]

In the rapid evacuation, families were separated and Biassou was forced to leave behind his own mother, whom he had allegedly rescued from slavery in the early years of the revolt.[72] The embittered black general lodged a formal complaint against Governor García and urged his dismissal.[73] Casa Calvo's

**69** The Marqués of Casa Calvo to Captain General Luis de Las Casas, 31 December 1795, ES 5-A, no. 23, AGI.

**70** Ibid.; J. Landers, "An Eighteenth-Century Community in Exile: the Floridanos of Cuba", *New West Indian Guide* 70 (1996) 1/2, pp. 39–58.

**71** Captain General Joaquín García to the Duque de la Alcudia, 18 February 1794, ES 14, no. 86, AGI; Captain General Joaquín García to Captain General Luis de Las Casas, 25 January 1796, ES 5-A, no. 36, AGI.

**72** Petition of Jorge [Georges] Biassou, 14 September 1796, Cuba 1439, AGI.

**73** Complaint of Jorge [Georges] Biassou, 31 May 1794, ES 13, no. 11, AGI.

predicted the Black Auxiliaries would expect "the same distinctions, prerogatives, luxury, and excessive tolerance" in Cuba that they had enjoyed in Bayajá. He assured the captain general of Cuba that he never promised the "venomous vipers" they would be allowed to remain in Havana.[74]

On the last day of December 1795, Spanish officials carefully recorded the exodus of the remaining Black Auxiliaries of Carlos IV from Bayajá on the north coast. A few days earlier, others had sailed from Ocoa on the south coast.[75] All were destined for Havana, but after the captain general of Cuba refused to receive the exiles, they were dispersed across the Atlantic. The black rebels who had become royal Spanish auxiliaries had waged four years of a bloody race war and were viewed with the utmost suspicion anywhere they landed. The largest group, led by Jean-François, finally landed in Cádiz, where they became the focus of constant surveillance. Other contingents settled in Campeche (Mexico), Portobelo (Panama), the coast of Guatemala, and St. Augustine (Florida).[76] Like most exiles, they longed to one day return to their former homes, and some also hoped to resume their former positions of power.

From Cádiz, Jean-François wrote to his lieutenant, Juan Santiago in Guatemala, hoping to reunite his troops and their families in Central America, a plan that never materialized. Meanwhile, from Florida, Biassou petitioned the Spanish crown to allow him to move his followers to the more important port of Havana. When the crown failed to respond, Biassou next offered to travel to Spain and join the royal forces battling French enemies in Europe, but this proposal was also ignored. The post-revolutionary diaspora of Spain's black veterans fragmented their troops, but they always hoped to regain their place in history. They were successful slave rebels who had fought a bloody war and freed themselves and large numbers of their families and troops by force of arms. Seasoned by war against French planters, French and British troops, and their own countrymen – and well-acquainted with "dangerous notions" of

**74** Marqués de Casa Calvo to Captain General Luis de Las Casas, 31 December 1795, ES 5-A, no. 23, AGI.

**75** Report by Captain General Luis de las Casas, 13 January 1796, ES 5-A, no. 28, AGI; Luis de Las Casas to Duque de Alcudia, 8 January 1796, ES 5-A, no. 24, AGI.

**76** Archivo General de Centro America, A2/120/2265/folios 4-5v. Documents on the expenses for the transport of Black Auxiliaries of Santo Domingo to Portobelo, 4 March 1797, Asuntos Politicos, Leg 6, N. 39, ANC. On this group, see R. Soulodre-La France, "The King's Soldiers: Black Auxiliaries in the Spanish and British Empires", paper delivered at the American Historical Association, New York, 2009. Also see J.V. Ojeda, *San Fernando Aké: microhistória de una comunidad afroamericana en Yucatán*, Mérida, Yucatán: Ediciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2001; and R. Cáceres and P. Lovejoy (eds.), *Haití: revolución y emancipación*, Costa Rica: Universidad de Costa Rica, 2008.

liberty, equality, and fraternity, despite their monarchical rhetoric – these men became objects of fear throughout the Atlantic world.[77]

Meanwhile, the shattered space that was the island of Saint-Domingue remained a site of bloody turmoil as Toussaint struggled to build and acquire recognition for a new state, rebuild a ruined economy, unify the island by invading the Spanish territory, and negotiate his political survival as "Governor for Life". Betrayed by the French with whom he had cast his lot, Toussaint died of desolation and hunger in a French prison in 1803. It fell to Toussaint's successor, Jean Jacques Dessalines, to finally declare the independence of Haiti on 1 January 1804. After 15 years of a bloody race war, Haiti was the first state to win independence in Latin America and the first black republic in the Atlantic space, but it remained a pariah among nations. In the tumultuous decades that followed, it remained a fragmented space and does to this day, divided by political boundaries and race.

**77** White fears of such men and their "notions" are described in M.-R. Trouillot, "From Planters' Journals to Academia, the Haitian Revolution as Unthinkable History", *The Journal of Caribbean History* 25 (1991) 1/2, pp. 81–99. See also D.P. Geggus, "Racial Equality, Slavery, and Colonial Secession during the Constituent Assembly", *American Historical Review* 94 (1989) 5, pp. 1290–1308; and "Slavery, War, and Revolution"; J.G. Landers, "Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida: The French Revolution on Spain's Northern Colonial Frontier", in: Gaspar and Geggus (eds.), *A Turbulent Time*, pp. 156–177.

# Part II: **The Impact of the French Revolution**

Christian Ayne Crouch

# 5 The French Revolution in Indian Country: Reconsidering the Reach and Place of Atlantic Upheaval

Two decades ago, Colin Calloway's study, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, proposed a reorientation of how historians had interpreted revolutionary events; he sought to centre the perspectives, experiences, and contributions of Native peoples in this conflict. This movement away from Eurocentric perspectives on turning points and conflicts, combined with the work by Indigenous scholars to take seriously Native perspectives on the construction of American history and the exhortation by practitioners of the New Indian History to "face east from Indian Country", encouraged many historians to revisit the revolutionary moment and, for some, to do so in ways that explored authors' own stakes in these projects.[1] A consideration of space necessarily requires being aware of an author's location and position, both physically and metaphorically. This chapter is written on the homelands of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians – a point that might seem extraneous to

**1** The author wishes to thank Megan Maruschke and Matthias Middell for convening "The French Revolution: A Moment of Respatialization Conference" and is grateful to all the workshop participants for their support and feedback. Profound thanks as well to H.D. Buch and to Jenny Shaw, for their steadfast support, critiques, and suggestions and to the Princeton American Indian and Indigenous Studies Working Group. C. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Examples of recent works expanding on the legacy of and beyond the American Revolution, particularly past the eastern Atlantic coast, include K. Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*, New York: Random House, 2015; S. Pearsall, "Re-Centering Indian Women in the American Revolution" in: S. Sleeper-Smith, J. Barr, J.M. O'Brien, N. Shoemaker, and S.M. Stevens (eds.), *Why You Can't Teach American History Without Indians*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015, or C. Saunt, *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. The concept of facing eastwards is explored in D.K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003. On Native stakes in historical construction, see E. Tuck and K.W. Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor", *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1 (2012) 1, pp. 1–40. For the reflections on New Indian History, see J. Merrell, "Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69 (2012) 3, pp. 451–512, and A. Mt. Pleasant, C. Wiggington, and K. Wisecup, "Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 75 (2018) 2, pp. 207–236.

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a contemplation of the French Revolution. Consider, however, that taking seriously where one begins a historical investigation can offer new questions and perspectives on topics that appear to have been fully mined. Everyone participating in this volume was asked to consider the question of respatializing the French Revolution. This appeared, at first, a somewhat challenging endeavour for a historian working at the intersection of French Atlantic history and Native American and Indigenous Studies. We must confront that Indigenous peoples did understand, respond to, and in some cases incorporate into their own politics the broader transformations of the late eighteenth-century Atlantic world including those set in motion by the French and Haitian revolutions. In fact, the two decades of internecine and international warfare that followed the collapse of the French monarchy overlaps with the efforts of specific American Indian leaders to recast Indian Country politics to halt once and for all the invasion of their lands by Anglo-American settler colonists. Therefore, this chapter applies the concept of "respatialization" as a spatial (geographic) notion as well as a conceptual re-engagement that takes as its point of departure a region little considered by scholars of the French Revolution: Indian Country. As this chapter argues, respatialization offers the potential to move boundaries, literally and figuratively, and allows us to make space for new actors and interpretations in otherwise familiar narratives of French and American history. This new thinking also necessitates considering the place France today has in articulating its history in relationship to all of its former first empire.

In the Anglo-American academy, the influence and reaction to the French Revolution on American settler colonial political figures is taken as a given. In the 80 years since the publication of C.L.R. James' groundbreaking *The Black Jacobins*, the relationship between French Revolutionary thought and developing political philosophy and political economy in Saint-Domingue/Haiti have become widely considered by Atlantic scholars.[2] Despite these advances, the

**2** See, e.g., M. Daut, *Baron de Vastey and the Origins of Black Atlantic Humanism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; L. Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004; D.P. Geggus (ed.), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001; D.P. Geggus (ed.), *The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997; D.P. Geggus and N. Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, Bloomingon: Indiana University Press, 2009; W. Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*, New York: New York University Press, 2009; J. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011; T. Reiss, *The Black Count: Glory, Revolution, Betrayal, and the Real Count of Monte Cristo*, New York: Crown Publishing, 2012. Numerous works explore as well the relationship of the French and Haitian revolutions to early (Anglo-)America, such as A. White,

connections between Native America and the French Revolution remain poorly explored and little considered. Efforts to revisit the French Revolution have moved beyond the Atlantic impact of political, cultural, and social upheaval to include considerations of the revolution's global impact.[3] These works have made important contributions, but the shift away from the Atlantic repercussions of the conflict might suggest that the Atlantic historiography is complete. It is not.

The French Revolutionary wars had a profound impact on Native North America by accelerating the processes of violence and dispossession that came with what has been called "the long war for the west", encompassing the territory of the Old Northwest and the upper Great Lakes, which lasted from 1754 until 1815.[4] Rafe Blaufarb notes that "although unintentional and unanticipated, a significant outcome of the French Revolution and the global war that ensued was the relative disengagement of the European powers from geopolitical rivalry on the North American continent".[5] This "disengagement", achieved through bilateral treaties between the United States and Britain and Spain respectively, stripped Native peoples of the material assistance and military support provided by Britain and Spain that had facilitated the Indians' active resistance against Anglo-American expansion. The treaties halted the flow of support and ultimately led to systematic removal of Native peoples from their ancestral homelands. Though seemingly distant, the French Revolution reshaped interimperial American strategies and thrust the consequences of Atlantic events into the heart of the continent.

A reconsideration of the spatial influence of the French Revolution can be extended and complicated further. For one thing, historians might consider whether these effects were as "unintentional and unanticipated" as they might

*Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012.

**3** J. Klaits and M.J. Haltzel (eds.), *The Global Ramifications of the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994; L. Hunt and J.R. Censer, *The French Revolution and Napoleon: Crucible of the Modern World*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017; S. Desan, L. Hunt, and W.M. Nelson (eds.), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

**4** R. Blaufarb, "The French Revolutionary Wars and the Making of American Empire, 1783–1796", in: Desan, Hunt, and Nelson (eds.), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, pp. 148–162, at pp. 158–160; F. Furstenberg "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History", *American Historical Review* 113 (2008) 3, pp. 647–677, at pp. 650–651.

**5** Blaufarb, "The French Revolutionary Wars", p. 162.

seem on the surface. Blaufarb notes that American audiences (by which he means Anglo-American) "were fully aware of the causal links" between European war, the treaties, and Indian Country.[6] But did Native peoples see the French Revolution and its aftermath in this way? Was it simply a distant phenomenon that shaped the realities of Indigenous communities through Atlantic geopolitics of British and/or Spanish alliance? Or were there ways in which some Indigenous actors responded to the rhetoric emerging around the Atlantic, particularly after the Jay Treaty (1794) and the Treaty of Greenville (1795) seemed to foreclose the options for continued Native resistance? Asking these questions opens up the possibility for exploring what could be termed a "Red Atlantic" Age of Revolution.[7]

We might also think about how the legacy of France's North American empire was operating in the late Ancien Régime and during the revolutionary period in France itself. Native Studies scholars have advocated taking perspectives that centre, rather than continue to marginalize, the spaces and perspectives of Native communities. Therefore, the understanding and effects of the French Revolution among Native peoples might look somewhat different if we approach the question from the position of being located in the homelands of Native peoples.[8] Positioning oneself in this manner not only allows Indigenous agents to be included, it also invites a consideration of how France continues to articulate, or efface, the memory of its early modern Atlantic empire in the very materials and repositories scholars turn to in order to trace these histories. An entry point into this consideration can be through archival material that seems, on its surface, to be utterly disconnected from Native North America.

**6** Ibid., p. 161.

**7** On the use of the term "Red Atlantic", see J. Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000–1927*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

**8** Recent scholarship has revised and taken account of Native engagement with the American Revolution to make Indigenous voices proactive, rather than reactive, to these political changes. See, e.g., Duval, *Independence Lost*, or Saunt, *West of the Revolution*. A wide range of Native American and Indigenous Studies scholars forward the perspective of centring narratives in Native space. Some examples include L. Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, and *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018; M. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America*, New York: Macmillan, 2015; M. Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

On 25 February 1791, the National Assembly of France issued a law regarding pensions granted to Acadian and Canadian officers (civilian and military) and their families. Publicized as being made in Louis XVI's name, the law stemmed from a 1789 report of the Committee on Pensions to the National Assembly, "demanding justice on behalf of citizens whose tender attachment to the mother-nation went uncompensated, and were in fact treated barbarously by the Ancien Régime". The "bloody" Seven Years' War returned civilian and military officials from Canada, Acadia, and St. Pierre-de-Miquelon, to France, but the committee noted with disapproval that, once home, these refugees received minimal pensions from the Ministry of the Navy, ranging from 600 livres tournois to, shockingly, 50 écus or less.[9] In 1791 and again in 1792, a series of laws were passed by the National Assembly, explicitly as attempts to right the wrongs of the monarchy in this domain. The correction rested on a public treasury endowed with 50 million livres to enable a continued disbursement of the former pensions now supplemented by daily stipends of "8 sous to the septuagenarians, 6 sous to heads of households and widows, 4 sous to children and orphans until age 20".[10] The publication of the law, filled with demographic information on the veteran families, including the names of every claimant remaining in France, their residence, date of birth, and the sums they could expect until age 20 or for life, suggested the earnestness of this project of restitution and an expectation of its long-term continuation in reformed France. Thirty years after New France (Canada) was first offered to Great Britain by Étienne-François de Choiseul in the Treaty of Paris (1763), the French government was deeply engaged in the lives of its American subjects once more.

This intervention by the National Assembly and its explicit self-positioning as an act of restorative justice is all the more noteworthy when we consider how aggressively officials of the Bourbon monarchy had moved, after the fall of Montreal and Québec, to erase the legacy and memory of the first French Atlantic empire in metropolitan France and (as I have argued in my previous work), in the wake of this, completely revised the boundaries of who could engage in colonialism and what the purpose of any future French empire would be. After the cession of Canada in 1760 and the return to France of the elite tier of colonial society in the aftermath of that defeat, officials in the Choiseul administration delegitimized the fidelity of these subjects, placing leading colonial officials on

**9** *Rapport fait A l'Assemblé Nationale au nom du Comité des Pensions, sur les Secours accordés aux Acadiens et Canadiens, Imprimé par ordre de l'Assemblé Nationale* (1789), pp. 1–2.

**10** *Loi Relative aux Secours accordés aux Officiers, tant civils que militaires, Acadiens & Canadiens, & à leurs familles donnée à Paris, le 25 février 1791*, Paris: De L'Imprimerie Royale, M DCC XCI, pp. 1–2.

trial for corruption and suppressing the uncomfortable colonial legacy visible in the midst of the French population. To this end, they segregated returned Canadian colonists in the province of Touraine and refused them a place in the new French imperial endeavours directed towards the Caribbean and the Pacific.[11]

The proposed 1792 law and the language of "uncompensation" for a "barbarous" act of betrayal showed the National Assembly radically reimagining the responsibilities of the state to its loyal subjects – now citizens – who had given the entirety of their belongings for *la patrie* (the homeland). The statutory debate also opened up an avenue to think about how the members of the National Assembly might best harness the expertise and past experience of these populations to further French territorial goals, first in securing France's borders and then, as the 1790s moved forward, in expanding them outwards. In 1792, a petition brought by a Paris-based playwright named Marie-Joseph Chénier, proposed making 14 foreigners from Europe and across the Atlantic world into citizens of the new French Republic because these men were "representatives of humanity as a whole".[12] Their incorporation would help to demonstrate "how the revolutionaries built universalism not solely out of rights ideology but also by incorporating foreign peoples and projects into the republic".[13] Among the foreigners put forward for citizenship were a handful of Americans like George Washington and Thomas Paine.

And yet, it is important to highlight that for all the innovation of the 1791 and 1792 proposals, their progressive authors and champions overlooked formal reparations to or civic inclusion of two significant populations of individuals who had actually shaped the contours of the old northern French imperial world. Unmentioned were the peoples who had been the core of bringing it into being and who had also made tremendous sacrifices on behalf of France, first in war and then as collateral damage as the northern French Atlantic imperial project shuddered to a halt. The National Assembly took account of neither the French settler colonial *habitants* (former French Canadian colonists) who had stayed in the North American territories ceded to Britain nor of sovereign Native peoples who called the Americas home. We

**11** C.A. Crouch, *Nobility Lost: French and Canadian Martial Cultures, Indians, and the End of New France*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014, pp. 148–152, 158–161.

**12** S. Desan, "Foreigners, Cosmopolitanism, and French Revolutionary Universalism", in: Desan, Hunt, and Nelson (eds.), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, pp. 86–100, at pp. 86, 88, 92, quotation at p. 89.

**13** S. Desan, L. Hunt, W.M. Nelson, "Introduction", in: Desan, Hunt, and Nelson (eds.), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, pp. 1–12, at p. 8.

cannot, Native Studies scholars would argue, have a fully rounded and complex understanding of any Atlantic events without including the perspectives of Haudenosaunee, Wabanaki, or Algonquin residents in the mission communities like Odanak (called Saint François by the French) and Kahnawake (Sault Saint Louis) near the St. Lawrence River or of the Anishinaabeg (Odawas, Potowatomis, and Ojibwes), Wyandots, Miamis, and Shawnees residing in proximities to old French forts, in places like Detroit and Michilimackinac.

Native peoples' lives had been entwined with both continental France and with its settler colonists, including many among those who had returned to France. Mission communities in particular had paid an exorbitant price, in blood and in property damage, for their perceived assistance to French interests in America during the two decades of conflict that culminated in the Seven Years' War. Had not the Ancien Régime wronged these communities as much, if not more, than the returned *habitants* – and, in the case of Native peoples, wronged them doubly? Under Choiseul's leadership, France had ceded Native homelands to the British in 1763 without the consent of Native residents and without Indigenous representation at the treaty table in Paris. Worse still, when the French returned as a military presence in North America in 1778, they did so on the "wrong side" for many of those communities, backing the settler colonial claims of rebelling Anglo-American colonists in a conflict that was resolved, once again, at treaty negotiations in Paris in 1783, which did not include any Native representation or participation.

Perhaps, one could argue, there was no compensation mandate made by the National Assembly for Indigenous Americans because there were no Native peoples residing in France. Perhaps – but the Acadian and Canadian populations found in France in the 1790s were statistically tiny as well and, more to the point, a number of prominent French-Canadian families had intermarried with Native communities so we cannot know for certain that there were no people of Native descent living in France at that time, or, at the very least, that there were not kinship ties or other bonds of connection that held together expatriate colonial and Indigenous populations. In 1778, when Admiral Charles Henri Hector d'Estaing anchored his French fleet in Boston, a Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) delegation travelled from the community of Kahnawake, first to Philadelphia to meet the French consul, Gérard de Rayneval, and then to Boston, to explicitly seek out a "cousin" amongst the French – the French officer whom they had made into an adopted Kahnawake, Louis Antoine de Bougainville. Fictive kinship carried as much, and at times possibly more, weight in these communities as blood alliance and they had not forgotten these bonds of unity in the nearly two decades that had passed between 1760 and

1778.[14] Moreover, throughout the 1760s and 1770s, Lenape and Anishinaabeg resistance against British and Anglo-American land claims in what Anglo-Americans called the Old Northwest was reputedly phrased by individuals like Pontiac, the Odawa war chief, in the language of the French king "regaining his legs" and returning as a "father come to life" who would protect his "children" from Anglo-American settler colonialism. Observers in the 1760s and d'Estaing again in 1778 noted the apparent pleasure with which Native delegations recognized Roman Catholic priests and the "white flag" representing France.[15] Thus, could not these communities have received compensation from France in the 1790s, alongside the Acadians and others, given these outward shows of their long-suffering fidelity recorded by agents of the state?

One problem for French Revolutionary officials considering North America, and France's colonial legacy there, lay in the ways in which Native peoples had not subordinated their sovereignty to the colonizers. Unlike the Canadian veterans who had been poorly used after their return to France, the vast majority of Native communities remained in the Americas; having refused to cross the Atlantic could have been read as demonstrating their lack of fidelity to the metropole. Moreover, the statements of the "French king" waking up renewed the relevance (or worse, the legitimacy) of the Ancien Régime, which by 1792 was becoming increasingly inconvenient for radicals in the National Assembly. When the Louisiana creole Joseph Pontalba requested that First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte return the colony to French rule on 29th Fructidor (16 September 1801), he noted that "the old men among the Indians" carried a positive memory of French America and would "see the return of their former protectors with the satisfaction equal to the umbrage which the United States will take at it".[16] In its description of these Indians, Pontalba's successful application carefully stripped the monarchical overtones that had characterized the statements of Native peoples when they enquired about a French return.

Pontalba additionally used language that subordinated Indians to their "protectors". This was important because, as Anglo-Americans and Canadian *habitants* observed in the 1760s and 1770s, Anishinaabeg and Lenape orators claimed French resurgence strategically, reasserting the optimal nature of what Native-French relations had been – a mutual alliance based on reciprocal obligations that would help these Indigenous nations confront continuous and violent Anglo-American expansion. The French return would not be to inaugurate

**14** Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, pp. 181–182.

**15** G.E. Dowd, "The French King Wakes up in Detroit: 'Pontiac's War' in Rumor and History", *Ethnohistory* 37 (1990) 3, pp. 254–278, at pp. 263–264; Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, p. 179.

**16** Pontalba quoted in Dowd, "The French King Wakes up in Detroit", p. 271.

a subjugation of Native communities, practices, and resources to French interests. Abundant colonial sources up until 1760 left an archive available to the new French Revolutionary regime, which demonstrated the role that Native peoples played in both creating and contesting the French empire's claims to dominance and uniformity. I would argue that this made Native presences potentially dangerous to the foundation of the new French national project due to the steadfast demonstrations Indigenous communities had made regarding their own sovereignty and traditions for nearly two centuries. Thus, the French Revolution enacted a fundamentally conservative action of removing Indigenous peoples from its consideration of who could transition from the old French Atlantic world into a participant in the new revolutionary one. The irony, of course, was that in silencing Indigenous presence and not atoning for the wrongs done to allies, the French Revolution laid the groundwork to continue the settler colonial practices of its predecessor state. Nowhere was this logic extended more clearly than in Napoleon's declaration of his rule and reinstatement of French claims to Louisiana (along with his attempt to restore legalized chattel slavery everywhere in the French Americas).

I will return to the implications of this continued erasure of Native peoples in French imperial and French republican narratives at the end of this chapter, but first, let us explore another possibility for tracing the French Revolution in Indian Country. As European tensions borne of the French Revolution spilled into the Atlantic, and at the very moment that French officials began publicizing the reimbursement of Canadian veterans for their suffering, some British authorities in 1792 revived an idea from a decade earlier of creating what might be termed a "Republic of Indians" – a proposed buffer state between Canada and the United States that would be populated by Native peoples and recognized as sovereign Indigenous space.[17] As France's fortunes rose in the revolutionary wars of the 1790s, Britain sought to quickly settle its disputes with the United States through negotiation, culminating in the unpopular treaty negotiated by John Jay and British officials. The United States was able to gain only one concession in the Jay Treaty, but it was an enormously important one: British withdrawal from forts in the Old Northwest and an end to British support for any potential "Republic of Indians". This agreement was reinforced by

**17** On the first proposed buffer state, see R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 410, 433–434; C.G. Calloway, *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 30, and Blaufarb, "The French Revolutionary Wars", p. 151. On the revival of buffer state idea in the 1790s, see Blaufarb, "The French Revolutionary Wars", p. 155.

the Treaty of Greenville, concluded between the United States and leaders of the Anishinaabeg Confederacy, Wyandots, Lenapes, Shawnees, and Weas, which permitted Anglo-American expansion into Ohio and Indian territory in the Old Northwest. There was a large network of *habitants* at mid-continent, many of whom built connections with US officials like William Clark or William Henry Harrison and also maintained trade or family ties with Native communities. These *habitants* could have circulated information regarding Atlantic events in the 1790s. Émigrés leaving France and journeying to the Illinois country, Louisiana, or New England also carried news with them that could then have circulated to Native populations. Some of these, now exiled, had themselves been active, prominent participants in the French Revolution.

American historians have closely attended to the ways in which Native peoples reacted to and challenged the American Revolution, particularly the ways in which Native communities asserted their own independence against the alleged "patriots" by rejecting Anglo-American pretensions to their land. The Declaration of Independence (1776) had explicitly defined Native peoples as "merciless Indian savages" in its 24th paragraph and the Articles of Confederation (1777), and later the US Constitution (1787), similarly put forward the conception that Indians remained alien to the US Republic and its citizenry – a legal stance that remained in place until the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act (1924). It is notable that, for the most part, Indigenous resistance in the 1770s and 1780s did not take the form of directly co-opting the rhetoric of Anglo-American political union.[18]

After the Treaty of Greenville, the Shawnee veteran Tecumseh emerged as one of the most visible Native leaders in the Ohio River Valley region in the early 1800s – and it is important to note that Tecumseh had refused to sign the Treaty of Greenville. His resistance to American expansion could be potentially read as part of an early nineteenth-century moment when ideas circulated by the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution may have carried more possibility and political utility to Shawnees, Miamis, Lenapes, and other Native communities than the American rhetoric of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (a happiness that was a euphemism understood by Anglo-Americans to represent the Lockean

**18** It was not until the Cherokee Constitution, adopted by the Cherokee Nation in 1827, was written that a Native council produced a record inspired directly by the United States Constitution. Drafted on 24 July 1827, the Constitution used the formulation and language of the US Constitution ratified in 1789. Notably, the Cherokee document incorporated and made explicit the restrictions embedded in the US model in order to exclude enslaved and free people of African descent from the body politic of the nation. T. Perdue and M.D. Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1995.

pursuit of property). Among the key concepts that Tecumseh put forth was his revival, by 1808, of the possibility of an intertribal Native federation that would put to rest long-standing rivalries between Native peoples in the Great Lakes and Mississippi valleys in favour of a united resistance. Though Tecumseh did not explicitly use the language of a "Republic of Indians", it is useful to consider how the innovation and political force of Tecumseh's project becomes clearer if read in these terms.

The recognition of inspiring deeds and ideas of Native peoples should not be approached through a frame that makes such concepts reactive to or intelligible through Eurocentric principles. Doing so only undermines the very innovation of the project that individuals like Tecumseh engaged in. We can, without reinforcing a Euro-American gaze, interpret the actions of Nativist leaders like Blue Jacket (the Shawnee who tried to build a confederation in the 1780s) and Tecumseh (who followed Blue Jacket in the early 1800s) as part of a transatlantic and global continuum. The French Revolution created a historical moment that radiated like a shock wave around the world, creating new tools and new difficulties for political elites everywhere by displacing traditional hierarchies and monarchs in favour of the people, initially defined as all people as put into practice by the ascent to power of the Girondins. What if we considered the possibility that the universalism of this French Revolutionary moment (which notably was never part of its American sister republic's world view) was in dialogue with and possibly inspired by the political universalism that Indigenous leaders were themselves championing throughout Indian Country? Taking seriously the invocation to look eastwards as well as westwards we must, at the very least, contemplate the multiple ways in which ideas flowed around the Atlantic.

Information about politics in Europe had long circulated among Native communities, irrespective of whether settler colonists chose to believe that their Indigenous neighbours were cosmopolitan or not.[19] The flow and transfer of information came in many forms, ranging from Indigenous travellers going to and returning from Europe, exchanges made by individuals of European and

**19** Examples of Native North American parsing of European dynastic rivalries date back to the sixteenth century, in the era of Spanish, French, and English presumptions to the southeastern coastal regions controlled by Algonquian-speaking and Timucuan/Apalachee communities. D. Richter, "Tsenacommacah and the Atlantic World" in: P.C. Mancall (ed.), *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550–1624*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007, pp. 29–65, at pp. 36–41. During the Seven Years' War, French officers worried about how the assassination attempt on Louis XV might be considered by Native men allied to French forces, indicating the continued circulations of information regarding European politics, Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, p. 99.

African descent with Indian communities, diplomatic encounters in urban settings, as well as in the circulation of texts. The Shawnee leader Blue Jacket (Waweyapiersenwaw), who preceded (and later mentored) Tecumseh in building confederacies among Lenapes, Potowatomis, Odawas, and Ojibwes, was connected through trade and kinship to French mercantile networks and British officers.[20] Through his French-Shawnee wife and his British-educated sons, Blue Jacket was well positioned to receive information of events taking place in France from 1789 onwards. Tecumseh's father was Shawnee and his mother may have been Creek; even if she was not, Tecumseh's parents had spent considerable time with Creeks at the village of Tukabatchee. During Tecumseh's earliest years, delegations from Creek villages reached out to forge independent diplomatic ties with the Spanish in Havana, making 19 visits to Cuba between 1763 and 1776. There were among the Creeks ties that may have influenced Tecumseh in his youth and he certainly later made overtures to attract different Creek communities as allies.[21] From 1791 onwards, the struggle to overturn a slaveholding empire in Saint-Domingue undertaken by the men, women, and children held in bondage ushered in a wave of émigrés fleeing (often with their human property) to Charleston, Philadelphia, and other American cities, many of them carrying their own interpretations about French (and French imperial) political thought and transformation.

Exposure to information regarding the French Revolution took an even more direct form in the waning years of the eighteenth century when Girondin envoys from the Hexagon arrived in the new United States, ostensibly to strengthen ties with a sister republic but also to explore the potential to reforge associations with Native communities. These individuals held mandates

**20** The former secretary of the National Assembly, Constantin-François Chasseboeuf, comte de Volney, travelled through Virginia, Kentucky, and the Wabash River region, and as well as Canada and the Genesee, Mohawk, and Hudson River valleys in 1797. Volney to Abbé Grégoire, 20 January 1797, in: A. Deneys, H. Deneys, "Six Lettres Inédites de Volney à Grégoire", *Dix-Huitième Siécle* 23 (1991), pp. 233–245, at p. 237. Volney also met the Miami leader Little Turtle (viewed by Tecumseh as an accommodationist) at Philadelphia in 1798, Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, p. 158. On Blue Jacket's family, see C.G. Calloway, *The Shawnees and the War for America*, New York: Viking, 2007, pp. 87–88.

**21** Saunt, *West of the Revolution*, pp. 192–199. On Tecumseh and kinship, see S. Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014, pp. 16, 209–210; L.K. Spero, "'Stout, Bold, Cunning, and the Greatest Travellers in the America': The Colonial Shawnee Diaspora", Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010, p. 429; R.D. Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*, Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1984, p. 19.

to probe and mend kinship and diplomatic associations with the Ancien Régime's Indigenous allies. The goals of Citoyen Edmond Genet and his peers are typically read through the lens of US federal involvement in French Revolutionary conflict, and there is no doubt that Genet made life complicated for US officials.[22] However, we should consider as well that Genet and his subordinates, André Michaux and Michel Ange Bernard de Mangourit, sought any way to promote the revolutionary cause. Michaux's instructions from Genet explicitly encouraged him to foment an uprising against Spanish rule by Anglo-American and Native residents of the Mississippian region, joining them together in "une Legion Independante et Revolutionnaire" (an independent and revolutionary legion) with officers commissioned from Native communities as well as from the expeditionary force to be commanded by George Rogers Clark.[23] Operating out of Charleston, South Carolina, and in search of promoting the cause, Mangourit published in late 1793 English translations of some of Genet's letters in the local papers as well as disseminating the new French Constitution of 1793.[24]

Mangourit also hoped to appeal directly to Native communities and this gives us insight into how revolutionary rhetoric was translated to Native audiences. In his instructions to his American agents, William Tate and Samuel Leroi Hammond, Mangourit requested that they disseminate news of a new France to the Indigenous residents who had first forged their bonds of alliance and conflict with the Ancien Régime. What is especially remarkable is how Mangourit rooted his explanation of revolutionary social reorganization in France to potential allies among the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Upper and Lower Creeks as revolutionary France's embrace of Native Americans' own practices.

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**22** On French migrants in the era of revolution, see, e.g., F. Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation*, New York: Penguin Books, 2015; B. Van Ruymbeke, "Refugiés or Émigrés? Early Modern French Migrations to British North America and the United States (c.1680–c.1820)", *Itinerario* 30 (2006) 2, pp. 12–32. On Genet and his peers, see Blaufarb, "The French Revolutionary Wars", p. 148.

**23** "Mémoire pour servir d'Instruction au Citoyen André Michaux, Agent de la République Française dans l'État de Kentukey [sic] et Sur le Mississippi", in: *Correspondence of Clark and Genet: Selections from the Draper Collection in the Possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, to Elucidate the Proposed French Expedition under George Rogers Clark Against Louisiana, in the Years 1793-94*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897, pp. 992–993.

**24** R. J. Alderson, Jr., *This Bright Era of Happy Revolution: French Consul Michel-Ange-Bernard Mangourit and International Republicanism in Charleston, 1792–1794*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008, pp. 33–34.

> The French left your lands [. . .] why! [. . .] their Chief sold them to the King of Spain without their consent [. . .]. They felt they were free as the Indians. Their nation felt this – she punished the guilty Chief. She wished to be guided by her elders like you. She reclaimed the rights of man you enjoy [. . .]. The rights of man are equality, liberty, security, and possessions [. . .]. The French Nation upon reclaiming her sovereignty from the hands of a usurper, declared there could be no law without consensus of all expressed freely and solemnly. Henceforth the Indians will have nothing to fear from the Europeans of France, for the most sacred law among the French is to respect the laws, customs, and property of Indians and all free peoples.[25]

If Toussaint L'Ouverture could claim a role as the true heir of the French Revolution, pursuing "the triumph of liberty and equality", and extending the rhetoric of the *Rights of Man* to its furthest logical conclusion (full emancipation), Mangourit's interpretation of the French Revolution's roots placed the genesis of the revolution's ideals in Indian Country. According to his explanation, Indians had shaped the very heart of emerging, radical French political thought.[26] He used the language long associated with American borderlands, speaking of "chiefs" and framed this in a Rousseauian lens of natural law, rights, and governance. Mangourit's emphasis on consensus-based governance is intriguing, since he could have simply enumerated the failures of the recently fallen monarchy without giving Native peoples credit for inspiring French regime change, of wanting to be "guided by her elders as you are".

If a version of Mangourit's framing of revolutionary events passed in text or by word of mouth to Creeks, Cherokees, or Shawnees, we might then consider how these ideas influenced Nativist thinking, including Tecumseh's: how to create a politics both innovative and of renewal to inspire their followers.

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**25** "Les français ont quitté votre pays [. . .] pourquoi! [. . .] leur chef les vendit au Roi d'Espagne sans leur consentement [ . . . .] Ils ont Senti qu'ils étaient libres comme les Indiennes. Leur nation la Senti – elle a puni Son chef coupable. Elle a voulu être comme vous conseillée par ses anciens. Elle a repris les droits de l'homme dont vous jouissés [ . . . .] Les droits de l'homme, sont l'égalité, la liberté, la Sureté et la propriété [ . . . .] La Nation Française en reprenant Sa souveraineté de mains d'un Roi qui l'avait usurpée, a declare qu'il ne pouvait éxister de loix que par la volonté de tous ses membres exprimée librement et Solomnellement. Desormeis les Indiens n'auront rien à redouter des Européens de la France, car la loi la plus Sacrée parmi les français commande le respect pour les loix, les coutumes et les propriété des Indiens et de tous les peuples libres [. . .]". F.J. Turner (ed.), M.A.B. de Mangourit, *The Mangourit Correspondence In Respect to Genet's Projected Attack Upon the Floridas, 1793–94*, Washington City, 1898, p. 623. Translation by author.

**26** L'Ouverture quoted in C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd Edition, New York: Vintage, (1938) 1989, pp. 197–198. See also N. Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008.

Leaders like Tecumseh rejected the Anglo-American construction of belonging that oppressed Native polities in favour of exploring new and sophisticated sociopolitical models.[27] What is certain is that the creative destruction of Europe's old order by France's revolution released internationally a political energy that changed every imperial calculation and inspired both the furtherance of revolutionary universalism and resistance to it in equal measure, sometimes within a single leader's mind. Political leaders took what they could fashion to their own use. The energizing effect of overthrowing of what had always been (in this case, the French monarchy) as well as the requirement to adapt to a challenging new situation and to try and shape it acted as the threads that bound Indigenous, African-descended, and Euro-American visionary leaders alike. This was the conscious purpose of revolutionaries as dissimilar as Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon and Tecumseh. The Mangourit connection is a tenuous one but suggestive of the ways in which, read through a French Revolutionary lens, figures like Blue Jacket and, later, Tecumseh could rationalize the radical reorganization of power hierarchy as a return to ancient Indian tradition. Even the Nativism of the later eighteenth century described by Gregory Evans Dowd could be considered in relationship to the complete revision of religion in the service of the state that featured in the French Revolution.[28]

Tecumseh's powerful physical presence and political goals resonated clearly with friends and foes alike. William Henry Harrison, the federal governor of Indiana territory, famously noted that the Shawnee possessed "one of those uncommon geniuses who spring up occasionally to produce revolutions and overturn the established order of things".[29] Harrison did not use such a term as "revolution" lightly when writing to the secretary of war, William Eustis, when he made this assessment in 1811. His statement was an explicit recognition of the extraordinary threat that Tecumseh posed to United States interests through the Shawnee war chief's project of "reimagining history and identity", in what Americans knew as the Northwest territory.[30] Tecumseh recognized the intertribal and intergenerational divisions that Anglo-Americans exploited among Indians and, critically, countered this not only by calling for pan-Indianism (a tactic that had precedents dating back to the seventeenth-

**27** Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made*, p. 18.

**28** G.E. Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, pp. 139–147.

**29** William Henry Harrison to Secretary of War William Eustis, 7 August 1811, in: *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922, p. 549.

**30** Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made*, p. 17.

century Narragansett chief Miantonomi) but also, as Tecumseh had stated in his address to Harrison, by achieving singular Indian purpose by endeavouring "to level all distinctions" and "to destroy the village chiefs, by whom all mischiefs are done. It is they who sell their lands to the Americans [. . .]. In the future we are prepared to punish those chiefs who propose to sell land to the Americans".[31] The levelling impulse could be interpreted as a flattening of intertribal distinction or it could have been Tecumseh's intention to engage in a radical social reorganization akin to that which had taken place, albeit briefly, in the French Revolution.

The violence of the American Revolution and its aftermath shattered the old order of Shawnee social hierarchy and political leadership; without this tremendous and negative remaking of the Shawnees' world, a figure like Tecumseh would not have risen to the prominence and position of influence in his own community. Like many of the most radical members of the French National Assembly, and distinctly unlike the most prominent thinkers of the American Revolutionary elite, Tecumseh was prepared to continue to destroy the old order within his society if it would serve the purpose of achieving pan-Indianism. And while his rhetoric (as recorded) relied on the familiar tropes of Indian speech, such as references to kinship that appeared in a speech to the Osages, "Brothers, we all belong to one family", it is worth contemplating if Tecumseh simultaneously gestured towards an interpretation of the ideal of fraternity, as an essential feature alongside liberty and equality, which had been embedded in the language of the French Revolution.[32] Some among the nascent French republicans had pushed for the granting of citizenship to progressive, non-French men of the Enlightenment in 1792; many American Indian nations (including the Shawnee) had long-standing practices of adoption and fictive kinship to strengthen their communities in time of crisis.[33] Unlike the 1792 proposal, Native communities that practiced adoption did so irrespective of race, gender, and religion. Tecumseh's appeal to "brotherhood" among the Osages could thus simultaneously gesture towards deeply held, Nativist restoration of tradition and a profound radicalization of the current political universalism.

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**31** Tecumseh to William Henry Harrison in: E. Eggleston and L.E. Seelye, *Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet*, New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1878, pp. 182–186. See also H. Adams, *History of the United States of America During the First Administration of James Madison 2*, Vol. 6, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890, p. 87.

**32** A.S. Greenberg (ed.), *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2012, pp. 57–58.

**33** On adoption, see, e.g., D.K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (1983) 4, pp. 528–559.

Respatialization also encourages moving past the traditional orientation of American history on an east-to-west axis to consider different directional approaches that invite tracing the impact of the Haitian Revolution (let alone the French Revolution) on expressions of Nativism emerging in Indian Country. Such work has been limited due to the strong focus on considering the American Revolution's importance to Indigenous communities. Just because Anglo-Americans like Jefferson refused to publicly acknowledge what Michel-Rolph Trouillot calls "a history of the impossible" in Saint-Domingue did not mean that this information would not or did not enter into Indian Country.[34] When Tecumseh stated that he "levelled" the chiefs, he had also said, "you wish to prevent the Indians from doing as we wish them – from unifying and considering their land as the common property of the whole [. . .] this land that was sold and the goods that were given for it, was only done by a few".[35] Land redistribution and equitable resource management shaped questions for the most radical thinkers in the American, French, and Haitian revolutions. Though drawing from an older consideration of property that circulated among Native communities, which delineated boundary lines that could also be used commonly, Tecumseh had, in 1807, stated in regards to US presumptions, "[t]hese lands are ours: no one has the right to remove us because we were the first owners."[36] As historian Allan Greer notes, Tecumseh was a man "who knew how to talk to colonizers, but who also was bold enough to reject their territorial assumptions".[37] Three years later, Tecumseh's phrasing transformed this idea into a reflection of land held by the people for all the people.[38]

Literary scholars have probed the multiple registers in which prominent Native individuals operated, in order to parse the ways in which individuals like the Mohegan minister Samson Occum could navigate the settler colonial world in terms familiar to Euro-Americans without diluting or abandoning the precepts essential to Native communities, be they Mohegan, Haudenosaunee,

**34** M.-R. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1995, pp. 73, 82.

**35** Eggleston and Seelye, *Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet*, p. 183.

**36** Tecumseh quoted in J. W. Powell, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institutions, 1892–93*, Part 2, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896, p. 684.

**37** A. Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires, and Land in Early Modern North America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 310.

**38** Juliana Barr offers a consideration of the assertion and recognition (or lack thereof) of Indian boundaries in the early Americas in "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68 (2011) 1, pp. 5–46, at pp. 8–10.

or beyond.[39] Our access to Tecumseh is entirely through transcription provided by others, copied down at times by individuals opposed to the Shawnee's projects, like William Wells (son-in-law of the accommodation-minded Miami chief Little Turtle and translator to William Henry Harrison). Returning to the language purported to have been Tecumseh's allows us some insight into the unique ways in which he bridged tradition and innovation. Engaging in this work is all the more important in light of the aggressive ways in which Anglo-Americans sought to frame Tecumseh, his reputation, and the language associated with him after the Shawnee's death. American observers drew correlations between his actions and those of Napoleon in calling him both "the Indian Napoleon" and "a Red Hannibal-Napoleon".[40] Authors like Benjamin Drake, writing *The Life of Tecumseh and His Brother the Prophet* (1841), and B.B. Thatcher used these terms to reinforce the notion of a vanishing, noble Indian. But their recollections were also rooted in collective, if subordinated, memories of Tecumseh's successes and threat to the United States. As with William Henry Harrison's statement regarding revolutionary leadership, perhaps we should revisit these expressions and look beyond their racialized stereotype to what they revealed about unspeakable Anglo-American fears. In aligning Tecumseh with Napoleon, Anglo-Americans not only drew a correlation between the Shawnee leader's military genius and that of his French counterpart but also implicitly connected Tecumseh to the legacies of the French Revolution. Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa, the religious reformer, based inclusion for heterogeneous Native populations at Tenskwatawa's villages on the basis of fictive kinship – a fictive kinship that could become the grounds for a type of utopian citizenship, rooted in brotherhood and property held in common, in this "Republic of Indians". Tecumseh, like France's revolutionary armies under generals like Napoleon and the African-descended, former aristocrat Thomas-Alexandre Dumas, carried forward the expansionist vision of this unifying utopia to other Indigenous communities. From his modest roots and his rise based on strategic acumen and personal magnetism to his ability to seize and

**39** A. Calcaterra, *Literary Indians: Aesthetics and Encounter in American Literature to 1920*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018, pp. 73–81.

**40** Benjamin Drake named Tecumseh "the Indian Napoleon" and this term was picked up by B. B. Thatcher's phrase "the INDIAN BONAPARTE" (caps in original). See G. Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005, p. 269; B. Gilbert, "The Dying Tecumseh and the Birth of a Legend", *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 1995, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-dying-tecumseh-97830806/ (accessed 5 December 2018).

capitalize on a revolutionary moment, Tecumseh resembled Napoleon's ascent to leadership as well.

In conclusion, I offer some suggestions to tie these strands together and demonstrate some contemporary queries that arise from respatializing the French Revolution and bringing this moment into dialogue with Indian Country, particularly connected to the ways in which France's revolutionary-era rejection of Indigenous legacy has perpetuated certain kinds of violence. Bureaucrats in both the waning years of the Ancien Régime and also in the era of the French Revolution silenced Native voices and Native presence in France and through this erasure, allowed a particular type of settler colonial violence to move forward through space and time in ways that we can trace in France today. Despite the wealth of Native American sources – textual, visual, and material – that resides in state archives in France, attesting to two centuries of sustained contact and relationship, the indexing of these sources in the archives erroneously reaffirms that these materials are the property of the European state that claims to have exclusively produced them – a point that effectively erases the dialogic exchange embedded in the maps, *plans* (site surveys), treaties, and speeches that was so central to their creation. More troubling, a number of these sources remain in institutions that came into being in order to effect imperialism: for instance, early modern military maps that relied on Native knowledge to be made are, to this day, under the control of the Ministry of Defence and this unproblematically reaffirms their service to the French state and to a natural, linear progression that still undertakes the work of imperial expansion that began in the monarchy and continues through today's Fifth Republic.[41]

In addition to the recasting of colonial material as being about French – as opposed to Indigenous – history, France has retained, at best, a sporadic and highly selective collective national memory of its first early modern empire in North America. Put simply, the modern French Republic continues the policies of the 1791 National Assembly in that it does not acknowledge an archival or material responsibility to the descendants of Native American communities. Indians are not included in an idea of France and the consequences of this omission have come up repeatedly in recent years. When France rebuilt its ethnographic museum, the Musée du quai Branly, which opened in 2006 as the signature cultural legacy of President Jacques Chirac, the new displays stripped museum objects of their provenance and context, flattening the ways in which Odawa or Kanien'kehá:ka or Shawnee materials came to be in French hands in

**41** C.A. Crouch, "Surveying the Present, Projecting the Future: Reevaluating Colonial French *Plans* of Kanesetake", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 75 (2018) 2, pp. 323–342, pp. 340–341.

the first place, and housed them in a building that architect Jean Nouvel designed to echo Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899).[42] And this issue of silencing the Native past has repeatedly arisen as well in the continuous trafficking of Indigenous American art and artefacts through French auction houses. The auction houses (and the French judicial system) deny any responsibility to critically assessing the free market sale, rather than repatriation, of Native American sacred and community objects, based on the argument that federally recognized Native American nations have no relationship to France, no legacy in France, and thus no legal rights in seeking restitution of these items.[43] On 14 November 2017, the French newspaper *Le Monde* obtained a communiqué from within the French Ministry of Culture that proposed, among other things, to reduce the archival mission of the ministry "to those archives essential for future generations" without any indication of which repositories, or which sources, might be deemed essential. Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, scholars who authored the 2018 report commissioned by French President Emmanuel Macron to weigh the question of returning indigenous objects in French collections, focused on items of West African provenance, not Native North American, in their consideration of the parameters of colonialism.[44]

This French reconsideration of archives and "future generations" is poignant, given that Haudenosaunee communities to this day maintain that the most important actions are those taken "to the benefit of the coming face" (meaning future generations) – American Indians are not likely to be among the future generations that the Ministry of Culture considers when reducing materials. We need to consider that respatialization means more than just adding geographic locales but changing an entire mindset. Archives are tangible places

**42** J. Chaplin, "Vive la différence? Le musée du Quai Branly", *Common Place* 7 (2007) 2, http://www.common-place-archives.org/pastimes/200701.shtml (accessed 1 September 2017); M. Kimmelman, "A Heart of Darkness in the City of Light", *The New York Times*, 2 July 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/arts/design/02kimm.html (accessed 14 November 2017).

**43** H. Keeler, "Indigenous International Repatriation", *Arizona State Law Journal* 44 (2012) 2, pp. 703–802; C.B. Graber, K. Kuprecht, and J.C. Lai (eds.), *International Trade in Indigenous Cultural Heritage: Legal and Policy Issues*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2012.

**44** C. Fabre, "Musées, archives, spectacle vivant … : les pistes de réforme envisagées pour la culture", *Le Monde*, 14 November 2017, http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2017/11/14/les-pistes-de-reformes-envisagees-pour-la-culture_5214495_3246.html (accessed 14 November 2017); F. Sarr and B. Savoy, "Rapport sur la restitution du patrimoine culturel africain. Vers une nouvelle éthique relationnelle", November 2018, http://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_fr.pdf (accessed 29 November 2018).

of cultural observation. When researchers consult materials in these spaces, they have the potential to shift the meaning of that material to create or to restore cultural memories. Respatialization invites an act of disputation, a generative reconstruction in the service of fresh perspectives and, ideally, necessary reconciliations. Tracing and articulating the connections, ideas, and spaces of the French Revolution to Native communities and exploring the ways in which the various architects of that revolutionary moment have since excluded Native peoples can lead us to a richer understanding of this history, its continuing violences, and its unfulfilled potentials. Embracing respatialization's possibilities of past recovery and present action may help to preserve the fragile legacy of these sources by rightfully restoring Indigenous North American voices back into France itself.

Ernesto Bassi

# 6 Mobility, Circulation, Spatial Configurations, and Respatialization in the Wake of the Haitian Revolution: A View from New Granada's Shores

On 23 September 1791, less than a month after the outbreak of the slave revolt that initiated the Haitian Revolution, news of the slave uprising in French Saint-Domingue reached the port of Santa Marta in the viceroyalty of New Granada. Like most people and news during the Age of Sail, information about the events in Saint-Domingue traveled by ship. Pedro Pérez Prieto, the 26-year-old captain of the schooner *San Fernando*, told Santa Marta's governor, José de Astigárraga, that a French schooner that Pérez Prieto encountered at sea had informed him that "the blacks and *mulatos* [of the French colony], aided by some white inhabitants had started an uprising and had killed all whites in seventy five plantations". After killing their owners, the rebels proceeded to "burn the plantations". Based on Pérez Prieto's report, Astigárraga began preparations for what he believed, given the proximity of Saint-Domingue and Santa Marta, could be a significant influx of refugees from the French Caribbean colony.[1] News of the events in Saint-Domingue, mostly transmitted by sailors reaching New Granada from different ports in the Caribbean, continued to capture the attention of Spanish authorities in Caribbean New Granada throughout the 1790s and well into the second decade of the nineteenth century.[2]

**1** Governor of Santa Marta to Viceroy of New Granada. Santa Marta, 25 September 1791. Archivo General de la Nación, Colombia (AGNC), Archivo Anexo I (AA-I), Gobierno, 13, pp. 463–469.

**2** For the spread of news of the Haitian Revolution through the Greater Caribbean, see D. Geggus (ed.), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001; D. Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002; M. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006; M. Lasso, *Myth of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age Of Revolution, Colombia, 1795–1831*, Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007; D. Geggus and N. Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009; A. Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014; J. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of Revolution*, London: Verso, 2018; C. Soriano, *Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies,*

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110619775-006

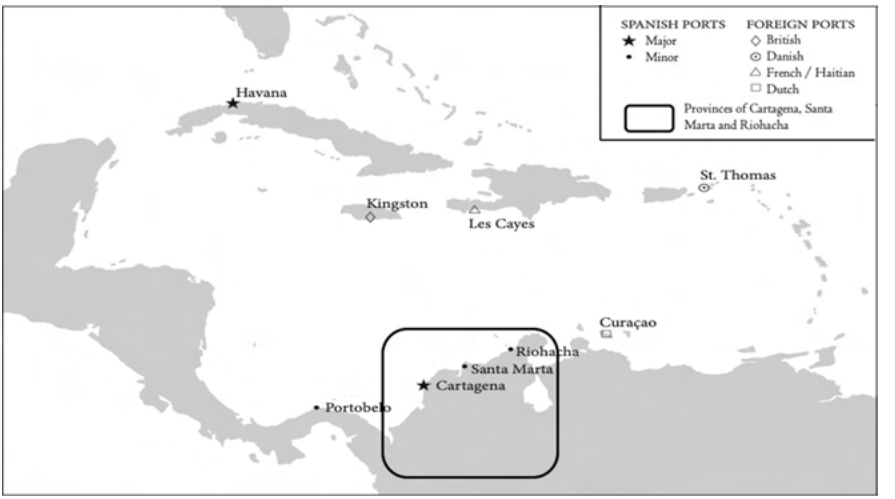
The exchange between Pérez Prieto and Astigárraga together with Astigárraga's reaction constitute useful starting points to think about mobility, circulation, spatial configurations, and respatialization, or perceived potential respatialization, during the era of the Haitian Revolution. I want to pursue this line of thinking in two different ways. First, by presenting an argument about the way in which existing (but often overlooked) geographical frameworks allow us to locate the exchange between Pérez Prieto and Astigárraga within a geographical space that I call the transimperial Greater Caribbean. And second, through an argument about the extent to which the Haitian Revolution triggered or accelerated efforts to redraw the economic geography of the Americas that went well beyond the known narrative of how, as a result of the revolution that destroyed Saint-Domingue's plantation system and gave birth to the independent republic of Haiti, Brazil and Cuba, in particular, emerged as the world's leading sugar and coffee producers.[3]

The first argument is one about lived geographies, or geographies of experience, and the second one is one about desired, but ultimately unrealized, respatialization. Looking outward from the Caribbean provinces of the viceroyalty of New Granada makes it possible to develop an interpretation that privileges what contemporaries hoped, envisioned, and thought possible over what, with the benefit of hindsight, historians know ended up happening. The view from New Granada's coast, in particular from the province of Santa Marta, enables an understanding of the mechanisms through which information was transmitted and the ways in which those who stayed put on land used this information to interpret their present and envision potential futures. For Astigárraga and other imperial officers in Santa Marta, these processes of interpretation and envisioning allowed them to imagine a prosperous Santa Marta that, through developing its agricultural potential, could become a key exporter of sugar and other agricultural commodities previously produced in French Saint-Domingue. Examining why Santa Marta could not live up to its potential (while a place like Cuba actually did) enables a better understanding of the intraimperial dynamics that resulted in the rise of certain areas and the lack of prosperity of others. Comparing the cases of Cuba and Santa Marta also enables a broader conceptualization of the rise of capitalism that takes into account not

*and the Crisis of Colonial Rule in Venezuela*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018.

**3** For the impact, economic and otherwise, of the Haitian Revolution in Cuba and Brazil, see Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror* and J.J. Reis and F. dos Santos Gomes, "Repercussions of the Haitian Revolution in Brazil, 1791–1850", in: Geggus and Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, pp. 284–313.

only places (like Cuba) that ended up becoming key sites of capitalist development, but also places (like Santa Marta) whose political and economic leaders aspired to turn into key capitalist sites but failed in their attempt.




**Map 1:** Caribbean Provinces of the viceroyalty of New Granada: Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Riohacha.[4]

## The Transimperial Greater Caribbean and the Circulation of News of the Haitian Revolution

In their study of the role of sailors, slaves, and commoners in the spread of revolutionary activity in the early modern Atlantic world, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker present eighteenth-century sailors as "a vector of revolution". Drawing on the work of Julius Scott on Afro-American currents of communications in the Caribbean, Linebaugh and Rediker assert that sailors, through "contact with slaves in the British, French, Spanish, and Dutch port cities of the Caribbean", collected and transmitted "information [...] about slave revolts,

4 Map drawn by author (2019).

abolition, and revolution".[5] At sea and on land, sea captains and ordinary sailors also established contact with colonial authorities, merchants, Indigenous people, and many other Caribbean dwellers. Through these contacts, they collected and transmitted information – sometimes accurate, sometimes greatly distorted – about European affairs, potential invasions, alliances, and many other details of relevance to colonial authorities and the general public interested in the geopolitical developments of the Atlantic world.

The spread of this information was an important effect of sailors' common experience of circulation across Caribbean and Atlantic waters. This experience allowed them and other less mobile Greater Caribbean dwellers to understand that, despite the existence of many invisible dividing lines crisscrossing the Caribbean (e.g. political boundaries and racial divisions), the lands and waters contained within the Caribbean basin, and sometimes stretching beyond it, constituted a meaningful geographic space of social interaction – a region. Following sailors, thus, uncovers or makes visible a region usually hidden by the weight of political geographies. Uncovering this region allows us to see the coexistence of a multiplicity of ways of ordering and making sense of global space or, in this case, of the aqueous territory that I call the transimperial Greater Caribbean.[6]

The lives of the sailors on the schooners *El Congreso de la Nueva Granada* and the *Altagracia* reveal details about sailors' mobility, professional trajectories, and everyday acts of region-making.[7] Both *El Congreso* and the *Altagracia* reached Portobelo's vicinity after several months cruising the Caribbean. *El Congreso*, its 23 sailors explained, reached Portobelo after abandoning its captain on Providence Island.[8] Before reaching Providence Island, *El Congreso*, in

**5** P. Linebaugh and M. Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Sales, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, Boston: Beacon, 2000; Scott, *The Common Wind*. See also M. Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail*, Boston: Beacon, 2014, pp. 116–119.

**6** For a more detailed analysis of this process of region-making, see E. Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

**7** This analysis is based on the interrogations of the sailors on both schooners. For *El Congreso*, see "Autos obrados sobre la entrada del corsario insurgente titulado *El Congreso*" ("Autos *El* Congreso"), AGNC, AA-I, Guerra y Marina, 118, pp. 721–933. For the *Altagracia*, see "Autos seguidos en el gobierno de esta capital de Santiago de Veraguas contra los individuos que sirvieron de corsarios con nación leal, en la goleta nombrada *La Belona* y la suerte les condujo a varar en el Escudo de Veraguas en la goleta apresada por aquella nombrada *Altagracia*" ("Autos *La Belona*"), AGNC, AA-I, Guerra y Marina, 130, pp. 395–481.

**8** "Patente de corso", in "Autos *El Congreso*", pp. 741–743. The schooner's letter of marque said its crew was composed of 33 sailors, including 11 officers, 21 ordinary sailors, and 1 cabin boy; only 23 were interrogated in Portobelo.

typical corsair fashion, had followed a border-crossing path that had taken its sailors from Cartagena "to the coast of Jamaica, [...] then to the coast of Florida, and then to that of Havana".[9] At different points throughout this cruise, some sailors abandoned *El Congreso* while others, forcefully or voluntarily, joined its ranks, thus demonstrating the instability of sailing crews and seafaring lives.

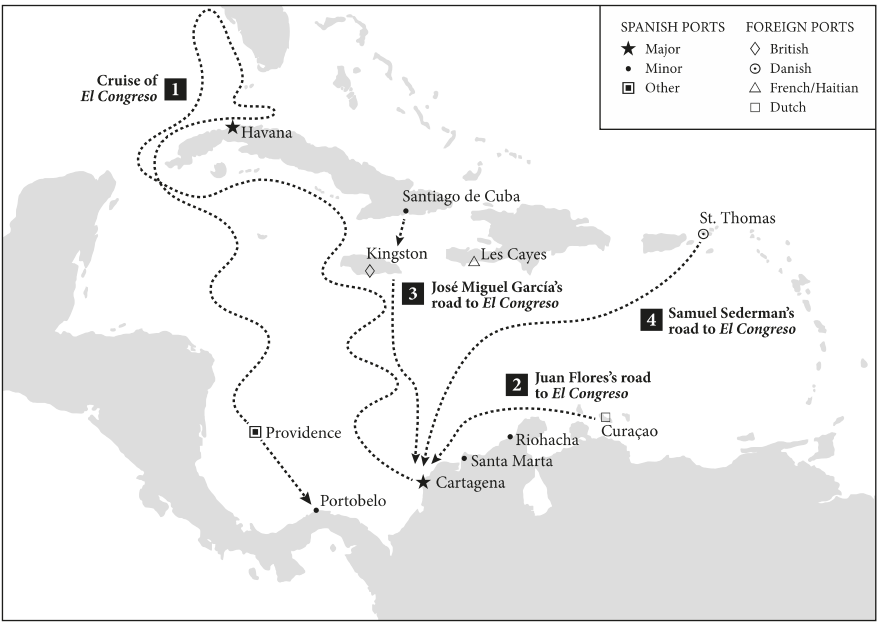
The *Altagracia*, its sailors reported, was a Spanish schooner that had been captured by Cartagena privateers near the western coast of Puerto Rico. Following orders to take the captured vessel to Cartagena, sailors Juan (an Englishman who became captain of the captured schooner but died shortly after reaching the coast of Portobelo), Ilario and Ignacio (both French-speaking sailors from Haiti), and Juan Estevan Rodríguez (a native of Venezuela) jumped from the privateer schooner *La Belona* to the captured *Altagracia*. On board the *Altagracia*, they joined Francisco Díaz, a young sailor from Venezuela, and slaves María Felipa, Vicenta, Felipa, Dolores, Juana, and Paula and her infant Ramón. While en route to Cartagena, Ignacio declared, "the winds and currents", coupled with the captain's lack of skills, diverted the *Altagracia* from its route and took it to the coast near Portobelo, where it had been stranded.[10]

To Spanish authorities, the sailors of both schooners were considered insurgent corsairs loyal to the Republic of Cartagena or, more simply, pirates. Following this logic, prosecutors sought to condemn the sailors "for the crime of sailing with all flags" and for capturing Spanish vessels while "flying [the flag] invented by the insurgents of Cartagena".[11] Sailors of both schooners naturally sought to make the case for their innocence. Of those sailing on the *Altagracia*, Francisco and the slaves were not charged with any crime, while Ignacio, Ilario, and Juan Estevan were tried as corsairs. Francisco avoided charges because all those questioned by Spanish authorities corroborated that he was on board the *Altagracia* before its capture and was forced to remain on board after the corsairs took over. Juan Estevan was acquitted of all charges, and Ignacio and Ilario were sentenced to eight years in jail in Havana. Beyond the ultimate outcome of the judicial procedure, the archival trail left by *El*

**9** "Declaración de Juan Flores", in "Autos *El Congreso*", pp. 757–758. Insurgent corsairs did not follow predetermined routes. Instead, they cruised the sea in search of prey. Their cruises resembled those of tramp steamers, whose improvised itineraries Colombian novelist Álvaro Mutis described as taking them "from port to port in search of occasional cargo to transport to no-matter where" (A. Mutis, *La última escala del tramp steamer*, Bogotá: Arango Editores, 1989, p. 16).

**10** "Declaración de Ignacio, marinero", in "Autos *La Belona*", pp. 402–407.

**11** "Autos *La Belona*", p. 470.




**Map 2:** Cruise of the Insurgent Schooner El Congreso de la Nueva Granada.[12]

*Congreso* and the *Altagracia* reveals the existence of a space of social interaction where sailors of all colours and from many geographic origins sailing under different flags and frequently switching from one ship to another lived lives that were marked by both the risks and opportunities that circulation across the transimperial Greater Caribbean had to offer.

The life story of one of these sailors, black sailor Juan Estevan Rodríguez, offers a particularly useful illustration of how the transimperial Greater Caribbean functioned as a coherent space of social interactions. Juan Estevan's life story also brings into sharp focus the everyday risks experienced by those who shaped and lived within this loosely bounded region. His experience, in short, reveals the connections between physical mobility, the flow of information, and the configuration of regional spaces.

Born in Ocumare, Venezuela, Juan Estevan was a chocolate maker, a trade he had learned while living on the other side of the Atlantic, in Catalonia. Upon returning to the Americas 12 years earlier, he had "worked as a sailor on several merchant vessels". About 2 years before presenting his declaration to Portobelo's

12 Originally published in Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, p. 66.

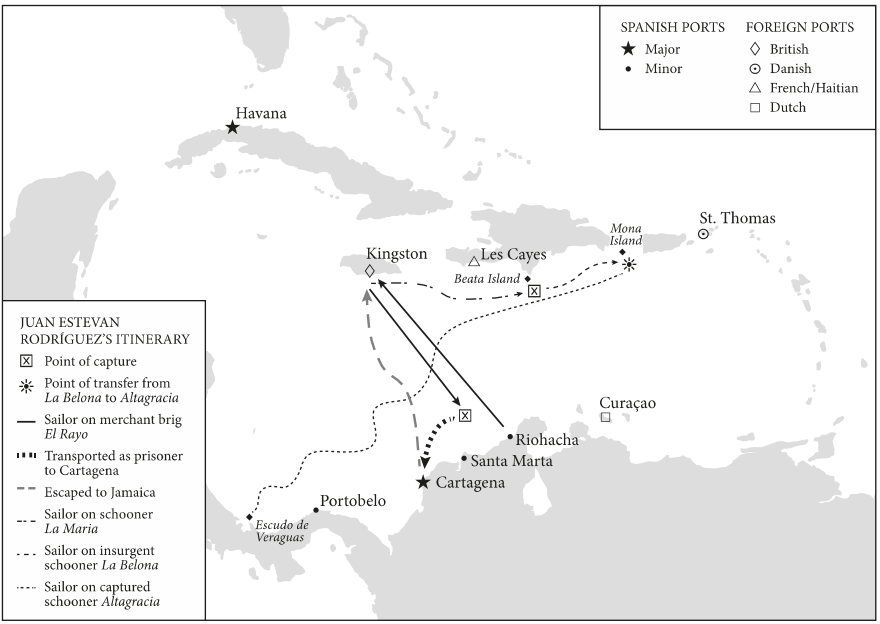
authorities, Juan Estevan was working as a sailor on the Spanish brig *El Rayo*, which "traded mules [from Riohacha] to Jamaica".[13] Returning from Jamaica, *El Rayo* was attacked and captured by a gunboat from Cartagena, where he was taken and held prisoner and forced "for six months to sweep the streets tied to a chain". After those 6 months, he managed to escape and fled to Jamaica, where he, once again, enlisted as a sailor, this time on the Spanish schooner *La María*. From Jamaica, *La María* sailed east towards Puerto Rico and "by the Beata Island, in front of Santo Domingo", fell prey to Cartagena's insurgent schooner *La Belona*. On board *La Belona*, "because some [of its sailors] knew he had escaped from prison", the captain, infamous French corsair Louis Aury, told Juan Estevan that "the only way for him [Aury] to spare his [Juan Estevan's] life was [if Juan Estevan chose] to enroll as sailor" on the insurgent corsair. Forced into his new status as a corsair for Cartagena, Juan Estevan sailed east on *La Belona* until, south of Mona Island (just west of Puerto Rico), they captured the Spanish schooner *Altagracia*. With three other sailors from *La Belona*, Juan Estevan once again switched vessels, charged with the task of taking the *Altagracia* to Cartagena. Due to the winds and currents, as one of Juan Estevan's fellow sailors explained, the *Altagracia* never reached Cartagena, and Juan Estevan and the schooner's other passengers ended up giving their versions of their Caribbean cruises to Spanish authorities in Portobelo.[14]

Juan Estevan was not alone in living a border-crossing, ship-switching, status-changing life.[15] His labour mobility (from ship to ship as well as, temporarily,

**13** Juan Estevan did not provide exact dates for any of the incidents he narrated in his declaration. Besides stating that he returned to the Americas from Spain "twelve years ago", he remained ambiguous about when any of the events he was recollecting happened. Based on the time he spent as a prisoner in Cartagena (six months) and the time he spent on board the *Altagracia* (five months), it is clear that it had been more than a year – perhaps two, given that before sailing on the *Altagracia* he had sailed on *La Belona* and other Spanish vessels and had also escaped from Cartagena to Jamaica – since he had been employed on *El Rayo*.

**14** "Autos *La Belona*".

**15** The work of Greg Grandin includes eloquent examples of the status-changing effects sailors experienced as a direct consequence of the geopolitical instability characteristic of the Age of Revolutions in the Caribbean and throughout the Atlantic. In an example from the eastern Atlantic, in the vicinities of Cape Coast castle, Grandin writes, "Early in Britain's fight against France, a British merchant ship calling at Cape Coast castle, purchased a cargo of captured Africans. They were considered slaves, locked in the ship's hold, and destined for the West Indies to work on sugar plantations. That ship was captured by the French navy, which took the Africans not as slaves but as conscripts, distributing them among its frigates and men-of-war. The Africans were now sailors. By 1803, however, the British had recaptured sixty-five of them. After some debate within the councils of the Admiralty, the British deemed the Africans to be not slaves but prisoners of war, subjects – or, as the French preferred, citizens – of




**Map 3:** Juan Estevan Rodríguez's Trajectory.[16]

away from ships) as well as his physical mobility (from port to port) were common elements of Caribbean sailors' lives. Sailors' Caribbean circulations suggest the many opportunities they had to share information obtained during their frequent Caribbean journeys. While most of the conversations and interactions among these seafaring individuals and between them and coastal inhabitants and islanders are beyond the historian's reach, it is not hard to imagine the type of information and experiences that sailors usually shared. Sailors surely shared stories that created a mild sense of familiarity with distant places from which they had migrated long ago and with which few of their fellow sailors and coastal interlocutors were acquainted. Of most immediate interest to interlocutors must have been stories about the most recent trips and adventures in frequently visited

a legitimate, if rogue, nation. But since the British couldn't get France to live up to its customary obligations and provide for these (or any other, for that matter, white or black) captured sailors, the British had them distributed on ships throughout the Royal Navy. They were sailors once again, as well as, presumably, new British subjects" (G. Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014, p. 300).

**16** Originally published in Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, p. 68.

ports, coasts, and islands. The accumulation of stories about recent developments and rumours on nearby Caribbean islands and coasts contributed to the creation of a coherent transimperial Greater Caribbean milieu.

The official accounts sailors like Juan Estevan, Ignacio, Ilario, and those on board *El Congreso* submitted to port authorities offer a clear sense of the transimperial region that they inhabited, produced, and traversed on a daily basis. Less clear in their accounts are the ways in which their interactions with coastal residents and islanders allowed sailors to spread to others the sense of regionness they experienced on an everyday basis. On occasion, local prisons – to which some sailors were taken after entering specific ports – became sites where sailors could share information with prison guards and other prisoners. Sailors like Bernardo Kennedy of the Danish schooner *Guavaberry* and the seven members that composed the crew of the schooner *San Francisco Xavier*, which entered Santa Marta in July 1803, followed this path. Imprisoned immediately after entering Santa Marta and Riohacha, these sailors' ability to spread news and rumours that they had gathered in other Caribbean ports was initially limited to the few people with which they interacted while in jail. After they were released or escaped from prison, this situation changed. Kennedy, stranded for several months in Riohacha in 1806, became familiar with the Spanish judicial system and, it is not difficult to imagine, also engaged in conversation with multiple members of Riohacha's society. Like him, many others enjoyed the opportunity to socialize in New Granada's ports, spreading information that made it possible for New Granada's coastal inhabitants to become acquainted with, and feel part of, the Greater Caribbean's transimperial social field.[17]

The picture of sailors' lives that emerges from these tales of circulation is a messy one. Permanently crisscrossing Caribbean waters, legally or otherwise, sailors connected imperial spheres. They were well acquainted with commercial hubs like Kingston, Les Cayes, Saint Thomas, Curaçao, Cartagena, Havana, and other key connecting nodes of the transimperial Greater Caribbean. Their mobile lives not only took them from port to port, frequently returning to a port they had previously visited, but also, adding to their nomadic existence, from

**17** "Querella de Bernardo Kennedy, tripulante de la goleta danesa *Guavaberry*, porque lo dejaron preso en Riohacha", 1806, AGNC, Sección Colonia, Milicias y Marina, 82, pp. 311–315; "Diligencias que se actúan por este gobierno sobre la aprehensión hecha por el comandante del bergantín Cartagenero guarda costa de SM a una goleta que de arribada entró en este puerto nombrada *San Francisco Xavier*", Santa Marta, 15 July 1803, AGI, Sante Fe, p. 952. See also "Informe sobre comiso en Cartagena de la balandra *La Victoria*", 25 September 1806, AGI, Santa Fe, p. 1149.

ship to ship, which usually led sailors to shift imperial patrons. It was common for sailors to have experience on board Spanish, British, Dutch, Danish, and, like those on board *El Congreso* and the *Altagracia*, insurgent schooners.

Through all these experiences, sailors both acted and were acted upon. They voluntarily enrolled on a given vessel and were forced to move from a captured schooner to a capturing one, where they then continued their nomadic lives. The unpleasant encounters Juan Estevan Rodríguez, Francisco Díaz, and others experienced at sea point to the Caribbean as a hostile environment and force us to reconsider notions of "masterless, mobile" lives at sea as closely connected to freedom and autonomy. While the sea, especially for plantation slaves, could have held a "seductive appeal", the distance separating this appealing perception from lived reality could sometimes be substantial.[18] My focus on the circumstances under which sailors moved across Caribbean waters allows me to identify the coerciveness that belied sailors' mobile existence. Sailors rarely chose where to go or when to return home. For many, in fact, there was no home. Francisco's answer when asked about his place of residence – he said, "Without fixed residence because I am a sailor" – points to the limits to the opportunities a seafaring life had to offer.[19] In their mobility, voluntary or not, full of opportunities or marked by difficulties and threats, sailors gave coherence to a transimperial space of social interactions. In short, they created a region. Read in this light, Francisco's answer becomes much more than a statement about sailors' nomadic existence. When answering, "Without fixed residence because I am a sailor", Francisco was also expressing the difficulties associated with naming the geographical space sailors inhabited. The absence of a name (a problem also faced by the historian reconstructing this lived geography) did not make the transimperial Greater Caribbean less real. Juan Estevan Rodríguez, Francisco Díaz, the sailors of *El Congreso*, and myriad other sailors, thus, offer a strong case for the role of mobility and the flow of information in the configuration of regional spaces that were lived and experienced but never consciously and explicitly articulated as regions.

**18** Scott, *The Common Wind*. For similar approaches on the opportunities that life at sea offered, see W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997; E. Pérez Morales, *No Limits to Their Sway: Cartagena's Privateers and the Masterless Caribbean in the Age Of Revolution*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2018.

**19** "Declaración de Francisco Díaz", 17 April 1815, in: "Autos *La Belona*", p. 449.

## The Haitian Revolution and the Unrealized Project to Turn the Province of Santa Marta into a New Saint-Domingue

While sailors' mobility makes it possible to see the existence of a transimperial Greater Caribbean as a space in which information, including news of the Haitian Revolution, spread quickly and almost unimpeded, it is important to understand what recipients of information did with the news and rumours they were receiving. In the growing literature on the impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic world, scholars have argued that fear and a sense of opportunity were common sentiments throughout the Greater Caribbean.[20] Seeing the destruction of Saint-Domingue's sugar production capacity as an opportunity to fill a market void, planters and reformers in the surrounding islands and continental coasts developed plans to become the next Saint-Domingue. Their proposals constitute telling examples of how the Haitian Revolution created a favourable contingency for what Immanuel Wallerstein and Terence Hopkins call "the incorporation of new zones into the world-economy".[21] In other words, the shockwaves the destruction of Saint-Domingue's economy sent throughout the Atlantic make it possible to understand the Haitian Revolution as a key moment of respatialization. As this section will demonstrate, the Haitian Revolution presented planters and reformers throughout the Greater Caribbean with an opportunity to push for the implementation of long-held ideas to turn their territories into important sugar producers and vital engines of capitalist growth. Comparing the trajectories of Cuba and Santa Marta demonstrates that, in the quest to transform the economic geography of the Caribbean in the wake of the Haitian Revolution, success was far from guaranteed. For many, visions of prosperity and wealth, far from materializing, ended up becoming shattered dreams. Within this framework, thus, it is possible to interpret the Haitian Revolution as a moment of desired or envisioned respatialization that did not become a generalized reality.

The best case for the emergence of Cuba as the world's leading sugar producer was recently made by Ada Ferrer. Her analysis in her book *Freedom's Mirror* goes well beyond the assertion that in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution Cuban planters rushed to fill the void left by the collapse of Saint-

**20** For examples of the literature, see note 2.

**21** T.K. Hopkins and I. Wallerstein, "Capitalism and the Incorporation of New Zones into the World-Economy", *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 10 (1987) 5/6, pp. 763–779.

Domingue's sugar production. Ferrer carefully reconstructs the process through which Cuban planters, led by Francisco Arango y Parreño, brought the sugar revolution to Cuba, turning the Spanish colony into the world's leading sugar producer. In the process, she also questions the automatic connection between Cuba's economic and political paths. Instead of simply asserting that fearing a potential social revolution and putting their economic interests before their political ones, the emerging Cuban planter elite opted to remain loyal to Spain, Ferrer follows the trajectory of Arango y Parreño and other Cuban statesmen and reformers to conclude that in the tumultuous geopolitical environment of the 1810s, "Cuban loyalty was conditional" and Arango and his fellow Cuban planters were ready to counter any action that they could interpret as "violat[ing] the rights of property and endanger[ing] the prosperity of the island".[22]

Arango's argument was powerfully articulated in his 1793 *Discurso sobre la agricultura de La Habana y medios de fomentarla*. Ranting about what he called Spaniards' "auri sacra fames" (sacred hunger for gold), Arango criticized Spain's mercantilist "preference for and protection of [. . .] mining" and argued for agriculture and trade liberalization as the best avenues for wealth and *felicidad* (prosperity).[23] Like for many merchants of the Atlantic world, who, as Greg Grandin puts it, "were quick to adopt the new language associated with laissez-faire economics", Arango called for "más libertad, más comercio libre de negros" (more liberty, more free trade of blacks).[24] A continuous supply of slaves would fulfill the labour needs of a growing sugar industry that, under the cover of free trade, would flood Europe and the growing North American market with Cuban sugar. Moreover, demonstrating his awareness of the geopolitical environment of the Caribbean and his opportunistic instinct, Arango invoked the ongoing events in neighbouring Haiti to advise Spanish authorities to "[t]ake advantage of the moment to bring to your soil the wealth that the narrow territory of Guarico gave to the French nation".[25] What he was doing, thus, was effectively proposing a reconfiguration of the Caribbean's economic geography or thinking of the Haitian Revolution as key

**22** Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror*, pp. 267, 269.

**23** F. Arango y Parreño, "Discurso sobre la agricultura de La Habana y medios de fomentarla", in: *Obras del excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño*, vol. 1, La Habana, Howson y Heinen, 1888, p. 56.

**24** G. Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014, p. 7.

**25** Arango y Parreño, "Discurso sobre la agricultura", p. 77.

moment of potential respatialization that could result in the transfer of Saint-Domingue's productive capacity to Cuba.

Arango's proposals took a lot of effort to turn from idea (project) to practice (reality). One of the most important findings of Ferrer's analysis is that at certain moments Cuba's sugar locomotive risked derailing. It was at those moments that Arango demonstrated his ability to turn his ideas into reality.

Thus, Ferrer's work, as well as that of Dale Tomich and others, have effectively added analytical layers that provide a better understanding of the account of the rise of Cuba as the Ever Faithful. Their studies of Arango and Cuba's sugar boom have effectively inserted Cuba in the story of the rise of capitalism, making claims "that regard slavery in the Americas as an anomalous or archaic social and economic institution" and "true capitalism" as occurring elsewhere, completely untenable.[26] In a very significant, albeit unintentional, way, however, their focus on Cuba also simplifies the narrative of the role of slavery and the slave trade in the development of the Atlantic world's agroindustrial capitalism. Just like focusing on the lane in which a race's leader is running makes the viewer lose track of other interesting developments in the race, the focus on Cuba clouds historians' ability to keep track of other competitors. Since Cuba clearly emerged as the winner in the nineteenth-century race to turn underutilized land into sugar-producing, capitalist agricultural units, the focus is completely justifiable and cannot be a target of criticism. My point, therefore, is not that there is anything wrong with focusing on Cuba, but that turning our analytical lenses towards other competitors (New Granada, in this particular case) enhances our comprehension not just of the respatialization or reconfiguration of the world's economic geography caused by the Haitian Revolution, but also of the emergence of a type of plantation society that recent scholarship has characterized as capitalist and modern despite its continued reliance on enslaved labour.[27] Even if it is hard to make a case for the chances of New Granada in this capitalist race, the projects some of its most prominent

**26** D. Tomich, "The Wealth of Empire: Francisco Arango y Parreño, Political Economy, and the Second Slavery in Cuba", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003) 1, pp. 4–28, at p. 6.

**27** D. Rood, *The Reinvention of Atlantic Slavery: Technology, Labor, Race, and Capitalism in the Greater Caribbean*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017; E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, New York: Basic Books, 2014; W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013; S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2014.

thinkers and reformers presented to promote the viceroyalty's economic development clearly demonstrate that New Granada, like Cuba and many other places in Spanish America, was part of the race.

Antonio Narváez y la Torre, governor of the province of Santa Marta during the second half of the 1770s and the first half of the 1780s, was one of the key promoters of Santa Marta's economic development. Like him, his successors José de Astigárraga and Antonio Samper believed Santa Marta had the potential to become a major exporter of a wide variety of agricultural commodities. While Narváez, writing before the Haitian Revolution, used Saint-Domingue as a model to be followed, for Astigárraga and Samper, much like for Arango in Cuba, the destruction of Saint-Domigue's plantation economy appeared as an opportunity to be seized. When compared to what Arango y Parreño envisioned and achieved, the plans and outcomes of Narváez and his successors make it possible to understand the inner workings of the Spanish Empire by illuminating the role of access to power in the accomplishment of economic goals in different imperial regions. The comparison also allows for a wider understanding of the emergence of certain places as key sites of capitalist development.

Narváez y la Torre, a *criollo ilustrado* (member of the educated creole elite), was born in Cartagena in 1733. His military and bureaucratic career included service in Spain, Africa, and New Granada. By the 1770s, he was one of the most respected members of Caribbean New Granada's elite and a prominent proponent of economic reforms that sought to transform the productive capacity of the Caribbean provinces. His 1778 "Relación o informe de la provincia de Santa Marta y Río de el Hacha" represents the best example of Narváez's economic development project, his dreams for Santa Marta and Riohacha. In it, Narváez decried the current "state of misery and poverty" of the province of Santa Marta and, based on what he saw as the province's near infinite agricultural possibilities, envisioned a prosperous future for this portion of Spain's American territories. Santa Marta, Narváez claimed, was perfectly suited for the cultivation, production on a commercial scale, and export of wheat, cacao, sugar, cotton, tobacco, several varieties of dyewoods, coffee, vanilla, woods for construction, quinine and other medicinal plants, cattle, tortoiseshell, and pearls. To further bolster this catalogue of the province's economic potential, Santa Marta was abundant in sources of water that could serve as energy producers and transportation routes, and its "advantageous location [. . .] allows for easy communication with [. . .] Spanish and foreign [Caribbean] islands, and with Europe". In short, Santa Marta's vast agricultural and commercial potential could turn it into a "source of immense prosperity for the kingdom [of New

Granada] and the [Spanish] crown".[28] Despite this potential, Narváez lamented in 1778, the province "lies in frightful misery, without agriculture [. . .] and without commerce; to such an extent that, while it could be the richest [province], it can be asserted that it is the poorest of the whole kingdom" of New Granada.[29]

The problem, according to Narváez, was clear: lack of labour. While Canary islanders and other Spaniards could offer a solution to this problem, Narváez considered "black slaves the most useful and absolutely necessary population, and that which should be requested and encouraged in this province". Because slaves were "the raw material of the raw materials that the Americas should produce", massively introducing slaves from Africa would directly result in the economic development of Santa Marta.[30]

Focusing on the French success in Saint-Domingue, Narváez claimed – supported by statistics that demonstrated a rise in the number of slaves from 206,000 in 1764 to 257,000 in 1767 – that the increased number of slaves had led to a rapid growth in the production and export of sugar, indigo, cacao, coffee, and cotton.[31] Attempting to replicate planters' success in foreign islands, Narváez asked the Spanish crown "to facilitate through all possible means the introduction of African slaves". Once "supplied [. . .] with an adequate number of slaves", the province of Santa Marta could contribute to the wealth of Spain through four different means: the multiplication of its production and exports, the increase in the consumption of Spanish products, the increase in royal tax revenues, and the development of the Spanish navy.[32] In sugar's expansion throughout the Caribbean, Narváez argued, Santa Marta was called to be the next link.

Ten years after Narváez drafted his project, his successor as governor of Santa Marta, José de Astigárraga, presented a report that repeated Narváez's proposals almost verbatim. Like Narváez in 1778, Astigárraga in 1789 opened his report highlighting "all the known advantages" of Santa Marta and lamenting that, despite the favourable conditions, the province lies in "extreme decay and misery". Santa Marta, Astigárraga affirmed, was suitable for the cultivation of a wide variety of agricultural crops suitable for exports, including cacao, sugar, coffee, and cotton. In order to develop its potential, the province

**28** Narváez, "Provincia de Sta. Marta y Río Hacha del Virreynato de Sta. Fé", in: *Escritos económicos. Antonio de Narváez, José Ignacio de Pombo*, Bogotá: Banco de la República, 2010, p. 55.
**29** Ibid., p. 24.
**30** Ibid., pp. 48, 55.
**31** Ibid., pp. 50–51.
**32** Ibid., pp. 55, 62–63.

required "caudal, inteligencia y brazos" (capital, skills, and labour). Like Narváez, Astigárraga believed that labour was the key to Santa Marta's development. Therefore, "the government's attention should be directed to increasing, by all means possible, the [province's] population." And not just any population. For, given the climate of the province, both Narváez and Astigárraga found African slaves to be "the most useful [. . .] for the development and happiness of the Americas".[33]

If in Astigárraga's and Narváez's visions African slaves were the key to Santa Marta's development, how many were needed and how were they to be imported? The answers Astigárraga gave to these questions begin to make visible the gap separating their dreams from what could actually be accomplished. According to Astigárraga, "the development of this province" requires the introduction of, "at least, one thousand slaves per year, for now". In what can be interpreted as veiled recognition of the financial and logistical limitations of reaching such figures, Astigárraga proposed an initial scheme in which the crown would finance the transportation of "two hundred or three hundred slaves" to Santa Marta to be sold to "*hacendados* [owners of a hacienda] at two hundred pesos each".[34]

The reports, petitions, and proposals of Narváez and Astigárraga were far from unique. Throughout Spanish America, bureaucrats and reformers voiced similar concerns and advanced analogous plans for economic development. And the crown and its ministers had been listening. In fact, in the decade separating Narváez's "Relación" and Astigárraga's report, the crown had grown increasingly favourable to such schemes and had taken steps to liberalize the slave trade. The idea of taking advantage of Spanish America's agricultural potential by massively importing African slaves was central to what the minister of the Indies, the count of Floridablanca, in 1787 called a "happy revolution in the commerce of Spain and the Indies".[35]

A mere week before Astigárraga submitted his report, the king had signed a *real cédula* (royal decree) "granting liberty to Spaniards and foreigners" to introduce, "for a period of two years", slaves to Santo Domingo, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Caracas. This initial license was soon expanded to include the ports of Cartagena and Riohacha (in February 1791) and Montevideo (in November 1791).

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**33** Astigárraga to Antonio Porlier, Santa Marta, 7 March 1789. Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Santa Fe, 1181, no.3.

**34** Ibid.

**35** José Moñino (Count of Floridablanca), "Memorial presentado al rey Carlos III y repetido a Carlos IV", in: A. Ferrer del Río (ed.), *Obras originales del Conde de Floridablanca*, Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1867, p. 336.

On 24 November 1791, when the *real cédula* for the free trade of slaves in the viceroyalties of Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Santo Domingo, Cuba and Puerto Rico was passed, ten ports were opened to Spaniards and foreigners and five to Spaniards only. In the viceroyalty of New Granada, Cartagena was opened to both Spanish and foreign merchants and Riohacha to foreigners.[36] While Santa Marta remained closed, its planters and merchants expected to benefit from the availability of slaves in nearby Cartagena and Riohacha.

Beyond legislation, the geopolitical climate of the Greater Caribbean during the 1790s became another critical element in the expectation for modernization and economic transformations in Spanish America. In Cuba, Arango y Parreño invoked the ongoing events in neighbouring Haiti to advise Spanish authorities to "[t]ake advantage of the moment to bring to your soil the wealth that the narrow territory of Guarico gave to the French nation."[37] In Santa Marta, Astigárraga and his successor Antonio Samper similarly used the Haitian Revolution as key element to continue arguing for the need to import machinery and slaves to turn Santa Marta into the productive and wealthy province Narváez had envisioned in 1778.[38] The Haitian Revolution, it can be said, inaugurated a new era, although not a new way of thinking. Revolutionary turmoil in Haiti emboldened reformers in Cuba and Santa Marta to pursue the economic future they envisioned for their homelands. While Arango and his Cuban peers managed to turn their vision into a reality, Narváez, Astigárraga, and Samper failed to turn the Haitian Revolution into a source of economic development and wealth for the province of Santa Marta. Regardless of their ability to turn their visions into reality, their proposals reveal a potential way in which the Haitian Revolution offered reformers throughout the Greater Caribbean a valuable opportunity to turn their homelands into strategic sites for the reconfiguration of the region's economic geography.

The comparison of the cases of Cuba and Santa Marta, then, reveals a number of common elements. First, reformers in both places drafted proposals for economic development that placed sugar and slavery at the heart of the advancement of their provinces. Second, new legislation facilitated the importation of African slaves into both places. Third, geopolitical developments in the

**36** "*Real cédula de su magestad concediendo libertad para el comercio de negros con los virreinatos de Santa Fe, Buenos Aires Capitanía General de Caracas, e islas de Santo Domingo, Cuba y Puerto Rico, a españoles y extranjeros bajo las reglas que se expresan.*" Madrid: Por Lorenzo de San Martín, impresor de varias oficinas de SM. Año de 1791.

**37** Arango y Parreño, "Discurso sobre la agricultura", p. 77.

**38** Antonio Samper to viceroy Ezpeleta. Santa Marta, 15 November 1793. AGI, Indiferente General, 2823, no. 2195, no. 3.

Greater Caribbean created expectations about the possibility of realizing both places' economic potential in the immediate future. An analysis of the number of slaves that entered some of the ports opened by the *real cédula* of November 1791 offers a useful way to understand why, despite these common elements, the dreams and visions of Narváez y la Torre and Arango y Parreño diverged.

Table 1 summarizes the official data recorded by Spanish imperial officials.

**Table 1:** Slaves Imported to Selected Spanish American Ports.[39]

| | Havana | Cartagena | Montevideo | Caracas |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1790 | 2,534 | | | 655 |
| 1791 | 8,498 | 378 | | 2,557 |
| 1792 | 8,528 | 244 | 650 | 1,315 |
| 1793 | 3,767 | 259 | 2,137 | |
| 1794 | 4,164 | 136 | 1,178 | |
| 1795 | 5,832 | 378 | 1,300 | |
| 1796 | 5,711 | 18 | 1,300 | |
| 1797 | 4,552 | 67 | 1,300 | |
| 1798 | 2,001 | | | |
| 1799 | 4,949 | | | |
| 1800 | 4,145 | | | |
| 1801 | 1,659 | | | |
| 1802 | 9,407 | | | |
| **Total** | **65,747** | **1,480** | **7,865** | **4,527** |

The comparison, available through annual reports submitted by provincial governors and viceroys, shows a clear contrast. While tens of thousands of slaves entered the port of Havana (41,052 between 1791 and 1797, to be more precise), only about 1,500 entered Cartagena during the same period. The available numbers for Montevideo and Caracas, while more modest than those for Havana, also surpassed those of Cartagena (7,865 for Montevideo between 1792 and 1797 and 4,527 for Caracas between 1790 and 1792). Moreover, of those who entered

**39** AGI, Indiferente General, 2824 and 2825.

Cartagena about half (721) were unsold and re-embarked for Havana and Portobelo. Even if a good number of those who entered and remained in Cartagena were to end up in Santa Marta, less than 1,000 slaves in a seven-year period is nowhere close to the 1,000 per year that Astigárraga considered necessary.[40] An earlier report from Santa Marta's governor, Antonio Samper, dated 25 June 1794, revealed that only 33 slaves had been brought to Santa Marta since the passing of the *real cédula* of 24 November 1791. Based on these discouraging numbers, Governor Samper concluded that, while slaves were absolutely necessary for the development of Santa Marta, free trade was not the best way to ensure an adequate supply. If an adequate number was to be supplied, Samper proposed, the royal treasury would need to not only guarantee the delivery of a previously determined number of slaves but also to give them on credit to Santa Marta's planters.[41]

Why did free trade in slaves not work for Santa Marta and the viceroyalty of New Granada? Why did Narváez's visions of prosperity for Santa Marta end up becoming shattered dreams, while Arango's similar visions became a reality in Cuba? The easy and not fully satisfactory answer is distance from the supply source. This explanation, however, fails to account for several critical factors. In short, while geography (i.e. physical distance) matters, it is not everything. Two key elements, availability of capital and access to power, provide more compelling explanations.

When explaining why many of the slaves brought to Cartagena remained unsold and were, therefore, re-embarked for other destinations, multiple officers claimed that lack of capital, or the "limited faculties" of Santa Marta's planters "to buy the number [of slaves] they required", constituted the main obstacle to the economic transformation of the province.[42] In contrast to their wealthier counterparts in Havana, planters and merchants in Santa Marta and Cartagena simply lacked the resources to compete under free trade. Because of this, several high-ranking officers in New Granada, including Samper, Governor Anastasio Cejudo of Cartagena, and Viceroy Joseph Ezpeleta ended

**40** Juan María de las Doblas, "Estado general que manifiesta los negros bozales introducidos y extraídos en este puerto desde 1º de enero de 1791 hasta 30 de septiembre del corriente año, con distinción de españoles y extranjeros, clase de cada buque, su nombre, el de su capitán y puerto de su destino, que uno en pos de otro es como sigue." Cartagena, 9 October 1797. AGI, Indiferente General, 2824.

**41** Antonio de Samper and Manuel Trujillo to viceroy Ezpeleta. Santa Marta, 25 June 1794. AGI, Indiferente General 2823, no. 14.

**42** Antonio Samper to viceroy Ezpeleta. Santa Marta, 15 de noviembre de 1793. AGI, Indiferente General, 2823, no. 2195, no. 3.

up opposing free trade as the most effective mechanism to supply their provinces with slaves and achieve the dreams of prosperity and development that Narváez articulated in his 1778 "Relación".

If availability of capital offers an obvious explanation for the divergence of Cuba and Santa Marta, the trajectories of Francisco Arango y Parreño and Antonio Narváez y la Torre during the 1790s allow one to take a peek into the inner workings of the empire by showing the key role that access to power played in fostering economic development. As José Antonio Piqueras demonstrates, Arango spent the last four years of the 1780s and the first half of the 1790s in Spain, working as agent of the city of Havana. As such, his task was "to promote and encourage the prosperity of his homeland".[43] While in Spain, Arango not only wrote his *Discurso sobre la agricultura de la Habana* but also established connections with renowned intellectuals and powerful members of Carlos IV's royal court, including leading figure of the Spanish Enlightenment Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos and Prime Minister Floridablanca.[44] By contrast, Narváez spent most of the 1790s as governor of Panama, complaining about his current position and trying, unsuccessfully, to get relocated to a better location. His correspondence with Juan de Casamayor, whom Narváez claimed was his only contact in Madrid, is a chronicle of frustrations and lack of effective patronage. Throughout the second half of the 1790s, Narváez repeatedly asked Casamayor to intercede in his favour at the royal court in order to be granted better employment.[45] Whether Casamayor lacked connections or simply did not care enough about Narváez to waste invaluable social and political capital is unclear. Whatever the case might have been, it is clear that Narváez, one of the most respected individuals in the Caribbean provinces of New Granada, was a minuscule player in Madrid's circles of influences. On a larger imperial scale, Narváez and his dreams of a prosperous Santa Marta fell on deaf ears. Arango's visions, by contrast, backed up as they were by financially healthier Cuban elites, ran the course from idea to reality.

Beyond offering a case study in intraimperial competition and the inner workings of the Spanish Empire, the divergent paths of Cuba and Santa Marta also reveal an understudied side of the narrative of the rise of capitalism, namely that for each place that effectively developed into a key node of capitalist development, many others failed in their attempt. As a result, the comparison between

**43** J.A. Piqueras, "Los amigos de Arango en la corte de Carlos IV", in: M.D. González-Ripoll and I. Álvarez (eds.), *Francisco Arango y la invención de la Cuba azucarera*, Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, 2009, p. 153.

**44** Tomich, "The Wealth of Empire", p. 7.

**45** The letters of Narváez to Casamayor are available in AGI, Panama, 261 and AGI, Panama, 262.

Cuba and Santa Marta further enhances our ability to understand capitalism – an economic system usually associated with globally integrated markets, great capital investment and reinvestment, efficient use of production factors, free wage and specialized labour, and innovation and creativity, all geared towards maximizing profit – beyond its Weberian interpretation as a "European, mostly British, primarily Protestant invention".[46] The cases of Cuba and Santa Marta contribute to the construction of what Kenneth Pomeranz calls "a more inclusive story" that not only considers slavery as a modern and capitalist institution but also allows a variety of non-European places to be cradles of capitalism.[47]

Central to these emerging narratives that, by incorporating China, Spanish North America, Cuba, the US South, and other non-European places, demonstrate the "multi-centered nature" of the rise of capitalism is the exclusion of places, such as Santa Marta, which were sites of intense intellectual activity and policy proposals that came short of translating into implementation.[48] While Cuba effectively became a key site of capitalist development during the first half of the nineteenth century, Santa Marta remained an imperial and capitalist backwater. The plans and efforts of Narváez, Astigárraga, and others, however, reveal the truly global nature of the rise of capitalism. Far from being discarded as unrealistic and quixotic, Narváez's shattered capitalist dreams should be interpreted as a key component of the spirit of the 1780s and 1790s and as an indication that, despite the growing number of studies that support the polycentric narrative of the emergence of capitalism, in this story much more than the half has never been told.

## Conclusion

The configuration and reconfiguration of geographic spaces are central elements of the two arguments I have presented. In the first one, sailors created a geographic space and following sailors enabled me to uncover their lived geography. In the second one, Antonio Narváez y La Torre, José de Astigárraga, and other enlightened creoles from New Granada envisioned the possibility of

**46** J. Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2011, p. 8. For the classic Weberian interpretation, see M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Scribner, 1930.

**47** K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 17–23; Tutino, *Making a New World*.

**48** Tutino, *Making a New World*, p. 14.

a fundamental transformation of the northern provinces of the viceroyalty of New Granada. The Haitian Revolution is at the heart of both processes and arguments. In the first one, the existence of a sailor-created transimperial Greater Caribbean made it easy for news of the Haitian Revolution to spread. In the second one, the Haitian Revolution created a favourable contingency for planters, statesmen, and reformers to pursue old dreams or to conceive new visions of development for their homelands.

Thus, the spread of news of the Haitian Revolution benefitted from the existence of and triggered new forms of experiencing and envisioning geographic spaces. While the acknowledgement of the existence of a sailor-created region offers scholars the possibility to approach geographic space through a lens that does not privilege political geographies, the analysis of the ways in which reformers envisioned potential future reconfigurations of the Caribbean's economic geography makes it possible for us to recover what Ann Stoler calls a "history of what was deemed possible but remained unrealized".[49] In both cases a fundamental aspect of the analysis is that just as humans make their own history, they also make their own geography. The process through which they make both their history and their geography could have led to many places. Reaching their stated goal was far from guaranteed.

**49** A. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 108.

José Damião Rodrigues

# 7 Islands in Turmoil: The Azores during the Atlantic Revolutionary Cycle

During the Age of Revolutions,[1] perhaps one of the most unexpected and visible consequences of the Napoleonic Wars was the dramatic respatialization of the Portuguese Atlantic world. Following the invasion of the Portuguese metropolitan territory by the French army in November 1807, the Portuguese court departed from Lisbon and moved to the city of Rio de Janeiro, the capital of the viceroyalty of Brazil. The transfer of the court to Rio de Janeiro was a unique experience in the context of European polities, reframing the spatial hierarchies of the Portuguese Atlantic world and with multiple implications of political, institutional, economic, social, and cultural nature within the framework of the Portuguese Empire. In this chapter, I will present some of the consequences that these changes had upon the Atlantic insular territories of the Portuguese Empire, considering the specific case of the Azores. I am going to argue that the rupture that took place in 1807–1808 enhanced the agency of the political and social actors in the Azores and contributed to the failure of the Portuguese crown's project to enhance control over the Azorean Atlantic periphery.

## Enlightened Reforms, the Portuguese Empire, and the Azores

Recent scholarship on "the long eighteenth century" has offered illuminating discussions and an important reappraisal of the relationship between Enlightenment and absolutism, namely by placing Southern Europe and its Atlantic colonies in the debate on the impact of the so-called "enlightened reforms". In this context, Portugal and its overseas dominions benefit from this reorientation and from a comparative framework. Although an important reform activity occurred before 1750, it was in the second half of the eighteenth

1 W. Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World. A Comparative History*, New York: New York University Press, 2009; D. Armitage and S. Subrahmanyam (eds.), *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; M.A. McDonnell, "Rethinking the Age of Revolution", *Atlantic Studies*, 13 (2016) 3, pp. 301–314.

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century that the bulk of political and institutional reforms took place.[2] Under José I (1750–1777) and the first decades of Maria I's reign (1777–1816), the Portuguese crown attempted to "rationalize" the institutional framework and the many jurisdictional levels encompassing the relationship between the imperial centre and far-flung peripheries establishing a stronger political control over the empire. However, despite these efforts, by the early years of the nineteenth century the political culture of the Ancien Régime continued to operate within the Portuguese pluricontinental monarchy. In spite of late eighteenth-century imperial reforms, the projects of reordering the Portuguese imperial territories, the rhetoric of unity, and the debates about the crown prerogatives – like in most, if not all, empires – political and social interactions as well as legal order within the borders of the Portuguese Empire were rooted in the foundational principles of corporate government and legal pluralism, with many blurred and overlapping jurisdictions.[3] The "constitutional order" of empires was highly unstable and Portugal was no exception. Although all the Portuguese possessions were conceived as a unified political system, in fact, and as A.R. Disney puts it, "the Portuguese empire was an extraordinarily widespread and dispersed entity, only loosely held together – a complex patchwork of disparate parts."[4] Thus, in the process of imposing political order and imperial authority negotiation and jurisdictional arrangements were a key element in the interaction between the political centres and the imperial peripheries.[5]

**2** In the historiography written in English about this period, the works of the British historian Kenneth Robert Maxwell are perhaps the most frequently quoted. On the secretary of King José I, Sebastião José de Carvalho and Melo, better known by the title of marquis of Pombal, see K.R. Maxwell, *Pombal, Paradox of the Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. For criticism of Kenneth Maxwell's view, see Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro's review in *e-Journal of Portuguese History*, 11 (2013) 1, pp. 110–119. On the reforms in Southern European polities and their Atlantic colonies, see G. Paquette (ed.), *Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and its Atlantic Colonies, c. 1750–1830*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, and especially Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro's chapter for the Portuguese case, "Pombal's Government: Between Seventeenth-Century *Valido* and Enlightened Models", pp. 321–338. See also N.G. Monteiro, "Reformas Pombalinas e Reformas Bourbónicas nas Américas: Esboço de uma Análise Comparada", in: Á. Garrido, L.F. Costa and L. M. Duarte (eds.), *Estudos em Homenagem a Joaquim Romero Magalhães. Economia, Instituições e Império*, Coimbra: Almedina, 2012, pp. 373–390.

**3** L. Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; L. Benton and R.J. Ross (eds.), *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500–1850*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2013.

**4** A.R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire. From Beginnings to 1807*, vol. 2: *The Portuguese Empire*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. xix.

**5** C. Daniels and M.V. Kennedy (eds.), *Negotiated Empires: Centres and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500–1820*, London: Routledge, 2002.

In the Portuguese imperial context, the political and jurisdictional status of the islands of the Azores remained somewhat indefinite throughout most of the early modern period. As I already developed elsewhere, two factors help to understandthis situation.[6] Firstly, the archipelago did not have a political-administrative unity for centuries. Indeed, although the islands of the present-day eastern and central groups had been donated to Prince Henry the Navigator at an unknown date and remained in possession of the ducal house of Viseu-Beja until 1497, when Manuel I, the last duke and king since 1495, combined them into the assets of the crown, the islands of Flores and Corvo had belonged to a lordship other than the king since 1452. In 1593, they passed to the lordship of Mascarenhas, the counts of Santa Cruz, and then to the sixth count, Martinho de Mascarenhas, also marquises of Gouveia.[7] Only in 1759, after the execution of the eighth count of Santa Cruz and duke of Aveiro, José de Mascarenhas, and the consequent seizure of all his assets by the Portuguese crown, the islands of Flores and Corvo finally became a part of the crown's assets. Secondly, in addition to the geographical dimension – the fragmentation and, above all, the distance, which sometimes led to the cartographic representation of Flores and Corvo as the Floreiras Islands, that is to say a geographical unit distinct from the islands of Terceiras or of the Azores – the fact that two political-institutional realities coexisted, the royal islands and the lordship islands, prevented the Azorean insular space from being a single political-administrative unit.[8]

In 1766, the establishment of the Captaincy General of the Azores by the Decrees of 2 August, signed by José I but drafted by the Secretary of State Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (count of Oeiras since 1759), undoubtedly

**6** J.D. Rodrigues, "Um arquipélago de geometria variável: representações dos Açores no período moderno", *Revista de História Regional*, Ponta Grossa, 13 (2008) 1, pp. 7–22 [URL: http://www.revistas.uepg.br/index.php?journal=rhr], reprinted in J.D. Rodrigues, *Histórias Atlânticas: os Açores na primeira modernidade*, Ponta Delgada: CHAM, 2012, pp. 33–43.

**7** On the donataries (*donatários*) of Flores and Corvo and, in particular, the Mascarenhas, see *Arquivo dos Açores*, facsimile edition of the original edition, Ponta Delgada: University of the Azores, vol. 1, 1980, pp. 21–28, and vol. 5, 1981, pp. 275–276, 353–358 and 517–527.

**8** Accordingly, by analysing the circuits and flows of people and goods as well as assessing the peculiar behaviour of São Miguel within the Azorean context, one can state that there was not a great degree of liaison between São Miguel and the remaining islands, in particular those of the central and western groups: "The relative economic independence of S. Miguel and the peripheral location of the eastern group within the archipelago hinder the appreciation of inter-island trade from the point of view of the people of S. Miguel, who were more interested in dealing with Lisbon, England and Overseas" (cf. Avelino de Freitas de Meneses, *Os Açores nas encruzilhadas de Setecentos (1740–1770)*, vol. 2: *Economia*, Ponta Delgada: University of the Azores, 1995, p. 165). In this context, the lack of political-institutional unity was reinforced by the non-existence of a full economic articulation between all islands.

marked a rupture in the political and institutional history of the archipelago.[9] One must emphasize that the reforms that the count of Oeiras thought up for the Azores need to be framed within, on the one hand, within the national conjuncture – an economic and public finance crisis, which would demand the attention of the authorities, especially in the years 1764 to 1770 – and within the international conjuncture; and, on the other hand, within the context of the implementation of a new administrative paradigm, structured in the "police science" of a cameralistic matrix, which proposed a model of active administration that best met the urgencies of the state.[10] Thus, as in the kingdom, in the Azorean case it was not in the matrix of an "enlightened despotism" that we should seek the eventual elements of the "modernity" of Pombalism, but in its active reformism of cameralistic inspiration[11] and in the attempt to break with a "passive" administrative model and the traditional balance of powers.[12]

Regarding the political status of the islands, they held equal status to the provinces of the Kingdom of Portugal. In the secret special instructions sent to the first captain-general of the Azores, Antão de Almada, there was concern for the need to investigate the reason for the suspension of the collection of certain taxes in the archipelago, the *décima*,[13] being the islands of the Azores "adjacent

**9** On the ambitious set of measures designed for the Azores and set forward in the diplomas of 2 August 1766, see J.G. Reis Leite, "Administração, sociedade e economia dos Açores, 1766–1793", in: *Arquivo Açoriano. Enciclopédia das Ilhas dos Açores*, vol. 16, Part 2, Fascicles 14–23, 1971, pp. 267–368; vol. 16, Part 3, Fascicles 24–35, 1972, pp. 369–475; and A. de Freitas de Meneses, *Os Açores*, vol. 1: *Poderes e Instituições*, 1993.

**10** J. Subtil, "Os poderes do centro. Governo e administração", in: A.M. Hespanha (coord.) and J. Mattoso (ed.), *O Antigo Regime (1620–1807), História de Portugal* IV, Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1993, pp. 157–193, esp. 159–163 for "police state". On the concept of "police", see P. Schiera, "The 'police' as a synthesis of order and welfare in the modern centralised State", in: A.M. Hespanha (ed.), *Poderes e Instituições na Europa do Antigo Regime. Colectânea de textos*, Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1984, pp. 307–319.

**11** J.L. Cardoso considers that the Austrian-German cameralism must be included in the doctrinal and political inspirations that fostered an environment conductive to change in the context of the enlightened reformism that characterized the governance of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (cf. J.L. Cardoso, "Direito natural e despotismo legal: a ordem e o discurso fisiocrático em Portugal", in: *Pensar a Economia em Portugal – Digressões Históricas*, Lisbon: Difel, 1997, pp. 119–135, esp. 127).

**12** On this issue, see J.D. Rodrigues, "'*Para o socego e tranquilidade publica das Ilhas*': Fundamentos, ambição e limites das reformas pombalinas nos Açores", *Tempo* 11 (2006) 21, pp. 157–183.

**13** The *décima* was an income tax introduced in 1641 just after the coup d'état of 1 December 1640 (the Restoration) in order to help the effort of the coming war (the War of Independence [1641–1668]). On the war, see F.D. Costa, *A Guerra da Restauração (1641–1668)*, Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2004; on the taxation system in the Azores, see J.D. Rodrigues, "As

to this kingdom" and therefore being a part of it, "provinces, like the others of Beira, Minho, or Alentejo, without any kind of difference".[14] With this change in the status of the archipelago, justified by its adjacency to the kingdom, the Azores definitively abandoned their position as an overseas domain and a manorial administrative model that had been implemented when it was settled.

The new political and legal status of the Azorean islands would be reaffirmed in the text of the important Charter of 26 February 1771 regarding the freedom of trade in cereals. In that statute, the legislator declared that the *liberdades* (liberties) enjoyed by the farmers of the kingdom should also be observed in the Azores, "as regards the police and economy in the said islands, which because they are adjacent are considered as parts and real provinces of this kingdom".[15] However, this new condition would not immediately bring benefits to the archipelago, which maintained its island specificity and was still far from the court.[16]

The political-administrative map drawn up with the creation of the Captaincy General of the Azores remained in force until the early 1830s. However, the Azores did not escape the shock waves of the 1807–1808 rupture in the Portuguese Atlantic world. As such, one of the most visible effects of the moving of the court to Rio de Janeiro and the uncertainties regarding the hierarchical structure that would prevail in the Portuguese Atlantic world was the fact that the archipelago returned to an undefined status for years to come. In the following, I present some of the political and administrative results of the 1807/08

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Finanças", in: A.T. de Matos (coord.), *A Colonização Atlântica*, vol. 3 of *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa*, Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 2005, pp. 428–445.

**14** J.G. Reis Leite (ed.), *O Códice 529-Açores do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino. A Capitania-Geral dos Açores durante o consulado pombalino*, Ponta Delgada: Secretaria Regional de Educação e Cultura/Direcção Regional dos Assuntos Culturais-Universidade dos Açores/Centro de Estudos Gaspar Frutuoso, 1988, pp. 35–58, "Instrucção Secretissima, que Vossa Magestade Ha por bem mandar dar a Dom Antão de Almada [. . .]", 2 August 1766, esp. 54.

**15** A.D. da Silva, *Collecção da Legislação Portugueza desde a ultima Compilação das Ordenações, redegida pelo Desembargador Antonio Delgado da Silva. Legislação de 1763 a 1774*, Lisbon: in Typografia Maigrense, 1829, pp. 534–536, esp. 535; *Arquivo dos Açores*, vol. 5, 1981, pp. 342–344, esp. 343.

**16** On these issues, see F.F. Drummond, *Apontamentos Topográficos, Políticos, Civis e Ecclesiásticos para a História das nove Ilhas dos Açores servindo de suplemento aos Anais da Ilha Terceira*, with an introductory study, reading, text editing, and contents by J.G. Reis Leite, Angra do Heroísmo: Instituto Histórico da Ilha Terceira, 1990, pp. 45–46; F.A. Mendes, "Crédito, Moeda e Fiscalidade em Ponta Delgada (1766–1800)", synthesis paper prepared within the scope of Educational Aptitude and Scientific Capacity Assessments, Ponta Delgada: University of the Azores, 1995, pp. 73–77.

rupture for the Azores, an issue that I believe is not very well known. I will focus my attention on the local power relations and, in particular, on the political communication between the captain-generals and the crown in the tropics and on the uncertainties and changes regarding the status of the islands, uncertainties that were put into use by the players involved.

## The Azores and the 1807/08 Rupture in the Luso-Brazilian Empire

Two major events marked the international developments of the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century, which had direct implications for Portuguese diplomacy and political life: the American Revolution together with the War of Independence (1776–1783), and the French Revolution (1789) together with its political and military consequences, namely the Napoleonic Wars and the revolution in and independence of Haiti. The shock waves produced by the events in France during the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods had great repercussions.[17] Within the Atlantic area, there were the slave uprisings – between 1789 and 1832, several uprisings were recorded and more than 20 were rooted in the rumour that the slaves had been freed; the independence of Haiti, declared in 1804 and a logical consequence of the slave uprising of 1791 and the proclamation of the abolition of slavery by Victor Hugues, whose decree was approved by the National Convention in France on 4 February 1794; the undeclared war, or quasi-war, between the United States of America and France in 1798–1800; the Napoleonic Wars; the transfer of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro in 1807/08, which introduced a radical change in the political and economic framework of the Luso-Brazilian empire; and the independence of the Spanish colonies of the Americas, a result of the French invasions.

The French invasion and occupation of the Kingdom of Portugal led to the transfer of the Portuguese royalty to Brazil and the settlement of Prince Regent João and the Portuguese royal family in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1808. The respatialization of the Luso-Brazilian empire was a unique moment in the history of the Atlantic world and of the Portuguese monarchy. In fact, until that year never before had a European ruler set foot in the Americas.

**17** Cf. J. Godechot, *France and the Atlantic Revolution of the Eighteenth Century, 1770–1799*, New York: The Free Press, 1965, p. 145.

Furthermore, as Rio de Janeiro became the new seat of the Portuguese monarchy, the political and economic core of the empire merged into just one. Even before reaching Rio de Janeiro, while in the city of Salvador da Bahia, by the Royal Letter of 28 January 1808, Prince Regent João authorized the opening of the Brazilian ports to foreign navigation, a measure that profoundly changed the conditions of Portuguese foreign trade.[18] Between 1796 and 1811, Brazilian commodities accounted for 60 per cent of Portuguese trade with other European markets. Following the French invasion in 1807, during the years 1808–1813 Portuguese trade faced a severe commercial crisis. The radical shift in the long lasting relationship that existed between Portugal and Brazil broke the "colonial pact" and transformed "metropolitan" subjects into "colonial" subjects, with the Kingdom of Portugal now a colony of a colony, as Patrick Wilcken suggests[19]; this shift eventually led to the end of the Luso-Brazilian empire, with the independence of Brazil in 1822. Hence, even before the end of the Peninsular War (1807–1814), the Luso-Brazilian Atlantic world was already operating within a new political and economic framework.

In the Azores, the years 1807/08 were also a rupture. On the one hand, by decision of the governor and captain-general of the Azores, Miguel António de Melo, the opening of the ports of Brazil led to the end of the legal constraints of the Azorean trade in its relations with Portuguese America[20]; on the other hand, and as in the past, the islands acquired significant importance in the geopolitical panorama of the Portuguese Empire. Faced with the Napoleonic threat, the captain-general sought the protection of the English fleet to police the Azorean seas, where there were no local means to oppose the French

**18** J.M. Viana Pedreira, *Estrutura industrial e mercado colonial: Portugal e Brasil (1780–1830)*, Lisbon: Difel, 1994, pp. 317–340; V. Alexandre, *Os Sentidos do Império. Questão Nacional e Questão Colonial na Crise do Antigo Regime Português*, Porto: Afrontamento Editions, 1993, pp. 167–285 and 767–792; L. Valente de Oliveira and R. Ricupero (eds.), *A Abertura dos Portos*, São Paulo: Editora Senac São Paulo, 2007; R. de Mattos, "Versões e interpretações: revisitando a historiografia sobre a abertura dos portos brasileiros (1808)", *HiSTOReLo. Revista de Historia Regional y Local*, 9 (2017) 17, pp. 473–505. For a synthesis of the period, see A. Slemian and J. P.G. Pimenta, *A corte e o mundo: uma história do ano em que a família real portuguesa chegou ao Brasil*, São Paulo: Alameda, 2008; G. Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: the Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770–1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 84–163.

**19** P. Wilcken, "'A Colony of a Colony'. The Portuguese Royal Court in Brazil", *Common Knowledge* 11 (2005) 2, pp. 249–263.

**20** R.M. Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral (1800–1820)*, Horta: Núcleo Cultural da Horta, 2005, vol. 1, pp. 301–307.

corsairs preying on those waters.[21] Nevertheless, considering the situation in the Kingdom of Portugal and the blockade of the Tagus and Douro rivers by the English navy,[22] the governor instructed that no merchant ship would be allowed to set sail to the Portuguese coast from any Azorean port. In a context of greater isolation, Miguel António de Melo also took the initiative to suspend the royal legislation in force in order to cut ties with the kingdom, turning the Azores into a space where the Bragança dynasty was sovereign. The governor chose to favour maintaining a communication channel with the court in Rio de Janeiro, with the defensive support of Great Britain while taking advantage of the stopovers of English ships at the port of Horta.[23]

Thus, as a result of the changes affecting the political and spatial hierarchies within the Portuguese Atlantic, the Azores became a transatlantic border, a contact zone that guaranteed the mobility of Portuguese and English forces.[24] And, within this critical scenario, we must also remember the Azorean participation efforts to pay off the national debt. Although the archipelago was "an accidental taxpayer against the terms of a convention to which, of course, it did not wish to be associated", the islands contributed to this end with several remittances between 1809 and 1819 and also with the sending of shipments of *roccella tinctoria* (a fungus used for making dyes), whose value came to nearly 12 *contos de réis*.[25]

In the Azores, one of the most immediate and visible consequences of the departure of the Portuguese court and the superior courts of the monarchy to Brazil was the interruption of the arrival of the lists of the Desembargo do Paço (Royal High Court), which contained the names of new local officials, allowing several officials to stay in power. On another point, and in general, the figure of the captain-general became more present and active at a time when the Azorean

**21** R.M. Madruga da Costa, "As Invasões Francesas e a transferência da Coroa Portuguesa para o Brasil: algumas repercussões nos Açores", *Arquipélago-história*, 2nd Series, 3 (1999), pp. 275–324.

**22** J.-A. Junot, *Diário da I Invasão Francesa*, introduction by A. Ventura, Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2008, pp. 116, 120, 121, 125, 128, 133, 148, 149, 161, 175 and 182 (from December 1807 to June 1808).

**23** R.M. Madruga da Costa, "Guerra Peninsular, Conjuntura Transatlântica e seu impacto nos Açores", in *O Papel das Ilhas do Atlântico na Criação do Contemporâneo*, Proceedings of the 5th International Colloquium on the History of the Atlantic Islands, Angra do Heroísmo: Historical Institute of Island of Terceira, 2000, pp. 97–104; A. Canas, "Governar Portugal na Guerra peninsular: um desafio atlântico", *Ler História* 54 (2008), pp. 75–93, esp. 77.

**24** R.M. Madruga da Costa, "Faial, 1808–1810; Um tempo memorável", *Boletim do Núcleo Cultural da Horta* 11 (1996), pp. 135–284.

**25** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral,* vol. 1, pp. 430–438.

islands were again called to play a central role. In fact, the years that followed 1807/08 witnessed a change in the power relations between the municipalities and the captain-general[26] and also between the captain-general and other agents of power present in the archipelago, especially the crown magistrates, giving rise to a frequent and negative conflict in the relations between institutions.

Upon the settlement of the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro in 1808, Azorean politics was marked by "some anarchy in the organic connection of dependence of the captaincy-general on the central power".[27] Of course, this is not a surprising scenario, as the change of the political centre of the Portuguese Empire from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro marked the beginning of a vast process of reform and administrative reorganization, beginning with Portuguese America and, in particular, the city of Rio de Janeiro itself, "which was thus transformed into the place of power by excellence".[28] Adding to the distance – which also meant time – and the lack of communication, the transformation of the capital of the State of Brazil into the capital of the Portuguese Empire temporarily placed the Azores in a temporal and spatial horizon even further away from the centre of power.

In this scenario, Miguel António de Melo soon understood that the transfer of the Portuguese court, the cabinet, and the royal courts to Brazil represented a transformation of the institutional and economic frameworks within which he had operated until then. In a letter dated 14 January 1808, he wrote to Domingos de Sousa Coutinho, the Portuguese envoy to London, informing him of the manner in which he had learned of the departure of the court – he had received the news while on São Miguel – and expressing his surprise regarding the establishment of a Board of Governors in Lisbon and doubts as to whether the jurisdiction

**26** The institutional and administrative changes would continue and, in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the hierarchies between municipalities would also change, with an impact on the local official structure: the Charter of 9 October 1817 annexed the villages of Lagoa and Água de Pau to the jurisdiction of the outside judge of Vila Franca do Campo, with the position of common judges being extinguished in both villages. Cf. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo [National Archives of Torre do Tombo] (ANTT), *Desembargo do Paço*, Repartição da Corte, Estremadura e Ilhas [Office of the Court, Estremadura and Islands], file 1671, no. 1 (Água de Pau) and 2 (Lagoa).

**27** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, pp. 93–94.

**28** Â. Domingues, "Dom João, príncipe esclarecido e pai dos povos, e a fundação das colônias sueca de Sorocaba e suíça de Nova Friburgo", in: Valente de Oliveira and Ricupero (eds.), *A Abertura dos Portos*, pp. 120–147, esp. 126.

of governors was extended to the Azores.[29] Three days later, in another letter, this time addressed to the viscount of Anadia,[30] the secretary of state for the navy and overseas, the captain-general presented his doubts concerning the possible obedience he owed to the governors of the kingdom and even sought to contribute to a clarification of the terminology of the administrative geography with regard to the concepts of "Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves", "Adjacent Islands" – which would be the Azores, Madeira and Porto Santo – and "Overseas Domains", comprising colonies south of Cape Bojador. In the same letter, the captain-general also raised the question of whether or not he could encourage, under the current conditions, the establishment of salt farms for local consumption and a rabbit hide hat factory for export and whether vessels that from then on would leave the islands to Brazil could transport foreign goods.[31]

The captain-general of the Azores showed to have a clear and correct understanding of the process that was underway, while at the same time he placed himself in a position of refusing to be subordinated to the jurisdiction of the governors of the kingdom. In a later letter to the viscount of Anadia, dated 1 March 1808, he wrote, in a more alarmed tone, that the current situation of calamity prevented "on these islands the ordinary course of Civil Procedures that are handled by the Court, as it is unknown to where the appeals filed should be forwarded to [. . .]. This uncertainty vexes the peoples, and distresses them." Mentioning that he already knew, when he went to the Azores in 1806, that forensic affairs had been in a state of disarray for years and that crimes were not being punished, he asked to be given competencies such as the ones practiced in other captaincies – for example, the courts of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and the State of India – while also giving suggestions to standardize forensic, civil, and criminal matters in the name of the proper course of justice.[32] In a letter dated 12 July of the same year, the viscount of Anadia informed the captain-general that the prince regent had established several higher courts in Rio de Janeiro and that the jurisdiction of the courts of Lisbon had been transferred

**29** Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Regional de Angra do Heroísmo [Public Library and Regional Archives of Angra do Heroísmo] (BPARAH), Capitania Geral dos Açores [Captaincy General of the Azores] (CGA), Book 5 of the registry of orders of the General Government of the Azores (1806–1808), fls. 232 v-235.

**30** João Rodrigues de Sá e Mello de Menezes e Sottomayor (Aveiro, 1755-Rio de Janeiro, 1809), first viscount of Anadia (1786) and first count of Anadia (1808).

**31** BPARAH, CGA, Book 3 of the accounts register of the General Government of the Azores for the State Secretariats (1806–1808), fls. 234–235.

**32** BPARAH, CGA, Book 3 of the accounts register of the General Government of the Azores for the State Secretariats (1806–1808), fls. 246 v-250 v.

to the newly created courts "and the same applied to the forensic affairs".[33] Thus, the bases were laid so that, despite their "adjacency" to the kingdom, the islands communicated preferentially with Brazil.

The leading role of the captain-general was also reflected in the insular military government. Following the invasion of Portugal by the French, Miguel Pereira Forjaz, the minister of war, foreigner affairs and the navy, carried out the reform of the Portuguese army, putting into practice decisions and regulations that had been decided since 1803. The reform finally materialized in 1808, mainly by means of the Public Notice of 30 September, of the Decree of 11 December, which determined a mass population survey, and the Charter of 20 December, which re-established the militia regiments.[34] However, in the Azores, the captain-general understood that the Charter of 20 December could not be applied to the archipelago without a royal order, as it was only meant for the territory of the Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves and the "European continent".[35] He also suggested that 19 adaptations of administrative nature should be introduced in order to take into account the insular specificity.

In Rio de Janeiro, the court had already recognized that the situation in the Azores posed problems in relation to regular communication between the various levels of power and that it required a proper framework, particularly in relation to the military government of the islands. In this respect, the letter dated 22 July 1808 could not have been clearer. In response to the abuses committed by Miguel António de Melo's predecessors in connection with appointments of assistants to the militia, the captain-general was ordered to obey the provisions of 12 December 1749 and 30 April 1785, "which will regulate similar provisions in the continent of Brazil". Furthermore, in relation to the individuals presented by the insular municipalities to the offices of the local ordinance companies, "because of the great distance of those islands to the capital that I chose for my residence", which prevented the complete observance of the Charter of 18 October 1709, the prince regent determined that the governor and captain-general of the Azores would thereafter draft the respective letters of nomination of the ordinance officers, whose approval would be

**33** Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Regional de Ponta Delgada [Public Library and Regional Archives of Ponta Delgada] (BPARPD), Arquivo da Câmara de Ponta Delgada [Archive of the Municipality of Ponta Delgada] (ACPD), Book 121, *Livro 7º do Registo (1799–1816)*, fls. 204–206.

**34** A.P. Nunes, "A segunda invasão francesa", in: M.T. Barata and N.S. Teixeira (eds.), *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, vol. 3, Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2004, pp. 73–89, esp. 75–76.

**35** Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino [Overseas Historical Archive] (AHU), Conselho Ultramarino [Overseas Council] (CU), *Açores*, box 66, doc. 66.

later submitted to the confirmation of the Supreme Military Council, based in Rio de Janeiro.[36] As greater autonomy was granted to the captain-general, his connection with Rio de Janeiro, and not with Lisbon, was confirmed, which in fact met the strategy of Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, who, from the new court, intended to avoid maintaining or creating a centre of power in the Kingdom of Portugal. It is therefore not surprising that the Regency Council in Lisbon complained in subsequent years that it had no "authority whatsoever" over the Azores and Madeira.[37]

In sum, if the disturbances arising from the transfer of the Portuguese royal court affected the normal functioning of the institutions while the peoples felt vexed in matters of justice, it is also true that Miguel António de Melo was able to collect dividends from the new Luso-Brazilian Atlantic world political map. Supported by the decisions of the prince regent and his ministers, he extended his jurisdiction despite being aware of the accusations that could be made against him, as he stated when addressing the viscount of Anadia:

> I do not wish to remind you of these and other affairs because I hope that the Prince Regent Our Lord will extend the jurisdiction he entrusted on me, but because His Royal Service greatly matters, that those affairs are not halted on these islands, being so slow as it is the one that R.H. finds on the same islands.[38]

With greater autonomy than that of the governors of the kingdom in Lisbon, Miguel António de Melo decided to implement several interim measures of provisional nature, which, benefiting from the state of affairs and the displacement of the political centre to Brazil, apparently contributed to a "greater governmental expression of the captaincy".[39] Thus, in 1809, following orders from the court or on his own initiative, the captain-general published some diplomas that contributed to removing the Azores from the jurisdiction of the governors of the kingdom. In a letter dated 28 February, Miguel António de Melo, in reaction to a warning from the count of Anadia, ordered that the royal courts established in Rio de Janeiro govern all matters

**36** BPARPD, ACPD, Book 121, *Livro 7º do Registo (1799–1816)*, fls. 206–207 v. For a description of the captain-general in the jurisdiction of the municipalities after 1807, see M.L.L. Ananias, *(Es)paços do Concelho em Tempos de Mudança. Ponta Delgada: 1800–1834*, Master thesis in Insular and Atlantic History (15th–20th Centuries), Ponta Delgada: University of the Azores, 2000, pp. 66–67, 175–178 and 329–333.

**37** Canas, "Governar Portugal", p. 83.

**38** BPARAH, CGA, Book 3 of the accounts register of the General Government of the Azores for the State Secretariats (1806–1808), fls. 255 v-256, letter dated 4 March 1808.

**39** Ananias, *(Es)paços do Concelho*, pp. 346.

relating to administrative matters.[40] Months later, in a long letter dated 23 June and addressed to the judge appointed by the king in São Jorge, regarding his rejection of a pardon for prisoners granted by the governors of the kingdom by the Decree of 7 October 1807, the captain-general affirmed his agreement with the position of the magistrate and rejected the jurisdiction of the governors over the islands, at least in matters of justice.[41] Less than a month later, in a letter dated 18 July addressed to the bishop of the Azores, Miguel António de Melo stated that to date the prince regent had not authorized that the jurisdiction of governors was exercised on the islands and that he understood the contrary.[42] As this matter was not clarified, during the next decade the captain-general would several times deny the jurisdiction of Lisbon over the islands.[43]

Miguel António de Melo remained in office until he was replaced in September 1810. Allegedly, according to news circulated by an English newspaper, he would have fallen out of favour with the regency in Rio de Janeiro for having joined the pro-French party. It was argued that his assets had not been confiscated when the city of Lisbon was occupied in 1808, but the accusation proved to be false. The substitution of the captain-general was due to the fact that Miguel António de Melo was an advocate of a liberal ideology. And contrary to his predecessors, the governor did not return to Lisbon, opting to stay in Angra, owing to fear of being a victim of persecution on his return to the kingdom.[44]

The new captain-general, Aires Pinto de Sousa Coutinho, was appointed on 15 December 1809, but he only arrived in the Azores in September of the following year, almost at the same time as the arrival of the *Amazona*, the frigate that, on 26 September 1810, docked in Angra carrying on board the regency

**40** In May 1808, the Court of Appeals of Rio de Janeiro became the Supreme Court and "all appeals and legal proceedings from the islands of Azores and Madeira, Bahia and northern Portuguese America should, as of now, be sent to Rio de Janeiro, which in terms of justice acquired complete autonomy from Portugal" (cf. Slemian and Pimenta, *A corte e o mundo*, p. 67).
**41** BPARAH, CGA, Book 6 of the registry of orders of the General Government of the Azores (1808–1810), fls. 195–197; F.F. Drummond, *Anais da Ilha Terceira*, facsimile reprint of the edition of 1850–1864, Angra do Heroísmo: Secretaria Regional de Educação e Cultura, 1981, vol. 3, pp. 196–197.
**42** BPARAH, CGA, Book 6 of the registry of orders of the General Government of the Azores (1808–1810), fls. 203–203 v.
**43** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, p. 95.
**44** F. d'Athaíde Machado de Faria e Maia, *Subsídios para a história de São Miguel e Terceira: Capitães-Generais, 1766–1831*, Ponta Delgada: Gráfica Regional, 1944, pp. 105–140.

deportees – the "setembrizados" – accused of having liberal ideas.[45] The governor, as well as his successor, Brigadier Francisco António de Araújo Azevedo, took several decisions that suggest that he was committed to the socioeconomic development of the islands. However, the captain-general still lacked the means to implement the original project of the Captaincy General of the Azores, and the failure of the "new" Board of the Royal Treasury contributed to the system's "financial collapse".[46]

It should be recalled that the political and social structure of the Ancien Régime contributed to blocking some of the governors' initiatives. It was not only the numerous conflicts of jurisdiction – which, arising from a regulatory vacuum, involved the military, extending a scenario that came from previous years – but also, despite the initiatives of the *regalismo josefino* (Josephine regalism),[47] the fact that local island elites remained influential, especially the nobles of the main Azorean senates (Angra and Ponta Delgada), controlling the political power at the local level and zealously defending their jurisdictional autonomy. Thus, contrary to some of the more confident statements of a couple of the captain-generals, the framework of the relationship between the Azorean political centre in Angra and the other island calls for a more "negotiated" vision of how the political authority was exercised.[48]

In this context, it must be pointed out that for the Azores, one of the main consequences of the establishment of the court in Rio de Janeiro and of the hesitations regarding the hierarchical structure that would be in force in the Portuguese Atlantic was the lack of a defined status for the islands, which was observable in the following years, changes and hesitations that were used by the political players involved. Thus, in a letter dated 12 December 1814, the internal affairs officer of the district of Angra referred to the Charter of 26 February 1771, which defined the islands "as parts, and real provinces of the Kingdom of Portugal", claiming it to be null and void by the provisions of the Charter of 7 January 1811, according to which "they must now be considered

**45** R.M. Madruga da Costa, *Um deportado do "Amazonas": monografia histórica, época liberal nos Açores, 1810–1834*, 2nd ed., Ponta Delgada: Tip. Fernando de Alcântara, 1930; J.D. Rodrigues (ed.), *O Atlântico Revolucionário: circulação de ideias e de elites no final do Antigo Regime*, Ponta Delgada: CHAM, 2012.

**46** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, pp. 439–445.

**47** N.G. Monteiro, *D. José*, 2nd ed., Lisbon: Temas e Debates, 2008; Paquette, *Imperial Portugal*, pp. 17–66; J.D. Rodrigues, "Um Tempo de Ruptura? (1750–1778)", in: J.P. Oliveira e Costa, J.D. Rodrigues and P.A. Oliveira (eds.), *História da Expansão e do Império Português*, Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2014, pp. 264–295.

**48** Daniels and Kennedy (eds.), *Negotiated Empires*.

adjacent to the State of Brazil rather than to the kingdom", so that the ministers of the islands should receive the taxes meant for the settlements along the shores and in the hinterlands of South America.[49] Nevertheless, other players, at the same time, continued to defend the islands' adjacency to Portugal.[50] In 1819, on the eve of the liberal revolution, Judge Alberto Carlos de Meneses, in his work *Pratica dos Tombos* (Practice of Registry), recorded the archipelago of the Azores, next to that of Madeira, both as "Adjacent Islands".[51]

During the years of the French invasions, successive changes in the definition of the jurisdiction of crown-appointed officials, on the one hand, and in the establishment of hierarchies involving the judicial authorities based in the Azores and the royal courts, on the other, contributed to maximize problems that were rooted in the particularistic structure and the jurisdictional culture of the Ancien Régime. An example of this is the lack of definition of the justice affairs in mid-1810, which led the governor to write to the secretary of state, "requesting the necessary statements regarding the subjection of the Azores to courts of Portugal, for having not yet received any instructions in this respect".[52] The reply obtained by the Public Notice of 12 July 1810 stated that, except for forensic affairs, which should be channelled to the Supreme Court of Lisbon, all other matters fell within the jurisdiction of the courts of Rio de Janeiro.[53]

However, not all the assertions were that clear. In this regard, Aires Pinto de Sousa Coutinho, writing on 9 October 1811 to the count de Galveias about the *Amazona* deportees, expressed the existing misunderstandings regarding the instructions he had received from Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon.[54] The misunderstanding also included conflicts concerning jurisdiction and the existence of different rulings from the courts established in Lisbon and in Rio de

**49** BPARAH, CGA, Island of São Miguel, Nº. 16, Crown Magistrates– Correspondence (1814–1817), letter dated 12 December 1814.

**50** BPARAH, CGA, Island of Terceira, Nº. 11, Crown Magistrates – Correspondence (1766–1818), representation of Fernando de Sá Viana, attorney of the tenant of the mills on Terceira, undated.

**51** A.C. de Meneses, *Pratica dos Tombos, e Medições, marcações dos bens da Corôa, Fazenda Real, bens das Ordens Militares, ou Commendas, Morgados, Capellas, bens de Concelhos, Corporações Ecclesiasticas, Confrarias, Hospitaes, e de Casas particulares; até ao Proprietario, e Lavrador do menor Terreno; com a agrimensura, procésso judicial, e formulario dos Livros do Tombo*., Lisbon: In Impressão Regia, 1819, p. 280.

**52** F.F. Drummond, *Anais da Ilha Terceira*, vol. 3, p. 199.

**53** Ibid.

**54** BPARAH, CGA, Book 5 of the accounts register of the General Government of the Azores for the State Secretariats (1811–1816), fls. 19 v-23 v.

Janeiro, which led the captain-general in 1815 to propose the creation of a Court of Appeals in the Azores, an initiative that had the support of several authorities.[55]

Conflicts of jurisdiction were not limited to the opposition between the captain-generals, the governors of the kingdom, and the courts of Lisbon. There was also tension with military governors, especially those of the islands of São Miguel, Faial, and Pico, which were subject to the jurisdiction of the captain-general but which occasionally tried to assert their autonomy. An example is the case of the governor of São Miguel, who, in 1804, requested to have direct correspondence with the crown and to which the captain-general refused, presenting himself as the "only and first delegate of his royal highness".[56] In a letter from the captain-general, the count of São Lourenço, addressed to the viscount of Anadia and dated 28 February 1805, the governor of São Miguel was accused of disobeying him and, appealing to the jurisdiction of the captain-general, was denounced as "indolent the intention of the governor when he requests to receive direct orders without going through the island of Terceira; which seems to have the purpose of shaking off the dependence owed to this government by other subordinates and all territorial parts of their district".[57]

If part of the friction was due to a regulatory gap,[58] by the middle of the second decade of the nineteenth century, Aires Pinto de Sousa Coutinho sought to solve this loophole by drafting, in 1814, "an instrument of regulatory nature" that would govern the actions of those that had been defined as "first public authorities" for the respective islands and their relationship with the Captaincy General.[59] However, his effort would come to nothing.

## The Azores on the Eve of the Liberal Revolution of 1820

At the Congress of Vienna (1814/15), one of the main concerns of the European delegates was to control imperial disintegration and to restore the status quo that existed before the Napoleonic Wars. In the Portuguese court in Rio de

**55** Drummond, *Anais da Ilha Terceira*, vol. 3, p. 237; Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, p. 91.
**56** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, p. 162.
**57** *Arquivo dos Açores*, vol. 10, 1982, pp. 385–387, esp. 386.
**58** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, pp. 153–157.
**59** Ibid., pp. 154, 156–157.

Janeiro, the general European peace was seen by some of the crown magistrates as an opportunity for the royal family and the court to return to Lisbon. This, of course, would represent a second respatialization within the Luso-Brazilian Atlantic world and a major setback for the elite groups in Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and Pernambuco, which had benefited from the presence of the court in Brazil. Despite the pressure, the prince regent showed little interest in returning to Lisbon.[60] The creation of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves at the end of 1815, by Decree of 16 December, reinforced the argument of those who claimed in those years that "it was not for the prince regent's purposes to return to Portugal and to transfer again the seat of the monarchy to Lisbon".[61]

Amidst the political turmoil in Europe and the Americas and the uncertainty of the Portuguese authorities regarding the decision to stay in Brazil or return to Portugal, the Azores seemed to have escaped this instability. In the Azores, local particularisms were combined with the withdrawal of the political centre and the geographical discontinuity. So, despite the "re-establishment" of the captaincy-general in 1798/99, the problems that had hindered the success of the attempted reform with the creation of the captaincy-general in 1766 kept on being a daily reality.[62] After the establishment of the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro in 1808, the indecisions and silences of the political centre regarding matters of political, administrative, and judicial nature were felt strongly in the Azores, which continued to be "embedded in the webs of a biased system of relations that would in no point help the positive progress of the administration's affairs".[63] In the final years of the second decade of the nineteenth century, the death of Maria I (on 20 March 1816), the second military campaign in the Banda Oriental[64] and the critical events during 1817 in Brazil – the Pernambuco

**60** J.D. Rodrigues, "Um Europeu nos trópicos: sociedade e política no Rio joanino na correspondência de Pedro José Caupers", in: Rodrigues (ed.), *O Atlântico Revolucionário*, pp. 193–213.

**61** M.B. Nizza da Silva, *D. João. Príncipe e Rei no Brasil*, Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2008, pp. 71–73; J. Pedreira and F. Dores Costa, *D. João VI*, Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2006, pp. 237–239, 262–263.

**62** J.D. Rodrigues, "'*para o socego e tranquilidade publica das Ilhas*'".

**63** Madruga da Costa, *Os Açores em finais do regime de Capitania-Geral*, vol. 1, p. 95.

**64** The Banda Oriental or Banda Oriental del Uruguay was the name given to the territories on the eastern bank of the Uruguay River and north of the Río de la Plata. These territories comprise present-day Uruguay, the State of Rio Grande do Sul, and some parts of the State of Santa Catarina, in Brazil, and were for a long time at the heart of disputes between Lisbon and Madrid, settled in several treaties. Prince Regent João took the opportunity to regain those territories following the inprisonment of the Spanish royal family. See C. Bessa, "O Brasil e as

uprising – and in Portugal – the failed attempt by General Gomes Freire de Andrade to overthrow the British government and the execution of Portuguese military officers – contributed to keeping the Azores out of the crown's sight.[65] In general, the main crown-appointed magistrates serving in the archipelago sought to use the new political and spatial circumstances in favour of an extension of their power. Local political and social actors, however, also sought the same and therefore clashed with the captain-generals and the military governors.

The status of the Azores, lying between the two shores of the Atlantic, between the kingdom and the empire, experienced oscillations, but these did not end in any effective proposal for reorganizing the political-administrative map. Such events would occur only after the liberal revolution of 1820. And, in a political conjuncture of change, the letter that one of the setembrizados, Judge Vicente José Ferreira Cardoso da Costa, wrote to a friend on 23 October 1820 is still significant.[66] In some of the Azorean islands, news was circulating that the Junta of Porto wanted to "extend the national insurrection to the Azores Islands".[67] Now what was the judge's opinion on this? In a clear manner, he stated:

> The Azores form a captaincy, and a political government entirely separate from Portugal. Our relations with the kingdom are friendly, commercial, and judicial: and in these aspects there has been no change at all; because ships bring here as before, sentences and papers of the same sort in the name of the king; and therefore we must understand, as it seems to me, that Portugal seems itself in relation to the Azores as before.

Invasões Francesas. Corte no Rio, Reino Unido e Independência.", in: M.T. Barata and N.S. Teixeira (eds.), *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, vol. 3, Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2004, pp. 232–252, esp. pp. 242–245; Paquette, *Imperial Portugal*, pp. 55–56.

**65** Paquette, *Imperial Portugal*, pp. 105–107.

**66** Vicente José Ferreira Cardoso da Costa was born in Bahia, Brazil, in 1765. He studied law in Coimbra and he held offices in the Portuguese administration. In 1810, following the third French invasion of Portugal, he was deported to the Azores along with several military officers, clergymen, and lawyers, all of them accused of being pro-French. Vicente José Ferreira Cardoso da Costa stayed in the island of São Miguel, where he married a lady from one of the main local households. On these events and on some of the setembrizados, see: Rodrigues (ed.), *O Atlântico Revolucionário*.

**67** Following the military uprisings of 1820 in Porto (24 August) and in Lisbon (15 September) juntas were formed in Porto and in Lisbon. The Junta of Porto's purpose was the restoration or regeneration of Portugal and the establishment of constitutionalism. In late September, a political agreement led to the creation of a unified junta in Lisbon. On the juntas, see Paquette, *Imperial Portugal*, pp. 108–109 and N.G. Monteiro, "A Vida Política", in: J.M. Pedreira and N.G. Monteiro (eds.), *O Colapso do Império e a Revolução Liberal, 1808–1834*, Madrid and Carnaxide: Mapfre-Objectiva, 2013, pp. 37–74, esp. 56–58.

And he concluded that

> it would be prudent that Portugal did not try to involve the Azores in its political affairs nor the Azores to be judges of the same, risking to complicate even more His Majesty in the resolutions to make, which already give Him a lot to do. Therefore, to lead with the mercantile, friendly, and judiciary as if we knew nothing of what is going on in Portugal.[68]

Claiming to facilitate the decision-making process of the monarch, the judge argued that the Azores should not be involved in the ongoing events of the kingdom, especially because it was "a captaincy, and a political government entirely separate from Portugal". This was, after all, a further assertion of autonomy from the local elites of São Miguel, who had co-opted the old setembrizado, which had anticipated the political divisions that would happen in the following years and that, after the definitive liberal triumph, would materialise in the administrative fragmentation that continued up until almost the end of the twentieth century.

In the following years, the Azores, just like in the Kingdom of Portugal, would be the stage for political and social conflict between constitutionalists and the supporters of the old political order. Peace would come only after the civil war of 1832–1834. It was, after all, a consequence of the unexpected and dramatic respatialization of the Portuguese Atlantic world that took place after 1807/08. Although being a small territory, the Azorean case provides a good example of the profound changes that took place during the decades of the Age of Revolutions and of how amidst the political turmoil actors tried to cope with new ideas and to adapt themselves to new political languages and models.

**68** A.J. Correia, "Historia Documental da Revolução de 1821 Na Ilha de San Miguel para a Separação do Governo da Capitania Geral da Ilha Terceira", *Revista Michaelense* 3 (1920) 2, pp. 705–729, esp. pp. 711, 712 and 728.

Antonis Hadjikyriacou

# 8 The Respatialization of Cypriot Insularity during the Age of Revolutions

The working assumption behind the present volume is that the French Revolution produced a set of tectonic movements on a global scale: a respatialization that entailed a reorganization and reconceptualization of space. This chapter examines one particular kind of space – insularity – a concept that I define as the condition of being an island. Focusing on Cyprus, I examine how perceptions of the island shifted during the Age of Revolutions by investigating the correlations between insular space and the development of economic, social, and political structures.[1] In doing so, the chapter is informed by how various historical actors (local denizens, petitioning villagers, local power holders, imperial appointees, travellers, merchants, and sailors) experienced, imagined, and projected their engagements with the island to different audiences. These interactions reflect material conditions, administrative organization, and the vernacular facets of power at the local level.

This chapter opens with an in-depth analysis of the idea of the island and complicates a word often taken for granted. Elaborating on the content of insularity as a spatial category and as an analytical and heuristic tool, the chapter then provides the historical context for Cypriot insularity while bringing examples from the preceding Venetian and subsequent British rule. It then goes on to demonstrate how during the Age of Revolutions perceptions of Cypriot insularity had significantly shifted, with lasting consequences in the historical trajectory of the island.

This shift was brought about most noticeably by Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt and eventual occupation of the country (1798–1801). This is not to say that France's imperial ambitions and civilizational mission were the sole catalyst responsible for the changes observed in Cyprus. Ottoman as well as local and regional historical processes also contributed to these outcomes, while the temporal horizon goes deeper than the turn of the nineteenth century. Moreover, changes were not simply at the level of perceptions: shifts in the way the island was understood in the Ottoman or Eastern Mediterranean order also

**1** For an earlier discussion along similar lines, see M. Aymes, "'Position Délicate' ou Île sans Histoires? L'Intégration de Chypre à l'État Ottoman des Premières Tanzîmât", in: N. Vatin and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Insularités Ottomanes*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose-Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 2004, pp. 241–275.

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impacted the organization of the economy, society, and politics of the island. Finally, the chapter closes with an enquiry into what heuristic and analytical insights respatialization can lend to the study of the Age of Revolutions. How radical of a break did the Napoleonic interlude in the Mediterranean bring about, and what can this tell us about the historical forces behind the particular respatialization at hand?

## Conceptualizing Insularity

Drawing inspiration from the "cultural turn", spatial history has been questioning conventional and "self-evident" geographical categories for the past two decades. This has contributed greatly to the conceptualization and theorization of all things spatial. More specifically, spatial history has questioned the singular semantics of geography and has argued for the socially constructed nature of space, emphasizing, for instance, that the idea of "natural borders" is a mirage.[2] The historiographical implications and further development of this research agenda have had a lasting effect, ranging from applications in global history to challenging the state-centred nature of dominant forms of spatial imagination.[3] Directly relevant to the growth of transnational history, the proliferation of non-state-centric spatial categories questions the analytical tools of the modern nation-state.[4]

On a different level, geographical categories have also been reconsidered as units of historical analysis. For example, perhaps echoing the title of the opening section of the first chapter of Braudel's *Mediterranean* – "Mountains

**2** K. Wigen, *A Malleable Map: Geographies of Restoration in Central Japan, 1600–1912*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2010; M.W. Lewis and K. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*, Oakland: University of California Press, 1997; B. Warf and S. Arias (eds.), *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 2009.

**3** M. Middell and K. Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization", *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010) 1, pp. 149–170; P. Cheney, "The French Revolution's Global Turn and Capitalism's Spatial Fixes", *Journal of Social History* 52 (2019) 3, pp. 575–583; K. Schlögel, *Im Raum lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* [In Space we Read Time: On the History of Civilization and Geopolitics], G. Jackson (trans.), Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016; J.C. Scott, *The Art of not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

**4** C.A. Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History", *American Historical Review* 111 (2006) 5, pp. 1441–1464.

come first"[5] – mountain settings attracted sustained interest following two groundbreaking books: one by Peter Sahlins on the Franco-Spanish border in the Pyrenees and another by J.R. McNeill on the environmental history of Mediterranean mountains.[6] Another particularly productive trend has been the shifting attention from land to sea. The efflorescence of thalassology has transformed historical understandings of space.[7]

One particularly intriguing development has been the critique of terracentrism. This trend calls for shifting attention to aquatic spaces – which are overlooked and marginalized by a historiography that privileges land as the stage in which history plays out – as sites of historical processes.[8] Another outcome from these discussions has been the so-called "new coastal history". While no "old" coastal history really existed before, this mode of enquiry does not study the sea as an undifferentiated body of water, but focuses on the terraqueous nature of the coast as the spatial zone where land and sea blend into each other.[9]

**5** F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II* [The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II], S. Reynolds (trans.), vol. 1, New York: Fontana, 1972, p. 25.

**6** J.R. McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; P. Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Oakland: University of California Press, 1989; B. Debarbieux and G. Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015; P.H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering After the Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013; Scott, *The Art of not Being Governed*.

**7** D. Armitage, A. Bashford, and S. Sivasundaram (eds.), *Oceanic Histories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017; P.N. Miller (ed.), *The Sea: Thalassography and Historiography*, Ann Arbor: Universiy of Michigan Press, 2013; J. Mack, *The Sea: A Cultural History*, London: Reaktion Books, 2011; see the forum "Oceans of History" in the *American Historical Review* 111 (2006) 3; P.E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; M.P.M. Vink, "Indian Ocean Studies and the 'New Thalassology'", *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007) 1, pp. 41–62; A. Wick, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2016.

**8** N. Frykman et al., "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: An Introduction", in: N. Frykman et al. (eds.), *Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: A Global Survey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 5–6; R. Mukherjee, "Escape from Terracentrism: Writing a Water History", *Indian Historical Review* 41 (2014) 1, pp. 87–101; J.H. Bentley et al. (eds.), *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

**9** I. Land, "Tidal Waves: The New Coastal History", *Social History* 40 (2007) 3, pp. 731–743; D. Worthington (ed.), *The New Coastal History: Cultural and Environmental Perspectives from Scotland and Beyond*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; A. Bashford, "Terraqueous histories", *The Historical Journal* 60 (2017) 2, pp. 253–272; J.R. Gillis, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in*

This kind of spatial category goes beyond the land/sea dichotomy, pointing to an ecological continuum, in the words of John R. Gillis.[10]

Whether directly or indirectly influenced by this historiographical context, more and more historians have been turning their attention to islands in recent years.[11] A large corpus of works from the field of island studies has gone to great lengths over the past two decades to articulate and elaborate on ways of thinking about islands.[12] Archaeology and classics have a long and productive experience in theorizing insularity, with a particularly rich body of literature on insular spaces. Especially useful, but not surprising, is the sensitivity of archaeologists to the material conditions of island societies, rather than just the conceptualization of insular space.[13]

All of these issues are not necessarily new. Lucien Febvre's *A Geographical Introduction to History* identified and addressed many of the above issues

*History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012; M. Talbot, "Maritoriality", in: B. Struck, R. Bavaj, and K.C. Lawson (eds.), *Doing Spatial History*, London: Routledge, forthcoming.

**10** J.R. Gillis, "Not continents in miniature: Islands as ecotones", *Island Studies Journal* 9 (2014) 1, p. 163.

**11** S. Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013; A. Hadjikyriacou (ed.), *Islands of the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2019, also published as *Insularity in the Ottoman World*, special issue of *Princeton Papers* 18 (2017); S. Gekas, *Xenocracy: State, Class and Colonialism in the Ionian Islands, 1815–1864*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2016; N. Vatin and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Insularités ottomans*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Laros, 2004; E. Zéi, V*isages et visions d'insularite: l'ile de Paros sans l'archipel Grec pendant la premiere moitie du XVIIIe siècle*, Istanbul: Isis, 2017; R. Margariti, "An Ocean of Islands: Islands, Insularity, and Historiography of the Indian Ocean", in: P.N. Miller (ed.) *The Sea*, pp. 198–229; L. Sicking, "The Dichotomy of Insularity: Islands between Isolation and Connectivity in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, and Beyond", *The International Journal of Maritime History* 26 (2014) 3, pp. 494–511.

**12** For a comprehensive overview of the literature, see G. Baldacchino (ed.), *A World of Islands*, Luqa: Agenda, 2007; see also the various issues of *Island Studies Journal*; J.R. Gillis and D. Lowenthal (eds.), *Islands*, special issue of *Geographical Review* 97 (2007) 2; E. DeLoughrey (ed.), *The Literature of Postcolonial Islands*, special issue of *New Literatures Review* 47–48 (2011).

**13** C. Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands: Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire and the Aegean World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007; C. Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the early Cyclades*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; K. Kopaka, "What is an Island? Concepts, Meanings and Polysemies of Insular *Topoi* in Greek Sources", *European Journal of Archaeology* 11 (2009) 2–3, pp. 177–194; B. Erdoğu, "Visualizing Neolithic Landscape: Archaeological Theory in the Aegean Islands", in: C. Lichter (ed.), *How did Farming Reach Europe? Anatolian-European Relations from the Second Half of the 7th through the First Half of the 6th Millennium Cal BC*, Berlin: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 2005, pp. 95–105.

almost a century ago, eloquently articulating the multiplicity of the meanings of geographical conditions as the "vicissitudes of possibility".[14] At stake is less the impressionistic identification of geographical attributes of space, or the conceptualization thereof, but rather their analytical and heuristic employment for the pursuit of historical knowledge. In this sense, one of the latest trends in the study of insular, littoral, coastal, archipelagic, oceanic, or transoceanic history is the focus on human mobility with varying degrees of volition or coercion.[15] The role of labour in these processes contributes greatly to a shift towards a research agenda that brings material factors back into the study of the experience of and interaction with space.

Insularity is neither a fixed spatial or geographical condition nor a state that simply oscillates between connectivity and isolation. They are not just in juxtaposition to each other, but can also blend into each other. These antinomies oscillate between a fluid and consolidated form, and the way such dichotomies coexist in insular environments testifies to this observation: bridge/frontier, finite/expansive, introvert/extrovert, or backwaters/cutting-edge laboratories. These, and many other possibilities, fluctuate and shift depending on temporal, spatial, environmental, economic, social, or political contexts. In what follows, I elaborate on what Cypriot insularity meant in the early modern Mediterranean.

## Cypriot Insularity in the Early Modern Mediterranean

Envisioning the Cypriot insularity entails an appreciation of the geographic, environmental, and climatic conditions conducive to the formation of a polycultural, yet cash crop– and export-oriented economy. This economy engaged with and

**14** L. Febvre, in collaboration with L. Bataillon, *La Terre et l'évolution humaine: introduction géographique à l'histoire* [A Geographical Introduction to History], E.G. Mountford and J.H. Paxton (trans.), London: Kegan Paul, 1925, p. 172.

**15** S.S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015; C. Anderson et al., "Locating Penal Transportation: Punishment, Space, and Place c. 1750 to 1900", in: K.M. Morin and D. Moran (eds.), *Historical Geographies of Prisons: Unlocking the Usable Carceral Past*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 147–67; C. Anderson, "The Andaman Islands Penal Colony: Race, Class, Criminality and the British Empire", *International Review of Social History* 63 (2018) S26, pp. 25–43; R. Durgahee, "'Native' Villages, 'Coolie' Lines, and 'Free' Indian Settlements: The Geography of Indenture in Fiji", *South Asian Studies* 33 (2017) 1, pp. 68–84.

was integrated into networks of international trade within and beyond the Mediterranean: apart from other Ottoman ports such as Istanbul, Alexandria, or İzmir, commercial links included Venice, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Marseilles, and London. It was based on water-demanding, labour-intensive commodities: cotton, silk, and cereals. Nonetheless, the main products of the island, lucrative as they may have been for local entrepreneurs, were also available in the adjacent region. This condition guarded Cyprus-based commercial interests and their privileged position in the struggle to keep the island's surplus hidden from the attention of offshore players. In this fashion, this struggle primarily concerned local actors, particularly from the latter third of the seventeenth century, when Ottoman rule had by then been consolidated a century after the conquest of the island in 1571.[16]

After the second century of Ottoman rule, sources remain cryptic on what the Ottoman vision for Cyprus was. Indicative, however, is that the most voluminous category of records in the Istanbul archives concerns exiles or imprisonments, while anyone seeking references concerning Cyprus in the narratives of Ottoman historians is confronted with case after case of banishment or punitive appointment. It would be no exaggeration to state that this was the most consistent use that the Ottomans made of Cyprus throughout their rule. This should raise few eyebrows: islands are considered ideal places of exile.

In this context, the high hopes that the Ottomans had invested in their newly conquered province had soon vanished into thin air. The island was little more than an average province. It neither stood out from the provinces in its surrounding region, nor did it perform any extraordinary function for the empire as a whole. Occasionally, the island would send grain supplies to campaigning Ottoman troops, but from the seventeenth until the mid-eighteenth century there is little indication of Cyprus actively contributing to Ottoman war provisioning despite being a grain-rich province. Military presence was little more than a token garrison, for the island was usually peaceful enough to not need strong troops. Periodic disturbances of a socioeconomic nature were easily dealt with dispatching troops from South Anatolia and Syria to the island. In 1783, four out the six fortresses on Cyprus had no gunpowder or bullets.[17] Just like the British three centuries later, the Ottomans realized that the island had value and interest only when it was in the hands of another competitor. Once Cyprus became part of the empire, they did not quite know what to do with it.

**16** M. Hadjianastasis, "Crossing the Line in the Sand: Regional Officials, Monopolisation of State Power and 'Rebellion'. The Case of Mehmed Ağa Boyacıoğlu in Cyprus, 1685–1690", *Turkish Historical Review* 2 (2011) 2, pp. 155–176.

**17** 20 Cemaziülevvel 1197/23 April 1783, C.AS. 46425, BOA.

As a result, the most consistent pattern in Ottoman governance was periodic crisis management, with indifference at intervals.

## The Respatialization of Cypriot Insularity

The turn of the nineteenth century marks a watershed in Cypriot history. In 1804, rioting crowds stormed the residence of the most powerful Ottoman official on the island: the dragoman (interpreter) and representative of non-Muslims Hadjiyorgakis Kornesios. They were protesting against his appointment as collector of the extraordinary taxes levied to cover the expenses of the Ottoman military and its British allies in their campaign against Napoleon in Egypt and Syria. This, however, was not just a tax riot. It was also triggered by the rumour of an ensuing dearth due to grain hoarding, like the one that took place two years earlier and was actually caused by the dragoman, who had manipulated the grain market. Using his administrative prerogatives, he managed to concentrate most of the island's grain and illegally export it to Spain. While the continental blockade ensured handsome profits for the dragoman, Cyprus experienced a famine. Fast-forwarding to 1804, the riots turned into an outright revolt, with the rebels capturing the capital and entrenching themselves inside the city walls. A two-year-long period of instability ensued, with Ottoman troops sent to restore order at a massive financial and material cost to the locals, a chain of revolts, and a radical reorganization of power in the long term. While the dragoman escaped to Istanbul unscathed, he was eventually executed in 1809 in front of the Sublime Gate. Dearth, famine, popular unrest, a chain of revolts, and a devastated countryside were all elements that threatened the very sustainability of the surplus-extraction capacity of the province. Such were the effects of the events of 1804–1806, that their aftershocks were felt well into the 1840s, when Cypriots were still repaying collective debts and fines incurred in the aftermath of the revolt.[18]

Although recurring over the medium and long term, these crises were short-lived. Yet, one can notice a qualitative change at the imperial level, as far as the attitude of Istanbul towards Cyprus was concerned during this period. Correspondingly, there were major shifts at the local level regarding the political economy of insularity. Starting from the vantage point of the capital, from 1798

**18** A. Hadjikyriacou, "The Province Goes to the Center: The Case of Hadjiyorgakis Kornesios, Dragoman of Cyprus", in: C. Isom-Verhaaren and K.F. Schull (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Sultans, Subjects, and Elites*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016, pp. 238–253.

onwards there was a flood of Ottoman documentation regarding Cyprus in the aftermath of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. Overall, the documentation concerned the geopolitical significance of the island, which had spiked as a result of the French operations in the eastern Mediterranean. This was in sharp contrast to the generally marginal position of Cyprus in Ottoman grand strategy.

First of all, the island was directly affected by the occupation of Egypt as it faced a direct military threat – an extremely rare occasion since the Ottoman conquest (1571).[19] Second, Cyprus became a provisioning base, a key outpost for military operations, as well as a centre for the collection and distribution of intelligence.[20] Indicative of this change is that this is one of the rare instances when the commander of Cyprus (*Kıbrıs muhafızı*) actually appears in the documentation to be performing military duties. This is in contrast to the vast majority of all other instances I have encountered documentation mentioning the office from earlier periods and concern other administrative or fiscal affairs.[21] Moreover, emergency troops were dispatched,[22] and the defence of the island became a major preoccupation.[23] Accordingly, the bad state of the island's defences was immediately made apparent, pointing to the lack of ammunition.[24]

**19** 19 Muharrem 1215/12 June 1800, HAT 2856, BOA; c. 1214/1799–1800, HAT. 5305, BOA; 23 Zilhicce 1213/28 May 1799, HAT. 6038, BOA; 15 Safer 1215/8 June 1800, HAT. 6250, BOA; c. 1216/1801–02, HAT. 6478, BOA; 17 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/29 August 1798, HAT. 6511, BOA; 25 Zilhicce 1213/30 May 1799, HAT. 6519 A, BOA; 7 Cemaziülahir 1214/6 November 1799, HAT. 6525, BOA; 19 Cemaziülahir 1214/18 November 1799, HAT. 6526, BOA; 26 Muharrem 1213/10 July 1798, HAT. 6543, BOA; 26 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/7 September 1798, HAT. 6658, BOA; 29 Cemaziülevvel 1214/29 October 1799, HAT. 6796, BOA; 20 Ramazan 1214/25 February 1800, HAT. 6832, BOA; 25 Cemaziülahir 1214/24 November 1799, HAT. 6834, BOA; 24 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/5 September 1798, HAT. 6755, BOA.

**20** c. 1213/1798–99, HAT 6423, BOA; 7 Rebiʿülahir 1213/1798, HAT. 6423 A, BOA; 8 Rebiʿülevvel 1214/10 August 1799, HAT. 6455, BOA; c. 1214/1799–1800, HAT. 13461, BOA; 17 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/19 August 1799, HAT. 14079 A, BOA; 20 Cemaziülevvel 1214/20 October 1799, HAT. 15372, BOA; c. 1213/1798–99, HAT. 15504, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, HAT. 1731, BOA; 5 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/17 August 1798, C.AS. 8012, BOA; 9 Zilkaʿde 1215/24 March 1801, C.AS. 21288, BOA; J. Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 154, 234; *Copies of Original Letters From the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt, Intercepted by the Fleet Under the Command of Admiral Lord Nelson*, 3 vols., London: J. Wright, 1799, vol. 1, pp. 112–115, 147–162; vol. 3, pp. 14–27.

**21** Representative cases are 16 Muharrem 1159/17 February 1746, C.DH. 6328, BOA, regarding the dismissal of civil officials because of corruption, or 2 Safer 1103/25 October 1691, AE. SAMD.II. 1829, BOA, regarding tax collection.

**22** 5 Rebi'ülevvel 1213/17 August 1798, C.AS. 8012, BOA; 29 Muharrem 1214/3 July 1799, C.AS. 4319, BOA; 15 Rebi'ülevvel 1214/17 August 1799, C.AS. 3490, BOA.

**23** 19 Muharrem 1215/12 June 1800, C.AS. 3028, BOA.

**24** 28 Rebi'ülevvel 1213/9 September 1798, C.AS. 39254, BOA.

Another qualitative shift can be observed at this juncture: the recurring use of the term *sevahil* (coasts) with reference to Cyprus. An opaque term though it may be, it might actually open a window into the spatial imagination of the Ottoman bureaucratic mind, for it is the exact same feature that the abovementioned clerk from 1721 used while attempting to highlight a special attribute of Cyprus: its large circumference. The term *sevahil* is not frequently found in earlier documentation. Its only regular use is during the war for Cyprus back in the sixteenth century, but I have not come across the term in the documentation I have examined prior to 1770 (see below).[25] It only appeared once at the turn of the eighteenth century, while discussing a different kind of maritime threat, corsairs.[26] In this sense, Cyprus' shoreline, a defining aspect of the Ottoman spatial imagination of insularity, appears in the documentation only when the island is under military threat due to naval operations nearby.

At the local level, the extraordinary conditions had also created new opportunities. In 1800, the previous governor had failed to pay the monthly allowance of the military commander. Hadjiyorgakis had quickly moved in to remedy the problem by paying the amount himself, thus earning the right to collect it from the population later with interest.[27] Apart from the monetary benefits from this transaction, this was part of the dragoman's strategy to make himself indispensable in the administration of the island, particularly so at a time of crisis. It also increased his political capital, since in the relevant documentation he is addressed as "the devoted Hadjigeorgakis, the lord dragoman".[28] This is the only time I have seen the title *sadakatlü* (devoted) and *bey* (lord) used to address a non-Muslim in Cyprus.

The military operations around Cyprus also meant that the island became a primary source of supplies and provisions not only for Ottoman but also British naval and military forces. There are several imperial orders for the requisition of grain, the baking of hardtack biscuit, or the purchase of other supplies.[29] Local pleas and petitions frequently claimed that such obligations were too onerous or could not be met. In such cases, the payment of a monetary

**25** 29 Recep 1213/6 January 1799, C.BH. 1094, BOA; 29 Cemaziülahir 1215/17 November 1800, C. HR. 5918, BOA.

**26** c. 1113/1701–02, AE.SSLM.III. 9490, BOA.

**27** 11 Recep 1215/28 November 1800, C.ML. 5155, BOA.

**28** 9 Receb 1215/26 November 1800, C.ML. 5155, BOA.

**29** 23 Cemaziülevvel 1213/2 November 1798, C.BH. 316, BOA; 27 Zilkaʿde 1215/11 April 1801, C. HR. 2137, BOA; Safer 1215/16 July 1800, C.AS. 5835, 23 BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 11 November 1800, C.AS. 6023, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 7 Ramazan 1215/22 January 1801, C.AS. 42087, BOA; 17 Rebiʻülahir 1213/19 August 1798, HAT 14079 A, BOA; 1215/1800–01, HAT 14824, BOA; 1215/1800–01, HAT 15583, BOA.

equivalent was arranged.[30] However, this procedure was not merely an administrative one. The monetary payment of requisitioned commodities opened up new opportunities to make profit at two levels. First, buying the grain at fixed state-controlled prices for the purposes of provisioning meant that the cost was far below market price. Thus, the officials charged with these duties, or those with access to these officials, were able to concentrate production at an extremely low price for the purposes of the requisition, and when the in-kind delivery obligation was discharged, they could sell it at market prices or indeed illegally export it.[31] Second, the payment of a monetary equivalent essentially constituted extraordinary taxation, and therefore a tax collection had to be organized. This process opened up additional opportunities to make profit through various financial means. The person on top of the tax-collection pyramid (in this juncture, the dragoman) would contract a loan to immediately pay the amount on behalf of the community, thus gaining the right to collect it; this would include the interest, administrative costs, as well as a profit margin.[32] The direct and indirect engagement of the island with the military and provisioning operations in the eastern Mediterranean meant not only that the way it was perceived by Istanbul was transformed, but also that this shift also transformed the balances of the political economy on the ground, greatly enhancing the position of individuals who could efficiently and effectively mobilize monetary resources and key commodities for the needs of the imperial army and its allies.

Another incident indicates the snowballing effect of minor issues in the context of such "major" events. Upon Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the Ottoman state responded by shutting down all French consulates throughout the empire. A further retributory action against the French invasion of Egypt was to confiscate the property of local consular personnel, which, by virtue of the capitulations, enjoyed various legal and fiscal prerogatives as "protected" employees of foreign diplomatic missions. Cyprus was no exception. Among those employed by the French consulate and thus had these privileges revoked and had their

**30** 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 11 Cemaziülevvel 1197/14 April 1783, C.AS. 42357, BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 1 Receb 1221/14 September 1806, C.BH. 8026, BOA; 23 Safer 1192/23 March 1778, C.BH. 10754, BOA; 7 Ramazan 1222/8 November 1807, C.ML. 4354, BOA.

**31** Y. Spyropoulos, *Othomaniki Dioikisi kai Koinonia stin Proepanastatiki Dytiki Kriti: Archeiakes Martyries, 1817–1819*, Rethymo: G.A.K. – Arheia N. Rethimnis, 2015, pp. 79–81.

**32** Hadjikyriacou, "The Province Goes to the Center", p. 243.

property confiscated was a certain Sarkis. An Armenian merchant, Sarkis came from a family with a long tradition of employment as consular staff for various European countries. Such individuals provided their deep knowledge of local commercial and financial networks, and they were indispensable in providing support to the merchants under the consulate's jurisdiction.

Upon the closing of the French consulate, the British acted quickly in an almost headhunting fashion to recruit Sarkis. They asked for his appointment by the Ottoman state to their consulate as well as for the cancellation of the confiscation of his property. The Ottomans flatly refused the request. Despite several requests and the interference of none other than the British ambassador to Istanbul, Lord Elgin, the Ottomans continued to find the request absurd. The situation escalated when the Ottoman ambassador to London was summoned and was made to understand in very clear terms that the denial of this request would affect bilateral relations – this was a time when the two empires were allies in the eastern Mediterranean front of the Napoleonic Wars.[33] One can imagine Sultan Selim III unwillingly authorizing the appointment by annotating the report with his rescript: "let it be permitted".[34]

Clearly, the issue was blown out of proportion. Nonetheless, Sarkis represented an important asset for the British: as a seasoned merchant, and by all accounts one of the most successful ones on the island, he provided access to the cash crops of the island within the highly competitive market of the foreign consulates. This was a time when French domination of eastern Mediterranean was receding and indeed received a powerful blow with the shutting down of all consulates. The British were quick in securing the know-how and connections of someone who could quickly and efficiently channel rural production to the port warehouses. Suffice to say, Sarkis allegedly kept 30,000 *kile*s (769.68–923.62 metric tonnes) of grain in his own warehouses. That means that a single merchant kept the equivalent of three-quarters of the total amount of grain requisitioned from the whole island by the Ottoman military in 1800.[35]

In this context, we can identify two overlapping, if distinct, processes. The first one concerns the repositioning of Cyprus in the Ottoman imperial vision and in the regional geopolitical order of the eastern Mediterranean. For the duration of this juncture, Cyprus was no longer just any other province of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman bureaucracy and military needed to pay attention to the island, as it suddenly, if only temporarily, became a valuable asset. This

**33** A. Hadjikyriacou, "Local Intermediaries and Insular Space in Late Eighteenth-Century Cyprus", *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014), pp. 427–456.

**34** Undated, HAT 15333, BOA.

**35** 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA.

process is directly related to Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. However, this repositioning also entailed another, broader process: the respatialization of Cypriot insularity. The political economy of the island underwent profound changes with a redistribution of wealth and power at the local level. While the original impetus came from the contingencies of warfare and international crisis, its effects and outcomes had much broader implications. During this period, individuals with privileged access to production and the rural surplus were able to manipulate and concentrate production in unprecedented ways – for example, by causing a famine and a chain of revolts. The outcome was the transformation of the experience of space with a much broader variety of historical actors both from above and below.

## Respatialization: A Moment, a Process, or Both?

If Cypriot insularity went through a respatialization during the Napoleonic Wars in the Mediterranean, how unique was this respatialization? Was it an isolated incident, or was it part of a larger process with preceding and subsequent continuities?

The sudden, if short-lived, imperial geopolitical attention was not unprecedented. Another instance when similar developments and shifts occurred was in 1770–1774, when a Russian naval expedition force entered the Mediterranean via Gibraltar.[36] Russian forces occupied several Aegean islands and founded the short-lived Republic of the Archipelago as a Russian protectorate; invaded the Peloponnese and lent support to a local revolt; provoked another revolt in Crete, which they failed to support despite their promises; sensationally destroyed the Ottoman fleet in the Battle of Çeşme (1770), and briefly occupied Beirut.[37] Russian presence in the Mediterranean was nothing short of a cataclysmic development, shattering many centuries-old certainties and leaving behind a historiographically underappreciated legacy, most notably as far as the Greek

**36** T.W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768–1913*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015, pp. 6–11.

**37** B.L. Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768–1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire*, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 150–160, 178–181; E.B. Smilyanskaya, "Russian Warriors in the Land of Miltiades and Themistocles: The Colonial Ambitions of Catherine the Great in the Mediterranean", Basic Research Program Working Papers 55 (2014), https://www.hse.ru/data/2014/05/13/1321487431/55HUM2014.pdf (accessed 22 November 2018); W. Persen, "The Russian Occupations of Beirut, 1772–74", *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society* 42 (1955) 3–4, pp. 275–286.

Revolution (1821–1829) was concerned. While Russian efforts lacked consistency and clear-cut planning, they nonetheless brought some tangible results. The island of Poros became the centre of operations, where the Russians built a naval base, hardtack biscuit-baking ovens, and warehouses. Interestingly, they managed to secure the use of the base after the end of the war during the negotiations. If short-lived and largely a failure, the experiment of the Republic of the Archipelago remains a radical and unprecedented endeavour.

To a large extent, most of the phenomena observed in Cyprus during the Napoleonic interlude in Egypt are mirrored here as well. However, of the two incidents, it was the former that was novel. Ottoman panic about the state of defences, fortifications, and equipment in Cyprus (or any Mediterranean coastal region) is vividly expressed in relevant documentation. This is also the first time that Ottoman anxiety over the safety of the Cypriot coastline appears as a real issue.[38] In another episode, almost 40,000 kg of gunpowder that was apparently to be safely kept in the port citadel of Famagusta since the conquest of 1571 had gone missing, allegedly sold by a governor a few years earlier.[39] This amount was almost half the annual production of the Istanbul gunpowder works during that period.[40] Finally, this is also the first time that I have identified documentation on Cyprus as a supplier of grain and hardtack biscuit for the Ottoman military and naval forces since 1606.[41] This time, deliveries were made not only to

**38** 5 Şevval 1182/12 February 1769, C.AS. 38547, BOA; 29 Rebiʿülevvel 1184/23 July 1770, C.AS. 2732, BOA.

**39** 5 Şevval 1182/12 February 1769, C.AS. 38547, BOA; M. De Vezin, "De Vezin", in: C. Delaval Cobham (ed.) *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908, p. 369.

**40** G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 135.

**41** 9 Cemaziülevvel 1205/14 January 1791, C.BH. 5053, BOA; 19 Rebiʿülahir 1206/16 December 1791, C.BH. 6298, BOA; 25 Zilhicce 1224/31 January 1810, C.BH. 6391, BOA; 1 Receb 1221/14 September 1806, C.BH. 8026, BOA; 23 Safer 1192/23 March 1778, C.BH. 10754, BOA; 19 Cemaziülevvel 1184/10 September 1770, C.BH. 12562, BOA; 10 Şevval 1227/19 August 1812, C. AS. 591, BOA; 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA; 7 Rebiʿülevvel 1226/ 11 April 1811, C. AS. 4129, BOA; 3 Ramazan 1226/21 September 1811, C.AS. 46709, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 14 Şevval 1187/29 December 1773, C.AS. 38775, BOA; 7 Ramazan 1215/22 January 1801, BOA; 11 Cemaziülevvel 1197/14 April 1783, C.AS. 42357, C.AS. 42357, BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 11 Receb 1214/9 December 1799, C.AS. 47574, BOA; undated, C.ML. 24286, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, HAT. 1731, BOA; 11 Şevval 1217/4 February 1803, HAT 3301, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, HAT 14824, BOA; c. 1214/1799–1800, HAT 15583, BOA; c. 1238/1822–23, HAT. 16556, BOA; c. 1248/1832–33, HAT. 19932, BOA; c. 1248/1832–33, HAT. 20018, BOA; 13 Şevval 1247/16 March 1832, HAT. 20022 N, BOA; c. 1248/1832–33, HAT. 20145, BOA; 9 Cemaziyelahir 1248/3 November 1832, HAT. 20145 A, BOA; 3 Safer 1238/

nearby ports as at the turn of the seventeenth century, but as far away as the pier of İsakçı on the Danube, the main theatre of hostilities.[42] The irony of Cyprus dispatching grain to the empire's granary is meaningful in view of the fact that pressure on the Danubian principalities forced the Ottomans to look elsewhere for their supplies. The same happened with the urban provisioning of Istanbul. Cyprus was called to send grain or flour to the capital, although not as frequently as in the case of military provisions.[43]

Such contributions were not insignificant, even by empire-wide standards. For example, in 1791 almost 1,130 metric tonnes of hardtack biscuit were required from Cyprus. This was actually the annual amount required from the Peloponnese for the provisioning of the joint Russian-Ottoman fleet operating in the Ionian islands in 1798–1800, and 8.5 per cent of the total requirements of the empire as a whole in 1798/99.[44]

Finally, just like at the turn of the nineteenth century, war and increased demand for grain from Europe provided ample opportunities for profit for those able to control, manipulate, and concentrate production. Hacı Abdülbaki Ağa, an infamous governor of the island, regularly exported grain despite Ottoman prohibitions, accumulating a perhaps unprecedented degree of wealth and power by the end of the 1770s. After being found guilty of various crimes and of oppression of Cypriot subjects of the sultan, the Imperial Council figured that over a period of nine years he had accumulated a personal fortune of 8 million Ottoman kuruş; this was more than half the annual Ottoman revenue for 1785/86.[45]

Many of the above observations are also true of a subsequent period, namely the 1830s. In another such geostrategic contingency, Muhammed Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, had posed a direct military threat to the Ottoman

20 October 1822, HAT. 20442–20442 B; HAT. 38776 G, BOA; c. 1237/1821–22, HAT. 39064 İ, BOA; 17 Safer 1238/3 November 1822, HAT. 40323 J, BOA; 23 Rebiʿülahir 1237/17 January 1822, HAT. 40547 A, BOA; 23 Receb 1243/9 February 1828, HAT. 44208, BOA; 25 Safer 1229/16 February 1814, HAT. 47823 E, BOA.

**42** 14 Şevval 1187/29 December 1773, C.AS. 38775, BOA.

**43** 15 Şaʿban 1183/14 December 1769, C.BH. 9206, BOA; 22 Şaʿban 1233/27 June 1818, C.ML. 56, BOA; 21 Rebiʿülahir 1204/8 January 1790, C.ML. 12864, BOA; 27 Safer 1183/2 July 1769, C.ML. 31698, BOA; c. 1225/1810–11, HAT. 17729, BOA; c. 1238/1822–23, C.ML. 30294, BOA; c. 1204/1789–90, C.ML. 56006, BOA.

**44** 19 Rebiʿülahir 1206/16 December 1791, C.BH. 6298, BOA; K. Sakul, "An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant", PhD dissertation, Georgetown University, 2009, pp. 291–292.

**45** Hadjikyriacou, "Local intermediaries", p. 439.

Empire and was almost able to reach Istanbul after conquering Syria and parts of Anatolia. In that instance, another flood of military and logistical documentation was produced directly relevant to Cyprus. From Egypt's point of view, the value of Cyprus was also somewhat different to that of the Ottomans. Muhammed Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, stressed in a letter the need to bring Cyprus under Egypt's control as a timber-rich region in order to ensure the construction of a strong fleet.[46] Indeed, the island was ruled by Muhammed Ali for a while.

## Conclusion

The present chapter examined the shifting perceptions of Cypriot insularity during the Age of Revolutions. The premise of the chapter in examining insularity is that the spatiality of sea-girt realms – or any other geographical category for that matter – is neither obvious nor self-explanatory. Further, it changes in time and context. Historicizing insularity along those lines, the chapter contends that that such spatial categories do not simply concern ideas about space; instead, the intellectual factors should be seen in dialogue with material ones – economic, social, and environmental. The chapter proceeded to examine Cyprus in the Ottoman early modern *longue durée*, demonstrating how the island was little more than a backwater, subsumed by the continental landmass that surrounded it: Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt. It had no outstanding value for the empire at large, and it was at best an average province for most of the period that it was under Ottoman rule.

Taking the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt as a possible manifestation of the moment of respatialization – which the volume at hand examines – the chapter discussed certain major shifts in the attitude of Istanbul towards Cyprus and what its insularity meant in the particular juncture. In the short term, these shifts were in sharp contrast to the normal state of affairs in preceding centuries. This was not a top-down relationship, nor did it exclusively concern issues of geostrategic importance. The political economy of insularity underwent certain qualitative transformations, building upon existing relations of power, the balance of which greatly shifted by the new opportunities offered by the military crisis at the turn of the nineteenth century. In turn, these

**46** A. Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 166–167.

changes had left a significant impact upon Cypriot society and economy for the decades to come.

Did this respatialization have an obvious value? Paul Cheney has recently argued against "modeling the Age of Revolutions in terms of the progressive effects of intellectual, economic, or social connectivity caused by globalization".[47] In this spirit, I would heed the critical appraisal of these historical processes. In addition, important though it may have been, the Napoleonic respatialization of Cypriot insularity was not a unique moment. It has striking parallels with a previous naval expedition to the Ottoman Mediterranean almost three decades earlier by the Russians. In more ways than one, the experience of the 1770s was replicated between 1798 and 1802 and had similar effects of the island. The parallels between the two expeditions do not end in the case of Cyprus. In fact, they extend far beyond its shores. For example, Russian presence in the Aegean had certain overtones to the subsequent scientific pretensions of the French occupation of Egypt – at least at the level of intentions. Thus, cartography was extensively employed by the Russians.[48] On a different level, the Russian adventure in the Mediterranean facilitated the articulation of alternative spatio-political visions. In the Peloponnese, where a Russian-backed revolt had taken place, Christian and Muslim notables called themselves "Peloponnesian Confederates" and envisioned a state entity for their "shared *patrie*" that would be under French protection.[49] This was in 1808, almost three decades after the bloody suppression of the Christian revolt instigated by the Russian expedition in the Mediterranean.

These considerations force a rethinking of familiar, if persistent questions of continuity and change. The respatialization discussed here was more of a process than a moment, or rather, a process composed of three specific moments: the 1770s, the turn of the nineteenth century, and the 1830s. In turn, these continuities pose the question of whether the Age of Revolutions was an exclusively Western European–driven process. To add respatialization to the

**47** Cheney, "The French Revolution", p. 6.

**48** E. Zei, "Theory and Politics of Micro-insularities in Modern Times: The Archipelago of the Aegean", unpublished paper presented at the conference, "Insularities Connected: Bridging Seascapes, from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean and Beyond", Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Foundation for Research and Technology, Hellas, 10–12 June 2016.

**49** K. Şakul, "The Ottoman Peloponnese before the Greek Revolution: 'A Republic of *Ayan, Hakim*, and *Kocabaşı*' in 'the Sea of Humans and Valley of Castles'", in: A. Hadjikyriacou (ed.), *Islands of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 121–145.

list of effects that the Age of Revolutions had is one thing. To try to understand respatialization as a broader, multicausal historical process is quite another. To do so, in the case of the respatialization of Cypriot insularity, one needs to go back to 1770 and then fast-forward to the 1830s in order to reconsider the Age of Revolutions and its manifestation in the eastern Mediterranean.

# Part III: **The New Spatial Organization of Societies**

Alan Forrest

# 9 The Reorganization of Administrative Space in France and its Colonies

Reorganizing the structures of local government and justice were among the early priorities of the French Revolution: even as the electoral assemblies were established in 1789, the decree that called them into existence spoke of future restructuring to come. Everyone seemed agreed that the somewhat haphazard administrative spaces that had served the Ancien Régime required reform, the unequal and often overlapping jurisdictions of provinces and royal governorships, of *sénéchaussées* and *bailliages*, each in its own way reflecting royal and provincial rights, jurisdictions, and privileges – the very privileges that the revolutionaries were set on abolishing. Besides, their unequal size and powers meant that French men and women, the new citizens whom the revolutionaries set out to create, were treated very differently in different parts of the country. Many had little or no direct access to local government or to the courts. Others faced long and gruelling journeys to faraway towns if they wanted to plead their case before a judge, journeys that they would pay for in lost wages and days' labour on the farm. In a society committed to ideals of liberty and equality, the maintenance of the existing structures seemed untenable, so that, for ideological reasons if for no other, reorganizing local government and justice was one of their priorities from the start. It was a concern raised in the *cahiers de doléances* (registers of grievances), and it had been aired in the *Encyclopédie*.[1]

But, of course, these citizens were not just units of governance to be moved around like pieces on a chessboard: the revolutionaries had not yet come to think of the French people, as Napoleon Bonaparte would subsequently do, as people whose principal function was to be administered by the state. They were often long-established in their local communities and were accustomed to the administrative ways of the old order. They travelled on fixed days to markets in nearby towns, they paid dues to their *seigneur* (lord) and taxes to the king, and a majority

1 M.-V. Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements: La représentation du territoire français à la fin du 18^e^ siècle*, Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1989, p. 26.

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among them respected the festivals and holy days of the Church. They thought of themselves as French, of course, but for most of them that was only one of their multiple identities. They were also Bretons or Burgundians, provinces that were rich in heritage and that commanded a proportion of their loyalty. They might also have defined themselves by language or dialect, by estate, or by religion. Not all, of course, were Catholic, but for those who were, especially in deeply religious areas, that, too, was a form of identity and one that might distinguish them from others. And territorially, as we know from the writings of soldiers when they were called far from their native town or village, they still had their roots in their *petit pays*, their immediate locality, often an area of a few villages or parishes that formed a natural unit in their perception and defined the spatial framework of their daily lives.[2] A great deal of local autarky still survived. When it came to their loyalties and their sense of who they were, it was these multiple experiences that often defined them, and in many parts of peasant France, in particular, they could make people deeply traditionalist and eager to hold on to their old ways.[3] If the revolutionaries were to reorganize the polity, even in France itself, they would have to be aware of local traditions and proceed with a certain caution and pragmatism. And it is clear, from the opening exchanges on the division of the territory in the National Assembly in November 1789, that some at least among the deputies were. They knew that their major task was to divide up the old provinces, and they recognized that provincial loyalties often ran deep. This would be more than an exercise in administrative logic. It would be an attempt to reshape France and, in the process, to change the assumptions of the people who lived there. Territory would become a resource both for state development and for the spread of revolutionary ideology.[4]

Of course, those who spoke out for the retention of the old provinces were often driven by an innate political conservatism, showing a reluctance to submit to centralism or to a unifying state ideology. Some noted the inconvenience that would result from new secular authorities that cut across established parish structures and objected that, in the words of the deeply conservative comte d'Antraigues, "the division into departments will cut across Church dioceses",

**2** X. de Planhol, *An Historical Geography of France*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 203–206.

**3** E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1976, esp. pp. 41–49. Weber has been criticized, rightly, for basing his analysis on some of the most backward parts of France, but in the first half of the nineteenth century many of his observations ring true.

**4** C.S. Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth and Belonging since 1500*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016, p. 2.

leaving them split and dysfunctional.[5] More generally, they feared that any new system would prove disruptive to honoured traditions and established customs. And a system that claimed to be founded in logic and mathematical principle, like the one that Sieyès and Thouret brought before the National Assembly, filled some with disbelief. What was to be sacrificed in the name of this supposed logic? How could a territoriality be justified when so many towns were dependent for their prosperity on the existing, somewhat haphazard administrative structures that had grown, with no apparent logic, over the centuries, and when peasant life was defined by its habits and customs, its fairs and markets? Change would necessarily cause casualties, bankruptcies, and distress. Thouret's plan might appear disinterested and technocratic, with its claims to be founded in science and the cadastre; but how far was there a place for cold mathematical solutions to an issue that lay at the heart of local life and culture? Those who were opposed to Thouret's proposal tended to take refuge in ideas of what was natural, claiming that the existing distribution of urban authorities owed more to "nature" and physical features – valleys, rivers and mountain ranges – than to any false logic that might be imposed by Paris in the name of supposed equality.[6] They doubted whether these could be discarded without dehumanizing the map of France.

Reform of this kind could not be achieved without creating victims. As Ted Margadant reminds us, there was a "complicated institutional heritage" that had "generated vested interests in hundreds of towns that served as central places for the law courts, fiscal agencies, bishoprics and other jurisdictions of the old regime", all of which, he adds, "can best be understood as expressions of urban social power".[7] Defenders of the status quo were not acting out of conservatism alone. They were talking for their constituents, for existing office holders, and for entrenched urban interests. And they were expressing what they recognized as a deep-rooted provincial sentiment, which had a profound emotional appeal that could not be simply ignored or swept away with disdain. How, asked the Baron de Jessé on 19 October, did they propose to overcome the sentiment that attaches the inhabitant of a province not just to the land but to the name of that land?[8] Why should they antagonize local people unnecessarily when compromise could so easily be achieved?

**5** Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements*, p. 49.
**6** Ibid., p. 42.
**7** T.W. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 18.
**8** Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements*, p. 48.

But that was not, of course, the revolutionaries' way, and, in the same spirit in which they reformed the system of weights and measures, changed the currency, and scrapped the Gregorian calendar, all in the name of rationalization, so they took a radical approach to reorganizing space, by sweeping away all the existing jurisdictions and establishing units of local government and justice that they deemed more in accord with the principles of the French Revolution and of a fundamental rationalism. The principles underlying the reform are well known: the country was to be divided, as nearly as was possible, into equal administrative units, equal both in geographical area and in population; and the main administrative town should be as centrally placed as possible so as to make it accessible to the largest possible number of people. Indeed, access was to be a primary consideration, so that the citizenry would not be unduly inconvenienced when they had dealings with the representatives of the state: this concern was repeated by both the urban elites across France and the deputies to the National Assembly in Paris.[9] For this reason, the units of government should not be too large or the principal towns too distant from the people they administered. But how many of these units – soon to be known as *départements* (departments) – would France need to cover the entire territory in an equitable manner? The decree of 22 December 1789, which first laid out the scheme, talked rather imprecisely of between 75 and 85 departments, but the detail remained to be worked out: for that to be done satisfactorily, everything could not be decided centrally. The deputies would have to consult local people, to find out more about their habits and movements. The principle, however, was clearly accepted: there would be some 80 departments, each divided into a number of districts (the exact number was to be determined by local needs), as well as, at the most local level, cantons and communes.[10] In this way, the deputies believed, every French man or woman would be able to access the administrative and juridical services he or she might require. Privilege was seen to have been abolished, while the new system that was proposed had a pleasing Cartesian logic. Everyone would have a place in the administrative system, and the local authorities, in their regular reports to one another, would both bring problems to the attention of the level above them (and eventually to the ministries in Paris) and inform ordinary people in the towns and villages of their rights and obligations under the law. The deputies were satisfied with their work: there was a certain balance and elegance to it all.

**9** B. Lepetit, *The Pre-Industrial Urban System: France, 1740–1840*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 210–211.

**10** Assemblée Nationale, decree of 22 December 1789.

For the revolutionaries there was also a democratic aspect to these reforms. Having rid France of units of governance that smacked of Ancien Régime privilege, the men of 1789 wanted to ensure that the new authorities would be answerable to the people they administered. So they prescribed a system of elections at every level of government, to the departmental and district assemblies, municipal councils, and even courts and school boards. But not all elections were direct, nor did they necessarily place real power in the hands of the people. Only municipal personnel and justices of the peace were directly elected; for elections of deputies to the National Assembly and of departmental and district administrators, a system of electoral colleges was introduced, with second-degree electors chosen by primary assemblies at the canton level; it was at this very local level that the majority of French citizens were invited to cast their vote.[11] The constant resort to voting to renew local administrations soon lost much of its appeal, however, as the declining participation figures across the revolutionary period demonstrate. Those chosen tended to be drawn from the same wealthy elite throughout the revolutionary decade. With the passage of time, moreover, the government's concern for democratic answerability dimmed, until under Napoleon the principle was largely abandoned. Local government became answerable upwards, to Paris and the minister of the interior, while local officials, from mayors to prefects, would be appointed rather than elected. It was a very Napoleonic solution to the question of where authority should lie and how provincial France should be governed.

But once the general principles had been established, the hard work of dividing the territory into the new administrative units still remained to be done, and, to their credit, the deputies did not propose to impose a new centralist structure without first testing public opinion. Exactly how many departments should there be, and how many districts did each deserve? Which cities should be given the key administrative functions; which were rewarded with colleges and tribunals? And, given that every town of any size believed that its claims should be paramount, how were the claims of one town to be balanced against those of its rivals? What were the criteria for granting such distinctions? These were not matters that the Committee of the Constitution felt itself adequately briefed to answer, and it therefore, quite sensibly, set up a subcommittee, the Committee of Division, whose task it was to collect the necessary intelligence from people on the ground and to propose a division of the territory that would meet the requirements of the Constituent Assembly. Having sought opinions

**11** M. Crook, *Elections in the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 158.

from all around the country and listened to petitions from supplicant towns and cities, the Committee of Division reported back to the deputies early in the following spring, and the new division of the territory was decreed on 26 February 1790. It had been a huge undertaking. The number of departments was now fixed at 83, and each had between 3 and 9 districts; there were over 44,000 communes. There would be elections, too, at every level: elected mayors and municipal councils, and elected bodies to run the districts and departments. In accordance with the principle still religiously observed in the early months of the French Revolution, it was important to establish clear lines of answerability, down to the electors as much as up to the central government – and the revolution, unlike Napoleon's empire that followed, placed great value on answerability and on election. A new administrative map had been drawn, one that would serve as a basis for the different levels of local government and justice across more than two centuries.[12] Within a few months, elections had been held, the new authorities put in place, and a new era in French governance launched. Along with the revolutionary calendar, it was perhaps the most important transformative step in bringing the revolution into people's everyday lives. Centuries of tradition had been cast aside and, in Michel Vovelle's phrase, both space and time had been "reconstructed" anew.[13]

Some might question, of course, the degree to which the former provincial identities were really allowed to die. Indeed, there was a striking similarity between the old administrative map of France and the new. The Committee of Division would usually start from the existing provinces, and work from there, rather than bring parts of former provinces together in entirely new units. Just how many units depended on a province's land area and population. Thus Languedoc was to be divided into seven departments, Brittany into five, and Burgundy into three so that, collectively, they still maintained something of their old provincial identity. Some of the old provinces had, of course, been notably small, and they would generally be left as a single department, named after a local river, coastline, or mountain range that would strip it of all seigneurial associations. Thus the Périgord simply became the new department of the Dordogne, the Quercy was transformed into the Lot, the Roussillon into the Pyrénées-orientales. Where the old territorial divisions were really small, and

**12** Assemblée Nationale, decree of 26 February 1790.

**13** M. Vovelle, "L'espace et le temps reconstruits", in: Collectif, *L'espace et le temps reconstruits: La Révolution française, une révolution des mentalités et des cultures?*, Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1990, pp. 381–386.

some of the provinces were tiny, they might usefully be amalgamated to form a single territorial unit on the same scale as its neighbours. In this way, the Béarn and the Basque country were united as the Basses-Pyrénées, the Bresse and the Bugey became the Ain, and the independent provinces of Aunis and Saintonge were merged into the Charente-inférieure.[14] A new identity might have been created, but the people of the region still shared the same customs and the same dialect. In this way, it was hoped that the new departments could be more than administrations, inspiring a feeling of local loyalty and belonging in their inhabitants. And to a degree this can be shown to have worked. A younger generation came to see their department as part of their identity, and during the Napoleonic Wars we find that young conscripts away from home for the first time were not afraid to declare their loyalty to their department or to describe it as their country, their *pays*. In their letters home they expressed pleasure at stumbling on fellow soldiers from their home department. So, for instance, when his unit was ordered to Moscow in 1812, François Bourbier wrote that he found consolation in the company of others from the Oise, boys like himself, from the villages around Beauvais.[15] Everyone could claim to belong to a department; it was an affiliation that was attached to everyone, and over time, with the demise of provinces and parishes and seigneuries, it would become an accepted descriptor, even a source of shared pride.

That is not to say that the process was completed without difficulty, or without friction, for what was presented to the National Assembly as the outcome of scientific debate was often shaped by months of wrangling between rival communities and those who spoke in their name. Where there were to be winners and losers, it was important to have a powerful political voice in Paris, someone who could silence dissident voices. For it was not always as easy to establish an agreed structure as it was in Brittany or Burgundy, where the old provincial lines were clear. What, for instance, of the south-west, where even the Committee of Division was reluctant to lay down the number of departments that should be created? Leaving these decisions to local people merely embittered the arguments between them, especially as Bertrand Barère, one of the most committed defenders of local interests, was set upon creating a department for his home town of Tarbes, a town of only 6,000 people on the

**14** A. Forrest, "Le découpage administratif de la France révolutionnaire", in: Centre Méridional d'Histoire (ed.), *L'espace et le temps reconstruits: La Révolution française, une révolution des mentalités et des cultures?*, pp. 3–12.

**15** A. Forrest, *Napoleon's Men: The Soldiers of the Revolution and Empire*, London: Hambledon and London, 2002, p. 137.

eve of the French Revolution. It was not an obvious choice, especially given its relative isolation and the lack of any major roads across the Pyrenees into Spain, but once a department of the Hautes-Pyrénées had been approved, governing a slightly artificial territory carved out of the surrounding countryside, other decisions followed, including the creation of a much-contested department in the Landes. These decisions are not to be explained by mathematical accuracy and had little enough to do with administrative logic. It was simply that Barère, already a formidable political powerbroker, was determined to win. As he himself would admit when he looked back on the moment in 1834, the departmental administration "was only obtained after fighting off the resistance and the ambitions of the surrounding provinces, all envious of such a rich and beautiful territory".[16]

The petitions and protests that form the archive of the Committee of Division show quite conclusively that the same pattern was repeated all over France, as towns and cities, seeing an opportunity for self-advancement or fearing the jealousy of their neighbours, fought like cat and dog over every administrative office.[17] They conferred status, they brought outsiders into their communities to transact business, and they kept hotels and shops open through their custom. And so the outcome was important. Civic leaders knew that, in many cases, their future prosperity depended on it, as towns that lost out in this auction of public offices might face decades of relative decline. The administrative and judicial system that came into being in the French Revolution, and which was revised under the empire, produced a new hierarchy of towns and cities that would leave its mark on future growth and prosperity. Those small towns that missed out on courts, schools, or other administrative functions risked seeing their populations decline across the nineteenth century; some carried on their fight for recognition well into the Third Republic.[18]

But, we may ask, how much respatialization really took place, especially at the urban level? Let us assume, with Bernard Lepetit, that where the

**16** J.-B. Laffon and J.-F. Soulet, *Histoire de Tarbes*, Roanne: Editions Horvath, 1982, pp. 185–186; J.F. le Nail and J.-F. Soulet (eds.), *Bigorre et Quatre-Vallées*, Pau: Société Nouvelle d'Editions Régionales et de Diffusion, vol. 1, 1981, p. 36.

**17** Archives Nationales (AN), series D-IV bis is the major source for studying the division of the territory in 1789–1790. It contains the papers of the Constitutional Committee of the National Assembly and the Committee of Division of the Legislative Assembly and the Convention. Letters from towns and cities requesting departments and districts, classified by department, can be found in D-IV bis 3–18; disputes between towns over districts, some dragging on until 1795, are in D-IV bis 56–76.

**18** Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution*, pp. 440–441.

established centres prevailed, it meant that the existing order was perpetuated, whereas a victory for the lesser towns implied far-reaching changes. He finds that in 54 departments – around two-thirds of the total – the *chef-lieu* (centre of administration) went to the town that already had administrative responsibilities in the Ancien Régime, whereas, of the new administrative centres chosen, 3 went to a town better-placed geographically within the department, 6 to the town that performed most functions (and was therefore of greatest value to the communities of its agricultural hinterland), while in 12 the choice of *chef-lieu* might appear somewhat random. These figures suggest that the Committee of Division was quite cautious, conservative even, in its reluctance to change town-country relations where existing structures offered apparent stability. In others, it was clear that there was no solution that satisfied local people and that the choice of departmental and district *chefs-lieux* was so divisive that it was better deferred. So in half of the new departments created in February 1790, no town was designated as the administrative capital as none could be agreed upon. In 17 departments, they voted to have several rival towns taking on the functions of *chef-lieu* in turn, often – though not always – because there was no obvious central point and no town was obviously pre-eminent (predominantly rural departments like the Ardèche and Dordogne are easier to explain here than departments like the Gard and Hérault, where the claims of Nîmes and Montpellier might seem to have been self-evident). The solution of an alternating administrative centre was not, of course, intended to be permanent; it was a costly and cumbersome idea, and it was quickly abandoned. But two conclusions can be drawn from these hesitations and compromises. The Committee of Division was indeed influenced by the endless lobbying to which it was subjected. And the arguments of rural communities, cut off by poor communications, were often acceded to.[19]

In its broad outlines, the map of departments that was established during the French Revolution continues to function today, which is a credit to the work of the original Committee of Division and the care they took to consult with local people.[20] But the process of reconstructing administrative and judicial space was a complex one, and it was not completed in 1790. That

**19** Lepetit, *The Pre-Industrial Urban System*, pp. 212–213.

**20** To the original number of 83, 3 were added during the French Revolution and French Empire: the Vaucluse was added after the annexation of the Comtat-Venaissin in 1791; the Loire was created out of the Rhône-et-Loire in 1793 to punish Lyon for its "treasonable" activity during the Federalist Revolt in 1793; and Napoleon created a new department of the Tarn-et-Garonne in 1808 from territory previously divided between the Lot, Lot-et-Garonne, Gers, Aveyron, and Haute-Garonne. Avignon, Montbrison, and Montauban became *chefs-lieux*.

distinction fell to Napoleon Bonaparte and his advisors in the Conseil d'État (Council of State), which in 1800 revised the structure of French local government to incorporate prefects and subprefects in every department with the aim of creating a more centralized and hierarchical structure. Prefects were not elected: they were appointed by Napoleon Bonaparte and were brought in from another region, or another department of state, to ensure that they would not be too beholden to local interests. And where they failed to carry out his will, they were subject to instant recall. As the specialist on French local government Brian Chapman expresses it, the prefect's job was "to perform the First Consul's will; when no orders were given, he was to interpret by his own sense of the nation's interests what Napoleon would wish in the circumstances".[21] Public opinion was to be closely scrutinized and any show of dissent noted, to which the government's response was often brutal. Prefects could call up units of the National Guard, or they could ask for military reinforcements to be sent from Paris, when they were faced with rioting and assaults on the prefectures, as happened in Caen in 1812 following a grain riot.[22] What had been an exercise in democracy in the early months of the French Revolution had been converted into a highly centralist model of local governance.

The Consulate's decrees completed the division of the territory that Sieyès and Thouret had begun, replacing the revolutionary districts with *arrondissements*, each to be administered by a subprefect, reorganizing the courts and tribunals to restore a hierarchy of civil law courts and bringing courts and administrative offices together in the same towns and cities. As Ted Margadant rightly emphasizes, the decisions taken in 1800 may have been altered marginally over the years, making allowance in some cases for the growth of new industrial towns or the decline of agricultural market towns (as with the coal and iron town of Saint-Etienne, which replaced Montbrison as *chef-lieu* of the Loire in 1855). Wars resulted in new departments in Nice and Savoy. But otherwise there would be few changes before the particular problems of the Paris Basin were recognized in 1960 with the creation of five new departments in the Parisian suburbs. In most respects, however, even in the face of pressure from other towns for departments or for a share of the administrative spoils, the territorial settlement that was established under the Consulate would endure.[23]

Bonaparte would go even further with his policy of standardization, when in 1802, by the terms of the Concordat, he integrated the administration of the

**21** B. Chapman, *The Prefects and Provincial France*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1955, p. 17.
**22** P. Coftier and P. Dartiguenave, *Révolte à Caen 1812*, Cabourg: Cahiers du Temps, 1999.
**23** Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution*, p. 368.

Catholic Church with the structures he had approved for secular administration.[24] Henceforth the rules of the cadastre were to be applied to Church administration, too, with the previous bishoprics – many of them quite tiny in terms of geographical area – abolished and new bishoprics created that corresponded to the departmental structure. It seemed rational in a world where the Catholic Church was increasingly treated as a department of state and where bishops would instruct their clergy to preach that civil disobedience was sinful or that defying the conscription law incurred the loss of one's eternal soul. But this was entirely in line with Napoleon's vision of local government, where the department, the district or *arrondissement*, and at the most local level the commune, were primarily administrative divisions, whose main purpose was to regulate the population and carry out the government's will. It was by this criterion that local people would judge them, and in some areas they would be found wanting or would be deemed too intrusive, too concerned to interfere in their autonomy.

Not all aspects of local life were effectively regulated and not all administrative tasks fell neatly into the new administrative order; and where they did not, the districts and municipal authorities risked losing much of their relevance. Or again, where the new authorities presumed to interfere with local ways and customs, they risked being defied. Poaching and smuggling as well as gleaning and forest laws, these were areas where local government had seldom interfered in the past, and many peasants felt themselves to have been freed from any form of control or policing during the outbreaks of anti-seigneurial violence that marked 1790 and 1791 in many areas of the country. Local people did not expect to be challenged by mayors and district officials if they entered communal forests to shoot rabbits or pick up firewood, and when they were accosted or arrested, trouble could flare. In part, the problem lay with the new administrative boundaries and the fact that, though they had been fixed with an impeccable Cartesian logic when deputies in Paris looked down at the map they were creating, they seldom took account of the woods, copses, and forests that sprawled across the French countryside. They seldom fitted easily into rigid administrative borders or corresponded to areas of policing, and as such they offered welcome relief to those wishing to slip between administrations to avoid the attention of the authorities in pursuit of game or poaching trout. For urban administrators unfamiliar with the network of smugglers' tracks and sheep runs that peppered the French countryside, they proved

**24** For a detailed discussion of the Concordat and its implications for the Catholic Church and clergy, see R.J. Dean, *L'église constitutionnelle, Napoléon et le Concordat de 1801*, Paris: R. J. Dean, 2004.

a source of continual conflict and frustration as well as a challenge to their own authority and legitimacy.

The management and administration of France's forests is a good illustration, if such were needed, of the centralist agenda of the urban elites who oversaw the reform of local government. They were concerned with abstract principles above local customs, and to rid the countryside of the hated officers of the Eaux et Forêts, the target of anger and resentment in many parts of France, they were eager to pass responsibility for the upkeep of forests and the execution of forest laws to local people. From 1789, as Kieko Matteson demonstrates, the authority of the old forest guards was undermined, and the National Assembly's rather vacuous injunctions to respect the law often went unheeded, as peasants rushed to capitalize on what they imagined to be the rightful benefits of revolution, from the ending of seigniorial authority to the subdivision of common land. Only in May 1790 did the National Assembly formally give local and regional administrations – the new departments, districts, and communes – formal responsibility for woodland conservation.[25] In the process, it left them to impose unpopular rules on the people, who had only recently been led to believe they were freed from Ancien Régime legislation, and to take charge of forests that had never been seen as part of their jurisdiction. It also left them powerless poachers, who moved seamlessly across their prescribed boundaries. When there was any ambiguity, country people easily returned to their old habits in defiance of the new administrative structures.

Revolutionary politics could create ambiguities as well as resolve them, especially where areas continued to be redefined or where courts and other administrations were handed out as rewards for good behaviour to deserving local authorities. Political considerations were never far away, and where cities behaved badly, retribution might follow. Indeed, there are cases where local areas changed hands several times in accordance with the ebb and flow of the revolutionary tide. Lyon and its department, the Rhône-et-Loire, provide perhaps the best example of this, when, after the federalist revolt in 1793, the department was split in two, leaving Lyon with an artificially amputated department of the Rhône. But such political decisions might have unforeseen consequences. As the police were organized by the department, this left the criminal fraternity of Lyon with an enticing range of departmental boundaries to cross after holding up stagecoaches or robbing travellers on the highway.

**25** K. Matteson, *Forests in Revolutionary France: Conservation, Community and Conflict, 1669–1848*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 111–114.

Better still, viewed from a criminal standpoint, was the political geography of Lyon and its eastern suburbs, especially the notorious *faubourg* (suburb) of La Guillotière on the left bank of the river opposite the Presqu'île, which, conveniently for those seeking an escape from the law, changed hands several times during the revolutionary decade, being alternately attached to the Rhône and the Isère. "A five-minute walk across the Pont de la Guillotière", remarks Richard Cobb, not without a certain satisfaction, "would bring the man on the run into the Isère and to a *faubourg* notorious for its violence and its anarchy and for the number of its carters' inns". To stack the odds slightly further against the gendarmes, the borders to the north of Lyon had also been considerately drawn. Here, "on the road to Paris, brigands, bandits, highwaymen, counterfeiters and political murderers could be assured of a safe refuge in the *commune* of Vaise, which further specialized in attacks on the Paris-Lyon mail coach. From the north-east end of the city, a quarter of an hour's walk would take the law-breaker into the Ain." In many instances, this would leave the police empty-handed and escort the wrongdoer to the sanctuary or safe house he sought.[26]

A common thread running through revolutionary discourse on local government reform was the government's obligations towards men who were no longer mere subjects of a king, but citizens enjoying rights that had to be respected. It was as citizens that they had the right to justice, just as it was as citizens that they were called upon to fulfil their obligations towards society and to the state. In metropolitan France, this principle may have operated reasonably smoothly, with each layer of administration representing certain tasks and duties; but then in metropolitan France, everyone was a citizen, and such distinctions as remained did not affect their obligation to pay tax, their need to appear before conscription boards, or their right to go to law. If the new division of the territory achieved a wide degree of acquiescence, it was because it could be integrated into the fabric of daily life, not just for the administrative elite, but for the population at large. More than the revolutionary calendar, which people in the countryside had little reason to use or even to know about, the new territorial divisions were used and were found to be convenient. As a consequence, when war came and France began to annex adjacent territories, French administrators concluded that what worked well in France should be extended to the occupied territories. By 1810, following the annexation of Holland and much of northwest Germany, the French Empire had swollen to 130 departments, all organized

**26** R. Cobb, *Reactions to the French Revolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 45–46 and 238.

according to the French model and administered wherever possible by local people.[27] It had become transnational, a Europe-wide lesson in modernization and administrative efficiency.

Yet in the early years of the French Revolution, the new division of the territory was reserved for France alone, and where it was extended abroad, it was to continental Europe. It was not proposed to extend the principle to France's overseas colonies, which were administered by French governors with the help of provincial assemblies composed of representatives of the white settlers. In colonies like Saint-Domingue, there was no question in 1789 of extending the rights of citizenship, either: this was a society where nine-tenths of the population was composed of black slaves, in law the property of the plantation owners rather than citizens in their own right. Moreover, with the growth of the slave trade in the years following the American War of Independence, the disproportion in numbers between white settlers and black slaves increased, raising tensions between the communities on the island and emphasizing the role of race in any emerging concept of citizenship. Saint-Domingue was seen in Paris as a colony, and colonies required colonial solutions. The National Assembly could not even agree that it needed to establish a separate colonial committee to legislate for the colonies. Instead, it insisted that it was for the colonists – and in the Caribbean that meant principally the white planters – to pass their own laws and write their own constitution. This was a dangerous strategy to follow.[28] The 1780s had been a decade of particular turbulence, with class antagonisms opening up between the rich planters and the poor white population, for whom status was dependent on the continuance of racial privilege. And institutionally, the French Revolution weakened colonial governance, as the overthrow of the Ancien Régime in France undermined all the traditional sources of authority in the colonies: the governor, the intendant, the law courts, the military garrison, and the militia. In the process it had, as David Geggus phrases it, "enflamed social and political aspirations while weakening the institutions that held them in check".[29]

In France's colonies in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, race lay at the very heart of the problem, and it was a problem that the French Revolution, by opening citizenship to all adult males, could only exacerbate. Many of the

**27** L. Bergeron, *France under Napoleon*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 213.

**28** Archives Parlementaires, vol. 11, pp. 40–42, séance du 29 décembre 1789 (sitting on 29 December 1789), "Tableau de la situation actuelle des colonies présentée à l'Assemblée nationale".

**29** D. Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 9.

revolutionary politicians in Paris were far better disposed to give rights to non-whites than were the three provincial assemblies on Saint-Domingue itself, whose distrust of the black and mixed-race populations was ill-concealed. The racial composition of French Caribbean society, especially in Saint-Domingue, was complex. It was not simply a matter of a class of rich white planters employing black slaves to cut the sugar cane; there were also free people of colour, the descendants of slaves, no doubt, but descendants also of the white *habitants* (plantation owners) to whom they owed their free status. And by 1789, there was a large free black population, men and women who had in many cases been slaves but who had received their freedom when their masters had retired to France, or in return for sexual favours, or as a reward for long years of loyal service. Under French law, those who had acquired their freedom had the same rights as whites; but in the French Antilles in the 1780s, few whites were prepared to respect that law or to treat them as their fellow citizens.

As the numbers of slaves and free men of colour increased, the white population of the islands became more conservative, more resistant to compromise. They felt more and more insecure, too, as they became a smaller and smaller minority in the Dominguan population. By 1789, nearly 90 per cent of the population of Saint-Domingue consisted of African slaves, while the number of free people of colour approached 50 per cent of the free population (huge proportions when compared to the South of the United States or to Britain's Caribbean colonies). The previous decade had also seen the rise of a large and self-confident free black population, notably in the larger cities, Port-au-Prince and Le Cap. These groups had their own leaders, and when the French Revolution broke out in France, they knew that they would get a much fairer hearing from the Assembly in Paris than ever they would from the white planters on the island. For them it was imperative that all power should not be left in the hands of Saint-Domingue's provincial assemblies, since that would leave them at the mercy of the whites. Local government reform was more than a question of institutions or of rapid access to justice. It was also question of how best they could exercise their newly won rights of citizenship, how they might contest the supremacy of the white *colons* (colonists). They were determined to reap the benefits of France's revolution, too.[30]

The white planters would, of course, vigorously resist any attempt to reform the island's structures of government, especially where it risked diluting the power they exercised over their slaves. Over the previous century they had

**30** J.D. Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 5.

pursued an unremitting campaign against the king's attempts to impose controls and to spread European legal and moral codes. In particular, they had resisted the imposition of the Code noir (the code governing the treatment of the black population), which, since 1685, had attempted to force planters to end abuses in the treatment of their slaves, prescribing the minimum amounts of food and clothing that they must provide, ordering their instruction in Catholicism, and cancelling work on holy days. In practice, few of these measures were implemented, while the local courts and provincial assemblies on the island made sure that the rights of the master were maintained and even, as the eighteenth century progressed, reinforced. When there were rumours of slave insurrections, the courts were even less willing to interfere in planters' rights, and in 1771 judges on the regional court in Le Cap went so far as to rule that royal justice should not come between masters and slaves.[31] Even in cases involving physical maltreatment and arbitrary sentences for offences, local justice showed no wish to intervene, no appetite for conflict with the more powerful planters. Perhaps rather cravenly, the National Assembly seemed prepared to accept their arguments and to leave matters of local justice and administration in their hands. They recognized that any root and branch reforms of justice and local government would be risky at a time when all parties on the island seemed to have intractable demands: the planters wanted greater autonomy from France, the mulattoes petitioned for full citizenship, and the slaves were becoming more aware of their collective strength in numbers.

Though they had not undergone French-style reforms, the colonies still had representation in Paris during the French Revolution, and the different interest groups lobbied and petitioned relentlessly, through their representatives, through the planters' pressure group, the Club Massiac, and, increasingly, through the municipal councils and chambers of commerce of the cities through which they traded and where they often had agents, commercial representatives, and, in many cases, family members with whom they maintained close contact. Planters and white settlers in Saint-Domingue and Guadeloupe, increasingly alarmed by the economic and political fallout from the French Revolution in France's Caribbean colonies, put pressure on the Atlantic port cities to speak up on their behalf, to defend their economic interests, and, more and more, to champion not only the slave trade, from which they themselves benefited, but the system of slavery itself. In La Rochelle, for instance, a pressure group was founded in 1789 to "bring together all those owning property in the Antilles who were resident in the *généralité* [generality] of La

**31** Ibid., p. 39.

Rochelle" to persuade the town to represent their interests.[32] This had the effect of identifying the main Atlantic ports with a colonial interest that came more and more into conflict with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and which risked reducing their ties with their rural hinterlands. In 1790, this could lead to the perception that they were largely divorced from the towns and villages of their respective regions, which in turn led to charges of egotism and indifference.

Squabbles over the new division of the territory generated interurban feuds and rivalries as petitioners pressed their case for recognition at the expense of their neighbours, and in submissions to the Committee of Division towns did not hesitate to condemn one another or to ridicule their claims to a departmental or a district assembly or to a college or tribunal. In particular, the smaller towns were quick to challenge the concentration of too much power in large commercial cities, and the argument was made that a more equal distribution of administrative authority would be more egalitarian and hence more revolutionary. They used a variety of arguments, some pointing to the established habits of local people, others being more concerned to denounce what they saw as the abuses that the concentration of power elsewhere would incur. Many of the smaller towns emphasized their central position in their department and drew attention to their value as markets for the surrounding countryside.[33] But across the west and south-west, petitions also revealed the extent of anti-commercial feeling in many rural areas and a particular resentment against the Atlantic port cities, underlining their irrelevance to peasants and to the rural economy of their hinterland. Older legal centres claimed precedence over Atlantic ports on the grounds that country dwellers went there to settle matters like land ownership and inheritance, custom commanding greater loyalty than commerce.[34]

So, while Nantes and Bordeaux were sufficiently dominant in their new departments to ensure their choice as *chef-lieu*, other ports faced more of a struggle. And even Bordeaux had to shrug off a plausible challenge from the market town of Libourne, which argued that it needed to retain its independence

**32** M. Dorigny, "Les colons de La Rochelle se mobilisent contre les Amis des Noirs: procès-verbaux de la Société des colons franco-américains de La Rochelle", in: M. Augeron and O. Caudron (eds.), *La Rochelle, l'Aunis et la Saintonge face à l'esclavage*, Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2012, pp. 223–230.

**33** Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution*, p. 442.

**34** A wide range of municipal petitions can be found in AN, series D IV bis, papers of the Committee of Division, 1789–90; A. Forrest, "Le découpage administratif de la France révolutionnaire".

if it was not to be smothered by its larger neighbour. Bordeaux, the petition alleged, "completely stifles Libourne, eclipsing it with its shadow and devouring it to the extent that, if Libourne were to remain part of this department, it would never be able to emerge from its obscurity".[35] In this case, the petition was rejected, but a number of Atlantic ports experienced real difficulty in staking their claims. Not only was Bayonne denied the *chef-lieu* of a department; even its claim for a district was dismissed in favour of Ustaritz. In the Charente-Inférieure, Saintes won out over La Rochelle, though Napoleon finally reversed the decision in 1810. Local people argued that Saintes was a market town and a natural regional capital, while La Rochelle was a mere commercial appendage, irrelevant to local farmers.[36] Similarly, Marseilles was passed over in favour of Aix-en-Provence in its bid to be *chef-lieu* of the Bouches-du-Rhône; again, this would later be reversed in Marseilles' favour.[37] And in Normandy, where Rouen obtained the *chef-lieu* of the new department of the Seine-Inférieure, Le Havre's claim to a district was rejected in favour of the small market town of Montivilliers. Once again, the arguments centred on its irrelevance to the local economy and its perceived failure to redistribute its commercial wealth. As the villages of the surrounding area explained in a petition to the National Assembly, Le Havre "is properly speaking nothing more than an entrepôt [a warehouse] for goods brought in from abroad to be sent on to all parts of the kingdom". Its merchants were uninterested in agriculture; it was a city of "rich capitalists well versed in speculation".[38]

Colonial ports were denounced for turning their backs on the land and its people, for looking outwards to the ocean rather than inwards to the countryside, and this perception was sharpened in the early years of the French Revolution when the merchants were among the principal beneficiaries of reform. In Nantes, for instance, merchants dominated the permanent committee elected to run the city in 1789, and in 1790 provided two-thirds of the *officiers municipaux* (municipal officers), 12 out of 18, and half the *notables*, 18 out of 36.[39] In all the Atlantic ports, a colonial culture had developed that prioritized connections across the seas over domestic considerations, creating a mentality quite distinct from the concerns of agriculture or of domestic capitalism. The ports were condemned by many in the interior as belonging to the colonial

**35** AN, D IV bis 8, petition from the town of Libourne, 1790.
**36** AN, D IV bis 5, petitions of La Rochelle and Saintes, 1790.
**37** AN, D IV bis 5, petition from the deputies of Provence in favour of Aix-en-Provence, 1790.
**38** AN, D IV bis 17, petition from the towns of the District in favour of Montivilliers, 1790.
**39** O. Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Nantes, histoire et géographie contemporaine*, Plomelin: Éditions Palantines, 2003, pp. 112–113.

world, wedded to an Atlantic space that was of little interest to rural communities to whom they offered little benefit. Their wealth and aloofness were equated with privilege, and during the Terror this invited reprisals: Bordeaux, most notably, was denounced as a "foyer de négociantisme" (hive of merchant self-interest), its merchants seen as an elite eager to replace the nobility as the social and political leaders of the city.[40] At a time when they faced competition for administrative responsibilities from legal centres and market towns, this was a perception that proved highly damaging, as it seemed to cut them off from their fellow citizens, to isolate their interests and to weaken their ties with the land. The port cities risked being seen as irrelevant to the lives of ordinary Frenchmen. They found themselves tarnished by their colonial connections, and, rather like the colonies themselves, they had difficulty in adapting to the demands of revolutionary respatialization.

**40** V. Daline, "Marc-Antoine Jullien, après le 9 thermidor", *Annales historiques de la Révolution Française* 36 (1964), p. 161.

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# 10 (Re)spatialization and its Limits: Territory and Descent, Ideology and Pragmatism in Definitions of Citizenship

Title II of France's Constitution of 1791 begins with three articles on territory and citizenship: Article 1 states that the "kingdom is one and indivisible" and will consist of 83 *départements* (departments), each of them subdivided into districts in turn made up of cantons. Articles 2 and 3 proceed to link citizenship to "France". Even though they provide various routes to citizenship (descent, marriage, purchase, entrepreneurship, or naturalization), none is effective outside the nation's spatial reach. Individuals can be citizens because they are children of a French father, born *in France*; because they are children of a foreign father, born and resident *in France*; because they are children of a French father, born abroad, but having returned *to France*; because their ancestors left France for religious reasons, and they have now returned *to France*; because they were born abroad of foreign parents with no connection to France, but have lived *in France* and bought real estate *in France*, have married a native wife *in France*, or run a business or a farm *in France*; or because they have been naturalized and fixed their domicile *in France*.

There is a tension between this emphasis on territory as the main conduit of citizenship and the constitution's introductory remarks, which emphasize not just the equality of citizens, the abolition of privileges, and equality of access to public appointments, but also the freedom of all "men" to go, to stay, or to leave. Regardless of how precisely this tension was to be resolved, citizenship clearly had a strong spatial dimension in the perspective of the Constitution of 1791; moreover, another spatial dimension was left unstated in the text: the contrasting reach of equality and freedom in metropolitan France and in France's colonial spaces.

It is not very controversial to state that the French Revolution marked a turning point in the history of citizenship.[1] But is has become less easy to pinpoint where exactly the peculiarities of revolutionary conceptions and practices

1 See, e.g., P. Weil, *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

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of citizenship lay and what their implications were in the medium and in the long term.

Classical readings of the evolution of French concepts of citizenship considered the territorial dimension – or, to put it differently, the respatialization of citizenship – as its most striking aspect. The emphasis on territory set French (and US) citizenship concepts apart from definitions that tended to highlight other aspects, like fealty, allegiance, or descent. French citizenship was often contrasted to German citizenship concepts, widely considered to have evolved in reaction against the revolutionary experience, with the long-term implication of creating pronounced inequalities within the national space between individuals set apart owing to their ancestors' migration history.[2]

However, much of the debate on the development of citizenship concepts, on citizenship and nationality legislation, and on the practical impact of state rules conducted since the 1990s has called this distinction into question.[3] The debate, for instance, has deconstructed the opposition between "French" *ius soli* (right of the soil) and "German" *ius sanguinis* (right of the blood) by demonstrating the importance of Napoleon Bonaparte's Code Civil for the formulation of Prussian citizenship laws. While recent work has been unanimous in highlighting the fact that it is more prudent to speak of varying citizenship laws and practices rather than of long-term traditions in the way citizenship is conceived, it has presented arguments both for moving the crucial turns in citizenship history forward, for instance by exploring the greater "nationalization" of social rights and the intensification of migration control from the 1880s,[4] and for moving it backward, by presenting arguments for the existence of clear normative concepts of citizenship in Ancien Régime societies.[5] This chapter will take up the debate on the reconceptualization of citizenship by first looking at the state of the debate on citizenship regulations in Ancien Régime France, then discussing the extent of respatialization during the French Revolution,

**2** R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

**3** See, e.g., Weil, *How to be French*; D. Gosewinkel, Einbürgern und Ausschließen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001; A. Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007; D. Gosewinkel, *Schutz und Freiheit? Staatsbürgerschaft in Europa im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016.

**4** C. Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit: Migrationskontrolle in Großbritannien und Deutschland, 1880–1930*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010.

**5** E.g. T. Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

and finally examining the implication of this process (and its retrospective interpretation) for later conceptions of citizenship.

## Spaces of Citizenship in Ancien Régime France

In contrast to the Constitution of 1791, which envisioned a clearly demarcated national territory subdivided into administrative entities that did not overlap, the relationship between France's Ancien Régime monarchy and the geographical space it controlled was complicated. Control over an expanding territory was clearly a political goal, in fact the overriding political purpose of the monarchy. Though "glory", the all-important marker of successful monarchical rule,[6] did not follow exclusively or immediately from the size of a kingdom, there was no doubt that size (as well as population) mattered greatly. However, this control did not need to be exclusive. At borders, the notion of a line demarcating the territory of one ruler from that of another only emerged gradually over time, even in frontier zones where there were only two contenders and the extent of territorial claims was relatively clear.[7] At France's eastern borders, exclaves and enclaves were more common; in addition, there was an overlap between secular and ecclesiastical boundaries. In a sense, this was in consequence of the expansion of France into territories that had previously formed part of the Holy Roman Empire and represented an intermediary state of affairs that might well have disappeared over time even without the French Revolution. But it was also a reflection of the way rule was envisioned: a combination of complex relationships that oscillated to varying degrees between interpersonal ties of fealty and loyalty and hierarchical administrative relationships between a central state and its local representatives. With the latter, the direct relationships between privileged corporations, such as certain towns or estates, and the monarch were another complicating factor. Hence, internal administrative space, too, consisted of overlapping jurisdictions (or places left outside the administrative map), and the French monarchy contained a number of foreign possessions, with the papal presence at Avignon and the imperial duchies of Salm-Kyrburg, Mömpelgard (Montbéliard), and Saarwerden the most visible.

While bringing such foreign entities under control was a monarchical goal in principle, this aim was not necessarily combined with a precise statistical or

**6** T.C.W. Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648–1815*, New York: Viking, 2007.

**7** P. Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

geographical knowledge of the kingdom available to the monarchy's central administration. Key data remained unknown, leading to complications with major construction problems like the Canal du Midi, for example.[8] One obvious issue was the degree of accessibility of some regions from Paris. While the integration of the kingdom by roads and postal links proceeded apace in the eighteenth century, considerable areas remained isolated.[9] Moreover, any attempt to provide the central government with a precise understanding of land ownership and, by implication, insights into local structures of governance encountered formidable difficulties. What was required was not merely a map of land correlating with a list of its owners, but a complex description of a variety of property rights subject to rapid change over time and only loosely correlated, if at all, with the formal rank of the primary owner of a given property.[10] The status of territory (and its administrative classification) could change for a broad variety of reasons, one of the more curious being whether the land was dry (used as open fields) or flooded (used as artificial ponds for the cultivation of carp); secular fields could turn into ecclesiastical domains by flooding and vice versa.[11]

Mapping the kingdom involved not just occasional voyages of discovery that brought local peculiarities to the attention of the royal administration. Such undertakings required the production of extensive tables that reconstructed or constructed the precise combination of rights and privileges that applied to specific territories and the persons found there, which might well be completely out of date by the time they had been completed. This fact became increasingly problematic in the run-up to the French Revolution. One reason was due to the growing prominence of debates on the significant differences in taxation and other impositions that invariably resulted from such arrangements. Another reason was due to the attempted resolution of such problems, namely the representation of the "nation" in Estates General, for which, as it

**8** C. Mukerji, *Impossible Engineering Technology and Territoriality on the Canal du Midi*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

**9** A. Bretagnolle, T. Giraud, and N. Verdier, "Modéliser l'efficacité d'un réseau: Le cas de la poste aux chevaux dans la France pré-industrielle (1632–1833)", *Espace Geographique* 2 (2010) 10, pp. 117–131.

**10** R. Congost, "Property Rights and Historical Analysis: What Rights? What History?", *Past & Present* 181 (2003) 1, pp. 73–106.; N. Fitch, "'Entrepreneurial Nobles' or 'Aristocratic Serfs'? Reconsidering Feudalism in Old Regime Central France", *French Historical Studies* 39 (2016) 1, pp. 105–143; P.M. Jones, "The Challenge of Land Reform in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century France", *Past & Present* 216 (2012) 1, pp. 107–142.

**11** R. Abad, *La conjuration contre les carpes. Enquête sur les origines du décret de dessèchement des étangs du 14 frimaire an II*, Paris: Fayard, 2006.

turned out in 1789, no electoral map that met the demands for an equal and comprehensive representation of the national territory existed – thus reinforcing the perceived need for fundamental administrative reform. *Bailliages*, the entities chosen as the main electoral units, contained numerous enclaves and exclaves, that is to say villages located within the confines of one bailliage could be part of another, more distant one. The affiliation could also depend on the precise administrative context. To make matters worse, the monarchy ordered administrative boundaries redrawn in January 1789 for the elections of the Estates General, a dubious move that was contested in practice because it contradicted traditional privileges.[12] As it turned out, the difficulties that arose appear to have been handled pragmatically at a local level. They concerned who was entitled to attend which electoral assembly (deputies were not required to be residents of the locality or members of the estate they represented), and there is ample evidence that these questions were settled on the spot according to local custom – thus allowing, for instance, women or men under 25 years of age to participate, though they were excluded in theory.[13]

By contrast, the monarchy's social space was mapped in great detail at varying levels. The relationships of rank within the aristocracy were as well known as the degrees of proximity and distance within urban societies; both could, but need not, have something to do with the geographical distance between individuals' places of origin and the place where membership ties were crucial (a city or a court). Both could, but need not, bear some relationship to the geographical distance of territories to which a noble title was attached and the location of a court. Therefore, social hierarchies that created proximity and distance could be imagined in spatial terms and were acted out in processions, for example, where the lowest and highest-ranking participants commonly took positions that converted the distance of social prestige into physical distance.

The relationship between this type of social imaginary and citizenship is currently subject to debate,[14] and this debate has implications for the broader

**12** M. Bouloiseau, *Cahiers de doléances du tiers état du bailliage de Rouen pour les États généraux de* 1789, Rouen: Presses administratives, 1957, p. XIV; R. Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, vol. 1: Society and the State*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, pp. 626f.; A. Forrest, *The Revolution in Provincial France: Aquitaine, 1789–1799*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 41.

**13** C. Le Digol, "Verification des pouvoirs et incident électoral. Les enjeux de la mise en forme des élections (1789–1791)", in: P. Bourdin, J.-C. Caron, and M. Bernard (eds.), *L'incident électoral de le Révolution française à la V^e^ République*, Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2002, pp. 45–60.

**14** Cf. P. Sahlins, "Sur la citoyenneté et le droit d'aubaine à l'époque moderne: Réponse à Simona Cerutti", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 63 (2008) 2, pp. 385–398.

narratives of the development of citizenship, which, somewhat paradoxically, is also its starting point. One way of approaching the problem of how to write a history of citizenship before the state has been to start from a modern definition of citizenship – that is to say, a set of norms that create rules for the inclusion of "citizens" and the exclusion of "aliens" – and to look for functional equivalents in Ancien Régime societies. For France, the *droit d'aubaine*, the law regulating the estates of *regnicoles* (subjects) and *aubains* (aliens) within the kingdom, seemed a plausible candidate for a precursor of "modern" citizenship of the type codified in the Constitution of 1791 and its successors as well as in the Code Civil of 1804. In theory, there was a significant distinction between *regnicoles*, that is to say individuals born within the confines of the monarchy (or "naturalized" subsequently), and *aubains*, that is to say foreign-born individuals. The distinction was that only *regnicoles* could inherit or bequeath property, while *aubains*'s possessions or claims went to the crown. In a meticulous study centred on those individuals who sought naturalization in France, Peter Sahlins documents the relevance of territory in this context as well as the range of exceptions that related to territory (e.g. exemptions for residents or bourgeois of particular cities), past and present alliances (the inclusion of Scots and subjects of other friendly powers), or local administrative exceptions.[15] Michael Rapport highlights that territory entered the picture in another way as well, for individuals exempted from the *droit d'aubaine* in France could be subject to special taxation if they removed property from the territory of the monarchy.[16] If one is prepared to accept that the *droit d'aubaine* amounted to "*nationalité avant la lettre*" (nationality before the letter),[17] and that this type of nationality had a strong territorial component, then territoriality may have reached a new apogee during the French Revolution, but it was not a novel development.

However, the view that *nationalité avant la lettre*, or indeed any consistent definitions of insiders and outsiders, can be found in Ancien Régime regulations in general and the *droit d'aubaine* in particular has been questioned. The most sustained attack has been mounted by Simona Cerutti, who argues that the *droit d'aubaine* is misconstrued when read as a proxy for citizenship. Working from a different set of sources on a different territory (notary records from the

**15** P. Sahlins, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and after*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

**16** M. Rapport, "'A Languishing Branch of the Old Tree of Feudalism': The Death, Resurrection and Final Burial of the droit d'aubaine in France", *French History* 14 (2000) 1, pp. 13–40.

**17** P. Sahlins, "La nationalité avant la lettre: Les pratiques de naturalisation en France sous l'Ancien Régime", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 55 (2000) 5, pp. 1081–1108.

Duchy of Savoy), she argues that the difference between "natives" and *aubains* was linked primarily not to their place of birth, but to the presence or absence of local connections and the presence or absence of local status – that is to say integration into social networks that had little to do with physical space but could conform to the type of social maps described above.[18] Whether Cerutti's work is the last word on the subject is an open question,[19] but one key result of the debate is that the legal position of "foreigners" and "locals" was as uncertain for contemporaries as it remains for historians. Who belonged to which category vis-à-vis which particular individuals in a position of authority, and what the practical consequences of this classification were to be, was likely decided on an individual basis – even though there was also a commercialization of the social order, in that patronage came at a price known to and demanded by brokers, just as social status in the form of patents of nobility was literally up for sale.[20] In this sense, Cerutti's formulation that being "foreign" (a term she unfortunately does not, as far as I am aware, translate into the Italian of her Turin sources in her book) was a condition of uncertainty in the Ancien Régime is surely apposite, though the degree of uncertainty is subject to question.

When it came to defining allegiance, too, territory played a large role in theory. The allegiance of subjects was acquired primarily through their birth in the territory ruled by a monarch. Moving from the allegiance of one sovereign to another was difficult and at times expensive, and the effects of a change of allegiance were at least open to doubt: naturalization could be granted by one monarch or royal administration in exchange for fees or service, but whether it could absolve an individual of the duty they owed to their birth monarch entirely remained contested. The numerous officers who left their native territory to serve another monarch walked a legal tightrope, although the risk of being tried for treason by moving to another territory was negligible, which suggests that the relevance of allegiance tied to territory was less than the relevance of personal networks, rank, or status; the same was true of admission to urban corporations like guilds or access to local poor relief.

A third perspective on territory, membership, and space complicates the picture further, even though it also represents a sort of compromise between

**18** S. Cerutti, *Étrangers. Étude d'une condition d'incertitude dans une société d'Ancien Régime*, Montrouge: Bayard, 2012.

**19** For a critical assessment, see P. Sahlins, "Sur la citoyenneté et le droit d'aubaine à l'époque moderne".

**20** S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth Century France*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986; S. Kettering, "Brokerage at the Court of Louis XIV", *The Historical Journal* 36 (1993) 1, pp. 69–87.

Sahlins's and Cerutti's perspectives. It highlights a notable feature of the built environment of the Ancien Régime: the existence of walled towns typical of continental Europe.[21] The existence of fortified towns was not only intended to protect territories from foreign invasion,[22] but also had a large impact on everyday life both inside and outside their walls. Town gates were artificial but noticeable checkpoints and walls both suggested and represented a clear demarcation between inside and outside space. While the walls of garrison towns could be designed mainly to keep soldiers in, usually town walls were associated with attempts to keep the less orderly non-urban world out; hence they could be shut at night and leave travellers arriving late stranded or subject to fines. In terms of policed space, there was an obvious contrast between towns and the countryside thinly patrolled by the *maréchaussée* (military guard).

Control of territory was thus extremely uneven, and comparatively well-administered spaces alternated with those in which the monarchy was a relatively remote presence. Turning definitions of boundaries into practice therefore depended disproportionately on cities, which in turn meant that the regulation of the monarchy's territory tended to begin and end with the first and last town and that urban regulations had a comparatively large impact, creating a considerable degree of diversity both between town and countryside as well as between different towns.[23]

However, the distinction could blur in very large towns. Whereas neighbourly surveillance was key to enforcing rules like immigration regulations in typical Ancien Régime urban societies, in a metropolis like Paris other methods could be required. In this context, this lead both to more intensive professional surveillance by policemen and paid informers as well as to plans for systems of documentation required to distinguish between insiders and outsiders even within urban space – providing a potential blueprint for dealing with situations in which distance prevented identification by personal knowledge.

**21** Y. Mintsker, *The Defortification of the German City, 1689–1866*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

**22** An aspect of fortress architecture highlighted by C.S. Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 56–72.

**23** See, e.g., H. Sonkajärvi, "From German-Speaking Catholics to French Carpenters: Strasbourg Guilds and the Role of Confessional Boundaries in the Inclusion and Exclusion of Foreigners in the Eighteenth Century", *Urban History* 35 (2008) 2, pp. 202–215.

## Respatialization?

The question is whether very much changed during the French Revolution. Certainly, uncertain boundaries and interstitial spaces became even more problematic. The quest for natural frontiers suggests that boundaries could become clear, definitive and comprehensive, doing away with exclaves and enclaves. This quest for certainty and definitive administrative units was also responsible for the initial conflicts between France and its neighbours, not least with the ecclesiastical territories in the western Holy Roman Empire, whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction and semi-public property extended well into eastern France. In terms of legal technicalities, as historians like Michael Rapport[24] and Patrick Weil show, normative texts distinguished natives from aliens following the implementation of the revolutionary constitutions, placing particular emphasis on the importance of a territorial connection to France and penalizing its absence. The documentation of membership or non-membership was reinforced by what John Torpey calls the "invention of the passport"[25] as well as by identity cards colour-coded for status (in red, white, or blue) in Paris.[26] Likewise, the mapping and administrative embrace of territory advanced apace.

Both processes were linked, in that the places where individuals required travel papers were defined by the new administrative spaces (and travellers outside their *canton* were considered sufficiently unknown to require proof of identity and permission to move). While the distinction between domestic and foreign space with regard to travel papers was gradual, leaving or entering the national space did require extra papers, fees, and permissions. In theory, therefore, citizenship was now linked more closely to a physical space, which was not merely an important criterion in determining citizenship, but which determined where citizenship mattered most and where it became precarious. At the same time, distinctions between metropolitan and colonial spaces largely remained intact, hardening and softening during different phases of the revolution and in different colonies. As the key marker here was the status of "natives" and "slaves", an issue closely anchored to physical space even during

**24** M. Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France. The Treatment of Foreigners 1789–1799*, London: Clarendon, 2000.

**25** J. Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

**26** O. Faron and C. Grange, "Paris and its Foreigners in the Late Eighteenth Century", in: A. Fahrmeir, O. Faron, and P. Weil (eds.), *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period*, New York: Berghahn, 2003, pp. 39–54.

the Ancien Régime, when slaves automatically acquired legal freedom in some judicial districts in metropolitan France. Under Napoleon, this distinction became firmly settled in law again, and even after emancipation it survived in the differentiation between colonies (and the Algerian departments), where "native" status continued, and metropolitan France, where it did not.

This changed, to a degree, with Napoleon's return to a more descent-focused definition of citizenship in the Code Civil, as Patrick Weil's careful analysis demonstrates. From 1804, the first indication of being French was being the descendant of a French father. Birth in French territory continued to matter as well, however; anyone who had remained in France after birth could opt to become French when he or she reached the age of majority, a possibility denied to foreigners born outside the country of foreign parents, regardless of the duration of their residence, requiring them to apply for the discretionary grants of admission to domicile or naturalization. In a respatialization perspective, this could be read as reducing the importance of space somewhat – while also reducing gradations of belonging between citizens, domiciled foreigners, and foreigners without domicile. However, the expansion and later contraction of French territory that occurred at the same time rendered the status of territory uncertain; after 1811, the acquisition of territories by France had retroactive consequences for anyone born there, prohibiting them from serving France's enemies. After the contraction of the French Empire began in 1812, the focus shifted, solidifying a link (usually by birth) to territory that had once been French or allied with France. As late as 1863, the attribution of imperial French decorations and pensions to veterans who had fought on the French side at Leipzig created major problems for the planned "national" German commemoration ceremony in the town by effectively excluding veterans from the left bank of the Rhine River, Bavaria, or – particularly poignantly – Saxony.[27] Such legislative and judicial decisions involved a respatialization of entire biographies, rendering anyone who had been born not just on the left bank of the Rhine River, but in Hamburg, Friesland, Erfurt, the Netherlands, or on the Croatian coast, potentially French.

While the 1811 regulations tied status to the connection between an individual and a geographical space at birth, other regulations that affected individuals in the same space had a different intention. Treaties regulating the punishment of deserters often introduced citizenship as a criterion alongside the place of birth, giving individuals the right to "return" to their "native" army regardless of where they served or which citizenship they held. Regulations

**27** *The Times*, 21 October, 1863, p. 9.

governing the fate of former inhabitants of secularized monasteries attached the receiving of a pension to their presence in France, but at the same time they required those born outside France's borders to return to their places of birth – thus cutting them off from their allowance. It is often unclear how rules, particularly incompatible or contradictory rules, were implemented in practice; it has been argued that the reach of the administrative state remained highly precarious in rural areas and the country's periphery until well into the 1850s.[28] The timing and extent of these processes was a result of changing conceptions of governance and governments' desires to unlock their territorial resources through "the rationalization of the rural countryside"[29]; it was also determined, however, by the outcomes of numerous local negotiations in favour of or opposed to change; on balance, local negotiations often saw to it that rationalization remained nothing more than an aspiration.[30]

Perhaps the situation in France can best be characterized as follows: rational respatialization was an aspiration that directly and indirectly affected conceptions of membership. There were, however, significant limits to the consistency and implementation, reflected not least in the tendency to introduce various exceptions for specific groups in particular places and to alter rules retrospectively. This in turn followed from the shift from an emphasis on natural frontiers to the experience of fluctuating boundaries. Accordingly, respatialization involved two processes: reformulating norms and reconfiguring territory. This also involved domestic space. For military as well as for bureaucratic reasons, the Napoleonic period witnessed the first continued effort at the defortification of cities, dismantling walls as defences, and paving the way for their disappearance as points of control (even though the control and tax barriers around Paris and other cities persisted for considerably longer).[31] What was at issue here was the understanding that urban particularities had been abolished in favour of a hierarchical (in)equality of administrative units. Furthermore, the capabilities of the administrative state and its increasing personnel were now able to permit the surveillance of the entire territory to a similar degree – a degree that also rendered the specific surveillance

**28** J.M. Merriman, *Police Stories: Building the French State, 1815–1851*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

**29** Maier, *Once Within Borders*, p. 287.

**30** As discussed in E. Weber's classic *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979; and, more recently, in J.C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

**31** Mintsker, *Defortification*.

of borders at the point of their imagined lines superfluous because the state's bureaucratic embrace of foreigners and citizens alike could occur at the first point of control.

## Medium- and Long-term Consequences

As Patrick Weil and others show, the French model of citizenship exerted significant influence in continental Europe, directly being implemented in the Netherlands, on the left bank of the Rhine or in the seven Illyrian departments in present-day Austria, Slovenia and Croatia and indirectly as a model for Prussia and other states. In central Europe, the key issue that ultimately limited or delayed respatialization was the persistence of social distinctions and composite statehood. While administrative space was standardized along the lines of the Napoleonic model, issues of membership were initially regulated within the framework of multilayered systems in which distinctions derived from a social hierarchy and corporate membership played a large role. State citizenship was thus always mediated by membership in localities and/or issues of rank. Physical space was but one factor in determining domicile or citizenship. This distinction was even deeper in Russia, where rank and religion continued to be vastly more important than links to space.[32]

In Britain, by contrast, a strong focus on the importance of physical space for definitions of subjecthood contrasted with numerous exceptions concerning descent, particular occupations, or even specific property, which could grant access to similar or identical status in the eighteenth century. Here, the impact of the French Revolution and counter-revolutionary warfare sparked several developments: increasing attention to political loyalty when controlling access to territory as well as increasing emphasis on the importance of allegiance derived from territory, particularly where the United States and its recent immigrants from Britain were concerned.[33] However, in this case, too, the timing of respatialization was potentially contested. In theory, nothing or very little had changed – not least because the fundamental legal authorities for definitions of citizenship were said to date back to the early seventeenth century. In practice, a temporary increase in surveillance had led to greater awareness of the rules and their

**32** E. Lohr, *Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

**33** D.R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*, Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2012, pp. 5–27; Fahrmeir, *Citizenship*, pp. 42f.

potential problems. But the scope of the rules and the extent of "His Majesty's Allegiance" remained imprecise. Birth in territory subject to "His Majesty's Allegiance" bestowed the status of a British subject. But were semi-private territories like the East India Company possessions, or territories like Hanover, ruled by the same prince, but only for as long as the different rules of inheritance permitted, subject to this allegiance in the same way as England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland?[34] Moreover, the short- and medium-term consequences of the war produced additional territories, whose residents were placed in uncertain legal positions or spent periods under effective British control without acquiring rights, sometimes leaving curious legacies like the Nelson estate in Sicily.[35]

In a long-term perspective, yet another ambivalence emerges. The key normative respatialization of the French revolutionary era was doubtless the imagination of a space, defined in geographical terms, where the equality of rights among citizens was obtained. In this vision, foreigners were a problematic group. They could either be imagined as citizens-to-be, that is to say individuals who would adjust in ways that would ultimately pave the way for equality. Alternatively, they could be seen as visitors who entered the country to conduct business or for other reasons but whose ties to the national space were so tenuous that they did not need to be defined further. In the nineteenth century, however, this fragile link had its limits when it came to property – generally speaking, aliens' property rights were respected and enforced, and the protection of citizens' property rights was considered an important aspect of states' foreign policy. Finally, foreigners could appear as individuals of dubious loyalty, who were likely to place their own nation first and who thus had to be subject to surveillance, particularly in times of crisis.

Over time, suspicion of foreigners waxed and waned, and the treatment of enemy aliens in wartime differed from conflict to conflict – albeit with a general tendency to improve after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and to deteriorate once again in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ultimately, however, respatialization tended to replace the uncertainty of Ancien Régime distinctions with a division between citizens and aliens, division that was often blurred in practice but which remained a key point of reference. Perhaps the

**34** T. Riotte, "Die 'Stepney Election Petition': Britische Staatsbürgerschaft und die Personalunion vor Gericht", in: S. Graf, R. Rößner, and G. Steinwascher (eds.), *Archiv und Landesgeschichte: Festschrift für Christine van den Heuvel*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018, pp. 297–307.

**35** L. Riall, *Under the Volcano: Revolution in a Sicilian Town*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

fundamental importance of this normative shift is both particularly relevant and particularly visible today.

For example, regardless of its ultimate outcomes, Brexit shows that the respatialization of citizenship rights in multilevel systems of governance can prove precarious when its basis – the fundamental equality of territories that form a "union" – is suddenly called into question, an experience possibly not unlike the bureaucratic aftermath of the collapse of the Napoleonic empire, which rendered economic, political, and residence rights uncertain in the course of a process of rapid respatialization that left issues unresolved until well into the 1840s. And a recent process of respatialization and refortification not of cities but of entire countries harks back to some of the issues raised during the transition from corporate to territory-based rights. Some present-day states apparently find that, as they cannot restrict those rights on legal or normative grounds, they can use the link between rights and territory formulated in the 1790s to deny rights by denying access. Clearly, respatialization has come a long way, but many issues related to the revolutionary respatialization of citizenship are still with us.

Laura di Fiore

# 11 The Respatialization of Italy between French Republics and Napoleonic Domination

## Italy in the French Orbit: Rethinking an Encounter

The French Revolution is a historical process that had the power to shape a global moment, understood as a shared temporal framework during which events, effects, and transformations contemporaneously happened/spread/were performed. This shared character immediately invokes, beside the temporal dimension, the spatial one, recalling a global space. Undoubtedly, the French Revolution and Napoleonic domination produced a global space of action, ranging from the European territories involved in a multitude of ways in the revolutionary and Napoleonic system to its reverberations between the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Italy was part of this global space, firstly with the Jacobin republics and then with its almost complete incorporation, though in different forms, into the Napoleonic power structure.

The decision to consider the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods as distinct parts of a unique chronology is – besides an emphasis on the continuity between the two experiences, particularly evident in the Italian case[1] – due to the consideration of this temporal timespan as a pivotal caesura for the history of the Italian peninsula, namely the term *a quo* to rethink the opening of nineteenth-century modernization and the long *Risorgimento* (unification) beyond nationalistic logics.[2]

Respatialization turns out to be an effective lens to shed light on the crucial transformations of this passage in the Italian peninsula. One of the central points of the revolutionary and Napoleonic projects was undoubtedly a new management of the territory. The French Revolution, with its principles of juridical egalitarianism and centralization of public power in national sovereignty, led to the transition from a fragmented and heterogeneous space characteristic of the jurisdictional and institutional pluralism of Ancien Régime

**1** A. De Francesco, *L'Italia di Bonaparte. Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796–1821*, Torino: Utet, 2011. On this point, see A.M. Rao, "Napoleonic Italy: Old and New Trends in Historiography", in: U. Planert (ed.), *Napoleon's Empire. European Politics in Global Perspective*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

**2** See A.M. Banti et al. (eds.), *Atlante culturale del Risorgimento*, Rome: Laterza, 2011.

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to a homogeneous, plain space reflecting the new kind of relationships between equal citizens and the unique state power focused on state territory. This new spatial framework was the central element of the Napoleonic administrative state. In fact, if the citizens lost the opportunity to participate politically – becoming more similar to subjects in continuity, nonetheless, with the revolutionary institutional design – they were destined to live not more among multiple spaces of power, but rather in a compact territory mirroring the even more centralized power and the administrative action of the new state.

Particularly, the interior administrative design, pivoting on the *département* (department), was decidedly "the premise of Napoleonic 'administrative revolution'",[3] which created a basic territorial unit from which the prefect could guarantee the dissemination of central power to the peripheral areas of a hierarchically organized territory. Destined to have a lasting effect on the future of Italian spatiality, the departmentalization of Italy has not been the object of a systematic analysis. Nevertheless, this topic has received increasing attention in the last years. The department has been the central territorial unit in the imposing *Atlante storico dell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica*, in which, besides thematic maps and analyses, one of the preeminent aims of the cartographic work has been the very production of a georeferenced map showing all the departments in French Italy.[4] Moreover, some works on specific areas (as will be shown) have quite recently analysed the dynamics involved in the creation processes of the departments in geohistorical and institutional perspectives.

The departmentalization process can now be read in an enriched perspective, in light of the special attention that has been devoted by historiography in recent years to the spatial dimension, in the framework of the "spatial turn movement".[5] Absolute, Cartesian space has been reconceptualized as unable to be independent of the social action from which it is constantly produced. This constructivist perspective has therefore made a sharp break with an essentialist view of spatiality, which had given shape, on the one hand, to a "spatial determinism", in which physical space was perceived as a generator of historical phenomena, and, on the other hand, to "methodological territorialism", based

**3** C. Lucrezio Monticelli, *Roma seconda città dell'Impero. La conquista napoleonica dell'Europa mediterranea*, Rome: Viella, 2018, p. 61.

**4** M.P. Donato et al. (eds.), *Atlante storico dell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica*, Rome: École française de Rome, 2013.

**5** B. Warf and S. Arias (eds.), *The spatial turn: interdisciplinary perspectives*, New York: Routledge, 2009.

on an extreme rigidity of spaces, taken as independent data from the analysed phenomena.[6] To consider space as a social and political product does not imply limiting the analysis to extra-institutional spaces, traced by social practices of the same space. The constructivist perspective of the spatial turn can fruitfully be applied in order to deconstruct and reinterpret the territorialization processes performed by state power as well as to investigate the relations between institutional and extra-institutional spaces.[7] Adopting this perspective mainly means to focus on historical processes of the production of institutional designs, emphasizing the role played by institutional and social actors, with their desire and their capacity to negotiate spatial configurations.[8] Moreover, the centrality of this processual character and of the social actors' role are at the centre of analyses in contemporary border studies, mainly carried out by geographers and anthropologists.[9] The ethnographic approach to borders – focusing on the interaction between state and local communities as well as its interpretation as "highly dynamic" "spatial and social phenomena"[10] – also proves to be useful in the investigation of internal borders.

**6** E. Langthaler, "Orte in Beziehung. Mikrogeschichte nach dem Spatial Turn", *Storia e regione* 21 (2012) 1–2, pp. 27–42.

**7** M. Middell and K. Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization", *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010) 1, pp. 149–170; S. Dorsch, "Space/Time Practices and the Production of Space and Time. An Introduction", in: S. Dorsch and S. Rau (eds.), Special Issue Space/Time Practices, *Historical Social Research* 38 (2013) 3, pp. 7–21; M.G. Müller and C. Torp, "Conceptualising transnational spaces in history", *European Review of History* 16 (2009) 5, pp. 609–617.

**8** In Italian historiography see A. Torre, *Luoghi. La produzione di località in età moderna e contemporanea*, Rome: Donzelli, 2011; B. Salvemini, *Il territorio sghembo. Forme e dinamiche degli spazi umani in età moderna*, Bari: Edipuglia, 2006; L. Di Fiore and M. Meriggi (eds.), *Movimenti e confini. Spazi mobili nell'Italia preunitaria*, Rome: Viella, 2013; M. Meriggi, *Racconti di confine. Nel Mezzogiorno del Settecento*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016; L. Di Fiore, *Alla frontiera. Confini e documenti di identità nel Mezzogiorno continentale preunitario*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2103.

**9** See the syntheses: T.M. Wilson and H. Donnan (eds.), *A Companion to Border Studies*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell 2012; D. Wastl-Walter (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, Farnham: Ashgate: 2011. On the intersection of border studies and the spatial turn in history see L. Di Fiore, "The Production of Borders in Nineteenth-century Europe: Between Institutional Boundaries and Transnational Practices of Space", *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* 24 (2017) 1, pp. 36–57; L. Di Fiore, "Border Studies und Global History. Grenzen als Gegenstand einer transnationalen Untersuchung", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 95 (2016) 1, pp. 397–411.

**10** D. Wastl-Walter, "Introduction", in: Wastl-Walter (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, pp. 1–9.

Finally, the analysis of French spatialization allows Italian history to be better understood in the framework of global history, moving beyond the view of an imperial history inclining to read administrative and territorial transformations in terms of a mere imposition, as a form of "cultural imperialism".[11] The global scope of the French Revolution has to be instead identified as providing an impulse to events extending across different part of the world, where the French impact generated connections and exchanges and where, in the cases of French political domination, transformations and foreign political, institutional, and cultural models confronted local needs, paradigms, and agencies. The focus on agency can indeed be considered a common trait of new imperial and global history, interpreting domination and imperial encounters – even if unequal in power relationships – in terms of exchanges and hybridization rather than of unilateral impositions.

In this context, this chapter analyses how the process of departmentalization developed in revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy. In France, as major works have effectively shown,[12] the project of territorial reshaping dates back to the project advanced within the National Assembly on 29 September 1789 by Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès and Jacques-Guillaume Thouret. The project was based on principles of territorial rationalization, founded on natural unities aimed at homogeneity and complementarity, and on meeting administrative needs. The role of rivers, mountains, as well as cities turned out to be pivotal.

First with the spreading revolution followed by Napoleonic conquest, departmentalization was extended to sister republics and Napoleonic Europe, triggering various reactions among local communities. This process was actually not different from what happened outside of France. In France, for example, thousands of petitions were addressed to the National Assembly from local people and communities defending the previous order, suggesting alternative

**11** M. Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814: Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. For a discussion of this thesis, see L. Antonielli, "L'Italia di Napoleone: tra imposizione e assimilazione di modelli istituzionali", in: M. Bellabarba et al. (eds.), *Gli imperi dopo l'Impero nell'Europa del XIX secolo*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, pp. 409–431; and for a recostruction of the debate see M. Meriggi, "Costituzioni antiche e narrazioni orientalistiche. Dal Sette all'Ottocento", *Storica* 15 (2009) 43–45, pp. 209–255.

**12** M.-V. Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements. La représentation du territoire français à la fin du 18e siècle*, Paris: EHESS, 1989; M. Ozouf, "Dipartimento", in: F. Furet and M. Ozouf (eds.), *Dizionario critico della Rivoluzione francese*, vol. 2, *Creazioni e istituzioni, idee*, Milano: Bompiani, 1994, pp. 498–507; S. Bonin et al. (eds.), *Atlas de la Révolution française*, Tome 4, *Le territoire*, vol. 1, *Réalités et représentations*, Paris: EHESS, 1989.

natural configurations, or trying to take advantage of the territorial redrawing.[13] These dynamics were not so different from the ones set in motion in French Napoleonic Europe. Studies on departmentalization processes carried out in other contexts are not numerous, especially with a focus that brings together both institutional-administrative and geographical perspectives.[14] Nevertheless, they uncover the multifaceted reactions emerging from this new spatial configuration, with an extra element, that is to say the presence of a foreign power in a context of conquest. This implied, firstly, a confrontation between different politico-institutional and cultural patterns and, secondly, an environment of unbalanced power relationships.

As regards French respatialization in Italy, it developed into a complex framework comprising the interaction, on the one hand, between foreign administrative actions and local population, and, on the other hand, between the French imported administrative models and pre-existing ongoing local processes. It seems plausible to advance the hypothesis that the Italian case could be considered emblematic of what happened in the rest of revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe, even with local and contextual variants, as further studies could highlight. My analysis will start from the south of Italy, followed by the insertion of this case into a broader Italian context, focusing on the Piedmont and the Roman areas.

## In the South: The Neapolitan Republic and the Kingdom of Naples

In the Kingdom of Naples, the moment of respatialization brought about by the French Revolution consisted of two stages: the Neapolitan Republic – lasting just 6 months, proclaimed in January 1799 and suppressed in June in the same year – and the Napoleonic domination during the Napoleonic Decennio,

**13** Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements*; T.W. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

**14** On departmentalization in Europe, see in particular S. Dubois, *La revolution géographique en Belgique: départementalisation, administration et representation du territoire de la fin du XVIIIe au début du XIXe siècle*, Bruxelles: Académie Royale de Belgique, 2008; see also, in some regards, P. Horne, *Le défi de l'enracinement napoléonien entre Rhin et Meuse, 1810–1814. L'opinion publique dans les départements de la Roër, de l'Ourthe, des Forêts et de la Moselle*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2016.

namely 10 years between 1806 and 1815 when Giuseppe Bonaparte and Gioacchino Murat governed the kingdom.

The Neapolitan Republic immediately turned to the question of reorganizing the provinces in the kingdom, with the issuing of laws regarding provincial administration on 9 February 1799. Particularly, the "Departments Law" provided an organic and rationalized administrative system, in which 11 departments substituted the previous 12 provinces and were subdivided into cantons, which in turn were composed of municipalities.[15] The new departments were assigned, as elsewhere in French Jacobin Europe, names of rivers, mountains, or other relevant natural elements.[16]

The "Bassal" Law (from the name Jean Bassal, who was among the French politicians who managed the first phases of the organization of the republic alongside the General Jean-Étienne Vachier Championnet) immediately raised criticism of and protests against this reorganization; as a result, on 25 April 1799 a new law restored the previous provincial design – except for retaining the new Province of Naples, raising the total of number of provinces to 13. Pietro Colletta, lieutenant general and historian, noted that the law changed,

> the ancient names of remembered memory with new names. In this law, the rivers, the mountains, the forests, the natural elements were capriciously put into departments and cantons and sometimes communities. The names were mistaken; a mountain was supposed to be a city and made district capital, the territory of a community subdivided in two cantons, some rivers were considered as two, some lands were forgotten.[17]

This criticism of the "artificial" character of the new territorial order disapproved of such an establishment without any respect for the existent order of space[18]; for the lived experiences in the case of communities divided (as we

**15** A.M. Rao, *La Repubblica napoletana del 1799*, Roma: New Compton, 1997.

**16** Bradano, Crati, Garigliano, Idro, Ofanto, Pescara, Sagra, Sangro, Sele, Volturno, Vesuvio.

**17** "i nomi per altri antichi di memorata memoria. In esso i fiumi, le montagne, le foreste, i termini di natura, si vedevano capricciosamente messi nel seno dei dipartimenti o dei cantoni e talvolta delle comunità: scambiati i nomi; creduto città un monte e fatto capo di cantone, il territorio di una comunità spartito in due cantoni, certi fiumi addoppiati, scordate certe terre." P. Colletta, *Storia del Reame di Napoli dal 1734 al 1825*, 3 vol., Napoli: Libreria Scientifica, 1951: vol. 2, p. 13.

**18** Similarly to what happened in the Cisalpina, Roman and Ligurian Republics. A. Spagnoletti, "La costruzione di un nuovo spazio amministrativo: il Mezzogiorno continentale tra 1799 e 1816", in: G. Giarrizzo and E. Iachello (eds.), *Le mappe della storia. Proposte per una cartografia del Mezzogiorno e della Sicilia in età moderna*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2002, pp. 65–73.

have seen) in different cantons; or for people's memory of the space and its names. Therefore, the contrast seemed to be between a state/administrative/rational territorialization – performed from above without a real knowledge of the territory itself – and a social/rooted/perceived conception of space.

The spatial internal configuration of the Neapolitan territory was considered such a central issue that Vincenzo Cuoco, in his famous *Saggio storico sulla Rivoluzione napoletana*, considered the reform an example of the gap between the "two peoples" in the Neapolitan Revolution: the one (the elite) engaged in imposing foreign principles and models on the other one (the populace), the latter being unable to comprehend French paradigms and politics, without any consideration for the peculiarities of Neapolitan culture and social order. In this context, Cuoco strongly stated that "[t]his man [Bassal] who had no knowledge of our territory, made of it an impracticable, ridiculous division. A traveller who from the top of a mountain drew in the night the valleys under him not having ever seen it wouldn't have done more inept work."[19] Accordingly, if

> the nature had divided the territory of our republic, then the nature indicated the departments; the population, physical and economic relationships between places must indicate the centrals [le centrali] and the cantons. Instead of that, intersecting departments cutting each other were seen; the people of province of Puglia saw themselves belonging to the provinces of Abruzzi; many cantons had no population, while others had too much population.[20]

In this context, the nature as well as the social and economic networks of the spaces clashed with the geometric cuts performed by revolutionary administrators, accused of ignoring the natural and social make-up of the territory. And again, particular attention was devoted to the change of the existent names, with Cuoco judging that "most revolutions had unfortunate results for the excessive intemperance of changing the names of the things".[21]

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**19** "*Quest'uomo [Bassal] il quale non avea veruna cognizione del nostro territorio, ne fece una divisione ineseguibile, ridicola. Un viaggiatore che dalla cima di un monte disegni di notte le valli sottoposte, che egli non abbia giammai vedute, non può far opera più inetta.*" V. Cuoco, *Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione di Napoli*, Milano: Dalla Tipografia Milanese in Strada Nuova, 1801, pp. 118–119.

**20** *"la natura avea diviso il territorio della nostra repubblica"*, then *"la natura indicava i dipartimenti: la popolazione, i rapporti fisici ed economici de luoghi doveano indicare le centrali, ed i cantoni. In vece di ciò si videro dipartimenti che s'incrociavano, che si tagliavano a vicenda; (. . .) le popolazioni della Puglia si videro appartenere agli Apruzzi; (. . .) molti cantoni non aveano popolazione, mentre moltissimi ne aveano soverchia."* Cuoco, *Saggio storico*, p. 119.

**21** *"il maggior numero delle rivoluzioni ha avuto un esito infelice per la soverchia intemperanza di cangiare i nomi delle cose."* Cuoco, *Saggio storico*. p. 118.

The issue of the names, recurring both in Colletta's and Cuoco's opinions, is very significant, as the name is one of the distinctive elements of "territory" (connected with sovereignty) compared to "space" (connected with social life), according to Daniel Nordman, where the territory's "institutionalization, appropriation, and power are at stake".[22] Therefore, naming is an expression and even a symbol of institutionalization. Nevertheless, at the same time, as the two authors stated, the names of territories were also central to people's relation to the space, symbolizing belonging and identity. The reason for this is that those names, even though rooted in an ancient memory, did not express a natural or purely social organization of space, but rather a different order of spatial organization produced by a different pattern of "institutionalization", "appropriation", exercise of "power" – or, better, of a plurality of powers[23] – characteristic of the Ancien Régime order. Accordingly, the oppositions – space vs. territory, or nature vs. administrative rationalization, or lived space vs. state space – have evidently to be nuanced.

To begin with, was the project of redrawing the provincial order imposed completely from the outside and alien to Neapolitan culture and needs? Not exactly. Giuseppe Maria Galanti cannot be viewed as the man on the top of the mountain drawing valleys in the night described by Cuoco. In the 1780s, Galanti, an economist among the major representatives of the Neapolitan Enlightenment, was given the governmental task of investigating the natural composition and economic situation of the kingdom. After his general visit of the provinces in 1792, he suggested the need to redraw the provincial design of the kingdom. His proposal consisted of a reduction of 12 provinces into 5 departments, each of which would become a seat of civil justice and fiscal, police, and economic administration. Even then, the state secretaries, except for Lord Acton, aggressively responded to this proposal, which they considered "sacrilege", being "disgusted" by Galanti's "dangerous ideas".[24] However, this proposal, similar to the others emerging in the last 20 years of the eighteenth century, did not materialize.

The main problem concerned the discontinuity of the power characteristic of the state territory, mainly due to the feudal order as well as the power structures of some universities,[25] so that the *Udienze* – territorial bodies in charge of

**22** "enjeu d'une institutionnalisation, d'une appropriation, d'un pouvoir". D. Nordman, "Territoire", in: C. Gauvard and J.F. Sirinelli (eds.), *Dictionnaire de l'historien*, Paris: PUF, 2015, p. 698.

**23** M. Meriggi, *Gli stati italiani prima dell'Unità,* Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011, p. 34.

**24** G.M. Galanti, *Testamento Forense*, Venezia 1806, vol. 1, pp. 258–270.

**25** A.M. Rao, *L'amaro della feudalità. La devoluzione di Arnone e la questione feudale a Napoli alla fine del Settecento*, Napoli: Guida, 1984.

judicial and administrative functions on behalf of the central government – were just one power among others and moreover were not in charge of a capillary territorial coverage.[26] The abolition of feudalism, attempted by the brief experience of the republican revolution and then performed in the Napoleonic Decennio, created the conditions to put into action a territorial reconfiguration in line with local projects from the late eighteenth century, when the synergy between an emerging middle class and a significant group of Enlightenment philosophers stimulated a rethinking of the relation between government and territory. Therefore, the "Departments Law" – more than a foreign initiative from above or alien to the local context, even though with some poor choices – was established in an evolving process propelled by the late eighteenth-century reformists, increasingly conscious of the problems connected with a fragmented territory characterized by the compresence of multiple powers.

Maybe this fragmentation was one of the causes of the weak sense of identity developed in the province since the sixteenth century, as the province played a very secondary role in the lives of people. And until 1806, internal administrative districts remained a very fragile pattern.[27] The quick suppression of the Bassal spatial design also prevented the inherent political project. The revolutionary design of the territory was indeed intended to build, along with an administrative space, a political identity space. As Ozouf-Marignier shows, based on the assumption of a geographic determinism, the departmentalization aimed at creating new forms of social organization related to space and territoriality. The final goal was the construction of a new sociopolitical order – representative democracy – through a new configuration of the territory, favouring the overlapping of spatial and social relations and identities. In particular, the departmentalization created new spaces for local identities, acting as a vehicle for a national feeling.[28] As a dowel of a wider national conscience, a sense of belonging was expected to develop within the department, creating an "*esprit*

**26** A. Spagnoletti, "Nel Regno di Napoli. Dal potere diffuso alla centralizzazione," in: G. Giarrizzo and E. Iachello (eds.), *Per un atlante storico del Mezzogiorno e della Sicilia in età moderna: omaggio a Bernard Lepetit*, Napoli: Liguori, 1998, pp. 66–67. See also Spagnoletti, "Nuovo spazio amministrativo".

**27** Ibid.

**28** M.-V. Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements. La représentation du territoire français à la fin du 18e siècle*, Paris: EHESS, 1989; M.-V. Ozouf-Marignier, "Centralisation et lien social: le débat de la première moitié du XIXème siècle en France", in: G. Giarrizzo and E. Iachello (eds.), *Per un atlante storico*, pp. 75–91, at p. 76.

*départemental*",[29] an expression of the power of the territorial design aimed to substitute previous forms of social organization and to produce social cohesion.[30]

In the Kingdom of Naples, for this new spatial identity "feeling" it would have been necessary to wait for Napoleonic domination, which promoted the reorganization of the administrative provincial territory. Emperor Napoleon commended, among his first instructions to Giuseppe Bonaparte (his older brother), "do not waste a moment in dividing your territory into *intendances* or *prefectures*".[31] *Intendenza*, corresponding to North Italian "department", was the name of the highest territorial form at a provincial level within the country's hierarchical structure, with its lower subdivisions comprising districts and municipalities. Parallel to these government organs, there were central, provincial, and municipal councils, even though, as mentioned above, in the Napoleonic era the promises of freedom and representation were put aside in favour of the primacy of the executive power.[32] Undoubtedly, the administrative reform issued by the Law of 8 August 1806 reproduced the French system established with the Law of 17 February 1800, expressing a more decisive centralization of the power after the fall of the Directory.

Nevertheless, Armando De Martino, in his important study on Napoleonic *intendenze*, investigates how the king's councillors, like Edouard Lefebvre and Jean-Marie Alquier, highlighted, even in memoirs, the existence of the important legacy of reform projects proposed and discussed in the last decades of the eighteenth century. In particular, the knowledge of the unique social and territorial fabric of the kingdom had to be based on the analyses carried out by the some of the most distinguished European Enlightenment intellectuals, namely the Neapolitan Giuseppe Maria Galanti, with the "description" already presented, and Antonio Genovesi, Gaetano Filangieri, and Mario Pagano, with their projects for a radical reform of the kingdom and its power structure.[33] This is an important point, showing how, also in regard to administrative and territorial reform, the Napoleonic government in Naples moved in many respects in

**29** Ozouf-Marignier, "Centralisation et lien social", p. 77. The quotation is from a document produced in 1807 by the prefect of the Department Loir-et-Cher.

**30** Ibid., p. 81. This essay pointed out the centrality of this issue in France for a significant part of nineteenth century, reconstructing its inheritance in post-revolutionary period.

**31** "[N]e perdez pas un moment pour diviser votre territoire en [...] intendances or prefectures." Correspondence de Napoléon, 8 March 1806, quoted in: A. De Martino, *La nascita delle Intendenze. Problemi dell'amministrazione periferica nel regno di Napoli*, Napoli: Jovene editore, 1984, p. 11.

**32** Meriggi, *Gli stati italiani*.

**33** De Martino, *Intendenze*, pp. 27–36.

line with eighteenth-century reformism. John Davis, in particular, suggestively emphasizes how in this "Mediterranean Kingdom", becoming "the southern frontier of the Empire",[34] the shattering reforms introduced were in many respects based on, and shaped by, forces coming "from below" in terms of both specific and contingent needs within the Neapolitan context as well as of pre-existing ideas and processes of transformation oriented in a direction similar to the one traced by the *Grande Nation*'s "modernizing mission".[35]

The provincial design, before its implementation in August 1806, was an object of discussion in the Consiglio di Stato (Council of State) during four sessions held the month prior.[36] In the debate, two different positions arose, the one suggesting a reduction of the existent provinces and the other one inclining to preserve the traditional order.[37] Finally – in contrast with what happened in the Kingdom of Italy – the latter position secured more consent, as it was judged more prudent not to introduce too many novelties in a moment of significant change, deferring possible modifications to future, calmer times.[38] The issue of the preserved traditional 12 provinces (with the addition of the Province of Naples) was scrutinized by Giuseppe Zurlo, one of the representatives of eighteenth-century reformism at the court of Murat, in his report on the results of financial and administrative order. As for the territorial subdivision, once again Zurlo highlighted that for a kingdom completely divided by the Apennine Mountains a division more based on natural considerations would be better. Nonetheless, he called attention to how the changes to existent *circonscriptions* (administrative districts), "always face the resistance by existing relations and already formed habits, which have overcome the obstacles of localities".[39]

**34** J. Davis, *Napoli e Napoleone. L'Italia meridionale e le rivoluzioni europee (1780–1860)*, 2nd ed., Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino 2014, p. 7.

**35** Ibid., esp. pp. 261–298. For a broad analysis of these processes, see A.M. Rao, *Lumi Riforme Rivoluzione. Percorsi storiografici*, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e letteratura, 2011.

**36** As the State Council's document was unfortunately burnt in Naples during the Second World War, the source to reconstruct these debates is the report by Capecelatro, president of the interior section, to the king.

**37** De Martino, *Intendenze*. The second one had been suggested, with the first instructions, by Emperor Napoleon himself.

**38** Nevertheless, some difficulties arose in the definition of borders, for examples in the case of Capitanata and Molise, see S. Russo, "Difficili confini: Capitanata e Molise nel Decennio francese", in: S. Russo, *All'ombra di Murat. Studi e ricerche sul Decennio francese,* Bari: Edipuglia, 2007, pp. 115–134. More problematic, however, was the internal definition of the provinces in districts.

**39** "incontrano sempre la resistenza delle relazioni già formate, e degli abiti contratti, i quali hanno vinto gli ostacoli delle località". G. Zurlo, *Rapporto sullo stato del Regno di Napoli per*

For that reason, he judged that it was preferable "to sacrifice a part of the natural symmetry and of the future possible comfort, to the present convenience and to the preservation of the system to which the peoples are accustomed".[40] The existent design, rather than natural, was the product of relations developed in previous institutional contexts, so that, in this case, the real opposition was between a geographical criterion and a sociohistorical one. The reform of 4 May 1811 followed this latter criterion, limiting change to just the network of districts, delaying once again the subdivision of the provinces. Accordingly, the choice was to make the administrative space coincident with the identity space drawn by the social practice and memory of the local population.

But in fact, the historical provinces maintained little more than just their names. Even on the basis of a compromise, the Napoleonic provinces were constructed, for the first time, as primarily administrative spaces, provided with state bureaucracies and representative organs. These administrative spaces gradually developed a new sense of identity connected with a new perception and practice of the territory. As Spagnoletti identifies, the correspondence between the "province-culture" and "the province administrative district", helped by the compromise for a formal continuity with the past, was based on the formation of a new elite selected through parameters defined at the provincial level (census and professional profile) and recognizing itself as the new administrative standard.[41]

An example of the production of identity spaces emerging from one's administrative identification is the centrality of the provincial unit for the "identification revolution". Through the universal obligation for all people to receive identity and travel cards, a completely new relationship between people, space, and power was established during the Napoleonic period.[42] Control over

*gli anni 1810 e 1811 presentato al Re nel suo Consiglio di Stato dal Ministro dell'Interno il 20 aprile 1812*, Napoli: Tipografia di Angelo Trani, 1812, pp. 8–9.

**40** "sacrificare una parte della simmetria naturale e del comodo futuro possibile, al comodo attuale e alla conservazione del sistema a cui I popoli sono accostumati". Ibid.

**41** Spagnoletti, *Nel Regno di Napoli*, pp. 71–73. It was, of course, just a part of the story. The subjects disadvantaged by the administrative reform, firstly the local elites previously ruling in the context of autonomuos municipalities, would have still protested years later, in 1820/21. A. Spagnoletti, "Il controllo degli intendenti sulle amministrazioni locali nel Regno di Napoli", in: Istituto per la scienza dell'amministrazione pubblica (ed.), *L'amministrazione nella storia moderna*, vol. 1, Milano: Giuffrè, 1985, pp. 953–960.

**42** Within the rich literature on this topic see at least I. About and V. Denis, *Histoire de l'identification des personnes*, Paris: La Découverte, 2010; I. About, J.R. Brown, and G. Lonergan, *People, Papers and Practices. Identification and Registration Practices in Transnational Perspective*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; L. Antonielli (ed.), *Procedure, metodi,*

internal mobility, that is to say moving within the kingdom, was introduced. A different document was needed depending on the distance covered and the borders crossed. A *carta di sicurezza* (security card) was issued by the mayor and stamped by the royal judge for those travelling outside the district, and a *carta di permanenza* (residence card) was, at the same time, required for those wishing to extend their absence for more than eight days. Those who wanted to cross the border of their own province had to obtain an internal passport issued by the highest authority at the provincial level, the intendant. In a first phase, the function of internal passport was performed by the *carta di ricognizione*, a sort of identity card prescribed in March 1808 by Giuseppe Bonaparte for all male inhabitants over 12 years old. Significantly, the pattern of the *carta di ricognizione* was different in its form for every province, maybe in order to immediately show the origin of the traveller.[43] Therefore, both the specific form for every province and, later, the prescription of a more binding document (as requested directly by the police) to cross the provincial borders concurred with producing a specific provincial space, recognizing its peculiarities from an administrative point of view and destined to be perceived in a new way also within the mental maps of individuals.

In this way, if the social fabric developed in previous institutional spaces remained the structure for the new administrative design, then provinces were in fact assigned new functions and meanings. And these substantially new spatial units produced new social practices and a new identity space. In this regard, Ozouf-Marignier's consideration of space and society as "in turn product and producers of each other" is very important.[44]

It is thus evident how, rather than in terms of a contrast between a cultural/presumably natural/social spaces and an administrative/artificial/geometric territory, the introduction of Napoleonic designs was the result of a confrontation between, on the one hand, previous reform projects and, on the other hand, the population's needs and forms of identification. This may also be based on the memory of the failed attempts in republican times. Nonetheless, it was also input for new and further developments as regards spatial practices and identity also shaped by the Napoleonic system of relationships between people and territory through the complex architecture of bureaucracies and representative bodies.

*strumenti per l'identificazione delle persone e per il controllo del territorio*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2014.

**43** Di Fiore, *Alla frontiera*.

**44** Ozouf-Marignieri, "Centralisation et lien social", p. 78.

## The Annexed Departments: From Turin to Rome

The respatialization of southern Italy in Jacobin and Napoleonic years can be placed into the wider context of the Italian peninsula. These French territorial reforms represented a strong caesura for Italy's spatial order, reflecting the drastic change in the relationship between space and power performed on the basis of revolutionary principles. This common experience brought the different parts of the fragmented peninsula nearer together in a seminal process of "uniformation", which does not mean homogeneity or unification.[45] If an embryonic form of "unity" in Italy – even though not projected towards political unification – was realized on an institutional level,[46] the reshaping of territory was undoubtedly a crucial aspect of it. By 1811, almost the entire Italian peninsula exhibited an administrative design based on French-style departments.[47] Nonetheless, the multiple parts of Italy – different in natural aspects, diverse in political order, and experiencing various events – present peculiarities that require specific studies to be inserted into a framework for comparative analysis.[48] Even though a systematic analysis of French departmentalization in Italy has not yet been carried out, in recent years some historians and geographers have focused on this topic.[49]

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**45** Donato et al. (eds.), *Atlante storico dell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica*, p. XI.

**46** L. Mannori, "Unità", in: Banti et al. (eds.), *Atlante culturale*, pp. 372–388.

**47** See the map in Donato et al. (eds.), *Atlante storico dell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica*, p. 43; A. Spagnoletti, "Amministrazione", in: L.M. Migliorini (ed.), *Italia napoleonica. Dizionario critico*, Torino: Utet, 2011, pp. 3–24.

**48** F. Galluccio, "Il découpage nel Lazio (1789–1814). Riflessi geografici e ideologici", *Quaderni meridionali*, 32 (2001), pp. 2–29; M.L. Sturani, "Introduction", in: M.L. Sturani (ed.), *Dinamiche storiche e problemi attuali della maglia istituzionale in Italia. Saggi di Geografia amministrativa*, Alessandria: Dell'Orso, 2001, pp. 1–11.

**49** Beside the mentioned *Atlante storico dell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica*, see P. Aimo, "Territorio e istituzioni nell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica: la creazione del dipartimento", *Storia amministrazione costituzione* 11 (2003), pp. 253–63; F. Bonini, "L'orizzonte politico-istituzionale vicino: la nascita delle circoscrizioni provinciali in Italia", *Storia amministrazione costituzione* 11 (2003), pp. 265–309; S. Mori, "Territorio e istituzioni: uno sguardo alla preistoria della provincia italiana", in: A. Corbellini and G. Angelini (eds.), L*e istituzioni storiche dell'Unità. Gli organismi territoriali di Valtellina e Valchiavenna e la provincia di Sondrio*, Sondrio: Società Storica Valtellinese, 2014, pp. 5–33. For Piemonte see M.L. Sturani, "La réorganisation des espaces administratifs à la périphérie de l'Empire napoléonien: le cas du Piémont (1798–1814)", *Revue de Géographie historique* 5 (2014), pp. 1–11; M.L. Sturani, "Innovazioni e resistenze nella trasformazione della maglia amministrativa piemontese durante il periodo francese (1798–1814): la creazione dei dipartimenti ed il livello comunale", in: Sturani (ed.), *Dinamiche storiche*, pp. 89–118; M.L. Sturani, "Riforme della maglia amministrativa e spazi sociali locali nel Piemonte napoleonico", in: L. Di Fiore and M. Meriggi (eds.),

In this section, I juxtapose the Neapolitan case with the annexed departments, particularly in Piedmont and Rome, relying on new studies intertwining history with administrative geography. To begin with, these departments had a different status after the republican phase – as part of the so-called "inner empire" – and were directly incorporated into the imperial Napoleonic fabric. Nevertheless, several processes show commonalties with aspects observed in the satellite Kingdom of Naples.

Considering the Piedmont space, the 22 Savoy provinces were reshaped into 4 large departments – Éridan (Torino as the capital city), Sésia (Vercelli), Stura (Mondovi), and Tanaro (Alessandria) – after the collapse of the provisory government in April 1799. Notwithstanding the brief timespan it was in force (amounting to only a few months), during this first experience with departmentalization the use of the names of rivers, recalling the concept of natural borders, was purely instrumental. It served "a symbolic function for legitimizing the new power. It marked a clear break with the Savoy tradition rather than a knowledge or a real willingness to adhere to the articulation of Piedmont river basins".[50]

Similarly, in the Jacobin Roman Republic the project realized by Gaspard Monge divided the territory into 8 departments: Tevere (Roma), Cimino (Viterbo), Circeo (Anagni), and Clitunno (Spoleto). Nevertheless, the names of natural elements often had no real correspondence with border lines, which in some cases tended to deviate from river courses for pre-existing routes more compatible with the exploitation of resources and the functionality of watersheds.[51] Although not always "natural" in reality, the borderlines of the French department were neither necessarily established according to the declared geometric criterion of having a capital city in the centre to favour exchanges and

*Movimenti e confini*, pp. 93–107; S.J. Woolf, "Frontiere entro la frontiera: il Piemonte sotto il governo napoleonico", in: C. Ossola, C. Raffestin and M. Ricciardi (eds.), *La frontiera da Stato a nazione. Il caso Piemonte*, Rome: Bulzoni, 1987, pp. 171–181. For Tuscany, see L. Rombai, "Amministrazione e territorio nella Toscana moderna e contemporanea. La riorganizzazione della maglia provinciale e comunale tra tempi francesi e fascisti", in: Sturani (ed.), *Dinamiche storiche*, pp. 43–68. For Lombardy-Veneto, see S. Mori, "'Il giro del dipartimento'. Aspetti della relazione fra pubblica amministrazione e territorio nel Regno Italico", in: A. Di Francesco (ed.), *Da Brumaio ai Cento giorni. Cultura di governo e dissenso politico nell'Europa di Bonaparte*, Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2007, pp. 345–367; E. Pagano, *Enti locali e Stato in Italia sotto Napoleone. Repubblica e Regno d'Italia (1802–1814)*, Rome: Carocci, 2007. On the Papal area, see Lucrezio Monticelli, *Roma seconda città dell'Impero*, pp. 61–99; Galluccio, "Il découpage nel Lazio".

**50** Sturani, "Espaces administratifs".

**51** Galluccio, "Il découpage nel Lazio", pp. 11–12.

communication with the department's peripheries. For example, the choice of Anagni as the capital city of the Circeo department instead of the more central Frosinone was due to the closeness of the former to French political ideals compared to the loyalty of the latter to papal power.[52]

After the quick collapse of the Jacobin republics, the Napoleonic territorial design altered the configuration of those that would become the annexed departments. The Piedmont territory, with the transformation into the 27th French Military Division and the following annexation to the French Empire in 1802, was reshaped into 6 departments, with the addition of Dora (Ivrea) and Marengo (Alessandria).[53] Between 1801 and 1805, some limited reforms intervened to make some changes to the administrative network, with the creation of *arrondissements* (districts) and municipalities. A more fundamental project of territorial reordering that placed more power in the hands of the prefects was blocked mainly by the protests addressed to the imperial government by local institutions and actors, such as mayors, communal councils, and representative of local elite. In many cases, these petitions and protests represented forms of resistance aimed at defending privileges and, more generally, the status quo.[54] But resistance to the rationalization of the territorial design and the defence of power positions were not the only forces at play. As Maria Luisa Sturani has revealed, the petitions also expressed "alternative projects from below, trying to ride the reform to build new centralities and new circumscriptions".[55] Even in this case, the administrative design, conceived and produced from above, had to face local requests, protests, and positions and to be subjected to a moment of negotiation with these forces from below. Social actors, even in the more oppressive Napoleonic administrative structure, did not stop exercising their agency, attempting to play their part in the process of territorial construction.

Far from a mere opposition between a new rational territorial order and a previous identity space is the case of Roman departments. Already in the context of the Roman Republic, some protests related to the new departmentalization were addressed to the French government, urging it to compromise in order to gain consent. Even in this case, despite the references to the "naturality" of communities, the real interests at stake were those of the landowners, who were worried about maintaining their privileges.[56] But, again, Napoleonic departmentalization opened up new scenarios. At the moment of Napoleonic

**52** Ibid., p. 11.
**53** While Asti became the capital of the department Tanaro.
**54** S. Woolf, "Frontiere entro la frontiera".
**55** Sturani, "Maglia amministrativa e spazi sociali locali".
**56** Galluccio, "Il découpage nel Lazio", p. 24.

reconquest, in 1809, a Consulte Extraordinaire pour les Etats Romains, in charge of the administrative arrangement of the new possessions, recognized how "[t]he territorial division, which was immediately undertaken, provided the first impulse to the new order of things to be established".[57] The Roman territory was subdivided in July 1809 into two departments: Tevere (Roma) and Trasimeno (Spoleto). The decision, taken on the basis of surveys and data collected in local archives, responded, in the opinion of its main protagonist, Joseph-Marie de Gérando, both to the "circonstances geographique" (geographical circumstances) and to the "habitudes anciennes" (old habits).[58] Nonetheless, in November 1810 the borders of the two departments were rectified in the light of "several complains advanced by the municipalities".[59] In this regard, a recent study by Chiara Lucrezio Monticelli has convincingly highlighted how in the Roman departments local responses to imperial politics does not have to be read in terms of a simple opposition between two distant systems or an expression of a different culture and needs. Indeed, on the one hand, the Napoleonic territorial redefinition opened up new opportunities for the formation of new elites as well as forms of political participation[60]; on the other hand, the local administrators proved to be in favour of mediating between central instructions and principles and local influences.

## Conclusions

The combination of the Neapolitan case with the Piedmont and Roman examples leads to some final reflections. Revolutionary and Napoleonic experiences undoubtedly introduced in Italy an unprecedented relationship between space, power, and citizenship. Aware of the importance of the knowledge and control of space, French leadership deployed several means in this direction, from the setting up of cadastres to the formation of specialized corps, like the bridges and road service, establishing a tight link between administrative state and technical knowledge.[61] In this context, the impact upon cartography, with the

**57** Ibid., p. 19.

**58** Cit. in Lucrezio Monticelli, *Roma seconda città dell'Impero*, p. 85.

**59** "diversi reclami indirizzati dalli comuni". Ibid., p. 89.

**60** Ibid., pp. 62; 90–99.

**61** Meriggi, *Gli stati italiani*, pp. 74–75; L. Blanco, "Formazione e professionalizzazione dell'ingegnere 'moderno': alcune riflessioni a partire dal caso francese", in: A. Ferraresi and M. Visioli, *Formare alle professioni. Ingegneri, architetti, artisti (secc. XV–XIX)*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2012, pp. 129–152; F.M. Lo Faro, "Ingegneri, architetti, tavolari: periti 'di

establishment of military topographic offices, is very significant.[62] Moreover, the introduction of identity and travel cards was a complementary aspect of this construction of a new typology of space. The Napoleonic state introduced in almost the entire Italian peninsula a system of classification and identification of people destined to accompany, even with some modifications, the Italian states until *Risorgimento*. The registry office connected, in most cases, every single person, free from Ancien Régime corps, to a precise point of state space, the domicile one, and, along with the introduction of identity cards, created a homogeneous, egalitarian space according to the state's perspective[63] Controlling the movement of people, abolished in the first hour of the republican period, was extended during the Napoleonic era to internal movement so that the interstate space of movement mirrored the administrative one, making subjects aware, at every point, of a constant and exclusive relationship with state space in both their static and dynamic conditions.[64]

Nevertheless, the production of this undoubtedly new institutional framework turns out to be more complex if investigated in the constructivist perspective suggested by the spatial turn. As shown by the three cases analysed here, these new institutional spaces were the product of a plurality of actors and an intertwining of different factors. To begin with, the French projects were not

misura' nel Regno di Napoli fra Settecento e Ottocento", in: R. De Lorenzo (ed.), *Storia e misura, Indicatori sociali ed economici nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia (secoli XVIII–XX)*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2007, pp. 305–361; G. Bigatti, "La matrice di una nuova cultura tecnica. Storie di ingegneri, 1750–1848", in: G. Batti (ed.), *La società operosa. Milano nell'Ottocento*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000, pp. 31–89.

**62** For the topographical office in the Kingdom of Naples see V. Valerio, *Società, uomini e istituzioni cartografiche nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia*, Firenze: Istituto geografico militare, 1993; G. Brancaccio, *Geografia, cartografia e storia del Mezzogiorno*, Napoli: Guida, 1991.

**63** O. Faron, *La ville des destins croisés. Recherches sur la société milanaise du XIXe siècle*, Rome: Ecole française de Rome 1997; M. Meriggi, "La cittadinanza di carta", *Storica* 16 (2000), pp. 107–120; A. Schiaffino, "L'organizzazione e il funzionamento dello stato civile nel Regno italico (1806–1814). Problemi di utilizzazione a fini di ricerca demografica", *Cahiers internationaux d'histoire économique et sociale* 3 (1974), pp. 341–420; A. Lazzarini, "Problemi d'impianto dei servizi demografici in un'area montana: il Dipartimento della Piave", in: L. Billanovich (ed.), *Il Veneto delle periferie. Secoli XVIII e XIX*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2012, pp. 107–120.

**64** A. Geselle, "Passaporti ed altri documenti di viaggio. Modalità e controllo del movimento in territorio veneto", in: D. Calabi, *Dopo la Serenissima. Società, amministrazione e cultura nell'Ottocento veneto*, Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2001, pp. 363–381; M. Meriggi, "Sui confini dell'Italia preunitaria", in: S. Salvatici (ed.), *Confini. Costruzioni, attraversamenti, rappresentazioni*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2005, pp. 37–53; Di Fiore, *Alla frontiera*. Stefano Poggi, Ph.D. researcher at European University Institute, is carrying out research focused on the "security cards" in Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, titled "State Identity. Personal Identification in the Kingdom of Italy (1805–1814)".

totally in conflict with reform projects and cultures that had been developed locally before the revolutionary turning point. In these cases, the revolutionary and Napoleonic moment, in virtue of the fundamental principles related to national sovereignty, central power, and juridical egalitarianism, advanced the already elaborated projects or launched processes, devoting particular attention to local specificities. Moreover, French respatialization very often took into serious consideration pre-existent orders. In reality, however, these criteria were not often followed. The natural one, even though constantly invoked, was generally not realized. The reference to nature was not less rhetorical when promoted by inhabitants, as it overlapped with the dimension of a social space – made up of economic and cultural relationships solidified in rooted practices and perceptions – which was far from "natural". This social fabric of space, often claimed to be swept away by geometrical and rational administrative design, was instead dealt with by institutions in their construction of space.

It is true that it almost always occurred in a second moment, following protests and claims raised by the local population.[65] However, as we have seen, this opposition was not always present or only a way to defend rooted privileges and to reproduce an immobile status quo. Members of local elites often recognized the possibility of taking advantage of the new spatial network, advancing territorial requests as well as seizing opportunities of social ascent and participation in the changes concerning administrative space. Not by chance, these French departments, filled with new meanings even when maintaining previous borders, in turn produced new social practices and identity paradigms, leading to the overlap of administrative and social-identity spaces. This process was nevertheless more complex than the one postulated by geographic determinism.

This geographic-administrative framework, through the methodology of border studies and the spatial turn, is analysed as a product and then as a producer in an articulated mechanism in which several actors and elements took part: the central (even imperial) institutions, the local representatives more inclined to support local claims, the past culture and reform projects, and the local population, facing a new interaction with space made up of subjective perceptions, fears, and desire not only to keep privileges but also to exploit the new design.

Finally, such an interpretation of a specific aspect of revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy, namely its respatialization, based on an intertwining of institutional history with border studies through the lens of the spatial turn, contributes

**65** More generally, for resistence to Napoleonic administration in Italy see A.M. Rao, "Les formes de la résistance anti-napoléonienne en Italie", in: C. Peyrard, F. Pomponi, and M. Vovelle (eds.), *L'administration napoléonienne en Europe. Adhésions et résistances*, Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2008, pp. 159–175.

to the recent rethinking of Italy's place in the French and Napoleonic system. As frequently happened in contexts characterized by domination and in imperial spaces, institutional patterns and administrative systems were not only forced upon passive populations as a simple imposition by a conquering power in an almost "colonial" manner.[66] Rather, in a complex encounter, they confronted local paradigms – often generating hybrid solutions and local claims – the latter not just aimed at resisting but even at appropriating them.[67]

**66** Meriggi, "Costituzioni antiche".

**67** See C. Lucrezio Monticelli, "La police à Rome durant la première moitié du XIX siècle: entre influence française et modèles ecclesiastiques", and V. Fontana, "Briser l'empire de l'habitude. Le mémoire du préfet du Léman et la réorganisation policière, Genève (1812–1813)", both in: C. Denys (ed.), *Circulations policières. 1750–1914*, Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2012, pp. 191–208 and 159–189. See also L. Di Fiore, "Les modèles administratifs entre imposition et adaptation: la police 'moderne' et la transformation des pratiques d'identification", in: P.-M. Delpu, I. Moullier, and M. Traversier, *Le royaume de Naples à l'heure française. Revisiter l'histoire du decennio francese (1806–1815)*, Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2018, pp. 133–146.

Federica Morelli

# 12 From Empire to Republics: The Collapse of the Spanish Monarchy and the Respatialization of America

The French Revolution did not have an explicit influence on Spanish America in terms of inspiring the emergence of revolutionary movements. Rather, before the outbreak of the revolution in Saint-Domingue, Spanish American colonies were experiencing a period of relative stability. For example, the great Andean rebellion, as well as other Indian and anti-fiscal movements in the continent, had been defeated and local elites started enjoying certain advantages of the Bourbon reforms, like the decree on *comercio libre* (free trade), which ended the trade monopoly with Cádiz, offering Spanish American and Spanish merchants the possibility to engage in commerce with other Spanish and Spanish American ports.

Nonetheless, the indirect impact of the French Revolution on Spanish American societies was of great importance, which took on three forms. First, its consequences on the French colonies in the Caribbean, and especially in Saint-Domingue, produced a high amount of fear among the Creole elite and the colonial authorities. For the elite in Spanish America, the real revolution was not the revolution in France, but the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804, a revolution of former black slaves and free people of colour in the most densely populated slave region of their world – the greater Caribbean. The colonial authorities of the Spanish Empire and all the Creole elite feared a possible rebellion or revolution of the *castas* (free people of colour), which explains why they described all conspiracies and rebellions as French or as a revolution. The territories with the most intense contacts were the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo (formerly Hispaniola, the first and oldest Spanish territory in the New World), Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Tierra Firme (the Caribbean parts of the northern coast of South America – known then as the Captaincy General of Venezuela and the Caribbean parts of New Granada, today Colombia and Panama). Waves of refugees – French émigrés and prisoners – fled to Spanish territories in search of a place to stay, but colonial authorities began to stop French citizens who wanted to cross the border to prevent the entry of revolutionary agents. This was linked to anti-revolutionary fever and paranoia, and it

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extended to building a kind of cordon sanitaire around the French colonies in the Caribbean.[1]

Second, France, in the sense of an expansionistic French Empire, had a strong influence during the Napoleonic era, culminating in the occupation of Spain and the usurpation of the throne in Madrid. It was this event that triggered the revolutionary movements leading to the independence of the Spanish American colonies from the metropole. As historiography has largely demonstrated in the last decades, the transfer of the Portuguese court to Brazil in 1807 and the crisis of the Spanish monarchy in 1808 represented the main causes of the Iberian independence movements between 1810 and 1826.

Third, together with the American Revolution, the French Revolution and its reverberations in the Caribbean, contributed to the spread of new ideas. The declaration of human and citizens' rights as well as the principles of national sovereignty, constitutionalism, republicanism, and federalism played a crucial role in the political debates during the revolutionary period, suggesting to Spanish American patriots possible solutions for building new political regimes.

These three impacts – indirectly produced by the French Revolution – intertwined to engender a process of change in Spanish America. Central to the drive for the reorganization of this imperial space was not only the redefinition of the territory, but also larger debates on citizenship. As Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper rightly show, in British North America, the French Caribbean, Spanish South America, and elsewhere the struggle for political voice, rights, and citizenship took place within empires before becoming revolutions against them.[2] The results of these contests were not consistently national. Debates about citizenship, thus, cannot be separated from the spatial reorganization of the territory. The imperial crises brought about by the Napoleonic invasion of the Iberian Peninsula created a tremendous power vacuum that no one or institution could legitimately fill. This aspect, along with the spread of new principles of popular sovereignty, citizenship, constitutionalism, and republicanism entailed a strong fragmentation of sovereignty, which permitted local communities to resume power and become the key political components in this process of respatialization.

**1** A.E. Gómez, "La caribeanidad revolucionaria de la costa de Caracas. Una visión prospectiva (1793–1815)", in: V. Hébrard and G. Verdo (eds.), *Las Independencias hispanoamericanas. Un objeto de estudio*, Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013, pp. 35–48.

**2** J. Burbank and F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 7.

## From the Federal Monarchy to the Federation of Communities

The invasion of the Iberian Peninsula by French armies in 1807 and the consequent abdication of the Spanish royal family in 1808 produced one of the most serious political crises in the history of European dynasties. This crisis led to the liberal Spanish revolution in Europe and the independence of most Spanish American colonies from Spain. According to classic historical interpretations, this event marked the beginning of a new era both for the Spanish nation and the Spanish American countries: the birth of the modern period as opposed both to Ancien Régime systems and to colonialism.[3]

Nevertheless, as more recent studies have demonstrated, the Spanish crisis did not start in 1808, but was instead the result of a broader and longer process that had appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century. According to these interpretations, the Spanish crisis should be situated between an interimperial conflict – that started with the Seven Years' War – and an internal transformation pursued by the Bourbon reforms.[4] Above all, these works highlight the Spanish efforts to place the monarchy in an international scenario characterized by the imperial conflict between Great Britain and France. Spain had always sided with France (both in the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution), except in the period after the outbreak of the French Revolution, when it allied with other conservative monarchies against France. The Treaty of Basel (1795) and its successor (the Treaty of San Ildefonso [1796]), agreed upon between the Thermidorian Convention and the Spanish prime minister, Manuel de Godoy, sanctioned the restoration of the traditional alliance and the definitive subordination of Spain to its powerful neighbour.[5] In the French authorities' eyes (from the Directory to Napoleon Bonaparte), the Spanish ally was only a pawn of French imperial politics: on the one side, it was considered a granary from which France could extract natural resources – including the precious metals from America – and an extensive market for French manufacturers; on the other side, it was used as a means to oppose the maritime power

**3** M. Artola, *Los origines de la España contemporánea*, 2nd ed., Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2000.

**4** T.H. Donghi, *Reforma y disolución de los imperios ibéricos, 1750–1850*, Madrid: Alianza, 1985; J. Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006; B.R. Hamnett, *The End of Iberian Rule on the American Continent, 1770–1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

**5** E. de la Parra, *La alianza de Godoy con los revolucionarios (España y Francia a fines del siglo XVIII)*, Madrid: Consejo de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992.

of Great Britain. The treaty of subsidies (1803) and that of the Consolidación de Vales Reales (1804) – which obliged Spanish American and especially New Spanish churches, monasteries, confraternities, religious hospitals, and colleges to dispose of their wealth in favour of the needs of French liquidity – as well as the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) are all signs of Spanish subordination to France's imperial politics.[6] It was exactly in this period that two important events occurred that shook up Spanish America before the 1808 crisis: Francisco Miranda's attempt at insurrection in Venezuela and the British invasion of Río de la Plata in 1806. Both were possible because of the weakness of the Spanish defences after Trafalgar. Even though these attempts failed, they had revealed the fragility of the Spanish Empire as well as the increasing opposition of the Spanish American population to the politics of metropolitan authorities.[7]

The invasion of Spain by French troops in 1808 was the final act of the politics of imperial subordination that had started some decades before. Bonaparte's strategy, in line with the Spanish authorities according to the secret agreement at Fontainebleau, initially established the invasion and partition of Portugal – a traditional ally of Great Britain – whose European and American ports (Lisbon, Porto, and Río de Janeiro) were important strategic bases for the British maritime forces. The invasion of Spain was a consequence of the failure of the initial project, since, thanks to British assistance, the Portuguese court fled to Río de Janeiro, transforming the colony into the political centre of the Portuguese Empire. The unexpected military crisis in Spain was exacerbated by the Bourbons' acts: instead of fighting against the aggressor, Carlos IV and his son Fernando VII renounced the throne in Bayonne in 1808. Napoleon transferred the Spanish crown to his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, and a few days later a new constitution, the Bayonne Charter, was published, establishing the full subordination of Spain to the politics of France.

This act represented a real challenge to European dynastic history: since medieval times, a royal family had never renounced its throne without a war or a family alliance. One of the main principles regulating royalty established the

**6** C. Marichal, L*a bancarrota del Virreinato. Nueva España y las finanzas del imperio español, 1780–1810*, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995; G. von Wobeser, *Dominación colonial. La consolidación de los Vales Reales, 1804–1812*, Mexico City: UNAM, 2003.

**7** The *Consolidación de Vales Reales*, in particular, was perceived as one of the most unfair measures of European despotism and was abolished after the 1808 crisis. The opposition to Spanish authorities' attitudes also increased in Rio de la Plata, where, as a consequence of the viceroy's flight with the royal treasure during the British invasion, the territory was defended by the local militia of Buenos Aires.

distinction between the sovereign as a physical and a legal person, between his personal estate and that of the crown. Whereas the first was alienable, the latter was not because it was associated with the office and not with the person. Being an administrator of the crown, the king could not dispose of the crown's assets and possessions without the agreement of the kingdom.[8] The Bourbons committed an illegal act because they did not respect one of the main duties of a monarch, which is the inalienability of the kingdom. As a jurist of the junta (autonomous assembly) of Quito affirmed in 1809 to defend himself from the charge of disloyalty towards the Spanish authorities: "the disposal is illegal: not because of the liberty of the transferrer, but because of the impossibility of the divested thing [the kingdom], since its character is absolutely inalienable; consequently the transferrer has not the ability to freely dispose of it".[9]

The reaction to these events was particularly strong in the Iberian Peninsula, not only because of the French invasion but also because the illegal act committed by the Bourbons. In fact, the Spanish "war of independence" against the French was not led by the representative institutions of the monarchy (such as the Council of Castile) but was a popular rebellion against the agreement signed by Napoleon and the Bourbons in Bayonne. The Spanish population and the local institutions never considered Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, their legitimate king. This royal vacancy led to the constitution of local juntas and thus to a fragmentation of sovereignty, on account of these institutions proclaiming themselves as the representatives of the absent king.[10] The need to form a united front against the French led to the formation of a Central Junta in 1809 and then to the summons of the ancient representative institutions of the monarchy, the Cortes of Cádiz, in 1810. The crisis of the monarchy therefore entailed a revolutionary process, which led to the end of absolutism and the triumph of liberalism with the publication of the Constitution of Cádiz in 1812.

**8** E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study on Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, pp. 347–365.

**9** M.R. de Quiroga, "Alegato de Quiroga presentado en el primer juicio iniciado contra los próceres en febrero de 1809", *Memoria de la Academia Ecuatoriana correspondiente a la Real Española*, special issue (1922), pp. 62–100. Manuel Quiroga had participated in the first junta of Quito in 1809 and was arrested after its demise in 1809. He died in prison during the famous events of 2 August 1809, when the majority of leaders of the first junta were killed by the royalist troops coming from Lima and Guayaquil in response to an urban popular protest that wanted to liberate the prisoners.

**10** R. Hocquellet, *Resistencia y revolución durante la Guerra de Independencia. Del levantamiento patriótico a la soberanía nacional*, Zaragoza: Prensa Universitaria de Zaragoza, 2008.

In Spanish America, the reactions to the abdications of the Bourbons were similar to those of European Spain.[11] Even though Napoleon sent emissaries to America to ensure that the new government was accepted, Spanish Americans never recognized his brother as the new king, since they considered the abdications an illegal act. However, the absence of a military occupation of America delayed the creation of local juntas, which were only formed in 1809 (La Paz and Quito) and in 1810 (Buenos Aires, Caracas, Santa Fe de Bogotá, and Quito). As in Spain, the abdications of 1808 entailed a process of political fragmentation because the territorial hierarchies that had structured the colonial space were overthrown. After the abdications, colonial authorities found themselves in a very critical situation: having been appointed by the Spanish king, they did not have any legitimacy to govern. This situation created a sense of disorientation among Spanish authorities as well as Spanish Americans. Who governed the monarchy? Who deserved obedience?

Even though the great majority of Spanish Americans expressed their opposition to Napoleon and their loyalty to Fernando VII – asserting their engagement to defend the Catholic faith and the motherland against the French, as the peninsular Spaniards – they thought that they could not defend their values without resuming power. In view of that fact that Fernando VII – the "desired king" as they called him – had left a power vacuum (he was in prison in France), Spanish American people had to assume power and govern in his name. It was not a revolutionary act; the crisis of 1808 had reactivated the traditional right of the communities to protect themselves from exterior threats. For example, in 1809 the junta of La Paz defined itself *tuitiva* (protective and defensive) of the people's rights. The first Spanish and Spanish American juntas did not introduce a revolutionary idea of sovereignty, that is to say the people being represented by the nation; rather, they declared themselves the depositaries of the sovereignty of the absent king. They had to protect him until his return.[12]

The context changed during 1810, when the Spanish American people realized that the peninsula had been completely occupied by the French as a result of the Spanish defeat in Ocaña in November 1809. Furthermore, the Central Junta, to which the Spanish American territories had sent their own delegates,

**11** On the similarities of the Spanish and Spanish American reactions to the crisis of 1808, see F.-X. Guerra, *Modernidad e independencias. Ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas*, Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992.

**12** On the juntas as depositaries of the sovereignty of the king, see J.M. Portillo, *Crisis Atlántica. Autonomía e independencia en la crisis de la Monarquía hispana*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006, pp. 55–57.

had been dissolved at the end of this same year and replaced by a regency council. The Cortes of Cádiz had been summoned according to the principles of modern representation. After having declared that the sovereignty now lay in the Cortes of Cádiz – which represented the nation – Spanish and Spanish American delegates started debates for writing a new constitution. Many Spanish American territories, however, did not recognize either the regency council, the heir of the Bourbons, or the Cortes of Cádiz, where the Spanish American delegates were outnumbered. Thus, the majority of the 1810 juntas were no more than depositaries of the sovereignty of the king, but they now governed in the name of the people that they represented. This change led some territories like Venezuela to declare its independence from Spain in 1811 and others to summon constitutional congresses for writing new constitutions. Nevertheless, the independence from the Iberian Peninsula was not considered absolute, since many Spanish American provinces intended to maintain their links to the monarchy, conceived as a form of government rather than a particular dynasty. The monarchy was by then perceived as a federal political entity, in which sovereignty was shared by the numerous parts of which it was composed.

During the crisis of the Spanish monarchy, sovereignty was resumed by the *pueblos* (cities) more than the *pueblo* (in the singular meaning people). The lack of an armed conflict did not lead Spanish Americans to unite their efforts against a common enemy. On the contrary, they gained what they had always sought: a complete autonomy from the metropole both politically and economically, or, as Txema Portillo defines it, the fulfilment of the *sueño criollo* (Creole dream).[13] The juntas were generally composed of members of the most prominent families of the Spanish American cities, who had already held public office in the *cabildos* (colonial municipalities). Indeed, it was the *cabildos* that most vocally promoted the idea of the juntas. Spanish *cabildos* were the only legitimate institutions that could represent the territory in the absence of the king seeing as they were the unique colonial institutions that had enjoyed representative power before the monarchy, speaking for the urban and the rural areas under their jurisdiction.[14]

**13** J.M. Portillo, *El sueño criollo: la formación del doble constitucionalismo en el País Vasco y Navarra*, San Sebastián: Nerea, 2006.

**14** Spanish American municipalities exercised their jurisdiction not only in the urban area, but also in the rural areas that surrounded the city. On the importance of *cabildos* during the crisis of the monarchy, see F. Morelli, "Orígines y valores del municipalismo americano", *Araucaria: Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades* 9 (2007) 18, pp. 116–285.

The crisis of the monarchy exposed another level of tension: the rivalry between capital city elite and their counterparts in the provincial towns. The assumed hegemony of the former usually provoked serious opposition or outright resistance from the latter. There were several outstanding examples of this all over Spanish America. This tension caused a serious territorial fragmentation, since the provincial cities did not recognize the sovereignty claimed by the juntas of the capital cities like Quito, Buenos Aires, Santa Fe de Bogotá, and Caracas, which sought to maintain unity in their respective colonial districts (*audiencia* [appeals court and its jurisdiction], captaincy, or viceroyalty). The other municipalities claimed the right to assume sovereignty and create their own local governments. This situation led to internal conflicts, which were not exclusively characterized by the opposition between patriots and royalists, but essentially between capital and provincial towns (Buenos Aires against Montevideo, Bogotá against Cartagena and Tunja, Quito against Cuenca and Guayaquil, and Caracas against Valencia).[15]

This kind of split was exacerbated by the application of the Spanish Constitution of Cádiz in those areas that had not declared their independence from the Regency,[16] such as Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region. In the last decades, historians have largely recognized the importance of the constitution for Spanish America. We should remember, however, that constitutional alternatives were put forward in several territories, such as Venezuela, New Granada, Mexico, Chile, and the River Plate between 1811 and 1816. These alternatives clearly emphasized that many Spanish Americans believed that if the Spanish monarchy were to become constitutionalized, there was no reason why there should be one constitution for the entire monarchy. That means that they rejected the idea, persisting among peninsular constituents, that the monarchy consisted of "one sole nation". Despite the Spanish Americans' pluralist vision of the monarchy, the Constitution of Cádiz was conceived as an "imperial constitution" that should be applied to all the territories belonging to the Spanish monarchy.[17]

**15** On the conflicts between capital and provincial towns, see, e.g., D.G. Ardila, *Un Nuevo Reino. Geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno de Nueva Granada (1808–1816)*, Bogotá: Universidad Externado, 2010; G. Verdo, *L'indépendance argentine entre cités et nations*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006.

**16** The Regency was governement that ruled during the absence of Fernando VII.

**17** J. Fradera, "Empires in Retreat: Spain and Portugal after the Napoleonic Wars", in: A.W. McCoy, J.M. Fradera, and S. Jacobson (eds.), *Endless Empire. Spain's Retreat, Europe's Eclipse, America's Decline*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012, pp. 55–73. Fradera makes the distinction between the imperial constitutions, which were theoretically inclusive of the colonial territories, like the Spanish Constitution of Cádiz of 1812, the Portuguese

Spanish historians have extensively debated the nature of this Spanish constitution. Whereas some defend its revolutionary character – underlining the introduction of national sovereignty, the division of powers, and the abolition of Ancien Régime privileges – others maintain its traditional nature, stating that the text "constitutionalized the ancient laws of the Spanish monarchy".[18] The reference to the ancient laws of the monarchy, included in the constitution's preamble, not only is instrumental but also describes a specific way to consider the relationship between the new and the ancient laws: the new legislation was subordinated to the compatibility between the constitution and the ancient laws. The link with the past is evident, for instance, when looking at the definition of the Spanish nation given by the text. That definition does not imply a new concept of the territory, which continues to constitute the territorial subjects inherited from the Ancien Régime: *audiencias*, provinces, municipalities, and parishes. Thus, the territory of the Spanish nation not only corresponded to the area where its members lived; rather, it included all the territorial subjects inherited from the Ancien Régime without creating new territorial districts able to break the ancient social bonds.

Furthermore, the constitution accorded considerable powers to local institutions, such as the municipalities and provinces. They were elected by the local population and had important political and jurisdictional functions. Whereas the Spaniards considered municipalities and provincial deputations to be formally subordinated to executive power, Spanish Americans considered them representative institutions of *pueblos*, as the Cortes of Cádiz were of the entire nation. These two interpretations reveal two different ways of envisaging the Spanish nation: while that of the Spaniards tended towards a centralized nation, the one proposed by Spanish Americans shaped a sort of federal nation, where municipalities and provincial deputations shared sovereignty with the Cortes of Cádiz. Even though the Spanish deputies blocked an amendment proposed by the Guatemalan deputy, Antonio de Larrazábal y Arrivillaga – which declared that the provincial deputation had the possibility to suspend laws that were considered detrimental to the province – the instability caused by the wars and the lack of a legitimate king contributed to the transformation of the

Constitution of 1822, and the French Constitutions of 1793 and 1795 and the dual-regime constitutions, which established special legislation for the colonies and became the nineteenth-century norm.

**18** C. Garriga and M. Lorente, *Cádiz, 1812. La constitución jurisdiccional*, Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007.

municipalities and the provincial deputations into real sovereign powers, deepening the territorial fragmentation initiated by the crisis of the Spanish monarchy.

This extreme political fragmentation explains why there are no state declarations of independence from Spain before 1814 (except in Paraguay). Cities, such as Caracas and Cartagena, had also declared their independence, but this was not recognized by the other provinces. The crisis of the monarchy and the application of the Constitution of Cádiz, in fact, had left the Spanish American territories in a situation of complete autonomy. At that time, independence from Spain was not an essential goal, and the same term "independence" was not associated with nationhood. Instead, independence meant either equality between Creoles and peninsular Spaniards or the right of a political community to self-government. The analysis of the first "declarations of independence" in Latin America reveals that the term did not always refer to only Spain but also to other political entities, like independence from the viceroyalties or other political authorities.[19] As David Armitage illustrates by analysing the declaration of 1776, independence at that time did not mean independence from a colonial power, but the liberty of a state or a political community to act freely with respect to other states or external authorities, including the ability to make agreements to voluntarily limit its own liberty. Many Spanish American cities defined themselves as "independent" even if they were still formally parts of the Spanish monarchy or other political entities.

The situation changed with the restoration of absolutism that followed the defeat of Napoleon as well as Fernando VII's decision to send military expeditions to reconquer America in 1814. The civil and internal conflicts were transformed into an international war against Spain: Spanish Americans became Americans and the Spaniards became the enemy to be defeated. The term "independence" changed into "absolute independence" in order to differentiate it from the "soft independence" of the previous period. The armies that liberated South America from the Spanish dominion helped create new territorial identities, such as Gran Colombia, which corresponded to the territory liberated by the Bolivarian armies (Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama).[20]

**19** A. Ávila, J. Dym, and E. Pani (eds.), *Las declaraciones de Independencia. Los textos fundamentales de las independencias americanas*, Mexico City: El Colegio de México – UNAM, 2013.
**20** C. Thibaud, *Repúblicas en armas: los ejércitos bolivarianos en la guerra de independencia en Colombia y Venezuela*, Bogotá: Planeta, 2003.

Nevertheless, because of the strong political fragmentation during the crisis of the monarchy and the wars, the efforts to reconstitute Spanish American territory after independence proved to be extremely difficult. Moreover, these attempts did not coincide immediately with the model of nation-state. During the first decades of independence, there were various attempts to reconfigure the spaces of the monarchy, such as Gran Colombia or the empire of Iturbide (which included Mexico and Central America), that were larger than the future states of the continent. These political entities were based on the agreement between provinces and *pueblos*, the subjects that had recovered sovereign powers during the crisis of the monarchy. Similar to the notion of federations of communities elaborated by Rousseau, these projects represented a potent alternative to the centralized nation-state, even though their origins lay in colonial charters and rights as well as especially in the political and territorial power of both the Spanish and Indian *cabildos* (municipalities) – significantly called "republics". During the independence period, these colonial traditions were articulated with a new republican language. The federation or confederation models (during this period "federation" and "confederation" were equivalent terms) appeared the most appropriate to transform the territorial fragmentation produced by the imperial crisis into new political spaces because it permitted the transfer of sovereignty from *pueblos* or communities to larger territorial entities, such as provinces, regions, or states. In the decades following independence from Spain, every effort to build a state had to come to terms with the power of the *pueblos*.

## Local vs. National Citizenship

The dynamics engendered by the dissolution of the Spanish Empire had a strong influence on the meaning of citizenship, since the spatial fragmentation allowed local communities to be essential participants in the definition of citizens. As Tamar Herzog's work clearly demonstrates, the role of local communities in attributing rights and duties and in defining the people's status was not new in the Hispanic world, resulting from practices that developed during the early modern period.[21] These legal traditions did not disappear with the advent of liberalism and revolutionary principles; rather, they intermingled

**21** T. Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

with the definitions of citizenship that emerged from the ideal of individual and universal rights. The figure of the individual citizen, enjoying the same rights and duties as all other citizens of a state as well as fundamental human rights, has always been an assertion and not the real essence of citizenship. This is even more evident in the nineteenth century, when, beyond the idealistic relationships between an individual and the state, other forms of social affinities continued defining the meaning of citizenship.

In addition to the influence of long-standing legal practices, in the Atlantic context the definition of citizenship proved to be more problematic because of the difficulty of creating new political subjects – now based on nationhood – in the place of the fragmented, multicommunity, and multiethnic empires. The latter had been constructed on the politics of difference, which meant the existence of different and hierarchic spaces of citizenship: the subjects of an empire enjoyed different rights depending on their position within the social scale and on their skin colour. Differentiation helped these extended political communities maintain order, collect taxes or tributes, and recruit military resources.[22] The transformation of this composite pluralism into a homogenous nation of citizens was a huge challenge. Defining those who composed the nation and could participate in the definition of its political representation proved to be a very formidable task, hence the ambiguous definitions of those who were meant to be the citizens of the new nations.

When the constituents in the Cortes of Cádiz addressed the issue of membership and citizenship in the Spanish nation, various constitutional texts could have served as models; however, they largely drew inspiration from the past. The constituents adopted a definition of Spanishness and Spanish citizenship that was based on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discussions regarding *vecindad* and *naturaleza*. Instead of defining the nation in cultural, linguistic, or ethnic terms, the constitution described Spaniards as people permanently residing on Spanish territories in both the Old and the New World. More importantly, rather than establishing clear requirements (such as rent or property) to exercise active citizens' rights, the definition of a citizen was based on the traditional concept of *vecino*.

*Vecindad* was a term that originated in Castile in the eleventh and twelfth centuries during the period of reconquest and resettlement. The term initially designated the privileges and duties of individuals who were willing to abandon their communities of origin and settle in lands recovered from the Muslims and now under Christian control. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

**22** On the politics of difference, see Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, pp. 11–12.

the *vecindad* status lost its immediate relation to immigration and it came to imply a wide range of fiscal, economic, political, social, and symbolic benefits in return for the fulfilment of certain duties. Normally, *vecinos* could use communal property, especially communal pastureland; participate in managing local affairs through the local council; and enjoy special commercial privileges, such as lower tariffs. Among the duties of *vecinos* was the obligation to submit to the local authorities, pay their fair share of the taxes levied on the community as a whole, join the local militia, and reside in the community. In Spanish America, *vecindad* became a status based on reputation, which mostly had a social significance. This integration of the *vecino* into the community depended on the wishes of each candidate as well as on the willingness of the other members to respect them. Municipal or colonial intervention was not necessary to constitute citizenship, since citizenship status was automatically attained once the newcomer began acting as a citizen.[23]

This local and social aspect of citizenship also determined its vertical and political dimensions because those who were recognized as *vecinos* (citizens) in local communities were, by extension, *naturales* (natives), that is to say subjects of the kingdom. Because integration was always carried out within the confines of the specific local community where one settled, owned a house, and demonstrated in other ways that one sought and deserved membership, it was through their adhesion to local communities that people, both native-born and immigrants, became eligible for rights in the local community and the community of the kingdom. Thus, the integration into local communities was fundamental to the recognition of these individuals as both citizens and natives. Rather than imposed from above, the distinction between citizens and noncitizens, natives and foreigners, came from below. It was negotiated socially, in day-to-day interactions, and depended on social negotiation and on an ongoing conversation among different actors, local groups, and colonial authorities. It was a by-product of the activities of people and groups fighting to defend their interests and protect what they argued was the common good. State and king were to a large degree external to these processes. In the normal course of things, people became citizens and natives, or lost their status as such, without any official intervention. Royal and municipal authorities intervened only when the members of the community failed to negotiate these arrangements on their own. Charged with identifying both *vecinos* and *naturales*, local communities therefore became gatekeepers of the kingdom community.[24]

**23** Herzog, *Defining Nations*, pp. 62–63.
**24** Ibid, p. 204.

Depending on one's intentions and reputation as well as on the approval of the other community members, citizenship, unlike today, was not a status but a process. The citizen status could be lost following the death of a parent or out of the necessity to leave the community of residence. On the contrary, it could be acquired when one person was integrated into a line of succession or established new social relationships through credit loans. Given the ways in which citizenship could be acquired or lost in the early modern period, the concept of alien or foreigner was not referred to as one's geographical provenance; instead, it indicated his/her exclusion from a local and political community.[25] Even though this condition could be transitional, it was a prospect present for all inhabitants.

The early modern concepts of *vecindad* and *naturaleza* had a considerable influence on the definition of citizenship in 1812. Despite the separation between *vecinos* and *naturales* – which reflected the distinction between passive and active citizens of the French constitution – local citizenship still received serious consideration. Given this continuity with the past, and the implicit and explicit references to both *vecindad* and *naturaleza*, some of the delegates found it hard to understand why certain people were "Spaniards" but not "Spanish citizens". Many of them asked how someone could be a *natural*, yet not be a *vecino*. The granting of citizenship, they attested, embodied "los derechos de la ciudad" (the rights to the city), and it had to be extended to all natives who permanently resided in the territory. The nation itself was nothing more than a "collection of *vecinos*" some Spanish American delegates, such as José Miguel Guridi y Alcocer and Larrazábal, stated during the debates in the constituency.[26] Given the strong reference to the past, the transition to new models was only partially successful.

These arguments were further used by Spanish American delegates to oppose the decision of Spanish liberals to exclude *castas* (people of African descent) from the category of citizens. They did not understand why *castas* could have been declared *naturales* but not *vecinos*. Mentioning the traditional association between citizenship, domicile, and naturalization, they declared that membership in the Spanish community was obtained, first and foremost, by virtue of integration into a local community. Spaniards of African descent, who were already *vecinos* of Spanish communities or who acted as citizens by paying taxes and complying with other obligations, were, in their opinion,

**25** S. Cerutti, *Etrangers: Etude d'une condition d'incertitude dans une société d'Ancien Régime*, Paris: Bayard, 2012; K. Parker, *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

**26** Herzog, *Defining Nations*, p. 154.

necessarily both *vecinos* and *naturales*, both Spanish citizens and Spaniards. "The justice claims the granting of the inferior title of citizens to the *castas*, since they have already been awarded the superior title of Spanishness", stated Uría.[27] In this case, the terms "inferior" and "superior" did not refer only to the horizontal and vertical dimensions of citizenship, but also to the fact that the first one legitimized the second one. "Consisting of the right of nativeness in that of citizenship", the latter could not be removed from *castas*, declared Larrázabal.[28] Another Spanish American delegate from Mexico, José Miguel Ramos Arizpe, went further, stating that "since the Spanish nation includes all the Spaniards from both hemispheres and it is the holder of sovereignty, the *castas*, having been declared Spanish, have to participate in this sovereignty and legislative power. In order to do this, they should be declared citizens, otherwise they have to give up their Spanishness and their participation in the sovereignty."[29]

The exclusion of *castas* from citizenship was the result not only of long-lasting prejudices against people of African descent but also of the strategies to reach the majority in the Cortes of Cádiz. All those participating in the debate were aware of the fact that the Spanish American population was much larger than the European one. Therefore, if Creoles, Indians, mestizos, mulattoes, and Africans were all admitted as full members to the community, not only would the majority of Spanish citizens be from America but Spanish Americans would also gain the majority in the Cortes of Cádiz. Since the number of deputies was proportional to the number of citizens, the issue of citizenship for people of Indian or African descent would determine the proportion of Spanish American deputies. From this moment forward, Spanish American representation became tied to discussions of racial equality, sparking one of the most intense and heated debates between Spanish and Spanish American deputies. Seeing that Spanish Americans had been formally granted equality, Spanish deputies could not openly express their fears at being outnumbered by Spanish Americans. Thus, they had to focus their attack on *castas*' qualifications for citizenship. As Marixa Lasso fully explains, this was of enormous significance, since it tied

**27** Uría on 4 September 1811. Congreso de los Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones, Legislatura 1810–1813*, n. 337, 1762, http://www.congreso.es/est_sesiones (accessed 11 April 2019).

**28** Larrázabal on September 6, 1811. Congreso de los Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones, Legislatura 1810–1813,* n. 339, p. 1788, http://www.congreso.es/est_sesiones (accessed 11 April 2019).

**29** Arizpe on 5 September 1811. Congreso de los Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones, Legislatura 1810–1813,* n. 338, p. 1788, http://www.congreso.es/est_sesiones (accessed 11 April 2019).

Spanish American representation to racial legal equality and Spanish delegates to racial discrimination.[30]

The exclusion of *castas* from citizenship was not, however, absolute. Article 22 of the Constitution of Cádiz recognized that there was the possibility for them to acquire citizenship under special circumstances, which included special services to the nation or special talents, legitimate birth, marriage to a legitimate wife, the establishment of a domicile, as well as the holding of a useful office, profession, or industry. In this case, they could request a letter of citizenship from the Cortes of Cádiz. Moreover, the definition of people of African descent was very ambiguous and left room for manoeuvre within local societies. The exclusion of citizenship concerned, in fact, those people who were "los que son habidos y reputados originarios de África" (reputed and considered to be of African origin). But, who decided if a person was of African origin? One Spanish American delegate stated that "the terms of the article are vague and are exposed to arbitrariness, since they do not state precisely who has to decide who are taking their origin from African parents, neither how and when this origin has to be considered outside the cases established by the law". This "would open the doors of the arbitrariness for those who have to decide", who can resolve "to admit or exclude someone from citizenship rights according to his own inclination".[31]

The ambiguous relationship between nationality and citizenship did not concern exclusively the status of people of African descent. It was a more general question about the meaning of citizenship and about who could legitimately determine it. Both for Spanish liberals and the Spanish American delegates, the horizontal definition of citizenship still had priority over its vertical definition: for both, citizenship should be defined by local society rather than the state. This is confirmed by the same constitution, which authorized local parish assemblies to determine, without possibility of appeal, who were citizens and who were not. These assemblies (called juntas) were composed of all citizens who were residents in the parish, would be presided over by the local judge and would meet in the presence of the local parish priest (Articles 35, 46, and 50). Thus, the determination of who was a Spaniard and who was a citizen was still locally based, and local communities continued to act as mediators between the individual and the nation as well as between the individual and his rights.

After separation from Spain, the definition of membership criteria of the new states did not change. Patterned after the Spanish Constitution of Cádiz, the

**30** M. Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia 1795–1831*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007, pp. 37–43.

**31** Salazar on 5 September 1811. Congreso de los Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones, Legislatura 1810–1813*, n. 338, p. 1776, http://www.congreso.es/est_sesiones (accessed 11 April 2019).

majority of Latin American legal systems reproduced the identification between the citizen and the ancient Hispanic notion of *vecino*.[32] As a consequence, the mechanisms of incorporation into the national community were not imposed by the state, but resulted from complex dynamics between the state and society. Until the 1830s and, in some cases, until the 1860s, the practical assumption was that *vecinos* were also *ciudadanos* (citizens of the state). Because the issue was about acceptance into a local community, most Spanish American states, during the first half of the nineteenth century, allowed local authorities to decide who was a *vecino* and thus a *ciudadano*. Instead of a system of electoral lists, people were permitted to vote if the officials at the voting table, with the assistance of various representatives of authority (normally the local judge and priest, along with ethnic authorities in the case of Indians), recognized them as citizens. Laws did not define the conditions for *vecindad*. Despite being a commonly deployed term, decisions about *vecino* status could become extremely conflicted. While most scholars agreed that *vecindad* denoted local integration, the meaning and extent of the integration and the ways to prove it, were often contested. Current research suggests that disqualification for citizenship followed social prejudice, which sought to eliminate the vote of those considered inferior or marginal.

In the light of these rules and practices, nineteenth-century citizens were not abstract individuals forming part of a nation, but instead concrete individuals belonging to a specific local community. It was the local society made up of *pueblo*s – which had recovered their sovereign powers during the crisis of the monarchy and the wars of independence – that continued to define the citizens of the new nations. This strong connection between *vecindad* and national belonging reflects the fact that the new Spanish American countries were mostly the product of alliances between municipalities or local communities.

The case of Spanish America clearly shows that the Age of Revolutions is not characterized by the Atlantic dissemination of the French model. Even though emerging in open opposition to Napoleonic imperialism, the Spanish liberal revolution and the American independence movements embraced the new modern principles of popular sovereignty, citizenship, constitutionalism, and republicanism. Yet, because of the dynamics of the imperial crisis, these same precepts entailed a strong fragmentation of sovereignty that permitted local communities to resume power and become the key political components in the process of respatialization.

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**32** H. Sábato (ed.), *Ciudadanía política y formación de las naciones. Perspectivas históricas de América Latina*, Mexico City: Fideicomiso de Historia de las Américas de El Colegio de México – Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999.

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