

lands als auch Frankreichs außenpolitische Eliten entscheidende Lektionen für ihr Verständnis künftiger internationaler Politik in den frühen Konflikten im westlichen Mittelmeer lernten, sind nicht von der Hand zu weisen, bedürfen allerdings auch noch der weiterführenden Beweisführung anhand der Debatten, die um spätere Konflikte geführt wurden. Der auf den letzten Seiten des Buches ausgebreitete Vergleich im Umgang Napoleons und der britischen Regierung mit Korsika und Malta liefert dafür bereits wichtige Stichworte. Die umstandslose Integration in ein französisches Modell von Staatlichkeit und Verfassung blieb letztlich von kurzer Dauer, so wie auch dem englisch-korsischen Königreich keine lange Existenz beschieden war.

Die Revolutionsdekade hatte die Idee nicht nur nationaler Souveränität fest im kulturellen Repertoire der Nachgeborenen verankert, sondern auch jenen, die sich mit der faktisch an alte imperiale Gewohnheiten erinnernden Eingliederung in eine solche nationale Einheit nicht anfreunden wollten, einen Zukunftshorizont eröffnet – die Behauptung von Eigenständigkeit und Souveränität, wenn sich Gelegenheit dazu bieten sollte. Die Krise der Imperien am Ende des 18. Jh.s beantworteten die Großmächte mit einem neuartigen Imperialismus, der auch im 19. und in beträchtlichen Teilen des 20. Jh.s einer vollständigen Dekolonisierung entgegenstand und an vielen Stellen überhaupt erst eine effiziente koloniale Herrschaft durchzusetzen in der Lage war. Das Konzept, demokratische Nationalisierung nach innen mit undemokratischer Kolonisierung zu verbinden und Nationalstaaten mit imperialen Machtsphären zu etablieren, erwies sich für mehr oder minder lange Zeit als

Erfolgsmodell, zeigte aber auch schon in seinen Anfängen eine Porosität, die Joshua Meeks mit seiner Regionalstudie für das westliche Mittelmeer sehr gut greifbar gemacht hat. Der Erfolg des Italienfeldzuges beeindruckte die Zeitgenossen Napoleons bis zur Bewunderung, aber das imperiale Konstrukt, das ihm entsprang, war trotzdem nicht von langer Dauer.

#### Anmerkung

- 1 David A. Bell, *The First Total War. Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

**Josep M. Fradera: *The Imperial Nation. Citizens and Subjects in the British, French, Spanish, and American Empires*. Translated by Ruth MacKay, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2018, 416 p.**

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Historians have long positioned the French Revolution as the moment when modern nations emerged. In contrast, global history narratives show that the nineteenth century was a period characterized by the co-existence of both empires and nations.<sup>1</sup> New imperial history has further stressed the endurance of empire throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, showing to what extent empire influenced and made possible the development of metropolitan societies. And thus,

the nation (state) is produced in the context of empire. The historiography of the Atlantic Revolutions has yet to catch up. Despite the connectivity, circulations, and entanglements explored during the age of revolutions (circa 1770–1830), now often studied through the “global turn,” the classic narrative “from empire to nation state” still closes the revolutionary story. Important interventions have outlined how these revolutions (American, French, Haitian, and Spanish American independence) have taken place within the context of empire, but have not fully outlined how empires were reformed during revolution, especially during revolution in the metropole in the case of the French empire.<sup>2</sup>

Josep M. Fradera’s *The Imperial Nation: Citizens and Subjects in the British, French, Spanish, and American Empires* fills an important gap by bringing these research traditions together in an ambitious synthesis and positioning his findings in global history. Translated by Ruth MacKay, this monograph is a revised and abridged version of *La nación imperial: derechos, representación y ciudadanía en los imperios de Gran Bretaña, Francia, España, y Estados Unidos (1750–1918)* published in two-volumes in 2015. Fradera is professor of modern history at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona and is a scholar of the Spanish Empire. This book puts Fradera’s extensive knowledge of the Spanish empire into a comparative context with other empires that experienced or were impacted by the successive waves of political revolutions that started during the 1770s. This book is an important contribution to and should be essential reading in all three historiographical traditions: global history, imperial history, and Atlantic history.

The central thesis of this book is that the Atlantic revolutions between circa 1780 and 1830 were key to the successive reform of empire throughout the long nineteenth century. The American and French revolutions in particular contributed to the demise of monarchic, composite empires but, in their wake, new empires “of a different sort” that did not exclude national developments emerged (p. 1). Under monarchic empires, subjects had various rights and obligations depending on their place and socio-economic position. Political revolutions shook this system to the core by advocating citizenship characterized by equal rights. Fradera seeks to elucidate how these polities, despite espousing the rights of man, maintained their colonies and expanded their empires over the course of the nineteenth century. They did so by applying constitutions and laws in the metropolises while enforcing different laws or constitutions in the colonies. To describe this, Fradera uses the French term *spécialité* and positions the French experience during and following the Revolution as a formative one for nineteenth century empires.

Importantly, France grapples with the colonial question during the French Revolution and haltingly experiments with extending its constitution and citizenship to the colonies in what Fradera terms an *imperial constitution*. This attempt serves as a model for Spain’s later constitutional experiment to maintain its American colonies. But during the ensuing revolutionary cycle, the US frees itself from Great Britain, Haiti breaks free of France, and most of Spanish America is lost to Spain. Despite these massive territorial and commercial losses, these states reform how

they manage their empires despite revolutionary upheaval and the emergence of “natural rights” at home. In their wake, *colonial constitutions* come to define the nineteenth century empire whereby the colonies are excluded from the rights present in the metropole. These revolutions are therefore key moments in defining the imperial metropole.

In a book about how empires were reformed during and following the age of revolution, the Haitian revolution could be given more weight for two reasons. First, the radical demands of black men and women on Saint Domingue to abolish slavery and be included in the French empire as equals influenced the contours and outcomes of the French revolution. Second, the African inspiration for the ideals of Haiti’s revolution deserves some treatment in a book largely focused on European empires and European transfers of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Haitian actors surely played a key role in defining what kind of empire was possible during and after the age of revolutions.

However, the comparison Fradera develops is extremely convincing. Though he is primarily a Spanish historian, my sense is that the book is weighted much more through the French experience of both revolution, constitutional experiments, and imperial reform. This work overcomes comparative imperial studies that position the British empire as a model (e.g. p. 128). Instead, by relying on global, entangled approaches in his case studies, Fradera also shows to what extent imperial agents observed and learned from (and even copied) how other empires dealt with colonies by creating special laws. His argument is strengthened by the di-

versity of his cases. Britain may not have had a constitution or undergone political revolution during the period in question, but Britain still enforced regulations and forms of representation that distinguished between colonial and metropolitan territories. Furthermore, he made an uncommon decision to include the United States into his narrative – at a time when American scholarship and debate on empire appears to be booming – though the US did not have formal colonies during much of the nineteenth century. Still, its treatment of African Americans, free and enslaved, as well as indigenous people are a compelling form of *spécialité* as the US expanded westwards during the nineteenth century. And finally, the US inherited and drew on the legacy of Spain’s special laws in its former colonies after 1898.

Fradera concludes that Britain, France, Spain, and the US were transformed into imperial nations during the global, but particularly transatlantic, crisis that faced monarchic empires during the late eighteenth century. These empires were different from their predecessors as their legitimacy in expanding and ruling distant peoples was derived from the nation and therefore from “the definition of who formed part of it and who, on the contrary, was merely a subject and therefore liable to other rules” (p. 236). Though this process started in the Atlantic, his conclusion is cautionary about in how far the concept of imperial nation may be extended to further. Though certainly other nineteenth century empires appear to mirror the developments presented in this book, Fradera cautions that these cases merit intense empirical studies on their own (especially

pp. 239–240), which is worth thinking through.

This synthesis is a significant contribution to the history of the complex, entangled relationship between empire and nation from the late eighteenth and into the twentieth century. Though Fradera begins with the Atlantic Revolutions as a key moment in the shifting form of empire, this book is much more than an Atlantic history. The case studies he develops – Britain, France, Spain, and the US – are not characterized by a focus on the “Atlantic” in the nineteenth century. The cases presented here all receive their treatment and are presented convincingly in an overlapping, chronological fashion. Additionally, he brings other European empires into the discussion. His arguments are not overly simplified; he invokes both continuities and legacies of the monarchic empires to understand what comes in their wake, though he also stresses rupture and transformation. I will refrain from a chapter by chapter account of this detailed work, though Fradera masters a dense account of these four empires’ expansion and competition, revolutionary reforms, and their use of the colonial *spécialité*. Still, such a complex synthesis may prove difficult reading for undergraduate students who might be less familiar with the material.

Regarding the finer points, the index is helpful and sufficient, though not extensive. The bibliography is impressive and consists of literature mainly in English, Spanish, and French, and is therefore an excellent resource for scholars. This well-researched book deserves attention from advanced scholars in the fields already mentioned: global history, imperial history, Atlantic history, as well as historians of

the various Atlantic and European revolutions. Fradera’s impact should be most felt in the historiography of the age of revolutions in a global context, which has largely overlooked empire and has not questioned or explained empires’ continued existence following national revolutions.

#### Notes

- 1 J. Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, Trans. P. Camiller, Princeton 2014, pp. 392–468.
- 2 J. Adelman, *An Age of Imperial Revolutions*, in: *The American Historical Review* 113 (2008) 2, pp. 319–340; J. Burbank / F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton 2011, pp. 219–250. For the global turn, see S. Desan / L. Hunt / W. M. Max Nelson (eds.), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, Ithaca 2013.
- 3 J. K. Thornton, “I Am the Subject of the King of Congo”: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution, in: *Journal of World History* (1993) 4, pp. 181–214.

**Ulrich Hofmeister: Die Bürde des Weibens Zaren. Russische Vorstellungen einer imperialen Zivilisierungsmis-sion in Zentralasien (= Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, Bd. 88), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2019, 419 S.**

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