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Colonization and Democracy: Tocqueville Reconsidered

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The prominence of colonization in Tocqueville's life and works has been widely noted, yet scholars disagree about its importance. The perceived tension between Tocqueville's analysis of democracy and his advocacy of colonization continues to be the subject of heated scholarly debate. Revisiting Tocqueville's analytical and practical engagement with colonization, this essay reexamines its relationship to Tocqueville's account of democracy. It argues that, while lending political support to the French empire, Tocqueville was a clairvoyant critic of colonial rule; and that his involvement with colonization could only be properly understood in light of the historical and civilizational vista that informs his oeuvre as a whole. Proposing that Tocqueville viewed European expansionism as an instrument of the global movement toward democratic equality, the essay concludes with an assessment of the significance of Tocqueville's colonial writings for his "new political science," and their relevance today.

Colonization is a prominent theme that runs through all of Alexis de Tocqueville's writings. From his travel notes and early works, through *Democracy in America*, to his parliamentary oratory, political journalism, and extensive correspondence, European expansionism and its defining significance for the modern world was at the center of Tocqueville's attention. Along with analyzing different colonial societies, Tocqueville dedicated a significant part of his parliamentary career to trying to influence, for the most part unsuccessfully, French colonial policy in Northern Africa and the Caribbean. Having declared the colonization of Algeria France's "greatest affair" and principal interest, Tocqueville made this affair into a defining feature of his statesmanship (Tocqueville 1962, 413; 2001, 122, 127; 2003, 564).

While the prominence of colonization in Tocqueville's life and works has been widely noted, commentators disagree about its importance for, and compatibility with, his analysis of democracy. The perceived tension between Tocqueville's defense of democratic liberty and his support for colonizing Algeria in political practice has been the subject of an intense transatlantic debate, now half a century long. Along with the proper understanding of Tocqueville's colonial writings, the debate has focused on assessing the consistency of his analytical vision, and his view of the relationship between democracy and empire. Disagreeing about whether it is possible to reconcile the liberalism of Tocqueville's analytical works with his Algerian involvement—and, if so, along what lines—scholars broadly concur that Tocqueville was an enthusiastic proponent of the French empire, and a keen champion of colonization.

The first part of this essay argues that the conventional image of Tocqueville as zealous colonizer is a misperception that has led to misunderstanding both Tocqueville's colonial engagement and his liberalism. Reappraising Tocqueville's attitude to colonization by drawing on evidence from his published writings, parliamentary speeches, notes, and correspondence, it seeks to demonstrate that throughout his involvement with France's colonies Tocqueville was critical of the French colonial regime and colonization as such. He was also skeptical about the long-term prospects of colonial rule. Considered together, the colonial writings make clear that Tocqueville anticipated the end of European imperialism under the pressure of the very principles of liberty and equality that often served as its justification. In short, far from an enthusiastic supporter of colonialism, Tocqueville was deeply ambivalent.

If taking to heart this ambivalence mitigates the perceived tension between the democratic moralist and the statesman, it makes Tocqueville's position on the colonies all the more puzzling: Given his sober analysis of the contradictions that haunt European colonialism, why would Tocqueville align himself with the colonial project and throw his political fortune behind a venture that, as will be shown, he considered inherently problematic and unlikely to endure? Addressing this question, the second part of this essay probes Tocqueville's understanding of the relationship between colonization and democracy, and its geopolitical determinants. Commentators have called attention to the thematic and chronological overlap between *Democracy in America* and the colonial writings, suggesting that Tocqueville's position on colonization is both coeval with, and integral to, his analysis of democracy and his liberalism (Allen 2014; Bohlender 2005; Duan 2010; Todorov 1993). Building on these arguments, I revisit Tocqueville's alleged nationalism, and his view of the interrelation between domestic and foreign affairs. I propose that Tocqueville's qualified support for the French colonial empire can only be fully understood in light of the broader historical and civilizational vision that underpin his analytical works. The centerpiece of that vision is the thesis—first elaborated in *Democracy in America*, and reiterated in the political writings—of the inevitability of social and political equalization not only in the West but the world over. The irresistible global rise of democratic equality and its revolutionizing consequences is the point of departure for

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Tocqueville's analysis of the modern world. It is also, I shall argue, the historical and ethical horizon that informs and defines his practical politics. Rather than a departure from this democratic vista, Tocqueville viewed colonization as a pivotal moment in the democratizing process.

I conclude with a brief assessment of the significance of Tocqueville's writings on colonization for his "new political science," and their importance today. Recapitulating their contribution to Tocqueville's analytical account of the modern world and its ethical dimension, I suggest that Tocqueville's colonial works offer a coherent and clear-sighted perspective on the global rise of equality and what we have come to call globalization. Taken as a whole, they are a valuable resource for thinking through the paradoxes and dilemmas of the modern world.

TOCQUEVILLE ON COLONIZATION[1]

Tocqueville's involvement with the French colonial empire and its compatibility with his analysis of democracy have been the subject of a lively debate. On one side of this controversy stands the claim that Tocqueville's position on the colonies is a departure from his principles, and that there is a marked "dissonance between Tocqueville's liberal and imperial voices" (Welch 2014, 311). Consequently, efforts to reconcile Tocqueville's moral and analytical vision with his political support for colonization "must ultimately fail" (Pitts 2000, 301; also Boesche 2005; Hereth 1985; Kahan 2012; Pitts 2006; Richter 1963; Welch 2003; Welch 2014). On the other side, scholars have noted the parallels between Tocqueville's colonial and analytical works, and between his liberalism and his endorsement of the French empire. Pointing out temporal and substantive continuities, these commentators argue that Tocqueville embraced the colonial project as a geopolitical necessity and/or a remedy for the dangerous tendencies inherent in democratic society (Alen 2014; Benoît 2001; Bohlender 2005; Boyd 2001; Capdevila 2012; Dion 1995; Duan 2010; Kohn 2008; Mélonio 1991; Todorov 1993).[2] Interpretive differences notwithstanding, one common feature of the growing literature on Tocqueville and colonization is the entrenched perception of Tocqueville as an "avid colonizer" and "militant imperialist" advocating conquest (Capdevila 2012, 219; Pitts 2000, 296). Even when noticing Tocqueville's skepticism about civilizing justifications of imperialism, and his misgivings about the benevolence of colonial rule, scholars seem to agree that Tocqueville viewed colonization as a positive good and threw himself into the colonial venture with youthful if naïve enthusiasm.[3]

The first goal of this essay is to adjust this perception which, I suggest, has led to fundamental misunderstanding of Tocqueville's view on colonization and of his liberalism. Revisiting Tocqueville's writings on Algeria, and placing them in historical and rhetorical context, I aim to show that from the beginning of his colonial engagement, Tocqueville was a reluctant supporter and stern critic of French colonization. Far from an enthusiastic colonizer, as a statesman and legislator Tocqueville sought to make the best of a situation, which from the outset he considered tragic.

To briefly recall the situation: France's occupation of the Ottoman regency of Algiers began in July 1830 with a punitive expedition targeting what one historian calls "the most powerful and intractable of the Barbary states" that for centuries harbored piracy and the slave trade in the Mediterranean (Thomson 1989, 108). The Barbary states were autonomous provinces of the Ottoman empire, inhabited by Arab, Berber, and Jewish populations, and governed by a small Turkish elite. From the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, most of their income came from privateering that enriched the rulers of the coast, while the interior remained economically poor, and ethnically and politically fragmented. Although essentially exploitative, and run by and in the interest of foreigners, the regime was well adapted to the customs and conditions of native populations, and enjoyed a degree of religious legitimacy (Ageron 1991, chap. 1; Danziger 1977, chap. 1).

It is generally agreed that the French invasion was prompted by the Restoration government's domestic concerns. Launched on the pretext of a diplomatic blunder, the Algerian campaign was an effort, ultimately failed, by the embattled Bourbon monarchy to avert a political crisis at home. What has gone unremarked is that this opportunistic campaign was, at the same time, the culmination of a European *cause célèbre* dating back to the mid-seventeenth century and championed by Enlightenment luminaries such as Abbé Raynal and Thomas Paine (Thomson 1989, 109–110). Armed with prerevolutionary arguments and relying on military leadership and strategy developed by Napoleon, the invasion of Algiers was a long-contemplated act backed by vested ideological interests. It was also the last of a series of confrontations that sought to contain the predatory practices plaguing commercial and political relations in the Mediterranean (Lambert 2005). Although the 1830 intervention was originally aimed at political and economic reconfiguration rather than permanent occupation, the fall of the Bourbon government triggered a vigorous debate, which in the decade following the surrender of Algiers was eventually settled in favor of colonization.[4]

Dating from 1837, Tocqueville's earliest writings on the colony—the two *Letters on Algeria*—echo this debate. Occasioned by Tocqueville's first electoral campaign, they single out as their chief interlocutor

[1] In this section, I adapted arguments drawn from Atanassow (2013a). Different versions of these arguments have also appeared in Atanassow (2013b; 2016).

[2] For a summary of these arguments, see Welch (2014, 313–21).

[3] E.g., Bohlender (2005, 524, 533); Capdevila (2012, 212); Duan (2010, 418); Kohn (2008 258). For a dissenting opinion, see Bégin (2009).

[4] For critical surveys of the disputed beginning of the conquest and its prehistory, see Hamdani (1985); Thomson (1989); Weiss (2007). Also Ageron (1991, chap. 1) and Confer (1966, chap. 1). For the revolutionary consequences of dynastic change in France, see Furet (1995, chap. 7).

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Amédée Desjobert, a vocal parliamentary critic of colonizing the lands that in 1838 the French government would officially name Algeria (Shepard 2006, 5; Tocqueville 2001, 5). An otherwise minor figure, Desjobert has been hailed as a lone hero of anti-imperialism in an age obsessed with economic and political expansion (Pitts, 2006, 185–7). However, a closer look at his writings reveals that even this anticolonial opposition was no less in favor of exerting French influence in Northern Africa. Insisting that national interest alone should guide foreign policy, Desjobert opposed lavish military and colonial expenditures and urged "maritime occupation without colonization" (Desjobert 1846, 112; also Desjobert 1837; Pitts 2006, 185–7 and note 99). So without much simplifying one can say that the debate surrounding *la question d'Afrique* was less about the *whether* than about the *how* of maintaining France's presence in the region, and about the ultimate objective of that presence (Kahan 2012, 160).

Too often ignored, this fact seems significant. It outlines the terms of the African debate, hence the practical limits within which an aspiring politician like Tocqueville could hope to speak and act effectively. Insofar as Tocqueville as a lawmaker sought to influence affairs, and not only—as observer and moralist—to analyze them, his stance in the Algerian debate was necessarily informed by political circumstances and guided by available alternatives.[5] Tocqueville's official engagement with the African colony began nearly a decade after the capture of Algiers, at a point when the occupation was a *fait accompli*, and a political consensus in favor of colonization was crystallizing. This timing is critical. It is one thing to justify invading another country, and another to consider France's responsibilities in the anarchic aftermath of a "mission accomplished." Whatever his opinions about the early stages of the occupation (and little is known about them), as Bégin shows, at no point in his political career did Tocqueville advocate conquest (Bégin 2009, 187–8).[6] While often speaking the vernacular of glory and honor, he consistently denounced the French military's drive to territorial expansion (Tocqueville 2001, 20, 124-6, 134–7, 168–173; Welch 2014, 328).

On the other hand, from the beginning of his African involvement, Tocqueville insisted that, having expelled Algeria's three centuries-old Ottoman overlords, France must take political and historical responsibility for the territories and populations that have come under her power. What this would entail in actual practice was as controversial in the France of the 1840's as it was in the United States after 2003, and the tragic parallels abound. In Tocqueville's view, without an effort to modernize the ethnically divided and politically and economically underdeveloped territory—in today's terms, to engage in nation-building—the occupation would be pointless. Unless Algeria was made to flourish on its own, France's presence in Northern Africa would be "ruinous for the treasury, destructive of our influence in the world, and above all precarious." (Tocqueville 2001, 92).

Tocqueville's writings on Algeria elaborate on themes first broached in *Democracy in America*. Key among them, I suggest, is the clash and mingling of civilizations that colonization brings about, and the ensuing challenges to coexistence. Tocqueville reflects at length on these challenges in the chapter on the three American races—by far the longest in the book—that concludes the first volume of *Democracy*. As has been noted, while claiming to consider subjects particular to America, Tocqueville's account has broader implications.[7] These are signaled by its focus on race: a term that, for Tocqueville, marked cultural rather than natural differences, including social, economic, and political dimensions (Allen 2014, 246–55). Although the chapter's title and structure intimate that the Red and Black races effectively had no part in the U.S. constitution, its analysis makes clear that the political future of the American Union will largely depend on the possibility of their inclusion, a possibility Tocqueville regards with profound skepticism.[8] Put otherwise, Tocqueville's assessment of the prospects for the United States—the democratic society *par excellence*—points to integrating racial and civilizational differences both as a decisive factor and the most momentous challenge to democracy's future. More than American, the race chapter exemplifies the universally democratic problem of melding different cultures and ways of life.

During his decade-long engagement with France's colonies, Tocqueville analyzed this problem comparatively and in detail. Upon entering the chamber of deputies, he studied the so-called old colonies in the French Antilles and penned a parliamentary report, followed by an 1843 series of articles, advocating an abolitionist program for colonial reform.[9] After the 1837 *Letters on Algeria*, Tocqueville made two visits to Algeria that resulted in a body of writings and four parliamentary interventions on the political, social, and economic condition of the colony. Reaching for a comparative perspective, he also studied closely and planned to write a work on British India.[10] In contrast to the chapter on the three American races, which is by turns elegiac and debunking—sounding, in Welch's words, "a tone of mournful inevitability"—Tocqueville's colonial writings strike a more optimistic note that reflected "the hope of political action" (Welch

[5] For accounts of the historical and political circumstances of Tocqueville's Algerian engagement, see Jardin (1988, chap. 18); Lawlor (1959, chap. 6); Welch (2014).

[6] For Tocqueville's early attitudes toward the conquest, see Welch (2014, 307–9) and Jardin (1988, 319–20).

[7] Tocqueville (2009, 516–7). Ralph Lerner observes that the collision of the three races is not unlike that of the American North and South, or of the French and Spanish with the Anglo-Americans. These fateful confrontations are "variations on the same theme" (Lerner 1988, 185–6; also Winthrop 2002, 112).

[8] As Barbara Allen suggests, while prescient about the challenges, Tocqueville underestimated American society's capacity to address race differences (Allen 2009, 85–115; 2014, 256). Nor did he anticipate a Lincoln.

[9] For a discussion of Tocqueville's works on abolition, see Drescher (1968) and Welch (2006).

[10] Tocqueville's writings on colonization are collected in Tocqueville (1962). A selection in English is available in Tocqueville (2001). When possible I refer to the English edition.

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2006, 228, 239). Geared to the practical objectives of governance and reform, Tocqueville's language in these writings is for the most part pragmatic, calibrated less to raising moral questions than to promoting political solutions. Differences in tone and genre notwithstanding, to suggest that, upon entering political life, Tocqueville abandoned his political and moral principles to become an enthusiast of colonization is to vastly overstate the case (Bohlender 2005, 530; Kohn 2008, 262; Welch 2014, 311).[11]

From the outset of his official involvement with the African colony, Tocqueville's analysis is sober and sobering. Although expressing support for the policy of colonization, his private notes and letters as well as public oratory and the two reports he drafted on behalf of a parliamentary commission are replete with indictments of the way in which this policy was conducted, and the government to which it gave rise (Bégin 2009, 200).[12] To adduce two early examples: In the fall of 1840, in preparation for his first trip to Algeria, Tocqueville surveyed the documents pertaining to the initial decade of the French occupation. "Perusing these reports," he writes, "leaves a painful impression. It is inconceivable that in our times, and coming from a nation that calls itself liberal, near France and in the name of France, a government is established that is so disorderly, tyrannical, officious [*tracassier*], so profoundly illiberal even in the portion where it could safely afford not to be such, so estranged from the elementary notions of a good colonial regime … one sees generals and administrators, who, having suffered at home the yoke of public opinion, the application of the principles of liberty, and the rule of law [*l'empire des règles*], seize with delight the occasion to act freely at last, and to satisfy passions and tastes spurred by the restraints, in a country whose exceptional situation serves them as pretext" (Tocqueville 1962, 197; my translation).[13] Around the same time he states in a letter to Corcelle, his parliamentary colleague and friend: "I think that we shall never do in Algeria all the great things of which we delude ourselves and that, all in all, we have there a rather sorry possession" (Tocqueville 1983a, 151; my translation).[14]

As Tocqueville contemplates in these early notes and will reiterate in public later on, the French presence in Algeria, rather than imparting orderly ways to a new society, provides an occasion to indulge motives and behavior normally repressed at home. Instead of the metropolis civilizing the colony, the colony brings out the worst of the mother country both in the kind of people it attracts and in the conduct of those people in the circumstances of colonial life. Tocqueville reserves his harshest censure for the army. In a frequently cited passage, he confesses to have returned from Africa "with the distressing notion that we are now fighting far more barbarously than the Arabs themselves. For the present, it is on their side that one meets with civilization. This manner of conducting war seems to me as unintelligent as it is cruel … It was certainly not worth taking the place of the Turks to recreate that aspect of their rule that deserved the world's abhorrence" (Tocqueville 2001, 70; 1958, 216–7; 1962, 197, 323, 421–2).[15]

Doubting France's capacity to govern her own nationals, Tocqueville's reservations only magnified when he considered the indigenous peoples. In the 1841 *Essay on Algeria*—a sustained exposition of Tocqueville's colonial policy drafted after his first Algerian visit—Tocqueville states: "I am under no illusion about the nature and value of the domination France can found over the Arabs. I know that *even if we handle it in the best possible way,* we shall *never* create anything but an often troubled and habitually onerous government there." Among the chief reasons Tocqueville pinpoints is "the social organization of this people" which France "can do nothing about *for a very long time, perhaps ever*" (Tocqueville 2001, 62, 65; italics added).

Tocqueville viewed the native peoples' nomadic way of life and tribal organization as a major obstacle to setting Algeria on a path of self-improvement. In his judgment, so long as this mode of social organization persists, there would be no hope of initiating political and economic development in Algeria by co-opting local powers; and changing that organization—which in the *Letters* he called "the most tenacious of all human institutions"—would entail a social revolution whose effects, as he wrote to Corcelle in 1846, would be "very painful" (Tocqueville 2001, 23).[16] Thus, from the beginning of his involvement with the colony, Tocqueville supported settling the African territory by attracting agricultural colonists from Europe who would commit their destiny and fortune to developing the land.[17] Yet, as he well knew from the American case, far from a simple solution settler colonization would only multiply difficulties. Colonists require land. The threat of dispossession incites a warlike population to take up arms with all the greater energy. This in turn entails the "unfortunate necessities" of a struggle for pacification (Tocqueville 2001, 70).[18] Aware of these repercussions, Tocqueville notes in the *Essay* that renouncing

[11] For the locus classicus of this overstatement, see Richter (1963, 363f).

[12] Welch notes the "brutal clarity" with which Tocqueville documents the failings of France (Welch 2014, 311).

[13] Compare with Tocqueville (2001, 93–105, 44–45) and Kohn (2008, 264–7). On the evolution of Tocqueville's understanding of 'good colonial regime' see Welch (2014).

[14] A travel note from his first African trip states: "Algiers is singularly bad, even within our detestable system of colonization," Tocqueville (2001, 48); cited in Bégin (2009, 191).

[15] On Tocqueville's critique of military rule, see Benoît (2014, 298–9) and Bégin (2009).

[16] Tocqueville's statement is worth citing in full: "Whatever happens, one may be certain that our vicinity will bring about among the Arabs a social revolution whose work will be very painful." (Tocqueville 2003, 571; my translation).

[17] For a discussion of Tocqueville's economic program for the colony, see Welch (2014, 323f).

[18] This much-quoted phrase appears in the context of Tocqueville's critique of the army cited above. With equal vehemence, he castigated practices of expropriation (2001, 71; 1962, 182–184, 206–7). Opposed to despoliation and lawless violence, Tocqueville struggled to chart a moderate policy that would contain within legal limits both land redistribution and unconventional war (Capdevila 2012, 213; Kohn 2008; Welch 2014, 325–6 and notes).

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colonization would greatly facilitate maintaining French control. "But such domination would always be *unproductive* and *precarious*" (Tocqueville 2001, 62, 52; italics in the original; Welch 2014, 321).

Not only is colonization likely to ignite resistance and further violence. Introducing European settlers creates the intractable problem of integrating on the same territory and under the same government different and, soon enough, mutually hostile modes of life. Tocqueville's 1837 *Letters on Algeria* expressed unexampled optimism about cultural intermixing that is absent both from the chapter on the three American races published two years prior, and from his later pronouncements on the North African colony. How to account for this momentary change of rhetoric remains an unresolved question for Tocqueville scholars. In the American writings, Tocqueville contrasted the racial pride of the English with the readiness of the French to mingle with the Indians (Tocqueville 2009, 573, 534, note 17). His short-lived optimism about Algeria may have issued from related hopes. An expectation about decline of religious passions may also help explain the *Letters'* upbeat tone, as do their publication as part of Tocqueville's bid for election (Allen 2014, 252; Benoît 2014, 286–97; Kahan 2015, 188–9; Tocqueville 2001, 25–6).[19]

Whatever the reasons for his optimism, after traveling to Africa, Tocqueville consistently declared all hopes of amalgamation "chimerical" (Tocqueville 1962, 275, 290, 293–4; 1985a, 565–6). By 1841, he was convinced that the hatreds born of the iniquities of conquest, and sustained by discrepancies in mores and ways of life, raised enormous barriers between settlers and natives. Not only was the gradual fusion of Christian and Muslim societies, anticipated in the *Letters*, an unlikely prospect. The challenges to peaceful coexistence seemed insuperable. As Tocqueville had observed in the confrontation of the three American races, the asymmetry of power and modes of life—what he termed "civilization"—proved extremely difficult to overcome. Any attempt, however well intentioned, at bridging deep cultural divides was inevitably tainted with violence:

> The indigenous population has the greatest need of *tutelage* at the moment when it comes to mix with our civilian population and finds itself, partly or completely, subjected to our officials and our laws. It is not only violent behavior that it has to fear … the same rules of administration and justice that seem to the European to be guarantees of liberty and property, appear to the barbarian as *intolerable oppression* … [T]he forms that we call *tutelary*, they name *tyrannical*, and they would rather withdraw than submit to them. This is how, without drawing the sword, the Europeans of North America ended by pushing the Indians off of their territory. (Tocqueville 2001, 144; emphasis added)

This passage from Tocqueville's first *Report on Algeria*, drafted on behalf of a parliamentary commission reviewing the 1848 budget for the colony, spotlights the central contradiction of colonial rule. In the context of a culturally divided society, insisting on uniform rules and legal equality ends up instituting moral tyranny, i.e., imposing norms and practices that are seen not merely as foreign but as sacrilegious, and incompatible with deeply held beliefs about dignified and righteous human life. Napoleon III's attempt, two decades later, to extend "perfect equality" to Algeria's native inhabitants corroborated Tocqueville's point (Ageron 1991, 38). Proclaiming Algeria "an Arab kingdom," and himself the Emperor of the Arabs and the French, Louis Napoleon offered full citizenship rights to all native Algerians who would renounce their religious status and accept French law. In Ageron's words, "the requirement to abandon their status under Islamic and Jewish law meant in effect that neither Muslims nor Jews applied for the full citizenship on offer" (Ageron 1991, 39, and notes).[20]

As Welch notes, Tocqueville's "rich sociological appreciation of the persistence of *moeurs*" made him consistently oppose any program of enforced legal or cultural assimilation (Welch 2014, 314). Instead, Tocqueville called for creating a differential justice system that would recognize religious and moral differences, and work toward integration incrementally (Tocqueville 2001, 142, 146, 19–20). Yet, if imposing legal equality through *assimilation* was inevitably perceived as morally oppressive, this alternative approach—which in French colonial jargon came to be called *association*—was bound to produce legal inequality and stratification that could not but radicalize in time the subject populations (Kohn 2008, 268–74; Welch 2014, 325–8).[21] What is more, it required the "tutelage" of an all-powerful state, charged with arbitrating between colonists and natives.[22]

Tocqueville articulated most vividly this colonial dilemma in an 1858 letter to Henry Reeve, his English friend and the original translator of *Democracy in America*. The letter was a response to Reeve's article on India published in the aftermath of the 1857 Sepoy uprising. Begun as a mutiny within the army of the British East India Company, the uprising escalated into a large-scale civilian conflict that earned it the name of India's First War of Independence. Commenting on Reeve's article, Tocqueville grants its central claim: that Britain "cannot retain India without the consent, at least tacit, of the Hindus." Yet pointing to the insurrection, he explains why and how colonization puts this consent out of reach. Tocqueville blamed

[19] As discussed below, alongside a possible waning of religious passions, the *Letters* anticipate an alternative scenario—the rise of political Islam—and point to French policy as critical for determining which way things might go, Tocqueville (2001, 18–9, 25).

[20] For a discussion of Napoleon III's reforms, and the Saint-Simonian roots of his Arab Kingdom, see Abi-Mershed (2010, chap. 6, Conclusion).

[21] Abi-Mershed's study shows how and why France's Algerian policy alternated between *assimilation* and *association*, each entailing a distinct set of contradictions for colonial practice (Abi-Mershed 2010). Also see Shepard (2006, chap. 1).

[22] For an analysis of Tocqueville's call for "tutelage" that would "put a revolution in the hands of government," see Welch (2006, 240–7; 2014).

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the insurgence of the Hindu army not on poverty or oppression, but on the lack of camaraderie between soldiers and captains. The "real or pretended superiority" of the Europeans mortifies the pride and self-respect of the Hindus, and "the resulting anger is much greater than any political oppression can produce." Differences in civilization and "race," and the exceptional pride of the English—haughtiness, he added, "intimately tied to their great qualities"—introduce insurmountable distance between the two peoples, and daily reminded them of their inequality (Allen 2014, 261–2; Tocqueville 1985b, 360–5; Welch 2014, 330–2).

Analyzing the colonial question in psychological terms, Tocqueville's letter to Reeve suggests that colonialism is unsustainable not only, or primarily, because it violates rights, but because it offends against pride and the self-understanding—as we would say, identity—of the subject peoples. Far from obliterating this identity, intensified contact between different modes of life reawakens it and makes it more defiant. In another letter of the same year, addressed to Adolphe de Circourt, Tocqueville states, with characteristic sweep and insight, that the Sepoy rebellion is more than *a* rebellion. It reveals "a new and general *fact*: a universal reaction against the European race ... [which] is occurring everywhere and is the common cause of a thousand different effects." While too weak at present, it is only a matter of time before this "universal reaction" seeks to dismantle Europe's domination (Tocqueville 1983b, 486; translation and emphasis mine).

To recapitulate: Tocqueville devoted the greater part of his political career to trying to shape, with limited success, French colonial policy (Tocqueville 1962, 280 n1, 351 n2, 280 n1).[23] In the heated debates about Algeria's future, he defended colonization as the only viable way of building a modern society on the shores of Northern Africa. Nevertheless, throughout his official involvement in Algeria, Tocqueville was as critical of the French colonial regime as he was skeptical about its long-term prospects. It is crucial to note that, for Tocqueville, the difficulties of Algerian colonization were due not merely to the economic and social conditions of the native peoples, or the incapacity of the French. The decisive challenges inhered in the very nature of colonial rule that brought face-to-face different political cultures and moral systems. Tocqueville, in short, balanced his support for colonization with a clear-sighted assessment of its probable future. Rather than crush or assimilate subject peoples, he expected European powers to mobilize their sense of cultural distinctness, and hand them the means of successful resistance. Already in the late 1830s, Tocqueville's analysis of Abd-el-Kader's leadership—the fiercest opposition the French encountered in Algeria before the Front de Libération Nationale that ended their rule in 1962—highlights the chief among those means: political centralization and nation-building (Tocqueville 2001, 18–22, 39, 63–80; Welch 2014, 333). It points to the rise of Arab nationalism that exploits religious passions to build moral unity and consolidate political power over a territory deeply divided by centuries-old ethnic and tribal hatreds. Likewise, in the drafts for the book on British India he never completed, Tocqueville anticipates that sooner or later "the English will end up putting the Hindus in a position to resist them" (Tocqueville 1962, 481; 1954, 230, 236; Kahan 2012, 1650).[24] As a whole, Tocqueville's colonial works signal that the most likely result of European expansionism is neither cultural integration of colonists and natives, nor lasting imperial domination, but wars of decolonization and the making of new nations.

COLONIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

Far from a single-minded enthusiast of colonization, as we have seen, Tocqueville was a prescient critic of European expansionism. His comparative analysis of colonial society identified its structural and moral contradictions, and anticipated its eventual demise. If a more balanced view of Tocqueville's involvement with colonization may attenuate the perceived dissonance between the political philosopher and the statesman, it also makes this involvement more perplexing. Given his unsparing account of colonial rule, why would Tocqueville put Algerian colonization at the center of his political career, and declare it to be of greatest importance for France?

Melvin Richter has argued that, on entering political life, Tocqueville put his country and its international standing first. When confronted with the choice between national and humanitarian interests, or between the political advantages of colonization and its moral ambiguities, Tocqueville the politician "set aside his ethical and sociological awareness" and became a proponent of *realpolitik* (Richter 1963, 368). In a related argument, Cheryl Welch submits that Tocqueville saw France's engagement in Algeria as a unifying project that could bridge partisan and class divides, thus reinvigorate broad-based commitment to the French nation (Welch 2014, 307–8, 315–6). For Richter and Welch, Tocqueville's liberalism stands in unresolvable tension with his national loyalty, as does the democratic universalism of his analytical works with his allegiance to France (likewise Brogan 2006, 399; Kahan 2012, 161–2).

Tsvetan Todorov, by contrast, grants Tocqueville's nationalism but denies its incompatibility with liberal commitments. Liberalism does not mandate that domestic and international relations be governed by the same principles. On the contrary, from its beginnings it has distinguished between the rule of law at home and the anarchy that marks relations between states and peoples (Dion 1995; Todorov 1993, 194–207). Continuing this line of reasoning, Demin Duan calls attention to the historical context and international determinants of democratic liberty. In Duan's account, Tocqueville saw

[23] For an appraisal of Tocqueville's statesmanship see Benoît (2004, chap. 5); Gannet (2006); Jardin (1981).

[24] For a comparative analysis of the Algerian and Indian liberation movements, see Walzer (2015, chap. 1).

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imperialism as irresistible. An objective geopolitical reality, the nineteenth century scramble for colonies left France with one of two options: either maintain her status as a great power by participating in imperial domination, or be dominated in turn (Duan 2010, 432; also Bohlender 2005).

On this view, rather than a self-contradiction, Tocqueville's simultaneous defense of democratic liberty and support for colonization reflects his realism about what David Clinton calls "imperious necessity" (Clinton 2013, 242).[25] In a world defined by great power politics, and divided into unequal states oriented by incommensurable values, to insist that foreign policy ought to obey the same principles that govern fellow citizens is to be dangerously naïve about international relations. Given this fragmented and unequal world, sustaining liberty at home may paradoxically require domination abroad. And so, these commentators conclude, in his capacity as legislator and statesman, Tocqueville's very commitment to liberty necessitated that he prioritize French national interests over those of other peoples.

Differ as they may, these various interpretations converge in diagnosing a rift between liberal democratic principles espoused at home and the nature of interstate relations, between humanitarian and national interest, democratic ethics and politics. The existence of such a rift and the necessity for prudent policy-makers to take it into account is the conventional wisdom in the theory and practice of international relations and, as Todorov argues, a starting point for liberalism (Todorov 1993; Waltz 2001).

However, a more careful look at Tocqueville's colonial and foreign policy writings shows that this was not—or not entirely—his own persuasion.[26] To be sure, Tocqueville called European expansionism "the movement of the century" and urged France to participate in that movement in order to safeguard her say in world affairs. He also pointed to "balancing the political, commercial and industrial influence of England" as a precondition for France's sovereignty and global liberty (Tocqueville 1985a, 271, 289–301, 345, 43).[27] Yet, while stressing the need to uphold the global power-balance and steadfastly confront the colonial reality, Tocqueville insisted nevertheless on embedding France's exterior politics in a principled long-term view. Since his first parliamentary address in 1839 through the brief tenure as minister of foreign affairs ten years later, Tocqueville strove to articulate a systematic approach to foreign policy (Gannett 2006). Far from asserting an irreducible gap between foreign and domestic relations, his parliamentary oratory and journalism highlighted their interrelation under the conditions of democracy. In speeches and articles, Tocqueville summoned France to recognize liberal democratic principles as fundamental not only to her domestic political culture, but to her international standing and her mission as a modern nation. Consider this excerpt from an 1845 speech:

> If France were governed as she ought to be, she would sense that her principal interest, her permanent interest, is to make liberal institutions triumph in the world, not only out of love for these institutions, but even out of care for her strength and grandeur… The great interest of France is to replace despotic institutions with liberal ones everywhere; this, I dare say, is France's capital interest (Tocqueville 1985a, 426, 291, 319, translation mine).

In a similar spirit, in the 1843 series of articles advocating the abolition of slavery in France's old colonies in the Caribbean, Tocqueville exhorted his compatriots to live up to their liberal democratic commitments: "These notions of freedom and equality that are weakening or destroying servitude everywhere: who spread them throughout the world? This sentiment, disinterested and yet impassioned with the love of men, which all at once made Europe hear the cry of slaves—who propagated it, directed it, illuminated it? We were the ones. Let us not deny it. It was not only our glory but our strength … Thanks to us, these ideas have become the symbol of the new politics" (Tocqueville 2001, 207).

Tocqueville's approach to foreign policy has been characterized as a nationalist argument for humanitarian ends (Boyd 2013, 276–9). Speaking the language of national greatness, Tocqueville strove to direct as much as to rouse his country's historic ambition to world leadership by attaching, in Welch's words, "the notion of French grandeur to the spread of democratic liberty" (Welch 2006, 228; also Kahan 2015, chap. 3; Winthrop 2002, 113). In his oratory and journalism, Tocqueville argued that propagating the ideals born of the French Revolution, and which made that Revolution a world-historical event, was not only France's moral duty but the mainspring of her power and claim to global leadership. Liberal democratic principles, Tocqueville contended, are what made France great in the eyes of the world; it is by an earnest commitment to these principles that she can maintain her greatness (Tocqueville 1962, 88, 110–1, 125–6, 329–30; 1985a, 291, 326–7, 421–37, 745–58).[28]

Just as Tocqueville's foreign policy speeches seek to reconcile universalist ideals with loyalty to the French nation by defining national grandeur in liberal-democratic terms, so too his colonial works resist a simple dichotomy between the interests of France and those of her colonial subjects. As in the antislavery articles, a recurrent trope in the Algerian writings is the coincidence of justice and national interest. Warning that colonial failures would provoke reactive violence, Tocqueville argued that establishing a "good government" that would promote the "well-being and

[25] For sustained accounts of Tocqueville's foreign policy, see Clinton (2003), Lawlor (1959), and Spitzer (2005).

[26] Tocqueville's foreign policy writings, for the most part unavailable in English, are gathered in Tocqueville (1985a).

[27] See also rejected fragment in Tocqueville (2009, 647). Capdevila (2012, 154); Drescher (1964, chap. 8); Spitzer (2005, 49–53).

[28] For the most ringing of these pronouncements, see the speech of January 27, 1848. Calling the principles of the French Revolution his "intellectual fatherland," Tocqueville declared them to be greater than his physical country, Tocqueville (1985a, 745–58). Also Drescher (1964, 168); Gannet (2006).

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enlightenment" of the native populations was a matter of expedience as much as duty (Tocqueville 2001, 146 with 57; 1962, 48, 75, 226, 318–9, 323, 329–30, 351, 423; 1985a, 328–9). Even as he called, in a frequently cited passage from the *Letters on Algeria*, for erecting on the shores of Northern Africa "a great monument to our country's glory," Tocqueville claimed that it was only with "time, perseverance, ability and justice" that this monument could be made to stand (Tocqueville 2001, 25; Bégin 2009, 191). From his early polemic with Desjobert onwards, he maintained that only as a flourishing society could Algeria advance French interests and prestige. Admitting that in the foreseeable future France could not dispense with the use of force, he urged nonetheless that the "permanent tendency and general spirit" of French rule ought to be based on liberal principles and oriented by high-minded commitments (Tocqueville 2001, 8, 145, 139; Welch 2014, 325).

For Tocqueville, then, rather than permanently opposed national interest well-understood and the "new politics" of freedom and equality can and should be reconciled (Tocqueville 2001, 207). Not only is it possible to harmonize external affairs with the liberal and egalitarian values cherished at home; it is necessary to do so if France wishes to uphold her status as a global leader and beacon of modern civilization—an aspiration Tocqueville consistently encouraged, not least by appealing to French glory and honor (Tocqueville 1962, 110, 124, 300, 323, 355, 423; 1985a, 326, 332 Winthrop 2002, 113).

Yet, is it possible to harmonize the apparent idealism of these pronouncements with the harsh realism of Tocqueville's analysis of colonial rule? And how seriously can we take the call on France to live up to her liberal democratic ideals vis-à-vis Tocqueville's own sober account of the challenges to institutionalizing those ideals in the colonial context? I suggest that these questions can only be satisfactorily addressed by taking into consideration Tocqueville's civilizational and historical vista, and his view of the relationship between colonization and democratization. The starting point of Tocqueville's science of politics, this historical and political vision informs his position on Algeria and his foreign policy as a whole.

In the Introduction to *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville portrays the victorious march of equality through history. Beginning from eleventh-century France, where the only means of action is force and the origin of power landed property, Tocqueville depicts a society striding toward democracy defined as a condition of social equality, whose each step is marked by diversification of the sources of power and growing complexity of social relations and needs. These, in turn, issue in ever-wider diffusion of learning, political participation and material goods. The culmination of this moving picture is a society of knowledge and wealth in which the progress of equality—in Tocqueville's word, its "conquests"—extend along the lines traced by enlightenment and civilization. Not restricted to France, Tocqueville claimed that the same egalitarian movement is taking place "in all of the Christian universe," and is soon to encompass the entire world (Tocqueville 2009, 9–10).

As early as 1835 Tocqueville hailed democracy's global rise and proclaimed the spread of a comprehensively egalitarian form of life as the distinguishing feature of the modern age. He believed that, once brought into broad daylight by the American and the French revolutions, the principle of social equality and its political counterpart—popular sovereignty—had left no politically viable or morally respectable alternatives. From that moment on, the primary political question was not *whether* but *how* to embody the democratic principle of legitimacy in concrete institutions and practices. First formulated in the Christian West, Tocqueville expected this same question to reach and revolutionize every corner of the world (Tocqueville 1962, 81, 109, 114–5; 2009, 3–32;).[29] From its opening pages, his first and most famous work announced the impending global democratic revolution, and called for "a new political science" to illuminate and guide the democratizing process (Tocqueville 2009, 16).

Yet, if Tocqueville dubbed democratization a "providential fact," he did not see it as abrupt or simply predetermined (Tocqueville 2009, 10 and note q).[30] Rather than a sudden break, the evolution of social equality in the West was long-drawn-out, driven by power struggles, and contingent on religious, technological, economic, and intellectual developments. Nor does the movement toward social equalization fully determine the institutional outcome. As Tocqueville argued, it could lead to two vastly different alternatives: one that guarantees rights and equal freedoms; and another, predicated on an omnipotent state that demands the equal powerlessness of all (Tocqueville 2009, 89, 90). Though "a universal, lasting, inescapable force," in each concrete case the general egalitarian trend is inflected by the particularities of time and place, as well as by character and culture, or what Tocqueville called "the point of departure" (Tocqueville 2009, 45–7, 1373–5; 1959, 150; Allen 2014, 243ff, Halévi 2013; 2016, 39–40)).

In *Democracy*'s Introduction and later in the book, Tocqueville lists colonization among the factors that pushed forward the democratizing process, and stresses the "method of colonization" as critical for shaping the long-term social and political consequences of that process (Tocqueville 2009, 60, 9–10, 49–50, 649–652), hence his original concern for, and later involvement with, French colonial policy. Tocqueville's recounting of the Anglo-American "point of departure" highlights the doctrinal and political specificity of Puritan settlements both as "the key to the great social enigma that the United States presents to the world today," and the "key to the whole book" (Tocqueville 2009, 49, 62).[31] It argues that the particular features of

[29] For sustained discussions of Tocqueville's democratic universalism, see Allen (2014) and Capdevila (2007).

[30] For a critical discussion of Tocqueville's providential language, see Zetterbaum (1968, 15–7).

[31] For illuminating analyses of the political and theoretical stakes of Tocqueville's account of Anglo-American beginnings, see Ceaser (2014) and Kahan (2015, 117–22).

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New-England colonization were crucial for the success and distinctively liberal character of American democracy (Allen 2005; Tocqueville 2009, 52–3, 60–2, 455).[32]

In the conclusion to the first volume of *Democracy*, recapitulating the reasons for the prosperity of the British colonies in North America and the decline of the French, Tocqueville puts "[i]n first place this one: free peoples accustomed to the municipal regime succeed much more easily than others in creating flourishing colonies. The habit of thinking for yourself and governing yourself is indispensable in a new country, where success necessarily depends in large part on the individual efforts of the colonists" (Tocqueville 2009, 650 n.1). Colonization, as this note intimates, requires self-reliance, practical intelligence, and widespread capacity for self-organization—all qualities Tocqueville extolled in America's democratic citizenry, and whose lack he deplored in the French (Gannett 2003). Put otherwise, the colonial experience both critically relied on and greatly enhanced the political education and civic virtues of the Americans.[33]

Yet it is not only as a laboratory in self-governance that the North-American colonies furthered democratic development. Opening "a thousand new paths to fortune [. . .] wealth and power," the discovery of America advanced democratization also by triggering imperial rivalries on a global scale (Tocqueville 2009, 9). In an 1831 letter to his brother Édouard, Tocqueville ruminated on the vicissitudes of the Seven Years war—arguably, the first truly global conflict that put an end to the French empire in North America—and imagined the course history could have taken, had the war's outcome been different. "Pressed from the back by the French and their Indian allies . . . the States would not have revolted against their mother country. They all recognize it. There would not have been an American revolution, perhaps not even a French revolution, at least not in the conditions under which it took place" (Tocqueville 1998, 146; my translation). Taking a global view, Tocqueville saw the imperial rivalries of the eighteenth century as decisive for the outbreak of democratic revolutions in America and France. Likewise in *Democracy in America*, he credits the American war of independence with precipitating democratization and helping establish popular sovereignty as the "law of laws" of the American regime (Tocqueville 2009, 93; compare with Palmer 2014, chaps. VI, IX, X, and Doyle 2001).

For Tocqueville, then, the rise and fall of modern colonial empires was instrumental for propelling the movement toward equality. Neither in Europe, nor anywhere else was this process quick, spontaneous or peaceful. Although claiming that American society saw "the results of the democratic revolution . . . without having the revolution itself," Tocqueville indicates that the political culture of the Anglo-American settlers was attained in the "rude school" of centuries-long partisan and religious conflict; and he points to the colonial experience, and its racial confrontations, as a crucible of democratization (Allen 2014; Tocqueville 2009, 27, 49; 578–66, 1141). As Bohlender has argued, both Tocqueville's analytical works and his colonial writings reveal the essentially violent dynamic of the equalizing process (Bohlender 2005, 525 ff). Rather than a "natural and tranquil development," equality is born in the throes of prolonged social and political struggles spurred by the economic and political rivalry of European states (Tocqueville 2009, 47 with 1134). Like Marx and Engels later, Tocqueville assigns a special role in this process to the unrelenting dynamism of the British Empire and its former colonies (Marx and Engels 1978, 474–5 and note).[34]

Just as *Democracy in America* declares the rise of democratic equality "irresistible," so too Tocqueville's colonial works view Algeria's entering the equalizing process an irreversible fact (Tocqueville 2001, 60–1; 2009, 28). By removing the Ottomans, France's intervention in Northern Africa had opened a pervasive power struggle that precipitated revolutionary change in the life of the native populations.[35] In Tocqueville's account, prompted by the fall of their centuries-old rulers, and availing themselves of the "arts and even the ideas of Europe," local elites fought a two-front battle: to resist the French on the one hand, and to overturn the structure of their own societies on the other (Tocqueville 2001, 65, 17–9). Pretending to defend the ancestral way of life, tribal warlords strove to consolidate power by reducing the hereditary aristocracy and undermining traditional hierarchies. France's influence and proximity had thus contributed to a political and social transformation "very much like that which took place in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages" (Tocqueville 2001, 67). According to Tocqueville, once brought into the ambit of European politics and the global power balance, Algeria would be neither able nor willing to leave it: for, paradoxically, the very forces that resisted the French had benefited from the French presence and power.[36]

Tocqueville's Algerian works thus suggest that a major effect of France's invasion was to put the native populations on the path to democracy by revolutionizing their social and political relations (Capdevila 2012,

[32] Recent study points to missionary Protestantism as a strong predictor of stable liberal democratic regimes, Woodberry (2014).

[33] For a similar thesis, see Frederick Jackson Turner's seminal essay on *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. Contrast with Tocqueville's 1833 sketch titled "Some Ideas About What Prevents the French from Having Good Colonies" (Tocqueville 2001, 1–4).

[34] For a sustained comparison of Tocqueville and Marx, see Capdevila (2012).

[35] See note 16 above. Tocqueville's 1846 letter to Lamoricière discussed below considers various "methods" of revolutionizing Arab society and giving "the people properly so called an importance it has not had." It singles out the religious character of tribal aristocracy as a main hindrance to democratizing efforts (Tocqueville 2003, 562–5; my translation).

[36] Michael Walzer's account of the anticolonial movement that resulted in Algeria's independence highlights a similarly paradoxical dynamic. National liberation, Walzer argues, was "a Western creed" that required, alongside the defeat of the colonial power, "overcoming the people's customary way of life,"(Walzer 2015, 7ff.).

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217–9).[37] His *First Report on Algeria* called on France to steer this democratizing process not by forcefully assimilating native peoples to Western values and ways of life, but by respecting religious and legal differences and fostering the development of indigenous cultures. "It is not along the road of our European civilization that they must, for the present, be pushed, but in the direction proper to them [. . .] Islam is not absolutely impenetrable to enlightenment: it has often permitted certain sciences and certain arts. Why not seek to make these flourish under our empire? Let us not make the indigenes come to our schools; but let us help them rebuild their own, multiply teachers, educate men of law and men of religion, without which the Muslim civilization cannot do any more than our own can" (Tocqueville 2001, 142).

Throughout his involvement in Algeria, Tocqueville expounded on the social and political importance of Islam, and criticized the adverse effects of French presence on Muslim society. In an impassioned speech of 1847, he berated the government's "unjust and impolitic suppression" of religious and educational establishments, as a result of which "the Muslim cult . . . has fallen into a misery that casts shame not only on France but on all civilization." Staining the honor of France, this suppression detracted from her moral power, "the first among the powers of this world." Once again, Tocqueville highlighted the coincidence of justice and expedience: a policy of religious pluralism was not only right in itself but also in France's best interest. By contrast, destroying monuments, "ruining temples, letting schools decline" could not but undermine France's authority and radicalize her subjects (Tocqueville 1962, 421–2, 169; my translation).[38]

In the *Essay on Algeria*, analyzing the rise to power of Abd-el-Kader, Tocqueville called him "a sort of Muslim Cromwell" who capitalized on the "religious hatred" inspired by the French to centralize and bolster his political control. Seizing on religion as the only bond that could bridge inveterate tribal divisions, the Emir fanned fanaticism as a way to legitimize his rule.[39] Warning against the political use of religious fervor, and highlighting the pivotal role of Islam for the cultural identity of native populations, Tocqueville's Algerian writings stress the need to respect mores and religious feelings as a first principle of colonial government. They urge France to promote the culture and traditions of the indigenous inhabitants not only as worthy in itself, but also as a means to forestall the rise of politicized Islam and smooth the road to modernization (Tocqueville 2001, 23–4, 143–6).

This is not to suggest that Tocqueville was sanguine about reconciling traditional Islam with modern democratic values.[40] Early in his engagement with Algeria, he immersed himself in a study of the Koran and of Islamic institutions, which he considered central to understanding the mores of Algeria's native peoples. In the course of this study Tocqueville's view of Islam grew increasingly critical (Kahan 2015, 183 ff). The core of his criticism is captured in a brief passage from volume two of *Democracy*: "Mohammed made not only religious laws, but also political maxims, civil and criminal laws, and scientific theories descend from heaven and placed them in the Koran" (Tocqueville 2009, 746–7).[41] The lack of separation between secular and sacred realms is a leitmotiv in Tocqueville's account of Islam. As an 1840 fragment states, it is "the first cause of despotism" and key obstacle to social and political change in the Muslim world (Tocqueville 1962, 174, and note 52 above). Although fundamentally egalitarian and, as Kahan has argued, meeting many of Tocqueville's own requirements for democratic religion, because of its confounding religious and secular authority, Tocqueville judged that Islam "cannot long dominate in times of enlightenment and democracy" (Tocqueville 2009, 747; Kahan 2015, 187–8).

While the same passage from *Democracy* asserts the Gospel's superiority to the Koran, and its better prospects for reigning in the modern world, as Kahan observes, Tocqueville's was a "tone of false confidence" (Kahan 2015, 186). On the one hand, Tocqueville had grave worries about the future of Christianity in democracy, and insisted on separating church and state chiefly as a means to protect religion. On the other, he was well aware that this separation, virtually absent in colonial New England and still incomplete in France and Europe of his day, was a hard-won historical achievement. Not simply a Scriptural conclusion, it was attained in the protracted religious and political conflicts that marked the end of the Middle Ages—i.e., of the very history Tocqueville saw reprised in the actions of Abd-el-Kader (Gannett 2003, 7–8; Kahan 2015, 187–8; Tocqueville 2001, 67). Even if Islam had failed to separate secular from sacred, as had Christianity for most of its history, this did not preclude the possibility of future separation. Indeed, Tocqueville's colonial policy could be understood to aim at stimulating such a development. By calling on the French to promote Islam under their empire and support native religious and educational institutions while taking a firm hold on the government, Tocqueville gestured at the role France might play in encouraging the separation of religion from politics, and—by abating religious hatred—in liberalizing Algerian mores (Tocqueville 2001, 23–5, 138–9, 235 n7).

If Tocqueville emphasized France's role in advancing the political and cultural development of Algeria's native inhabitants as critical for their preservation and flourishing, he did not view it as a one-way street. Sheldon Wolin has argued that educating the bourgeoisie

[37] For a discussion of Marx' parallel assessment of the effects of British rule in India, see Avinieri (1969, 93) cited in Walzer (2015, 16, 149).

[38] See also Tocqueville (2001, 23–5, 142–3).

[39] "It is as an interpreter of the Koran, with the Koran in hand, that he orders and condemns; he preaches reform as much as obedience . . . The religious hatred that we inspire created him, it raised him, it sustains him. To quell it would be to renounce his power." (Tocqueville 2001, 64).

[40] See Kahan (2013) and Kahan (2015, chap. 8) for sustained discussions of Tocqueville's complex view on Islam.

[41] For similar pronouncements in Tocqueville's notes and correspondence, see Kahan (2015, 184–8).

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into a virtuous political class was a key motive behind Tocqueville's endorsing the colonial project (Bohlender 2005, 528–30; Gannett 2006, 248–9; Wolin 2003, 414).[42] A stern critic of the French "taste for uniformity," and of the apathy and corruption that compromised the liberal promise of the July monarchy, Tocqueville hoped that, if properly guided, France's attempt to build a modern society in Algeria might provide French democracy with a political education and experience it vitally needed to reform its own political culture (Tocqueville 1985a, 386–7, 745–58; 2001, 23).[43] An 1846 letter to General Lamoricière articulates this hope and exemplifies Tocqueville's efforts to inform and invigorate colonial leadership. Tocqueville writes:

> What prevents us from doing for Algeria all that would be necessary is our ignorance. Good will, courage, even ardor for service exist in a high degree; but the ignorance, though less great than several years ago, is still profound. And this ignorance prevents some from acting, and makes others act badly. The day when a certain number of true notions take root in the nation, or at least in the political world, and when these notions become commonplaces, Algeria will be saved [...] You must keep this well in mind: it is not this or that individual, however highly positioned, who needs to be enlightened, but the country and above all the Chamber. The question of Africa will only be on the decisive path to good and grand solution the day it becomes a parliamentary and ministerial question, which is to say, when ministers stand or fall by it. Then the first intelligences of the country will be at its service, then the attention, the effort, the activity of statesmen will turn in that direction (Tocqueville 2003, 564; my translation).

At the time of this letter the young general, soon to become national hero by effecting Abd-el-Kader's surrender, had just been elected a deputy to the Chamber. Written in a blunt manner carefully tailored to its addressee, the letter reflects Tocqueville's attempt to groom parliamentary support for his Algerian vision.[44] As it makes clear, legislative oversight and direct ministerial responsibility are fundamental tenets of Tocqueville's colonial policy. Viewing personal accountability as indispensable for decent administration, Tocqueville signals that in the context of democratic politics, the way to enhance that accountability is to thrust the colonial question into the very center of the nation's life. Arguably, it is in order to spur the ambition of political actors and mobilize domestic supervision of the colony that Tocqueville repeatedly pointed to Algeria as the "greatest task" and national interest, on which hang France's role in the world and—"most formidably"—her honor (Tocqueville 1962, 413, 423; 2001, 168, 127).[45]

Yet stressing the need to train able and responsible statesmen, Tocqueville's letter suggests that, if the "immense African question" were to be auspiciously resolved, France's involvement in Algeria would have to accomplish an educational task of much greater magnitude. The effort to establish a modern society in Northern Africa could succeed only if it redressed the ignorance and advanced the political understanding not of isolated individuals but of the nation at large. Throughout his Algerian engagement, Tocqueville castigated the centralizing mindset and collectivist underpinnings of French colonial practices (Bégin 191–3; Welch 2014, 321–5). He recognized in the colonial debates and administrative conundrums the very contest of liberal and socialist ideas that convulsed public life in France (Tocqueville 2001, 89).[46] Though doubtful of the colony's long-term future, Tocqueville hoped that the Algerian experience might enlighten public opinion, and—by instilling "a certain number of true notions"—contribute to reforming French political life.

For Tocqueville, then, as a result of France's invasion, and of the larger context in which it took place, Algerian and French interests had come to be closely intertwined. And it was on the long and rocky path to democratic equality that they might be reconciled—a path along which, Tocqueville wagered, France and European powers in general could be a force for good in fostering the development of non-Western societies, even while advancing their own (Allen 2014, 252). This hopeful vista notwithstanding, Tocqueville was clear that, even if in the long run Algerian and French interests may lie on the same side of modern democratic civilization, under colonial conditions these interests would not, as he states in the *Essay*, "for a very long time, perhaps ever" be perceived as harmonious (Tocqueville 2001, 62).

COLONIZATION AND TOCQUEVILLE'S NEW POLITICAL SCIENCE

In the preceding sections of this essay I have argued that, while lending political support to France's imperial projects, Tocqueville was a vocal and clear-sighted critic of colonial rule. His political analyses and parliamentary interventions brought to light the dilemmas that turned colonial society into a dystopia and compromised its future. Pointing out the inherent contradiction and instability of modern European empires, Tocqueville anticipated their eventual dismantling. I also reconsidered the questions of whether and how Tocqueville's qualified support for the French empire relates to his analytical defense of liberal

[42] For an account of Tocqueville's political pedagogy, see Lerner (1994, chap. 7).

[43] Abi-Mershed comments on the parallel expectation held by the Saint-Simon-inspired administrators and ideologues of Algerian colonization, Abi-Mershed (2010, 10).

[44] Though an implacable personality in whom, Tocqueville notes, not "an atom of liberalism" can be detected, Lamoricière was favorably disposed to Tocqueville's objective of replacing Algeria's military rule with civil governance, Tocqueville (2001, 80 n).

[45] For similar tropes in Tocqueville's writings on abolition, see Tocqueville (1962, 88, 111, 124–5) and Welch (2006, 228).

[46] This contest came to a head in the June days of 1848, in which two Algerian generals—Cavaignac and Lamoricière—played a decisive role (Abi-Mershed 2010, 120,113; Sessions 2015; Tocqueville 1995, chap. 9). For a study of the revolutionary effects of the Algerian war of independence on France's institutions and self-understanding, see Shepard (2006).

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democracy. Tocqueville's theoretical and practical engagement with colonization, I maintain, was informed by—and sheds light on—the historical vista underpinning his analytical works. The interrelation between the construction of colonial empires and the global expansion of democracy is a cornerstone of that vista, and a starting point for Tocqueville's "new political science." In conclusion I recapitulate the contribution of Tocqueville's colonial writings to his analytical vision, and their relevance today.

The Introduction to *Democracy in America* famously calls for "a new political science" to address the realities of a "world entirely new" (Tocqueville 2009, 16). While never explicitly pointing to the aspects of political science that have become obsolete, Tocqueville's works can be read as an extended meditation on the unprecedented social and political phenomena that make the modern world "entirely new," thus pose theoretical challenges and new practical tasks for political science. For Tocqueville, I submit, the most momentous among those distinctly modern challenges is the confrontation of cultures and value systems brought about on a global scale by Western colonial empires.

Democracy in America signals the enduring significance of colonial legacies and the inevitable tensions to which they give rise. Tocqueville's comprehensive account of the American polity puts its colonial origins in the foreground, and plays up the exceptional character and decisive importance of these origins for the liberal character of the American regime. In light of this account, colonization emerges as a key factor in propelling the democratizing process and shaping its social and political consequences. Although Tocqueville portrays the rise of American democracy as exemplary, he contends that it is not the only road to democratic modernity. By contrasting Anglo-American with Spanish and French colonization, *Democracy* intimates the variety of colonial patterns (Tocqueville 2009, 50, 266, 366, 495–6, 546–7). Moreover, the chapter on the three races illustrates that even the seemingly best-case American scenario is fraught with political and moral dilemmas that compromise its integrity and threaten its existence.

Although sketching the momentous importance of cultural diversity and its colonial roots, Tocqueville's analysis of American democracy leaves undeveloped the relationship between specific colonial patterns, conflict and democratization. It is in his detailed and richly contextual colonial writings, I suggest, that this relationship comes under sustained scrutiny. Tocqueville's comparative accounts of French and British colonization make manifest the expansive character of democratic equality, and enlarge on its global ramifications. These include the geo-political dimension of democratization, the impact of imperial rivalry as a catalyst of the equalizing movement, as well as the historical preconditions and the social and psychological determinants of this movement.

Likewise, if America provides Tocqueville with a model of racial and cultural conflict and reveals its importance for democracy's future, it is only in the colonial writings that this model is elaborated into a full-blown social, institutional, and policy analysis. Tocqueville's writings on the colonies, more expressly than the analytical works, expound on cultural confrontation as both a crucible of, and greatest challenge to, social and political equalization. As they show, it is in the cohabitation and rubbing together of different modes of life that the question of universal norms and common humanity arises in all its urgency and practical significance. At the same time, studying up-close the encounter of human alternatives triggered by colonization, Tocqueville shows how and why this encounter is inherently violent even when relatively peaceful. Whether in the context of Algeria, the French Antilles, Ireland, or British India, his analysis points to the tenacity of cultural and moral divides whose deep roots—in collective memory, identity, and cultural pride—frustrate, even as they give impetus to the process of civil and political equalization.[47]

In short, Tocqueville's colonial works make clear that democratization is not a uniform template or simply linear trend; and that different colonial situations may lead to vastly different trajectories of equalization. They lay bare the dialectical dynamic of modernity (Atanassow 2013a). Written in a variety of genres, and reflecting different audiences and contexts, these works epitomize the careful attention to "times and places . . . circumstances and men" that Tocqueville demanded in his programmatic call for a new science of government (Tocqueville 2009, 16). Taken as a whole, they present a remarkably coherent analysis that anticipates and stands to inform contemporary research in comparative democratization.

Tocqueville's studies of colonization do not only clarify the object of the "new political science" and exemplify its key principles. They also embody its ethos. And herein above all may lie their enduring significance.

The colonial works, like the analytical ones, are premised on cautious optimism about the human capacity for governance and self-improvement. They reassert the irresistible spread and potential advantages of the egalitarian trend, and insist on the possibility, through enlightened policy, to steer this trend toward a liberal outcome. Yet, even as Tocqueville embraced the inexorability and potential goodness of egalitarian civilization, and heralded its global rise, soberly he warned against utopianism and unwarranted hopes for the future. Tocqueville's colonial writings disclose the inevitably violent character of the equalizing process. Putting on display its human and civilizational toll, they evidence that the global rise of democracy is intertwined with episodes of conquest and domination. Along with "the dark side of Tocqueville," the colonial works shed light on the dark side of democratic modernity, to which Tocqueville bore discerning witness (Boesche 2005). Tocqueville's oeuvre as a whole, and the colonial writings in particular, thus call into question facile assumptions about the moral status of modernity. Forcing us to acknowledge vexing truths about the origins and preconditions of modern

[47] For a comparison between Tocqueville's accounts of Ireland and Algeria, see Kahan 2012, 152–67.

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civilization, they offer a salutary antidote against triumphalism and complacent celebration of progress.

As Tocqueville saw from afar, the "entirely new" world of democratic equality is an increasingly interconnected one, in which mutual dependence is no longer a choice but a fact. Along with the efficacy of state borders, this new fact calls into question time-honored distinctions between foreign and domestic, national and humanitarian, hence between "realist" and "idealist" approaches to international relations. As I have argued, Tocqueville's position on colonization was rooted in his belief that freedom and democracy are universal values; and that France's "permanent interest" was to "replace despotic institutions with liberal ones everywhere" (Tocqueville 1985a, 426).

Tocqueville charged France, and Western nations in general, with the responsibility to disseminate the world over liberal democratic principles in the very interest of sustaining these principles at home. Though we must repudiate the odious forms this presumptive responsibility took in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we cannot simply reject the charge for this would mean forfeiting our democratic creed. Likewise, we may dispute the categories of Tocqueville's analysis or its ramifications, but we cannot easily dismiss the questions it puts to us: Do liberal democratic societies have a duty to improve the life of other peoples and regimes, and how can they live up to such a duty? Does a commitment to human solidarity entail the right, or perhaps impose the obligation, to interfere in internal affairs of sovereign states, even by military force? Under what conditions, and to what extent, is intervention justifiable? And what kind of political and historical responsibility does it entail?

In pressing these questions, Tocqueville's writings on colonization challenge us to reconsider the practical implications of democratic universalism, and to recognize the difficulties inherent in efforts to spread freedom and democracy. Perhaps more directly than his great analytical works *Democracy in America* and *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, Tocqueville's colonial writings paint a vivid picture of the dilemmas of modernity, and elaborate a framework for probing these dilemmas. They offer an invaluable resource for thinking through the moral and political conundrums of a democratizing world.

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