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978-0-521-87788-6 - French Political Thought from Montesquieu to Tocqueville: Liberty in a Levelled Society?

Annelien de Dijn

Excerpt

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## *Introduction*

Since the 1980s, many important books have been written on the history of nineteenth-century liberal thought. The writings of canonical liberal thinkers, such as Benjamin Constant and Alexis de Tocqueville have engendered new and intellectually stimulating interpretations.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, scholars have recovered a number of lesser-known nineteenth-century liberal thinkers, such as François Guizot, or T. H. Green, from oblivion.<sup>2</sup> But historical interest has not remained limited to individual liberal thinkers. Over the past few decades, several histories have appeared which analyse the discourse of nineteenth-century liberal movements in their various national contexts. The intellectual landscape of mid-Victorian liberalism, for instance, is now a familiar one.<sup>3</sup> We have gained more insight into the ideological preoccupations of both English and Dutch progressive liberals of the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, our knowledge of the French liberal movement in its manifold manifestations has increased

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Stephen Holmes, *Benjamin Constant and the making of modern liberty* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984); Biancamaria Fontana, *Benjamin Constant and the post-revolutionary mind* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991); Françoise Mélonio, *Tocqueville et les Français* (Paris: Aubier, 1993); George Armstrong Kelly, *The Humane Comedy: Constant, Tocqueville and French liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Roger Boesche, *The strange liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987); Sheldon Wolin, *Tocqueville between two worlds. The making of a political and theoretical life* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le moment Guizot* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); Aurelian Craiutu, *Liberalism under siege: the political thought of the French doctrinaires* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003); R. Bellamy, *Victorian liberalism: nineteenth-century political thought and practice* (London: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Eugenio Biagini, ed., *Citizenship and community: liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment and reform. Popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> M. Freedon, *The new liberalism. An ideology of social reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Henk te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef: liberalisme en nationalisme in Nederland, 1870–1918* (s-Gravenhage: SDU, 1992); Siep Stuurman, *Wacht op onze daden: het liberalisme en de vernieuwing van de Nederlandse staat* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 1992); Stefan Dudink, *Deugdzaam liberalisme: sociaal-liberalisme in Nederland 1870–1901* (Amsterdam: IISG, 1997).

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considerably.<sup>5</sup> In addition to these national histories, a number of scholars have attempted to capture the nature of nineteenth-century liberalism as a European phenomenon.<sup>6</sup>

The increased attention for nineteenth-century liberalism in recent historiography can be attributed to different factors. Interest in the history of political thought has been stimulated over the past few decades, in particular in the Anglophone world, by the work of scholars such as Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock. In their methodological writings, and in their own work on early-modern political thought, these authors have shown that it is possible to study political thought as any other field in the history of mankind, thus turning what had long been a philosophical activity into a historical discipline. At the same time, the 'cultural' or 'linguistic' turn in history has contributed much to encouraging an interest in the world of mentalities and ideas in general. By emphasizing the creative power of language in itself – language is now seen as a force that shaped reality rather than merely reflecting it – interest in ideology has increased markedly among scholars engaged in social or political history.<sup>7</sup>

But if the study of political ideas in general was stimulated by developments internal to the human sciences, the particular interest in the history of liberalism must be attributed to developments in the external world of politics. The demise of communism was undoubtedly the most important of these. While the ideological foundation of the communist regime had already lost much of its intellectual respectability after the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1973, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 underscored the fallibility of communist doctrine in an even more direct way. As Marxism lost the intellectual pre-eminence it had possessed for so many years, left-wing intellectuals began to turn instead to its long-neglected rival, liberalism. This trend was also stimulated by the political

<sup>5</sup> Louis Girard, *Les libéraux français, 1814–1875* (Paris: Aubier, 1985); André Jardin, *Histoire du libéralisme politique. De la crise de l'absolutisme à la constitution de 1875* (Paris: Hachette, 1985); Lucien Jaume, *L'individu effacé ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and modern society: a historical argument* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); Alan Kahan, *Aristocratic liberalism: the social and political thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> The seminal texts are: Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas' in *Meaning and context. Quentin Skinner and his critics*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 29–67; J. G. A. Pocock, 'Languages and their implications' in his *Politics, language and time. Essays on political thought and history* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 3–41. The context within which this approach was formulated is sketched in Richard Tuck, 'History of political thought' in *New perspectives on historical writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 193–205.

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revival of liberal parties in several European countries. A renewed interest in liberal political thought was the logical consequence of these developments.

One of the most important conclusions put forward in the literature resulting from the liberal revival is that nineteenth-century liberalism, understood in its broadest sense as an ideology in which the concept of liberty held a central place, was composed of a much more varied set of political doctrines than previously assumed. In particular, scholars have discovered that *laissez-faire* liberalism, with its emphasis on the limitation of state power, and its defence of the individual citizen's negative liberty, was far from being the only variant of nineteenth-century liberalism. Victorian liberals also propagated a more 'democratic' sort of liberalism, in which direct political participation was seen as indispensable to the preservation of a liberal regime. As Larry Siedentop has argued, there were not one, but 'two poles of liberal thought – two traditions which had diverged significantly by the mid nineteenth century'.<sup>8</sup> Although Siedentop identified these different traditions as respectively 'English' (*laissez-faire* liberalism) and 'French' (the more democratic strand), it has by now become clear that both can be found in most European countries.<sup>9</sup>

Students of liberal thought were inspired in their re-discovery of this democratic brand of liberalism by an increasing interest in the role of classical republicanism in the history of Western political thought. This intellectual tradition, which had its roots in the writings of sixteenth-century Italian humanists such as Nicolo Machiavelli, was based on the idea that liberty was possible only with self-government. Inspired by the example of the republics of the ancient world, republicans emphasized the values of an active commitment and participation by each citizen in public affairs. They attached much importance to public spiritedness, the moral disposition which made a continual exertion of political duties possible. While scholars long assumed that republicanism was essentially a Renaissance ideology, this view has been revised over the past few decades. It is now clear that the language of classical republicanism was one of the dominant modes of thought in Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Larry Siedentop, 'Two liberal traditions' in *The idea of freedom. Essays in honour of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 174.

<sup>9</sup> Eugenio Biagini, Stephen Holmes and Siep Stuurman all point explicitly to the existence of a 'democratic' or 'radical' brand of liberalism in, respectively, Britain, France and the Netherlands.

<sup>10</sup> The seminal texts are: J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment. Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1975); Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Quentin Skinner and Martin van Gelderen, eds., *Republicanism: a shared European heritage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 2 vols.).

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The rediscovery of republicanism by early-modern scholars had an important impact on the study of nineteenth-century liberalism. Students of nineteenth-century political thought, especially in the Anglophone world and in the Netherlands, have discovered that many republican tropes survived in the post-1789 ‘democratic’ brand of liberalism. It has become clear that the democratic liberalism described by Siedentop was deeply influenced by the older republican discourse. Like the republicans, nineteenth-century liberals often stressed the importance of self-government rather than propagating a negative conception of liberty. They believed that public spiritedness was necessary to maintain such an active participation in government, thus echoing an important theme from the republican discourse. Moreover, far from propagating an egoist individualism, many nineteenth-century liberals attached great importance, again like the republicans, to community values and patriotism.<sup>11</sup>

In turn, this discovery stimulated a new view of the relationship between republicanism and liberalism. Originally, scholars of early-modern political thought defined republicanism as an ideology essentially at odds with nineteenth-century liberalism.<sup>12</sup> The revision of nineteenth-century liberalism achieved in recent literature, however, has made this opposition somewhat tenuous. Some specialists of nineteenth-century political thought now emphasize the similarities between both intellectual traditions, up to the point of conflating them completely. While Stephen Holmes argues that ‘liberalism and republicanism are not opposites’; Eugenio Biagini claims that ‘Victorian liberalism was both “individualist” and “republican” at one and the same time. There was no opposition between these characteristics, because, rather than being opposed, they were merely different facets of the same tradition.’<sup>13</sup>

In short, our understanding of the historical complexity of nineteenth-century liberalism and of its rootedness in early-modern political thought has been considerably enhanced by the recent literature on democratic liberalism. With this study, I aim to contribute to a further exploration of this complexity, by illustrating the importance of yet another strand within

<sup>11</sup> The similarities between republicanism and nineteenth-century liberalism have been stressed in particular in Anglophone and Dutch historiography. See J. W. Burrow, *Whigs and liberals: continuity and change in English political thought (The Carlyle Lectures 1985)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Holmes, *Benjamin Constant*; Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment and reform*; Dudink, *Deugzaam liberalisme*.

<sup>12</sup> Both Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock have underscored the opposition between republicanism and liberalism in their work.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Holmes, *Passions and constraint: on the theory of liberal democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 5; Eugenio Biagini, ‘Neo-roman liberalism: republican values and British liberalism, ca. 1860–1875’, *History of European Ideas* 29 (2003), 58.

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nineteenth-century liberalism. My research shows that, apart from the classical *laissez-faire* liberalism, and the democratic, republican-influenced brand of liberalism, yet another variety of liberalism, which can be described as an ‘aristocratic’ liberalism, was widely prevalent in the nineteenth-century context. Functioning in many ways as an oppositional mirror-image of democratic liberalism, this brand of liberalism had its roots in an eighteenth-century intellectual tradition that had been developed in explicit opposition to the republican paradigm.

The term ‘aristocratic liberalism’ requires a more precise definition. I use it to designate a very particular set of ideas, developed by a number of thinkers (not necessarily, or not even predominantly, aristocrats by birth), who drew their inspiration mainly from Montesquieu’s *Esprit des lois* (1748). These thinkers and publicists shared a particular conception of liberty that differed in many respects from the ideas propagated by republicans – differences which I will discuss at greater length further down the road. At the moment, it is important to remember that aristocratic liberals believed that liberty should be safeguarded through the checking of central power, rather than through the self-government of the people. Their ideal was that of a pluralist, rather than a self-governing, society, in which ‘intermediary bodies’ (often envisioned as an aristocracy, but not necessarily so) existed between the government and the people. Aristocratic liberals believed that a levelled, atomized society, which lacked such intermediary bodies, offered no protection against despotism.

It should be pointed out that this characterization of aristocratic liberalism differs from the definition developed by Alan Kahan in his recent study of the social and political thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville. While Kahan describes these thinkers as ‘aristocratic liberals’, he does not mean by this term that they shared a specific conception of liberty that was inspired by Montesquieu’s *Esprit des lois*. Instead, Kahan is interested in uncovering a ‘meritocratic’ ideology propagated by Burckhardt, Mill and Tocqueville, which was fuelled by a distaste for the masses and the middle classes, by contempt for mediocrity, and by an emphasis on individuality and diversity. In Kahan’s definition, aristocratic liberalism therefore consisted essentially of a ‘shared set of elitist values’, rather than of an intellectual tradition in which the concept of intermediary bodies took a central place.<sup>14</sup>

In my investigation of aristocratic liberalism, I will concentrate on political debates in France during the ‘short’ nineteenth century, from the return

<sup>14</sup> Kahan, *Aristocratic liberalism*, pp. 4–5.

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of the Bourbons in 1814 to the establishment of the Third Republic in 1870–1875. This focus on France might seem surprising. Since the publication of François Furet's *Penser la Révolution française*, historians tend to emphasize the weakness of the pluralist tradition in French political culture. Nineteenth-century Frenchmen, it is argued, adopted the utopia of the immediate government of 'general will', developed by the Jacobins, rather than the idea of a limitation of central power. Throughout the nineteenth century, it is claimed, the French remained under the sway of the revolutionary legacy, with its emphasis on unity and popular sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> Montesquieu's influence, his preference for checks and balances, was supposedly blocked out by the Revolution – with Tocqueville as a lone and isolated exception.<sup>16</sup> The inherent illiberalism of French political culture is also held responsible for French exceptionalism, the continuing difficulties of the French in establishing a stable, liberal regime in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

Historians of French liberalism tend to emphasize the impotence of post-revolutionary liberals to resist this revolutionary legacy. The history of nineteenth-century liberalism has therefore become to a large extent the history of a failure, of a group of isolated figures speaking to the wind. This is illustrated in particular in the recent literature on Tocqueville's place in French political culture, which depicts him as an eccentric and often misunderstood thinker.<sup>18</sup> Some scholars of nineteenth-century liberalism have come to the somewhat surprising conclusion that liberalism itself was not liberal in France. Even those who called themselves liberal, it has been argued, valued unity and consensus more than liberty. Thus, Pierre Rosanvallon argues that the Jacobin legacy was recuperated by nineteenth-century liberals such as François Guizot and Adolphe Thiers, a process

<sup>15</sup> François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978); see also Pierre Rosanvallon, 'Etat et société. Du XIXe siècle à nos jours' in *Histoire de la France. L'Etat et les pouvoirs*, ed. André Brugière and Jacques Revel (Paris: Seuil, 1989), pp. 491–617.

<sup>16</sup> As Jaume writes: 'La légitimité de l'intérêt particulier a tout peine à se frayer un chemin en France, car, prenant d'abord naissance dans la critique du despotisme (ainsi chez Montesquieu), elle se heurte bientôt à la vision installée par la Révolution: l'abstraction de la citoyenneté à la française empêche que soient exprimées et reconnues des particularités solidifiées en groupes ou en corps; dans le même sens, l'identification de l'intérêt collectif à l'Etat, ainsi que la fonction de préservation de l'égalité dévolue à ce dernier, font que l'intérêt particulier (de l'individu ou de corps) est passible de l'accusation de "privilège" – c'est-à-dire à la fois d'archaïsme et d'injustice': Jaume, *L'individu effacé*, p. 282.

<sup>17</sup> Again, Furet's writings provide the seminal expression of this view – see his *La Révolution française* (Paris: Hachette, 1988, 2 vols.); see also Pierre Rosanvallon, *La monarchie impossible. Les Chartes de 1814 et de 1830* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), pp. 7–10.

<sup>18</sup> This view has been to a certain extent challenged by Françoise Mélonio's seminal study of the reception of Tocqueville's work in France. Nevertheless, even Mélonio emphasizes Tocqueville's 'exoticism' in French political culture. Mélonio, *Tocqueville et les Français*, pp. 299–304.

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which he describes as the ‘liberal recomposition of Jacobinism’.<sup>19</sup> In his thorough and insightful survey of French liberalism in the nineteenth century, Lucien Jaume likewise comes to the conclusion that the dominant figures within that movement privileged the rights of the state over those of its citizens.<sup>20</sup>

This does not mean that the existence of an anti-democratic, pluralist discourse in nineteenth-century France has gone entirely unnoticed in the existing literature. However, it is usually emphasized that this was a minority, atypical tradition. In his discussion of nineteenth-century French liberalism, Jaume points to the existence of what he describes as a ‘liberalism of the notables’. He detects it in the writings of a number of liberal Anglophiles, such as Auguste de Staël, Prosper de Barante, J. C. L. Sismondi and Saint-Marc Girardin, who admired the openness and political responsibility of the English aristocracy. These liberals rejected the legacy of the Jacobin state and believed that it was necessary to recreate interest groups. However, Jaume emphasizes that this remained a minority tradition in French liberalism: ‘The rights of particularity, the distinction between exemption, which is deemed necessary, and privilege, which is condemned, liberty as the power to exempt oneself from the general rule, all these ideas came back periodically, and notably after every period of crisis, but they were quickly subjected to taboo.’<sup>21</sup>

A similar view is developed in Rosanvallon’s most recent book, *Le modèle politique français*, which provides an ambitious revision of the thesis of French exceptionalism. Rosanvallon argues that a positive evaluation of ‘intermediary bodies’ was much more widespread in post-revolutionary France than is usually assumed. French history, he writes, shows an ‘active tension between the monist principles of the revolutionary democracy and social aspirations to a certain pluralism’.<sup>22</sup> However, in Rosanvallon’s view, these aspirations were the expression of a resistance within civil society against the Jacobin model, rather than being inspired by a particular form of liberalism. The counter-history presented in his book is conceived as a social history rather than an intellectual history. This allows Rosanvallon

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le modèle politique français. La société civile contre le jacobinisme de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), p. 17. It is interesting to note that a similar view on the ‘Jacobin’ nature of French liberalism is also defended in Roger Henry Soltau’s classic *French political thought in the nineteenth century* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1959), pp. ix–xxxii.

<sup>20</sup> Jaume, *L’individu effacé*, pp. 537–554.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 281–319, quote p. 349: ‘Les droits de la particularité, la distinction entre la dérogation, qui serait nécessaire et le privilège, qui est condamné, la liberté comme pouvoir de s’exempter du cas général, toutes ces idées reviennent périodiquement, et notamment après chaque période de crise, mais elles sont vite frappées du tabou.’

<sup>22</sup> Rosanvallon, *Le modèle politique*, p. 18.



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to conclude, like Jaume, that the Jacobin legacy retained its sway over nineteenth-century political thought. 'If the original Jacobin organisation had been heavily amended', he writes, 'the political culture of generality has remained in the [French] mindset with all its consequences in terms of the conception of sovereignty or the general interest.'<sup>23</sup>

Such conceptions of nineteenth-century French political culture have naturally tended to discourage a systematic investigation of the prevalence of aristocratic liberalism in nineteenth-century France. In this study, however, I will show that an emphasis on the division and fragmentation of political power was an important current in French political thought – indeed, that it was at least as important as the Jacobin legacy. Moreover, I will argue that the positive view of intermediary bodies, such as the aristocracy, expressed by many French publicists and political thinkers, had its roots in a coherent political doctrine, which had been developed by Montesquieu in the middle of the eighteenth century. By doing so, I aim to contribute to the criticism which has been developed recently by a number of (mostly Anglophone) scholars of the thesis of French exceptionalism.<sup>24</sup>

To conclude, a few words might be needed on the approach adopted in this study. It focuses primarily, although not exclusively, on the ideas and concerns of those who described themselves as 'liberals' in nineteenth-century France, where the term was introduced in the 1820s. Throughout the nineteenth century, these liberals shared a number of sentiments and beliefs. They were favourably disposed towards the memory of the Revolution, at least in its initial phase. Liberals also tended to support specific types of political institutions, modelled on the English and American examples, in which power was shared between an executive body and a bicameral legislature. They professed a constitutional agnosticism on the question of the form of government, which agitated nineteenth-century Frenchmen for so long, arguing that the differences between a constitutional monarchy and a presidential republic were not of crucial importance. In this sense, one can speak of a more or less unified liberal movement in nineteenth-century France.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 432: 'Si l'organisation jacobine première a fortement été corrigé, la culture politique de la généralité est restée dans les têtes avec toutes ses conséquences en termes de conception de la souveraineté ou de l'intérêt général.'

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Isser Woloch, editorial introduction to *Revolution and the meanings of freedom in the nineteenth century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 30; Dale van Kley, editorial introduction to *The French idea of freedom. The Old Regime and the Declaration of Rights of 1789* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 5–20.

<sup>25</sup> For a slightly different definition of the common values of the liberal movement in France, see Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Political traditions in modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), chapter 8.



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However, this study does not aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the ideology of this movement as a whole, of 'liberalism' in general. Rather, in keeping with the specific approach adopted in the series in which it is published, it focuses on the way in which these nineteenth-century liberals used a specific political vocabulary, developed by Montesquieu in his *Esprit des lois*, in post-revolutionary France. How was the discourse of aristocratic liberalism, originally formulated in the political and intellectual context of the mid eighteenth century, adopted in and adapted to the new political and intellectual needs of the post-revolutionary period? – that is the central question of this study. In order to answer that question, it relies heavily on quotation; I am convinced this is a necessary evil to give the reader as much as possible a sense of the special colour and tone of this political language.

The focus on a particular language, on its continuity and discontinuity, also implies that I neglect other themes and ideas developed by individual political thinkers discussed here. It has not been my goal, for instance, to do complete justice to the complexity of Alexis de Tocqueville's thought; rather, his writings are studied from one specific angle, as representative of one specific discourse. Nevertheless, I am convinced that this approach allows one to shed a different light on his work from that which a more thorough investigation of his writings as a whole would do. At the same time, I have attempted to illuminate the specificity of the political discourse here investigated by situating it within the more general context of liberal thought in nineteenth-century France. By discussing the prevalence of very different brands of liberalism, it becomes possible both to illuminate the particularity of aristocratic liberalism and to explain why its precepts were either adopted or rejected by individual publicists.

In order to do so, I have investigated an extensive set of pamphlets and political brochures, written both by famous political thinkers (such as Benjamin Constant, François Guizot, Tocqueville) and by publicists who have been completely forgotten today. Most of these pamphlets were written in response to concrete political problems and proposed specific political reforms. However, their authors often attempted to legitimate their proposals by appealing to more general principles, which makes these publications an interesting source for the historian of ideas. Especially in the Restoration period, pamphlets were still an important source of political communication, despite increasing competition from the newspaper press. In a later period, pamphlets and brochures remained an important mode of expression in the political debate, as they allowed publicists to evade the limitations imposed by censorship on the periodical press.

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Furthermore, I have analysed a number of important political reviews. Although these were usually short-lived and more amateurishly run than British periodicals such as the *Edinburgh Review*, they nevertheless provide an indispensable source for the student of political thought. I have investigated the moderately royalist journal *Le Conservateur* and its more right-wing successor *Le Défenseur*, as well as the successful liberal journal *La Minerve française* and its successor *Le Mercure de France*, the industrialist reviews *Le Censeur* and *Le Censeur européen*, and the doctrinaire journal *Archives philosophiques, politiques et littéraires*. In addition, I have analysed the written reports, collected in the *Archives parlementaires*, of a number of important parliamentary debates conducted in the period here investigated.

As a final remark, I will briefly outline the structure of this study. In a first, introductory chapter, I place Montesquieu's aristocratic liberalism in the context of the political debate of the eighteenth century. In chapters 2–5, I then discuss the way in which his arguments were adopted and adapted in the political debates of the Restoration period, which began in 1814 with the return of the Bourbon kings to France, and ended with their final expulsion in 1830. These chapters focus in particular on the heated debate between royalists and liberals over how to preserve liberty in the post-revolutionary world. I then investigate in the following chapters how the political vocabularies developed by Restoration publicists were used by a number of important liberal thinkers in the post-1830 period. Chapter 6 is devoted to a discussion of French liberalism under the July Monarchy, focusing mainly on Alexis de Tocqueville's writings. In chapter 7, I examine the continued influence of the discourse developed by Restoration publicists on political thinkers within the liberal opposition to Napoleon III's regime in the 1850s and 1860s.

On the basis of this investigation, I illustrate, as the following chapters will make clear, that aristocratic liberalism was a vibrant tradition in the French political discourse of the nineteenth century. Without losing sight of the fact that other forms of liberalism existed as well, I show that many nineteenth-century publicists, at least until the 1870s, used arguments that were clearly inspired by Montesquieu's aristocratic liberalism. Nineteenth-century politicians and political thinkers, it will become clear, found in the *Esprit des lois* both a convincing analysis of the problems confronting post-revolutionary France, and an answer to the question of how these problems needed to be tackled.