Introduction

Most historians associate the European Mediterranean in the first half of the nineteenth century with backward regions at the periphery of the continent setting out for modernity. Leading contemporary politicians such as the Austrian foreign minister and future chancellor Metternich fostered such a discourse of orientalism. They moulded the once stimulating South into a part of Africa, referring to ‘tyranny, superstition, poverty’ and calling the consequences of these characteristics ‘barbaric’, ‘hot-tempered’ and ‘violent’. Thus, it is hardly astonishing that classical Western historiography on the nineteenth century almost forgot about the South and, until just a few years ago, concentrated on the great powers – Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria and Russia. At the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15, these five countries as a political centre divided Europe into bully pulpits, which left no space for the former great powers of Spain and Portugal, the once powerful trading centres in the Italian peninsula, or the tottering Ottoman Empire. The master narrative suggested for a long time that there existed just one European model of modernization that was valid for the entire world. Normative progress in the form of modern constitutions could come only from the liberal Western powers of Great Britain and France, which had negotiated a new social contract between monarch and people. According to the political power centre in the North, the normative centre, too, was to be found there. Such unilateral dichotomies of cultural and political transfers have only recently
been questioned. These discourses neglect to consider that the eventual peripheral South had quite independent answers for the challenges of the post-Napoleonic era and that one cannot apply only one concept of modernization to all socio-historical contexts even within Europe. Such judgements have been possible also because the 1820s revolutions failed mostly after very little time and were remembered, at most, as mere episodes in the history of the nineteenth century, or were simply ignored.

This chapter focuses on the events of the European Mediterranean between 1812 and 1823 and tries to understand Europe ‘from the periphery’. It starts out from the assumption that in this period the Mediterranean revolutions sparked early liberalism, models of political representation and European constitutional thought in a distinctive way. With reference to Shmuel Eisenstadt’s idea of ‘multiple modernities’, it questions the hegemonic Western way of understanding modernity, by provincializing it. The peripheral European South generated particular modernization projects of its own. A good example is the Spanish Constitution of 1812 that, by 1820–1, had been introduced in four countries: Spain, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Portugal and Sardinia. Since this model had no major role in the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire, we will concentrate on the Iberian and Italian peninsulas. These transnational perspectives enable us not only to analyse European discourse, but also to identify transatlantic references to the Americas, as well as the global implications of a revolutionary South that includes the Indian subcontinent and reaches as far as the Philippines.

Firstly, this chapter will outline the situation of the region under consideration between the birth of the Spanish Constitution of 1812 and the end of the Napoleonic Empire in 1815. Secondly, it focuses on the Restoration years and opens up the European perspective on the transatlantic Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America, thus turning the Italian states into an ‘Atlantic periphery’. Then my focus will turn to the revolutions of the 1820s in southern Europe. By examining the press, diplomatic sources and exchanges between liberal exiles, the chapter will outline mechanisms of cultural and intellectual exchange between shifting centres and peripheries. Finally, dealing with the legacy of the Spanish constitutional model until 1848, the chapter will conclude that accounts of the nineteenth century should not be limited to the history of independence movements, nationalism and nation states, but that they need to include issues such as political participation, individual liberties and the role of written constitutions.
1812: Spain’s ‘most progressive’ constitution

Traditionally, the beginnings of the modern age in Europe used to be linked to the Enlightenment. Although scholars nowadays increasingly question this equation, a turn to more self-reflectivity in all European societies of this period is evident. Even if characterized by different junctures and characteristics, the Enlightenment gained acceptance not only among the intellectual and economic elites in France, Great Britain and the Holy Roman Empire, but also in Spain, Portugal, Naples and Sardinia. The same applies to the politics of enlightened reform and the search for alliances with other ‘enlightened’ monarchs. Meanwhile, before the French Revolution, hardly any monarch was willing to give up absolute sovereignty and to grant a written constitution – with the remarkable exception of the Habsburg ruler Pietro Leopoldo of Tuscany, although the European public learned of his achievements only long after his death, by 1825.

The actual constitutional development in southern Europe was closely related to the foreign stimulus coming from Napoleon Bonaparte. While Piedmont was soon at the mercy of French interests, and fell victim to French imperial expansion, Naples experienced a short republican period, producing its own constitution in 1799, before being granted an authoritarian constitution based on the Statute of Bayonne under Napoleon’s brother-in-law Murat. In 1815 it was granted a new constitution based on the restoration of the monarchy. In content, all of these constitutions were far removed from the state’s political realities.

As far as Portugal is concerned, the Braganza dynasty had already escaped to Brazil before the first of three invasion attempts starting in 1808. Due to British protection of Portugal, Napoleon never succeeded in conquering the country completely and in 1811 he withdrew from the western part of the Iberian peninsula. The Congress of Vienna recognized the Braganzas’ new kingdom across the Atlantic, which was governed in personal union with the European mother country. The far bigger country on the peninsula, Spain, fell victim to the last stage of Napoleonic expansion in the Mediterranean. While the two Italian kingdoms, Piedmont-Sardinia and Naples, had to wait for independence until Napoleon’s fall, Spain, which was never completely occupied, defied French rule. In the Spanish War of Independence, the country’s intellectual elites, who were very unhappy with the Bourbons’ timid reform policies, saw the opportunity to establish a new political order by means of a constitution. How could this happen?
When the Bourbon King Charles IV and his son Ferdinand VII were quarrelling over the Spanish throne in 1808, Napoleon ordered his General Joaquin Murat to conquer the northern part of the Iberian peninsula. Once he reached this goal, Napoleon asked the two Bourbons to meet him at Bayonne in southern France. There, on 5 May, he dictated diplomas of abdication to both of them, imposed the so-called Statute of Bayonne two months later, and installed his brother Joseph as José I on the Spanish throne. Napoleon’s intervention proved to be an event of unparalleled consequences in Spanish constitutional history. Soon, large parts of the Spanish population began to put up resistance. Local juntas made a stand against the deposition of their dynasty, and against the ongoing invasion by French troops, for two reasons: first, they supported their legitimate king, Ferdinand VII; and second, they regarded the people’s fundamental right to co-decide in matters of succession as having been violated by Napoleon. Thanks to the new guerilla tactics of their army and with support from Britain, by 1813 Spain had managed to expel its French invaders. As a result of the people’s enthusiastic participation in the struggle for independence, the prospects for revolutionary and liberal ideas were promising. The power vacuum that briefly prevailed after the defeat of the French opened up the opportunity to establish a new order in Spain: a constitutional monarchy.

In the microcosm of the occupied city of Cádiz, elected deputies from the free and occupied provinces and from overseas flocked together to discuss the future of their country. Generally, about one-third of this crowd can be ascribed to the first estate, only three per cent to the nobility and approximately two-thirds to the third estate. These socially rather well-off men referred to themselves by the traditional name of the Spanish parliament: the Cortes. Since there were enough representatives from all three estates, both from the cities as well as from the provinces, the Cortes could legitimately claim to constitute an assembly of delegates that represented the entire Spanish nation in both hemispheres. For the first time in Spanish history they decided, against the will of the royalists, to meet in a single chamber that was constituted irrespective of class differences. The constituent Cortes declared, in their very first decree on 24 March 1810, that they represented the sovereign will of the Spanish nation and that the envisioned constitution was to be based on the principle of the separation of powers. Soon three groups emerged: liberals, royalists and Americans. Of these three, the liberals were by far the largest group. All groups discussed different constitutional models. In the end, on 19 March 1812, they promulgated a constitutional text that
combined elements from French, American and British constitutional thought along with historically Spanish traditions.\textsuperscript{22}

Two more contemporary constitutional models were in circulation in Europe at the time: the Sicilian constitution of 1812 and the French \textit{Charte constitutionnelle} of 1814. Compared to these texts, the Constitution of Cádiz was by far the most complex as far as the diversity and multiplicity of theoretical influences is concerned.\textsuperscript{23} In the Sicilian case the project was based on an initiative by the British governor Lord William Bentinck, even if parliament played a central role. In France, the Charter was imposed by Louis XVIII. As a consequence, only in Spain did the nation flock together as the constituent power. Article Three declared that ‘sovereignty lies essentially with the nation’; no such mention existed in the Sicilian or French texts. The progressive character of the Spanish constitution is also reflected in its reference to universal male suffrage for Spanish citizens, while suffrage in Sicily and France was restricted by census. Nowhere else was parliament more powerful than in Spain, where the single chamber enjoyed far-reaching prerogatives. The Spanish parliament’s unique position was further strengthened by the fact that the king only had a suspensory veto and no right to dissolve parliament. Thus, compared to the Sicilian and the French models, the Spanish text was by far the most progressive.\textsuperscript{24} France’s \textit{Charte constitutionnelle} sought to balance the people’s sovereignty with monarchic absolutism. As an \textit{octroi} it emphasized the pre-eminence of the king, although it had to accept the essential result of the revolution that monarchical power was restricted by a constitution. The moderate Sicilian constitution, where the role of the king was weaker, has to be situated halfway between the two others.\textsuperscript{25}

Among Spain’s several constitutions during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Constitution of Cádiz was the most progressive. Neither the Royal Statute of 1834 nor the constitutions of 1837 and 1845 conceded similar power to parliament and nation. Only the constitution of 1869 got close to the Cádiz model, again by the exact designation of the text as the ‘Democratic Constitution of the Spanish Nation’ and the word-for-word copy of Article Three. However, contrary to the situation in 1869, in 1812 and 1820 no republican ideas were on the agenda. Likewise, during the first half of the nineteenth century, ‘democratic’ was still considered a swear word that liberal constitutionalists did not use. Only conservatives and absolutists, who were hostile to written constitutions in principle, made frequent use of the term in order to denounce the danger of antimonarchic conspiracies and the potential of liberal constitutions for encouraging social upheaval in post-Napoleonic Europe.\textsuperscript{26}
‘Restoration’ in southern Europe: Old empires and new peripheries

Historiography has characterized the years following the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire as the Restoration era. For the period from 1815 to 1830, the term is misleading and offers no key to understanding nineteenth-century European history as a whole. Only in the Mediterranean and in a few German states did the monarchs who had governed before Napoleon return, and almost everywhere monarchical rule had to adapt to new conditions. Recent studies question the conventional dichotomy of revolution and restoration, describing the relation between the two in more nuanced ways. For instance, Brian Vick stresses that such bipolar schemes, referring to the period following the Congress of Vienna, are of little explanatory value. Instead, he underlines the multifaceted process by which a new international order emerged, one characterized by a multilateral European dimension. Similarly, new research on Spain relates the return of the Bourbons in Madrid to developments elsewhere in Europe. After all, the old colonial powers of Portugal and Spain remained imperial states with territories in both hemispheres – although after the Napoleonic expansion and the Spanish War of Independence they struggled with their colonies’ fight for independence in Latin America.

If we now look at the Congress of Vienna, and at the aims pursued by the centre (namely the European great powers) towards the periphery (i.e. southern Europe), we note a ‘policy of security’ that was defensive and constructive at the same time. Analysing the Treaty of Paris of May 1814, three agreements concerning Spain, Portugal and the Italian states have to be mentioned: the rollback of French borders to the state of 1 January 1792 Art. III); the reconfiguration of Italy into independent states (Art. VI); and the restitution of Santo Domingo to Spain (Art. VIII). At the Congress of Vienna there was no Italian, Portuguese or Spanish commission. In the conference proceedings of 8 June 1815, twenty articles of the fifth paragraph deal exhaustively with Italian affairs. Among the most important results were the enlargement of Sardinia to include Genoa (Art. 85–90), the Austrian expansion into northern Italy (Art. 93–5) and the return of the Habsburg secundogenitures – Habsburg-Lorraine, Habsburg d’Este and Bourbon-Parma in Modena, Massa and Carrara, Parma and Piacenza, as well as in Tuscany (Art. 98–100). Furthermore, the Spanish infanta Maria Luisa received the principality of Lucca (Art. 101–2) and the Papal State was restored
as a stabilizing factor in the Italian peninsula (Art. 103). The Bourbon Ferdinand IV returned to his throne in Naples and ruled from now on as King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies (Art. 104), with Naples as the capital, turning Sicily into a peripheral position within the new kingdom. Three articles of the sixth paragraph (Art. 105–7) dealt with Portugal and its relationship to France. It settled the return of Olivenza by Spain and of French Guyana.³⁴ Portugal was one of the signatories of both the Treaties of Paris and the Vienna Final Act, whereas Spain was so upset that its demands for Parma, Piacenza und Guastalla had been ignored that its minister plenipotentiary, Pedro Gómez de Labrador, refused to sign the Act (which King Ferdinand VII belatedly did in 1817).

In the field of European high politics, the Italian states, Portugal and Spain indeed found themselves in a peripheral situation, because they were excluded from the most important decisions made by the four victorious powers plus France, and participated in the Congress of Vienna simply as signatory powers of second rank.³⁵ Although the independence of all southern European states was formally re-established in 1814–15, the great powers preserved considerable informal influence, southern Italy being the most evident example. Here, Vienna and King Ferdinand of the Two Sicilies agreed on a secret treaty to grant Austria the right of military intervention in case the internal conditions of the southernmost kingdom should change in a revolutionary way.³⁶ Neither in Spain nor in Sardinia, where the Bourbon Ferdinand VII and the Savoy Victor Emanuel I re-ascended to their thrones in spring 1814, were similar arrangements to be found. Nonetheless, both states remained in the French geostrategic sphere of influence, whereas Britain, as an imperial sea power, performed a similar function in Portugal and in the Mediterranean’s insular and maritime provinces – the southern Italian ones in particular.³⁷

Turning towards Latin America, it has to be stressed that ‘constitutionalism was, essentially, an Atlantic phenomenon’, because both Spanish and Latin American deputies had given birth to Hispanic liberalism, which combined enlightened with Catholic elements.³⁸ The constitution of 1812 played an important role during the first constitutional period, but a minor one in the second. Despite treating Spanish citizens as equal concerning taxation (Art. 339), its abstract ideals were hardly implemented in practical politics, neither during the years 1812–14, nor during the revolution of 1820–3. Furthermore, people of African origin in the colonies were mostly excluded from citizenship, and slavery continued to exist until the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, the colonies continued to find themselves in a peripheral position
towards their European motherland and, starting with the Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon, most of them tried to fight for their own independence. Within the framework of this short chapter we cannot summarize the manifold regional consequences of these movements for the Spanish constitution in the colonies. It should be enough to state that even though all Hispanic revolutions started in the absence of a king, their constitutional debates and handling of the Cádiz model of 1812 were far from linear or homogeneous.  

It is remarkable that Portuguese Brazil maintained the imperial political system of the ancien regime until 1821. Unlike in the Spanish colonies, in Portuguese Brazil there were hardly any demands for an independent kingdom or for constitutional liberties; and there were no fights between republicans and royalists. This is usually explained by the transfer of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro, meaning that the Braganza dynasty was present – historically a unique reversal of the traditional relationship between metropole and colony. In other words, periphery did not mean periphery forever. This scenario implied that in contrast to the Spanish territories, in the case of the Portuguese Empire the emergence of centrifugal forces in the provinces could be avoided, creating a sense of Brazilian unity at a time when many Portuguese in the motherland felt abandoned. Contrary to most former Spanish colonies that chose a republican form of government, Brazil opted for a monarchical government in 1822 that lasted until the end of the Empire in 1889. Ultimately, the Atlantic region might be best defined as a huge laboratory for a variety of open-ended political experiments.

Returning to the chapter’s initial argument about the Restoration period, in the case of the Mediterranean we suggest talking about restorations in the plural, that did not follow any monolithic principle. On the one hand, monarchical legitimacy – i.e. divine rights related to the recognition of the hereditary succession from one sovereign to the next, with the approval of the international community – regained acceptance. On the other hand, in several cases the restoration of the former dynasties was the result of specific conditions such as Napoleon’s brief return to power. Concerning the return to the more general conditions of pre-Napoleonic Europe, the answer has to be even more nuanced: while in Madrid and Turin an absolutist revival turned back the clock to pre-revolutionary times, in the Two Sicilies many administrative and judicial reforms remained in force. In addition, in all three kingdoms the Napoleonic experience had left an impact on people that could not be extinguished by one brushstroke. If we do not insist on a mere constitutional definition of restoration, but take into consideration social and
cultural agents, it makes little sense to talk about a ‘Restoration’ in the singular; and nowhere in Europe do we see a general rollback to the ancien régime.\textsuperscript{44}

The first post-Napoleonic revolutionary wave

It seems justified to ask whether, after Napoleon, a harmonious order of peace in Europe could be achieved without violence; or if violence was not a desired aim and an instrument to counteract violent changes. By establishing a new equilibrium at the centre of the continent, did monarchs and politicians not merely risk moving the outbreak of violence to the periphery? At least in southern Europe in 1820–1, Metternich’s strategy to prevent revolutions through reform politics had failed. Furthermore, in February 1820, Charles-Ferdinand d’Artois, Duc de Berry, a potential heir to the French throne, fell victim to an antimonarchical attack.\textsuperscript{45}

In the German Confederation and in Britain, the authorities were mostly successful in avoiding uprisings and the spread of terrorist attacks. Exceptions were the assassination of the writer and diplomat (then in the Russian service) August von Kotzebue, or larger protests such as at Peterloo in 1819, or the Cato Street conspiracy in 1820, which was directed against the entire British Cabinet and may well have turned into a proper revolution.

However, after Simón Bolívar and other insurgents took advantage of the unstable situation in Europe and established independent republics in Latin America, a new cycle of revolutions began hitting Europe. In Spain, on 1 January 1820, troops meant to suppress the turmoil in the colonies, rebelled in in Cádiz. Spain was followed by the Two Sicilies, Portugal and Sardinia, as well as by the south-eastern parts of the Balkans that belonged to the Ottoman Empire. The fact that the European periphery had been defeated during the Napoleonic Wars, but now propagated liberty and constitutionalism, reveals the fragility of the arrangements undertaken by the victorious powers at Vienna.

These signs of political unrest, over a period of fifteen months, were nourished by increasing discontent over the politics of absolutist governments among large parts of the population. Social and economic factors such as the high price of bread – the result of a famine following the climatic crisis after the eruption of the Tambora in Indonesia in 1815 – had particularly severe consequences for the essentially agricultural
southern European societies. Similarly dramatic for public finances was Portugal’s and Spain’s loss of most of their transatlantic colonies, since the mother countries were used to gaining high profits from overseas. Deprived of imperial trade, they no longer knew how to handle their debts. In addition, the experiences of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic era had made people aware that they had enjoyed superior forms of government before. The Spanish liberal Álvaro Flórez Estrada wrote to King Ferdinand VII from his London exile: “Today there is no craftsman or agricultural worker who would not long for any change of government, because he recognizes that the current government has lost its entire moral strength, because it only has the power to do bad and because it is impotent and void concerning the benefit for society.”

Liberal movements in the western hemisphere identified the societal benefits of extensive modernization associated with rationalized bureaucracies, liberalized economic activity, political participation, independent academic institutions, freedom of the press and the increase of literacy among the masses. In order to express their demand for substantial reforms, they organised their discontent in many ways. In Spain, one pronunciamiento followed another without showing results. These highly formalized coups d’état by military means envisioned the establishment of a more liberal political order. In the Italian states and Portugal, essentially military secret societies such as the Carbonari, Federati and o Sinédrio reinforced their activities. In southern Italy, the Murattiani, the former administrative and military elites of the Napoleonic period, espoused a liberal and constitutional form of government. Thus, parts of the army, first of all officers who were at the same time highly educated members of the secret societies, together with parts of the petty bourgeoisie, landowners and tradesmen, now claimed political participation. They justified their demands by reference to their strongly increased economic influence. In Sardinia, the same applied to young aristocrats. However, in all of these cases the decisive factor was the army, where liberal officers took the lead and proclaimed constitutions, while riding across the country, initially with just a few hundred men. According to Metternich, the idea of the army as an institution of political modernization constituted a far more fatal development than speeches in constitutional parliaments.

No revolutions broke out in the capitals, where complacent old men were often involved in the same solidified elite circles for decades, but they did in the provinces, i.e. in the respective peripheries. This is hardly astonishing if one considers the fragmented, but essentially agrarian, social and economic structure of southern Europe. After 1815, more than two-thirds of the population still worked in the primary sector.
Meanwhile, agriculture and the agrarian elites witnessed during that period a real boom due to the permanently increasing prices for their products. In addition, the provincial elites benefited from the end of feudalism, which brought a paradigm shift from privilege to merit. Intimately connected with the increase in power for the provincial notables was a new individualism that resulted in political demands to protect private property and civil rights. Similar to the arguments espoused by Marta Petrusewicz in the introductory section of this book, and contrary to the unbridled Manchester liberalism reigning in much of northern Europe, southern European societies opted for a slow and gradual modernization, preserving social hierarchies, traditions and local knowledge. This essentially local and regional character contributed significantly to the peacefulness of the revolutions, which were almost without violence and not directed against the ruling monarchs. The character of these movements constitutes a central argument against the stress on nationally motivated acts of violence related to ‘essentially European terrorism between 1817 and 1825’.  

Referring in this context to the term ‘national’ requires some brief remarks about the nation state as an alleged telos and a political leitmotiv during the early nineteenth century. In the case of the two old empires, Spain and Portugal, the transformation into nation states shows several peculiarities. Spain changed from a Catholic monarchy to a Catholic nation, where the legitimation of power did not simply derive from divine right but from sovereignty shared between monarch and citizens. This arrangement was guaranteed by the written constitution. In the Portuguese case, constitutional change was linked to the transfer of the court to Brazil. In many Latin American countries a sense of national identity did not emerge before the middle of the nineteenth century. The same applies to Portugal and Spain, where a national consciousness only emerged in response to the dissolution of the empire. In the Italian case, the idea of the nation state as it emerged in 1861 was largely constructed teleologically, after unification. Sardinia, around 1820, at best envisioned the unification of northern with central Italy. The majority of the people of the Two Sicilies regarded southern Italy as their nation and responded to the Risorgimento with a peripheral sense of patriotism. Moreover, they struggled against a violent Sicilian separatism. At most they imagined an Italian confederation of states presided over by the Pope. Thus, national discourse was largely based on local and regional identities.  

The Spanish pronunciamiento of January 1820 aimed at reinstating the Constitution of 1812. Other constitutions were hardly discussed. The
Charte constitutionnelle was opposed due to anti-French prejudices. The moderate liberal elites in Naples, Lisbon and Turin – foremost among them the Murattiani and young noblemen around the young intellectual Cesare Balbo – supported a constitutional model along French or British-Sicilian lines, but soon had to give way to the pressures of secret societies to accept as their model the Spanish Constitution of 1812. Following the Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon the reputation of this document had assumed almost mythical dimensions, as Balbo has pointed out: ‘The Spanish Constitution was the slogan, the name, the flag around which all liberal opinions, the liberal hopes of Italy gathered together’.57

Although the revolutionary elites relied not on democratic radicalism but on legitimate dynasties in order to realize their political projects, the four monarchs on the Iberian and Italian peninsulas shared a considerable disdain for constitutional forms of government. However, we can observe important differences between them in the run-up to the proclamation of the constitution. Ferdinand VII took the lead in the constitutional movement – against his own conviction, but following the State Council – by saying: ‘I swore to this constitution that you desired and I will always be its strongest supporting pillar … Let us go on sincerely, and me first, on the constitutional path.’58 His uncle in Naples, Ferdinand I, dissociated himself from the constitutional regime, by vesting his son Francis with official duties. John VI of Portugal returned to Lisbon only reluctantly and after parliament had urged him to take the oath on the constitution. After that, his son Peter – left behind in Rio de Janeiro, the ‘tropical Versailles’, 59 – proclaimed the Empire of Brazil to be independent and became head of state. In the end, Victor Emanuel I in Turin was the only monarch to retain his anti-constitutional attitude, and he abdicated in favour of his brother Carl Felix. The Italian and Spanish monarchs reached out to the European great powers to seek the quickest possible end to constitutional government.

Taken together, there are five points which seem to confirm the peripheral situation of these southern European countries prior to the revolutions of 1820. 60 Firstly, geography and topography conditioned a peripheral position at the edge of Europe, although Portugal and Spain remained transatlantic colonial powers even after the emergence of independence movements in Latin America. Secondly, in economic terms, southern Europe remained essentially agrarian and did not produce many high-quality consumer goods for export. With the increasing loss of their colonies, raw material resources and other sources for revenue collapsed. Thirdly, regarding political conditions, the formally independent countries of Portugal, Spain, Sardinia and the Two Sicilies
became part of the informal influence spheres of the great powers – France, Britain and Austria – resulting in a loss of sovereignty. Fourthly, concerning the prerequisites of an extensive modernization of society, the future did not look very rosy in view of weak governmental and administrative structures. Finally, there was their socially peripheral situation, which was due to an almost total lack of the middle classes, which explains why agrarian elites continued to play such an important role in the modernization of southern Europe.

The main problem of the period 1815–20 consisted in the fact that urgently needed administrative, infrastructural, economic, political and judicial reforms, which leading European politicians such as Metternich demanded, were only partially and reluctantly introduced. Therefore, there seemed to be no other solution than revolution to modernize society. Paying reference to a pivotal historical event such as the Spanish War of Independence, heroes such as Rafael del Riego in Spain led the southern European revolutions to a temporary success, suddenly turning Europe’s periphery into a centre of change.

**Modernization from the periphery: The Cádiz constitution and the Mediterranean revolutions, 1820–3**

In what ways did the constitutional monarchies seek international recognition for their revolutionary path to modernization? At least three levels can be identified: first, they worked through the international press; second, they sought direct and indirect diplomatic support for their new regimes; and third, they participated in the transnational networks of secret and patriotic societies, joining other European liberals, especially in Spain and Greece, in order to support their fight for liberty, independence and constitutionalism.61

The press and public opinion in the southern European kingdoms identified numerous parallels and connections between the revolutions. Meanwhile, with regard to the revolutionary process, different countries ascribed different roles to themselves and to each other. Liberal Spain saw itself as the pioneer of the constitutional movement in the Mediterranean and stressed the revolutions’ moderate character, distancing itself clearly from extreme ideas and violence: “These are the maxims that will bring the Neapolitans security in their institutions, peace in their villages, dignity for the nation, the respect and appreciation of Europe. These are also the maxims that will guide the Portuguese to be happier and to
be respected. Journalists in the Two Sicilies emphasized the Spanish Constitution’s role as a model for civilized political and constitutional change, but also underlined the rapid success of their own revolution. Revolutionaries in the Kingdom of Sardinia worked towards an imminent uprising in the whole of Italy, which in the long term should lead to the unification of the entire peninsula. It was for the aim of national unification that Cesare Balbo opposed a revolutionary strategy, as well as the implementation of the Spanish Constitution of 1812. The Piedmontese liberals assigned themselves an essential role in the transformation of Italy and southern Europe, which presented the basis for their role on the even bigger European stage.

Enemies of the revolutions in Europe were clearly aware of the events’ international and transnational dimension. The Piedmontese consul-general in Tunis, Luigi Filippi, complained in 1822 that with their revolutionary ambitions the liberals would teach all of Europe principles such as independence, liberty and equality, thus nurturing rebellion and anarchy. The liberals’ biggest offence consisted in having divided the monarchs from their loyal subjects and in having initiated reforms by way of radical revolutionary uprisings. Many contemporaries made similar observations, underlining the principle behind all of these uprisings, ‘that contagious spirit of democratic swindle which … puts social peace at risk’. Meanwhile, they seemed unable to prove the widespread theory that these networks of European liberals worked by a perfidious plan of French agitators and diplomats to start constitutional revolutions in the European periphery, which were in turn to spread across the continent. The same applies to Metternich’s conviction that they were fighting a well-organized, disciplined and monolithic secret society that was responsible for the revolution in Europe as a whole.

As controversial as the press and public opinion was diplomacy. Similar to the views prevailing in Vienna, at the congresses of Troppau, Laibach and Verona the representatives of the Two Sicilies, the Duke of Campochiaro and Prince Cariati, both of them Murattiani, opposed the two legitimist representatives of Ferdinand I, Cardinal Ruffo and Prince Serra-Capriola. Contrary to the situation in 1814–15 in 1820–1 the constitutional monarchists found themselves in the position of having to defend themselves and were not received by Metternich. Most other European courts also denied the liberal Neapolitan delegates accreditation. Even if they started their duties as representatives of their government, they were often isolated or found themselves in trouble regarding the gathering of information or communication with their respective capitals, as was the case for the Neapolitan envoy Troiano Pescara in Turin, the consequence
of direct Austrian intervention.\textsuperscript{71} Thus, foreign secretary Campochiaro had to find other public and secret channels for making Naples’ voice heard in Europe.\textsuperscript{72}

The liberals in northern and southern Italy received designated diplomatic support from Spanish ambassadors in both Naples and Turin, Luis de Onís and Eugenio Bardají. However, this commitment came too late, because already in Troppau the great powers had agreed on the intervention principle. On the other hand, recommendations and statements of solidarity usually remained mere lip service.\textsuperscript{73} Concerted actions by Spanish, French and Bavarian diplomats – all representatives of constitutional monarchies – to introduce liberal constitutions in the Italian states on a permanent basis remained unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{74} The Piedmontese envoys in Madrid (Antonino Brignole Sale and Vittorio Balbo Bertone di Sambuy) and Naples (Raimondo de Quesada, Earl of San Saturnino/ Clemente Solaro della Margherita) watched the events closely. They criticized the Spanish Revolution as an arbitrary act by a few thousand men directed against their monarch. In the case of the Two Sicilies they were aiming for a more restrained modification of the constitution.\textsuperscript{75} The ambassadors of the Two Sicilies in Turin and Madrid (Troiano Pescara and Andrea Coppola, Duke of Canzano) were hoping for an anti-Austrian uprising all over Italy and for open Spanish support in international circles.\textsuperscript{76}

Italian and Spanish secret or patriotic societies represented the third transnational element behind these events. Alongside the huge constitutional debate in Italy and all over Europe at the time, translations of constitutions, the publication of constitutional commentaries and of constitutional catechisms contributed to the exchange of liberal ideas in Europe and beyond. The agitation among liberal exiles everywhere in Europe formed the climax of this public debate in the Mediterranean. From early 1821 onwards, Italians moved the Carboneria to Spain, where they made plans for actions at home and in 1823 fought alongside Spanish liberals against the French intervention. In addition to serving their personal interests as exiles, they thus displayed practical international solidarity. Spain received them benevolently and granted them financial aid. The Spanish integrated the Italian liberals into their constitutional army, founded new patriotic societies and supported their extensive journalistic work.\textsuperscript{77} Thanks to the help of his friend the Spanish diplomat Luis de Onís, the protagonist of the Neapolitan revolution, Guglielmo Pepe, managed to escape the death penalty and flee to Spain, where the inhabitants of Barcelona welcomed him triumphantly.\textsuperscript{78} Many Neapolitan and Piedmontese liberals received similar aid. Narciso Nada
counted more than a thousand people, of whom most were radicals and chose Spain for exile, whereas a moderate and less compromised minority fled to France, Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and other European countries.\textsuperscript{79}

Most recent studies have emphasized the importance of the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese experience of exile for the development of national identity at home, as well as the influence of the different host countries on the exiles’ intellectual biographies. The international and cosmopolitan background of these people, their mobility and their multilingual background, contributed significantly to the emergence of a liberal, patriotic, and to some extent republican political culture in Europe and Latin America. In particular this was the case in hotspots like London and Paris, but also on the other side of the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{80} This background also explains why a majority of these liberals did not accept the borders imposed in 1815, and why many of them thought beyond their own national background. For many of them it seemed obvious that the domestic political order could only be overcome within a bigger international context.\textsuperscript{81} When Spain as the South’s last bastion of progressive constitutionalism fell in 1823 – in the two Italian states this had happened as early as 1821 – the only field of transnational activism for European liberals remained the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{Cádiz’s legacy: The ratio of constitutional modernization between periphery and centre}

Even today, the events of the 1820s in southern Europe are – if at all – described disparagingly as skirmishes, riots or revolts that seem insignificant due to their short lifespan.\textsuperscript{83} Such assessments, however, misjudge the importance of these revolutions led by a generation of Europeans that had come of age during the years of the Napoleonic Wars. This period of constitutional government started with the first parliamentary elections based on almost universal male suffrage. In Portugal, the liberals borrowed the electoral law of the Spanish Constitution and, by February 1821, had produced a proper ‘Political Constitution’, while the parliament of the Two Sicilies, by January 1821, and in coordination with the king, adapted its constitution to the specific needs of the kingdom. In Portugal, the Spanish model seemed to attract interest everywhere, until the revolutionary movement had reached its goal of reforming the
political system and of making Lisbon once more the political centre of the Portuguese Empire. Only in Sardinia, in the short time before the revolution’s suppression, was no substantial constitutional change granted, though even here the liberation of the press allowed for a brief flourishing of public debate. Although the constitutional period in southern Europe lasted for only a few months or years, and was far from being free of tensions, for the liberal elites in capital cities and provincial towns democratization and parliamentarization remained central features of political debate, with the result that at the next opportunity, in the 1830s and 1840s, the protagonists of these events were prepared to stand up again for political and individual rights, and for written constitutions.\textsuperscript{84}

The works of historians such as John Davis and Marta Petrusewicz confirm these views. On the one hand, they stress the continuity of institutional, judicial and economic reforms under the Bourbons before, during and after French rule. On the other hand, they question older ideas of a passive Italian South and underline the contribution to these reforms precisely by the southern intellectual and administrative elites.\textsuperscript{85} For this reason, the revolutions of 1820–1 should be interpreted as an attempt to translate the controversial political legacy of the French Revolution into constitutional liberties. This would be far more than just ‘the last dream of a generation’, as the liberal philosopher Benedetto Croce argued.\textsuperscript{86}

Only once a new type of modern constitution arrived in Europe, in the form of the revised French \textit{Charte constitutionnelle} of 1830 and the Belgian Constitution of 1831, did the influence of the Cádiz model decline. These new constitutions reconciled liberalism and Catholicism, as well as the relationship between parliament and monarch.\textsuperscript{87} After a last brief intermezzo of its 1812 Constitution, even Spain introduced this new type of constitution in 1837. Meanwhile, the memory of the Spanish model in Europe lived on, for instance during reflections about a possible revival of the Constitution of the Two Sicilies during the Revolution of 1848.\textsuperscript{88} Only with this last, bigger and more effective revolutionary wave did the first liberal constitutional model of the nineteenth century begin to fall into oblivion.\textsuperscript{89}

Taken together, the events of 1820–3 in southern Europe should be read as forerunners of liberal constitutional revolutions for the entire continent, happening in countries that did not pause passively at the periphery of Europe, but took the initiative for themselves. They adopted this stance while Britain and France were struggling for world domination, and within the context of a crisis of the Iberian monarchies that lasted for decades. Although Portugal and Spain had left the narrow circle of great powers, and the Italian states remained under Austrian
domination for almost another fifty years, recent studies suggest that these Mediterranean countries did not merely stand at the edge of great power politics. The foreign and domestic policies of the pentarchy counteracted the revolutionary emancipation movements in the Mediterranean, while also benefiting from the inner conflicts and emerging civil wars within the revolutionary countries. Generational conflicts between older Bonapartists and younger radicals as well as anti-imperial emancipation movements further weakened the revolutions. Ultimately, the ‘Vienna Settlement’ survived its first test. Meanwhile, the great powers soon started to act more flexibly, as demonstrated by the fact that they intervened in Spain and in the Italian states, while standing aside in the cases of Portugal and Greece. On the one hand, the European pentarchy led by Metternich succeeded in suppressing revolutions through its conference policy, and until 1848 it prevented the formation of constituent assemblies in Spain and the Italian states. From this point of view one might describe the Congress system as an experience anticipating ideas and institutions such as the Concert of Europe, the League of Nations, the United Nations or the European Union. On the other hand, crushing the revolutions encouraged the use of violence, radical action and subversion in southern Europe for years to come. There were no means for peaceful conflict resolution. Europe’s leading politicians failed to permanently establish any such organizations. Instead, the ‘principles of 1789’, which had resulted in twenty-five years of revolution and warfare, continued to guide European politics.

Coinciding with the revolutions of 1820–3, we observe a first wave of transnational liberalism that over the following decades would grow in importance. The experience of exile represents a general pattern of this generation. Consequently, this informal Liberal International, which was the direct result of the patriots’ mobility for political and military purposes, became a haven of cosmopolitan as well as national ideas. With respect to recent comparative and transnational studies, I suggest sharpening the focus conceptually to discuss a specific Mediterranean liberalism of the 1820s and 1830s. It was tied together by a sense of friendship and solidarity, political kinship and empathy, the endeavour for constitutions, civil rights and parliaments. The exiles shared the experience of battles in the Iberian peninsula or Greece, and ideological bonds such as patriotism and the fight for independence and against absolutism. The liberal exiles did not want crowned heads to roll; they aimed for constitutional monarchies and parliamentary participation. The failure of the Mediterranean liberal movements contributed to the discourse of decline and degeneration of Southern societies, which in
turn inspired the Romantic movement. Meanwhile, if we turn our gaze from the much-studied politics of the great powers to the global revolutionary South in the 1820s and 1830s, reaching from Latin America and southern Europe to Asia, we perceive ‘a history of democracy and pluralism’ that contrasts with the narrow view of conflicts and ruptures. Of course, there was no single revolution in the 1820s, which suggests that in intellectual history we have to ‘privilege contexts over ideas’.

As a consequence, it should be possible to rethink the categories of centre and periphery in the age of revolutions, the origins of political modernity in Europe, and the question of how liberty and constitutional government, as well as social and political change, could be achieved by legal means. If one accepts and takes seriously this challenge, rather surprising perspectives appear, as the example of the Mediterranean revolutions of the 1820s shows. In this constellation, from a Southern perspective, the continent suddenly resembles the image its former colonies have themselves made of Europe. Not only does eurocentrism as such appear in a different light, but also the idea of a European centre of gravity formed by Britain, France and the German states is put into question. Conventional spatial hierarchies collide here with asymmetric power relations, requiring a more differentiated analysis. At long last the voices of the losers of history emerge over the grand narratives that have traditionally been written by the great and powerful, by the victors of history.

Notes


16. On Spain under Charles IV (1788–1808) until the end of the Napoleonic occupation of the Peninsula, see the exhibition catalogue Ilustración y Liberalismo 1788–1814. Madrid: Gobierno de España, Ministerio de Cultura, 2008, especially the important articles on politics, society and economics by Emilio La Parra López, Jesús Millán García-Varela and Ángel García Sanz, pp. 245–80, on liberalism and revolution by José María Portillo Valdés and on early constitutionalism by Joaquín Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, pp. 435–56.


20. Between September and December 1810 the assembly did not yet have access to stenographs, which is why only summaries of the debates exist. However, the subsequent parliamentary work is testified extensively in several thousand pages in the Diario de Sesiones.


41. Even slavery was abolished only by 1888. See Gerstenberger, Gouvernementalität, 23.
47. A good overview of the different national paths to independence is Ivana Frasquet and Andréa Slemian, eds, De las independencias iberoamericanas a los estados nacionales.
48. Representación hecha á S. M. el Señor D. Fernando VII en defensa de las Cortes por Don Alvaro Florez Estrada, Madrid, 1820 [written in London, 8 October 1818], p. 176 f.
51. Siemann, Metternich, 647.
53. See Gerstenberger, Gouvernementalität, esp. 98–124.
54. Gerstenberger, Gouvernementalität, 21 f.
58. See Ferdinand’s manifesto in Brandt, ed., Quellen, Doc. No. 10.2.3.
60. Based on Marta Petruzzewicz, ‘La modernizzazione che venne dal Sud’, in Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, eds, I Sud, 105–28 (especially 114 f.).
76. Alberti, ed., *Atti*, vol. 5/1, no. 119, Pescara to Campochiaro, Turin, 4 December 1820, 195 f.; also no. 126, Canzano to Campochiaro, Madrid, 7 December 1820, 200 f.


83. See an Italian online encyclopaedia such as http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/moti-del-1820–21_%28Dizionario-di-Storia%29/ [accessed 7 March 2017].

84. The Neapolitan General Guglielmo Pepe, for example, played a leading role in the revolutions of 1799, 1820 and 1848; see Luca Manfredi, L’uomo delle tre rivoluzioni: Vita e pensiero del generale Guglielmo Pepe. Foggia: Bastogi, 2009.


