

Deglobalizing the Global History of Europe

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Standing on the shores of continental Europe today, one might believe that the winds of history blow tirelessly out to sea. Indeed, few historical narratives have been as centrifugal as the global. Even the most provincial historian hears the call to pull up anchor and push beyond the waves toward distant horizons. So deep does this theme run that the basic assumption of a structural and ever-creeping global integration would seem increasingly baked into how we choose, periodize, and investigate all historical subjects. In the flash of an eye, once noble monographic subjects have become pitifully parochial, trips to archives are counted in continents instead of towns and series, and we have gone from carefully hiding to drowning in deep regret of our linguistic inadequacies. Neither air travel nor the internet was necessary to feed the long-distance ties of colorful characters of the past; familial networks spread fortune and misfortune across oceans; remote towns turned out to have hemispheric hinterlands. Histories of Europe have stumbled upon global interconnectedness earlier than expected, in surprising places, and through unlikely objects, and in so doing have emboldened us to state what now seems obvious: modern European history has always been global.

There is much truth here. Writing European history after the global turn would be more than ill-served by a reactionary skepticism, misplaced isolationism, belligerent nationalism, or an about-face rejection of the massive scientific gains achieved by grasping the full depth and reach of global connections.

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But questions remain. And these interrogations have only amplified as we see a shift in the structures, technologies, and modes of the globalization inherited from the post-Cold War world that fueled our most recent round of global history.¹ Indeed, as Stefanie Gänger and Jürgen Osterhammel have highlighted, one of the most troubling dimensions of global history over the past three decades has been a tacit assumption “of increasing globalization, a continuous consolidation of the world’s economic as well as ecological, cultural, and social contexts.”² Yet one might reasonably respond that the problem is not so much our unspoken consensus that there has been a generalized movement toward global integration over the last three hundred years, uncovered through complex histories that analyze processes, actors, and objects from a global perspective. By most measures, the implicit hypothesis of an underlying globalization since at least the eighteenth century seems incontestable. Rather, the challenge would seem to lie elsewhere. What if globalization has never been simply a subterranean structural force that historians are only now recognizing, but was also a phenomenon grasped by actors in the past?

David Motadel’s call in the introduction to this forum to gather perspective on the “global turn” thus has further implications from a historiographical point of view: as we reflect on our own assumptions about what the “global” means, we must also recognize that historical apprehensions of the global itself change over time.³ Indeed, if we look back critically on the global histories of the last three to four decades, which have done so much to improve our understanding of modern Europe, we must also recognize that they have been part of just one, more recent and quite specific mode of global awareness in an already long history of European global historical and scientific consciousness. Though the term “globalization” may not have existed as such in previous periods, there was nonetheless a “global understanding” among historical actors.⁴ Moreover, earlier mindfulness of global forces in turn contributed to shaping globalization as we know it. In other words, the point is not to contest whether global integration has steadily taken place and should be the subject of our global histories, but rather that these processes were observed by historical actors as well.

There are many lessons to be drawn from studying earlier perceptions of globalization. Among them is the (at first) contradictory observation that a continuity and even deepening in global interconnectedness did not systematically

1. Paul B. Cheney, “The French Revolution’s Global Turn and Capitalism’s Spatial Fixes,” *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 3 (2019): 575–83.

2. Stefanie Gänger and Jürgen Osterhammel, “Denkpause für Globalgeschichte,” *Merkur* 855 (2020): 79–86.

3. See David Motadel’s introduction to the present special issue, “Globalizing Europe: Global History after the Global Turn,” *Annales HSS (English Edition)* 76, no. 4 (2021): doi:10.1017/ahsse.2022.2.

4. “The absence of the label ‘global history’ until very recently hardly signifies that the question was not posed.” See Guillaume Carnino and Jérôme Lamy, interview with Liliane Hilaire-Pérez, “L’histoire des techniques a longtemps été la discipline la plus simplificatrice,” *Zilsel* 5, no. 1 (2019): 229–67, here p. 259.

imply more open borders, increased interdependency, or growing cultural fluidity. Dis-integrating and downscaling modes of social organization were invented and reinvigorated in response to perceived global forces. There were conscious attempts to channel the fruits and accumulations of global processes based on an awareness of their potentially enriching *and* destabilizing impact. These attempts to take control of globalization did not stop it, but they did give it a specific shape in particular moments. This history must also be written.

As a point of departure, we may observe that historically one of the most important technologies designed to direct and shape globalization toward specific ends in Europe was the imperial nation-state. Coming to grips with how actors in the past conceived—and reconceived—the relationship between such scales as the nation, Europe, empire, and the world remains an essential task for historians of Europe after our latest global turn. For historical actors have consistently reinvested or refused modes of social coordination based on their own conceptions of how and for whom global integration should be ordered. It is therefore particularly problematic—but also very telling—that in the global histories of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries some sub-global categories like towns or regions have been given pride of place while others, and specifically the nation, have consistently appeared anti-global, or at the very least in tension with structural processes of globalization. And yet, for certain periods the concepts of nation, nationalism, and empire may also be understood as formidable technologies for redirecting, reorienting, and reprioritizing the forces of globalization in order to *serve* specific European interests.

The first half of the nineteenth century in France offers a particularly interesting window onto this problem. Even if the final result of the nineteenth century was greater global integration, the path was hardly linear. The Napoleonic Wars, a growing nationalism across the continent, protectionism, the birth of the social sciences, new modes of imperial power, and a reinvention of democratic practices all shifted in profound ways how states understood their relationships to the global pressures inherited from the eighteenth century. While France remained nested in European and global networks, in many cases individuals and groups resisted what they perceived as threats wrought by the global connectivity of the previous century. One may even uncover new forms of retrenchment toward localism, nationalism, and imperial ambition in the service of the nation, through which actors sought to reshape, reorient, and re-hierarchize processes of global integration—as well as the terms they used to understand these movements. In the end, what emerged was a profoundly different conception of *how* France should be global.

There seems little doubt that the latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed a steady and impressive—both in scale and in depth—acceleration in hemispheric, oceanic, and even global economic integration.⁵ From the expansion of

5. Rafael Dobado-González, Alfredo García-Hiernaux, and David E. Guerrero, “The Integration of Grain Markets in the Eighteenth Century: Early Rise of Globalization in the West,” *Journal of Economic History* 72, no. 3 (2012): 671–707.

global commodity markets,⁶ threats to sovereignty,⁷ new modes of war,⁸ cross-border cultural practices,⁹ and a “global underground”¹⁰ that undermined the legitimacy of the state itself under Louis XVI¹¹ to the internationalization of the banking sector,¹² the rise of international trade,¹³ and the massive expansion of bills of exchange, “the causes, internal dynamics, and consequences of the French Revolution all grew out of France’s increasing participation in processes of globalization.”¹⁴ While historians have expressed some doubts about apprehending this period from a global perspective,¹⁵ the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that at the very least the age of “Atlantic Revolutions”¹⁶ and the collapse of the French monarchy marked a high point in a “primitive,” “proto,” “early,” or “first” globalization.¹⁷

As Gänger and Osterhammel point out, the story of this first globalization’s legacy in the nineteenth century has overwhelmingly focused on continuity.¹⁸ There is little doubt that the global connections that continued and

6. See, for example, the many papers presented at “Opening Markets: Trade and Commerce in the Age of Enlightenment,” Fourteenth International Congress for Eighteenth-Century Studies, International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ISECS), Erasmus University, Rotterdam, July 26–31, 2015.

7. Roger Deacon, “Despotic Enlightenment: Rethinking Globalization after Foucault,” in *Confronting Globalization: Humanity, Justice and the Renewal of Politics*, ed. Patrick Hayden and Chamsy el-Ojeili (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 34–49.

8. Richard Whatmore, “The End of Enlightenment and the First Globalisation,” *E-International Relations*, July 16, 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/16/the-end-of-enlightenment-and-the-first-globalisation/>.

9. Gilles Havard, “Le rire des jésuites. Une archéologie du mimétisme dans la rencontre franco-américaine (xvii^e–xviii^e siècle),” *Annales HSS* 62, no. 3 (2007): 539–73.

10. Michael Kwass, *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

11. Paul B. Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

12. Jan De Vries, “The Limits of Globalization in the Early Modern World,” *Economic History Review*, n.s. 63, no. 3 (2010): 710–33.

13. Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

14. Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, introduction to *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, ed. Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 4.

15. David A. Bell, “Questioning the Global Turn: The Case of the French Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 1–24; Jeremy Adelman, “What Is Global History Now?” *Aeon*, March 2, 2017, <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment>.

16. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, 2 vols. (1959–1964; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). Jacques Godechot, *Les révolutions (1770–1799)* (1963; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1986).

17. Bailey Stone, *Reinterpreting the French Revolution: A Global-Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Matthias Middell, “The French Revolution in the Global World of the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History*, ed. Alan Forrest and Matthias Middell (London: Routledge, 2016), 23–38.

18. Gänger and Osterhammel, “Denkpause für Globalgeschichte”; Annie Jourdan, “Napoleon and Europe: The Legacy of the French Revolution,” in Forrest and Middell,

even accelerated across the nineteenth century drew upon processes that began in the eighteenth.¹⁹ The modes of eighteenth-century globalized commerce, for example, remained pertinent and greatly expanded in the nineteenth century, even as they were coupled with new technologies and forms of global empire. Nonetheless, it is important not to confuse continuities in structural social and economic processes with continuities in actors' perceptions of the benefits, challenges, and even potential pitfalls of this globalization. From this perspective, it is significant that while historical works have accurately emphasized continuities in global integration between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most have tended to locate the major processes of this further globalization in the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁰ The early nineteenth century has certainly not been ignored. But far less attention has been paid to how actors of the period immediately following the French Revolution interpreted and reacted to the global integration they, too, considered at least partially responsible for the Revolution and the world it created.

Nineteenth-century global history has had its foils. And if there is one framework that has been identified as the global's bungling but persistent rival, it is the nation. National histories have straightjacketed our methodologies within the strict confines of abstract borders, limited the very kinds of questions historians and social scientists may ask, and tacitly subjected the entire discipline to a mode of historical inquiry that prevents large portions of the human experience from finding a narrative.²¹ Much has indeed been lost in the fetishization of the nation as the structural foundation of a "modern" history.²² And yet, such consistent targeting of the nation as *the* anachronistic and irredentist foe is in many ways surprising when one considers the extent to which other scales—including objects, individuals, cities, continents, hemispheres, and empires—have not only

The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History, 207–24; Alexander Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

19. For just one example, see Emma Rothschild, *An Infinite History: The Story of a Family in France over Three Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021). See also Pierre Singaravélou and Sylvain Venayre, eds., *Histoire du Monde au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2017), which proposes a vision of the nineteenth century as so many "segments of time to which we accord an internal coherence" (p. 9).

20. "Contrary to popular belief, the most impressive episode of international economic integration which the world has seen to date was not the second half of the twentieth century, but the years between 1870 and the Great War": Kevin H. O'Rourke, "Europe and the Causes of Globalization, 1790 to 2000," in *Europe and Globalization*, ed. Henryk Kierzkowski (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 64–86, here p. 65. See also Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "Global Violence and Nationalizing Wars in Eurasia and America: The Geopolitics of War in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 4 (1996): 619–57, here pp. 638–48.

21. Speranta Dumitru, ed., "Les sciences sociales sont-elles nationalistes?" special issue, *Raisons politiques* 54, no. 2 (2014).

22. Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 576–610.

been considered compatible with global histories, but even, in some cases, taken as the best ways to pursue them. It would also seem to be historically unwarranted: nations and nationalism, especially in Europe, took shape and in some cases reached an initial zenith at precisely the moment that new forms of globalization were emerging. Indeed, some early theorists of globalization, though they did not necessarily call it that, set their sights on a renewed nationalism that would supersede old modes of world organization—as did their most forceful critics. After all, the early socialist ideas that culminated in Karl Marx’s blanket condemnation of industrial capitalism sought to expose the triumphant, almost impenetrable bourgeois nationalism that was driving the early stages of global industrialization, stuffing the coffers of nation-states and naturalizing the very borders it was in some ways surpassing.

Marx was of course right. Less than two decades after Napoleon attempted perhaps the first great “decoupling” as he tried to consolidate the continental economy through the blockade against Britain, France was artificially drawing borders around its national economy at the same time that it expanded its European and global influence through empire. This should not be surprising: as imperial, trans-border, and even global as they may have been, the core of Napoleon’s economic ambitions was always a reprioritization of the place of France on the continent and in the world. The economic nationalism and protectionism that followed the fall of the empire in the first half of the nineteenth century thrived on these experiments even as they consciously sought to nourish and profit from the *expansion* of a global economy. Just a few short years later, the German émigré Friedrich List traveled to the United States to study infrastructural development before heading to France to work alongside Adolphe Thiers on early plans for the same. Such globe-trotting certainly contributed to a new globalization of economic policy and expertise, but it did so in the service of a new economic nationalism. Eighteenth-century economic doctrines, List argued, “had only ever seen humanity and individuals, not nations.”²³

Thiers’s commitment to tariffs, national consolidation of the economy, and *France-first* commercial policies was profound and highly influential.²⁴ While he remained deeply attached to France’s imperial expansion across the Mediterranean and beyond, he also cultivated a veritable obsession with what we would today call “onshoring.” French dependence on foreign production was, he insisted, the consequence of the dangerous and ill-informed economic doctrines that had dominated the previous century. “It is a question of national interest,” Thiers declared of French industrial capacity, invoking “interests as diverse as national production, all interests that the government must heed, that it must

23. Friedrich List, *Système national d’économie politique* [1841], trans. Henri Richelot (Paris: Capelle, 1851), 2.

24. David Todd, *L’identité économique de la France, libre-échange et protectionnisme, 1814–1851* (Paris: Grasset, 2008); Stephen W. Sawyer, *Adolphe Thiers. La contingence et le pouvoir* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2018).

reconcile if it can, but that it must protect from the incursions of others.”²⁵ This national political economy was expressly designed to undermine the misguided forms of economic liberalization and international integration that had contributed to what he called the *laissez-faire* excesses of the French Revolution: “This is the fine argument of the ‘*Laissez faire*’ and the ‘*Laissez passer*’ ... which has never done the world any good.”²⁶

This new global political economy in which the nation came first was also shored up by a direct attack on the scientific assumptions that underpinned earlier modes of global integration. The social science that emerged in the nineteenth century did not predate globalism but was in fact a rejection of the kind of abstract global universalism that had animated scientific inquiry in the previous century—giving rise to a methodological nationalism with which social scientists still struggle today.²⁷ In the field of historical production dominated by figures such as Jules Michelet, François Guizot, and Edgar Quinet, the *roman national* provided a means of at once lifting France above regional identities and reprioritizing its place in a more integrated world. “France ... possessed annals, but no history at all,” was Michelet’s damning assessment of his Enlightenment forebears.²⁸ His *Introduction à l’histoire universelle* thus observed, in words that sound particularly familiar to us, that his contemporary world was “caught up in a hurricane, which moves so quickly that even the most surefooted experience a vertigo that weighs upon every chest.” As a result, his universal history, he insisted, “leaped off from far and high; explaining the history of France provides no small share of the history of the world.” This was true to such an extent that “this small book could also be called *Introduction à l’histoire de la France*; for it is in France that it concludes.”²⁹

25. Adolphe Thiers, “Discours sur la loi des douanes prononcé le 15 avril 1836,” in *Discours parlementaires de M. Thiers, première partie (1830–1836)*, ed. Antoine Calmon (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1879), vol. 3, no. 58, pp. 269–93, here p. 273.

26. Adolphe Thiers, *Discours sur le régime commercial en France, prononcés à l’Assemblée nationale les 27 et 28 juin 1851* (Paris: Paulin, Lheureux & cie, 1851), 23; *Speech of M. Thiers on the Commercial Policy of France and in Opposition to the Introduction of Free-Trade into France, Delivered in the National Assembly of France on the 27th of June, 1851*, trans. M. De Saint-Felix (London: J. Ollivier, 1852), 14.

27. See, for example, the review article by Martin Gierl, “L’historicisation globale du monde des Lumières. De la médiatisation de l’historiographie au XVIII^e siècle à sa numérisation aujourd’hui,” *Dix-huitième siècle* 46, no. 1 (2014): 203–18, here p. 207. Discussing J. G. A. Pocock’s study of Edward Gibbon’s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788), Gierl describes how, “alongside Gibbon’s Rome as a metaphor of culture and power, Pocock deploys the political and ideological space of the contemporary global understanding of history and culture. The eighteenth century’s historicization of consciousness via the inscription of local historicity into a global history of the world and of culture is discernible in Gibbon and his reception of pre-Enlightenment and extra-European worlds, and it can be documented through local studies, partial studies, and analyses of different types of sources.”

28. Jules Michelet, “Préface de 1869,” *Histoire de France* (1869; Sainte-Marguerite-sur-Mer: Éditions des Équateurs, 2013), 7.

29. Michelet, *Introduction à l’histoire universelle* (Paris: Hachette, 1831), 1.

No matter what their historical understanding actually owed to the eighteenth century, Michelet and his nineteenth-century progenies tirelessly asserted that it was time for a new history of the world in which the French nation was the privileged scale of historical knowledge. A global France recognized the achievements of globalization past, but privileged the nation as the new vehicle for global integration. Michelet's fusional relationship with France was not a denial of universality and world history so much as a refusal of the specific form he asserted these had taken in Enlightenment histories, from Adam Ferguson's essay on civil society to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's account of the origins of inequality.³⁰ He sought to reorient universal history, to re-hierarchize the scales through which such universality could be attained. For Michelet, like many of his contemporaries, universal history needed to be *re-written*, France first.

And Michelet was certainly not alone. Of course, global conceptions of history and processes of globalization existed before such appellations were assigned by social scientists. But it is precisely for this reason that the birth of the social sciences marks such an important moment in the contradictory processes of world-making. Their emergence in France was rooted in a critique of the "abstract" and "metaphysical" assumptions that figures like Auguste Comte saw at the core of Enlightenment philosophy. Comte scoffed at those foolish generations whose transcendent perspective prevented any concrete or precise grasp of the "the social" as such. The "society" Comte studied so scientifically was decidedly French. Methodological nationalism was not a *sui generis* invention, ignorant of eighteenth-century Europe's pretensions to embody a universal humanity; it was to the contrary specifically geared to challenge such borderless conniving. The lessons and models it provided to the world stemmed from its intentional grounding in a national context. As Comte argued in the fourth volume of his *Philosophie positive*, the excesses of the French Revolution had been precisely the result of "the philosophical elaboration of this doctrine, which can be seen everywhere uniformly dominated by the strange metaphysical notion of a so-called state of nature, the primordial and invariable type of any social state."³¹ A similar movement can be seen in literary texts. Even as global references could be found throughout the fictions of the famed *docteur es sciences sociales* Honoré de Balzac, he also self-consciously presented his oeuvre as the inheritor of naturalists such as the Comte de Buffon, Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and Georges Cuvier. One of the more unexpected effects of the shift from the *espèces zoologiques* (zoological species) of his predecessors to the *espèces sociales* (social species) of the *Comédie*

30. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* [1767], ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1755). See also the European Research Project ENGLOBE, "Enlightenment and Global History" (2009–2013, Potsdam University), which argues that the Enlightenment "was the first moment in history when questions and problems arising out of globalization processes became an issue," <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/238285>.

31. Auguste Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive*, vol. 4, *La philosophie sociale et les conclusions générales* (Paris: Bachelier, 1839), 4:72.

humaine was a nationalization of the very scientific categories he claimed to be inheriting: “If some scientists do not admit yet that Animality is transferred into Humanity by an immense current of life,” Balzac argued, “the grocer certainly becomes a peer of France.”³² In this slippage from the universality of the animal world to the social profile of a member of France’s upper house, Balzac effectively nationalized a scientific project that had once been transversal.

As Balzac suggested, the challenge was also political. Having lit the lamp of Revolution and given voice to an undivided universalism, by the second decade of the nineteenth century the continent that had been briefly dominated and unified under one of the great inheritors of 1789 was once again splintered. On the heels of Napoleon’s First Empire, in 1815 the Treaty of Vienna established a hybrid system, in which a divided Europe reasserted itself along with a restored monarchy in France. The dreams of a new, unified Europe collapsed as quickly as they had become a reality.³³ The disintegration of this first project of European integration had real consequences. The “statification” of French society was also a process of nationalization set against the backdrop of forces of globalization that had been so influential in the previous century.³⁴ This statification was not neutral, but was shaped by the rival ideologies that animated the successive regimes of the first half of the nineteenth century in France. For all their focus on individual rights and their skepticism of certain forms of state intervention, liberals backed the colonial expansion that radically reshaped the contours of global trade. It is now widely recognized that despite—or indeed because of—his commitment to individual liberty in France, Alexis de Tocqueville supported imperial expansion into Algeria to strengthen the nation and reinforce its position in Europe and the world.³⁵ The author who wrote of “democracy that fills the world” in the original manuscript of *Democracy in America*³⁶ also extolled the positive consequences of an aggressive imperialism, arguing that it was only by engaging in heinous forms of imperial war that France would be able to consolidate its national pride and grandeur. Nineteenth-century liberalism proved to be particularly amenable to global systems founded on an uneven distribution of political and economic rights. Statification, imperialism, and globalization were all part of the same movement.

32. Honoré de Balzac, “Avant-propos de la *Comédie humaine*,” in *La comédie humaine*, vol. 1 (1842; Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 7–20, here p. 9.

33. Thierry Lentz, “Napoléon est le précurseur de la construction européenne,” in *Napoléon* (Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 2001), 23–27.

34. On the process of social statification see, in particular, Emmanuel Fureix and François Jarrige, *La modernité désenchantée. Relire l’histoire du XIX^e siècle français* (Paris: La Découverte, 2017).

35. See the texts collected in Alexis de Tocqueville, *Tocqueville’s Writings on Slavery and Empire*, ed. and trans. Jennifer Pitts (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

36. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* [1840], ed. Eduardo Nolla, trans. James T. Schleifer (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012), note 1025. This English version is based on the manuscript held at Yale University; the phrase is strangely absent from the standard French edition of de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique* (Paris: Gallimard/ La Pléiade, 1992), 1128–29, note 1139.

But even as these liberal ideals endured they confronted other political themes born in the French Revolution, most notably the notion of popular sovereignty. The fact that this was never scaled up to the world as a whole but took root in “nations” deeply impacted how globalization would be experienced and pursued. Certainly, the idea of constructing a *demos* on the scale of a state as large as France was already daunting. Even as democracy took root internationally across the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the idea that a meaningful mode of democratic organization could exist on a continental scale, much less a global one, struck many as absurd. The “self” in self-government was decidedly national. As a result, the uneasy equilibrium between sovereignty and globalization that existed under the monarchy in the second half of the eighteenth century was hardly stabilized in the post-Revolutionary period.³⁷ Instead, the construction of a popular sovereignty became an inexhaustible source for feeding ideas about national character, a passion for equality within French borders, and a “practical” spirit within a rapidly globalizing context.

Republicanism was no doubt one of the paths through which popular sovereignty and an insurgent nationalism were joined most tightly with growing global pressures; indeed, such national affirmation in the face of international forces became a marker of the French Republic. The paradox was that this new investment in Republicanism was shared by other European and Atlantic states even as they denied the same opportunities for political engagement on their colonial peripheries. From this perspective, French Republicanism in the first half of the nineteenth century was also a force in dis-integrating, redirecting, and readjusting the processes of global integration that had structured the previous century. The revolts that spread across Europe in the 1830s and 1840s ironically contributed to these processes. While not nationalist in our contemporary sense, dyed-in-the-wool Republicans like Alexandre Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, and François-Vincent Raspail were fighting for a more just France, the devolution of power to the French people, the interests of French workers, *and* a more just humanity. The push for electoral reform, the expansion of suffrage, the new correspondence committees, and calls for social regulation throughout the first half of the nineteenth century incrementally reinforced the weight of the national administration. While it was hoped that the French embrace of democratic socialism would inspire other nations, to exist at all it required, at some level, a reinvestment in *French* solidarity which had been sorely missing under the monarchies of Europe’s ancien régime.

The era of the First Empire and the decades that followed witnessed what might be called a deglobalizing globalization; that is, a moment when global integration certainly did not stop, but when the scales of belonging and those structuring global processes were perceived as contrary influences and acted upon in ways that

created strong head-winds. These forces profoundly transformed global connections and reforged them at least partially around new national concerns. Teasing out the opposing and even regressive movements that hindered, shaped, and shifted processes of globalization is particularly important if we are to grasp the events of the first half of the nineteenth century and the global history of Europe more broadly. The outline above suggests just some of the ways that conceptions of the global in European history could be shaped by changing priorities, hierarchies, and prejudices. After the global turn, writing such European histories will require a profoundly reflexive approach to how the scales on which we conceive our political, social, and global interactions have been historically constructed. What we have come to see as global history—uncovering global connections and revealing hidden international and world networks—cannot be projected onto a becalmed ocean. The contrary winds that buffet the global historian’s craft blow onshore as often as they drive us toward distant horizons.

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