2001

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Hill, Michael R. 2001. “A Methodological Comparison of Harriet Martineau’s *Society in America* (1837) and Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (1835-1840).” Pp. 59-74 in *Harriet Martineau: Theoretical and Methodological Perspective*s, edited by Michael R. Hill and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale. New York: Routledge.

CHAPTER FOUR

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Michael R. Hill

IT IS COMMONPLACE IN AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES TO CITE ALEXIS DE Tocqueville's (1835–40) *Democracy in America* as an insightful work by an astute foreign observer who carefully assayed the character of American politics and social institutions. Year after year, Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* receives, by far, many more citations in *Social Sciences Citation Index* than does Harriet Martineau's (1837) *Society in America*. Few essays on "democracy" appear in popular outlets such as *The New York Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Newsweek* without including an homage to Tocqueville and his presumably well-founded insights. At the same time, Harriet Martineau's instructive and once well-known analysis, *Society in America*, is today largely uncited and unappreciated by most mainline scholars and popular pundits alike.

The neglect of Martineau, relative to Tocqueville, is perplexing to feminist sociologists. For example, Mary Jo Deegan (1991: 13) argues that:

> [Martineau] is one of the major founders of sociology as a legitimated area of study. Her preeminence in this regard is equal to, if not greater than, that of any man in her era, including the relatively overpraised Comte and de Tocqueville.

Shulamit Reinharz (1992: 49) contends that Martineau's:

> *Society in America* deserves to be studied as one of the earliest feminist ethnographies and as a profound contribution to the understanding of U.S. women's lives.

And, Lynn McDonald (1994: 171) observes that:

> Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is richer in quotable quotes than *Society in America*, but Martineau's book is in many respects wiser. Both authors give moving accounts of the misery caused by slavery. Both saw it as a fundamental violation of the American Constitution and thus destined to disappear. But Martineau was the more astute in recognizing the separate issue of racism, relating the discrimination freed blacks faced in the urban north. Generally speaking, where there are differences in findings between Tocqueville and Martineau she, with the benefit of hindsight, turns out to have been accurate. While, for example, the French aristocrat judged political participation to have been extensive, she saw apathy and indifference. She treated the high level of church attendance in America as a sign of conformity, from fear of dissent. Tocqueville was dead wrong on the status of women, a subject she discussed at length and with excellent judgment.

If these and similar critiques are correct, and I believe they are, relative to Tocqueville, the time has arrived for mainstream theoreticians and textbook writers to demonstrate a more robust grasp of Martineau's work. The average sociologist apparently needs Joe R. Feagin's (forthcoming) stirring wake-up call, not only to pay attention to Martineau, Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, and other early sociologists, but also to comprehend their frequent *superiority* to many of the white male sociologists, such as Tocqueville, who are traditionally and frequently trotted out for honorific citation. In this light, this chapter therefore issues a direct methodological challenge to one of sociology's sacred cows: Alexis de Tocqueville.

Specifically, Martineau's data in *Society in America* are *methodologically superior* to those gathered by Tocqueville for *Democracy in America*. A straightforward test is required, the import of which should be understood even by sophomores in undergraduate research methods classes. As professional sociologists, we presumably value the idea that social analysis must be based on solid empirical research rather than ideological convenience. Thus, if Martineau's methodology is demonstrably superior, then her critical observations of American life must be recommended over those propounded by Tocqueville. Intellectually and scientifically, there is no acceptable alternative conclusion within mainstream sociological epistemology (Hill 1984). This chapter offers a comparison of the methodological procedures against which Tocqueville's and Martineau's theoretical insights must ultimately be tested if their works are to be proffered and promulgated as empirically-grounded social scientific knowledge.

ACCESSIBLE SOURCES

Below, this chapter compares and contrasts the methodological dimensions of Martineau's U.S. studies relative to Tocqueville's more widely-known work. This comparison is made possible by a surprisingly large volume of readily available empirical evidence. It is important, from a sociology of

knowledge perspective, to note that the empirical basis on which to build a comparative methodological analysis of Martineau's and Tocqueville's American studies is not obscure: it is not for lack of evidence that Martineau has been unheralded whereas Tocqueville is more often celebrated. The relevant evidentiary materials have been ignored rather than embraced by those who champion and structurally reproduce Tocqueville's vision of American life.

Martineau was a prolific writer whose works wait, ready for sociologically-informed analysis, in myriad university libraries across the English-speaking world. Her preeminent inquiry into American institutions, *Society in America*, was quickly supplemented by a second and equally important empirical work titled *Retrospect of Western Travel* (Martineau 1838c). Unfortunately, *Retrospect* is even less cited today than *Society in America*. The empirical procedures employed in making and recording her American observations are carefully detailed in her (1838b) methodological handbook, the first in the social sciences: *How to Observe Morals and Manners*. For relevant biographical data, her *Autobiography* (1877b) is a useful reference. Gayle Graham Yates' edition of Martineau's (1985) writings on women is directly pertinent to the further consideration of women's issues. Two of Martineau's fiction works are notably germane to her analysis of New World slavery, specifically: her didactic antislavery tale, *Demerara*, in the *Illustrations of Political Economy* (Martineau 1832–4, no. 4) and her (1841) celebration of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Black Haitian revolutionary, in *The Hour and the Man*. For a list of other major works in Martineau's prodigious corpus, see Joseph Rivlin's (1947) detailed bibliography of her separately published works.

Documentary riches of the type more often found only in obscure archival deposits (Hill 1993) are, in this case, widely available for scholarly study and assessment. Three volumes of Martineau's (1983, 1990, 1995) correspondence have been published, as well as a collection of the letters of James Martineau, Harriet's clerical brother (Drummond 1902). Selections from Harriet's hard-to-find newspaper articles from the *Daily News* are also available (Martineau 1994). The recently released microfilm edition of Martineau's papers at Birmingham University (Adam Matthew Publications 1991), together with the online finding aid for the Reinhard S. Speck collection in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, provide an additional wealth of easily accessible materials.

Modern scholarship on Martineau is increasing, although predominantly within the fields of literature and women's studies programs. There are several full-length studies of Martineau as a literary figure, of which Valerie Pichanick's (1980) *Harriet Martineau: The Woman and Her Work, 1802–76* is perhaps the best known current example, but which, like its predecessors and more recent successors, seriously misunderstands the

nature of sociological research and exposition. For analyses of Martineau's skill and accomplishments as an empirical researcher, we must turn to the social sciences.

In reference to Martineau's American studies, Seymour Martin Lipset (1962) provided a useful introduction to *Society in America* in his one-volume abridgement of that work (an enduring edition handsomely reprinted by Transaction Publishers in 1981), and to which John Cawelti (1963) provided an insightful critique. It was my pleasure to chronicle the methodological characteristics and scientific logic of Martineau's sociological worldview in my introduction to Transaction's sesquicentennial edition of Martineau's *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (Hill 1989). Katherine Bullock (1992) presents a critical reexamination of *Society in America* and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (1992) usefully surveys the sociological dimensions of Martineau's work as a whole, including her American studies. The published record addressing Martineau's substantive social scientific observations in North America may be relatively smaller, but it is not obscure.

The materials required to explicate Tocqueville's methodological procedures are likewise widely available in university libraries. Tocqueville's (1835–40) most noted work, *Democracy in America*, is seen usefully in the context of Gustave de Beaumont and Tocqueville's (1833) joint monograph, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France*. The latter work was the original justification for Tocqueville's trip to the U.S. Other relevant sources include Tocqueville's (1831) American notebooks (published as *Journey to America* in 1959) and his complete works (*Oeuvres Complètes*, published in French in 1967 and containing several volumes of Tocqueville's letters). Beaumont's (1835) sentimental antislavery novel, *Marie*, parallels Martineau's more theoretically-steeped offerings in the genre.

Tocqueville's niche in the patriarchal pantheon is secured by numerous full-length studies, of which George Pierson's (1938) is the best known standard work. Among sociologists, Irving Zeitlin (1971) approached Tocqueville with a critical edge and selections from Tocqueville's (1980) writing have been enshrined in the University of Chicago's institutionally prestigious Heritage of Sociology series. Taken together, the sources cited above provide a wealth of empirical documentation by which Tocqueville and Martineau can be instructively and critically compared.

POINTS OF COMPARISON

There is a clear basis for placing Martineau and Tocqueville side-by-side for comparative scrutiny. Both were foreigners who traveled to the U.S. in the early 1830s: Tocqueville ventured from France, Martineau visited from England. Both traveled extensively in the United States. The geographic

routes they took from city to city, state to state, are nearly identical, with the exception that Tocqueville took a long detour into French-speaking Canada. This high degree of spatial congruence is impressive and, so far as their routes in the United States are concerned, they both had opportunities to see much the same thing.

During their respective travels, both interviewed and talked with leading citizens, including presidents, judges, legislators, esteemed writers, and others with noted reputations. Both traveled with companions: Tocqueville with Gustave de Beaumont, Martineau with Louisa Jeffrey. Both Tocqueville and Martineau wrote lengthy, social scientific analyses based on their visits to the U.S. Martineau and Beaumont both wrote fictional accounts of slavery in the New World. But, whereas Tocqueville and Martineau were both widely read during their era, only Tocqueville is read extensively today. On the surface, one might conclude that—whereas Martineau's *Society in America* is arguably similar in many ways—Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* has simply weathered the test of time, that Tocqueville's work is the better of the two. Close inspection shows, however, that the latter conclusion is untenable when their respective methodologies are compared. As social science *per se*, Martineau's work is methodologically superior to Tocqueville. When their research methods are attentively compared, any similarity between these two intercontinental travelers quickly disappears.

POINTS OF CONTRAST

Despite the apparent similarities between Tocqueville and Martineau, the record documents significant differences in their backgrounds, purposes, and methods. These points of contrast reveal serious relative deficiencies in the methodological techniques used by Tocqueville. In all, Martineau and Tocqueville can be contrasted on at least eight major methodological points.

Contrasting Backgrounds

Martineau differed in terms of social class, maturity, and experience. Martineau, an Englishwoman born in 1802 to middle-class parents, was thirty-two years old when she debarked at New York to begin her tour of the United States in 1834. Martineau came to the U.S. as a successful, well-known writer. She was a knowledgeable and experienced political economist, and she admired and embraced an inclusive conception of democracy. By comparison, Tocqueville, a Frenchman born in 1805 to an aristocratic family, was twenty-six years of age when he arrived at Newport in 1831. In contrast to Martineau, Tocqueville came from a privileged back-

ground and was an inexperienced and obscure young man searching for ways to launch his career. His concept of democracy was perversely elitist.

Contrasting Purposes

Martineau and Tocqueville came to the U.S. for different purposes. In 1834, Martineau had just completed two years of intensive writing, specifically: the monthly, book-length installments comprising the *Illustrations of Political Economy*. She sought a trip for rest and relaxation. Martineau planned tentatively to make Europe her destination and then a friend, Lord Henley, intervened, pleading:

> Whatever else may or may not be true about the Americans, it is certain that they have got at principles of justice and mercy in their treatment of the least happy classes of society which we should do well to understand. Will you not go, and tell us what they are? (Martineau 1877b, I: 203; see also Martineau 1837, III: 179–80)

Martineau (1877b, I: 331) accepted this philanthropic charge, noting that "the reasons he urged were of course prominent in my mind during my travels."

Martineau traveled without expressly intending to produce a book on America, and she declined advances from eager publishers who pressed her to write such a book. She entertained the idea, but did not want to be encumbered by a firm obligation. Martineau told one publisher, "I would not say that I certainly should not write a book on my return" (*Ibid.*: 329). She left open the future possibility of writing about her travels, insisting on a free hand in collecting data and making observations. She wrote:

> I went and returned entirely free from any kind of claim on me, on any hand, for a book. I can truly say that I traveled without any such idea in my mind. I am sure that no traveller seeing things through author spectacles, can see them as they are; and it was not till I looked over my journal on my return that I decided to write "*Society in America.*" (*Ibid.*: 330)

"My first desire was for rest," she wrote (*Ibid.*), but it was "rest" framed in Martineau's inimitable peripatetic manner:

> I believed it would be good for me to "rough it" for a while, before I grew too old and fixed in my habits for such an experiment.

Thus, Martineau sailed to the U.S. for two years of "roughing it," to relax, to gather information on social welfare practices for Lord Henley, and to

systematically see the U.S. through something other than "author spectacles."

By contrast, Tocqueville and Beaumont traveled to the United States as a premeditated ploy to bolster their political careers. They arrived with investigation and publication as primary concerns. Before their departure from France, they sought and obtained government authorization to prepare an official report on American penal practices, resulting in Beaumont and Tocqueville's (1833) *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France.* Beyond this official purpose, however, they toyed with the idea of writing about life in the U.S. Authorities generally agree, however, that the plan to write *Democracy in America* did not crystallize until well after Tocqueville returned to France.

In sum, Tocqueville came to the U.S. sponsored by the French government and prepared to view American penal institutions through the very "author spectacles" that Martineau judged anathema to objective observation. Martineau entered the U.S. primed to see things "as they are." She entertained the possibility of writing a book about the U.S., but kept publishers at arm's length to ensure her independence. Tocqueville went to the U.S. to report specifically on prison conditions. His idea to prepare a larger institutional analysis took shape only after his return to France. Compared to Martineau, Tocqueville was simultaneously too focused (i.e., on prisons) and too much the dilettante to write accurately about American society as a whole.

Methodological Preparation

Martineau arrived in the U.S. armed with a remarkable set of methodological guidelines that she drafted during the month-long voyage across the Atlantic (Hill 1989). This she later expanded into her methodological treatise on *How To Observe Morals and Manners.* The core data collection principles Martineau advocated have a strongly positivist character. She concentrated on the observation of things, by which she meant physical artifacts, official records, and other traces of institutionalized behavior and social organization. "The grand secret of wise inquiry into Morals and Manners," she wrote, "is to begin with the study of THINGS, using the DISCOURSE OF PERSONS as a commentary upon them." Interviews, conversations, and informants had secondary importance to Martineau. She wrote: "To arrive at the facts of the condition of a people through the discourse of individuals, is a hopeless enterprise. The plain truth is—it is beginning at the wrong end" (Martineau 1838b: 73).

Prior to her arrival, Martineau read widely about the U.S. while at the same time reserving judgment:

> I went with a mind, I believe, as nearly as possible unprejudiced about America, with a strong disposition to admire democratic institutions, but an entire ignorance how far the people of the United States lived up to, or fell below, their own theory. I had read whatever I could lay hold of that had been written about them; but was unable to satisfy myself that, after all, I understood anything whatever of their condition. As to knowledge of them, my mind was nearly a blank; as to opinion of their state, I did not carry the germ of one. (Martineau 1837, I: x)

Methodologically, she wrote: "It is taken for granted that the traveller is informed before he sets out, respecting the form of Government and general course of Legislation of the nation he studies" (Martineau 1838b: 192). Whereas Tocqueville later relied heavily on secondary sources in the subsequent execution of *Democracy in America*, Martineau's reading was a requisite preparatory step.

There is no record that Tocqueville developed a systematic proposal for data collection. His preparation consisted primarily of obtaining letters of introduction from influential persons in France. In the field, he concentrated on obtaining interviews with persons he considered knowledgeable about American life and institutions. Methodologically, Tocqueville took as primary the very data that Martineau relegated to secondary status.

Documentation and Record Keeping

Martineau and Tocqueville both kept travel journals during their U.S. tours, but only Martineau thought beforehand about the problems of recording data. She recognized the necessity to record observable facts, to be sure to note the things that are most easily forgotten, to make daily entries, and she understood the dangers of generalizing on the spot (Martineau 1838b: 232–39).

Unfortunately, and to the best of my knowledge, Martineau's notebooks have not survived. Indeed, she may have destroyed her notes to protect her informants, as Martineau (1837, I: xix) assured her confidential informants that their identities would "remain private." In later life, Martineau commanded all her correspondents to destroy such of her letters that they had retained. Hence, it is consistent to assume that Martineau may have intentionally destroyed her field notes. Tocqueville's (1831) journals, however, have been published and are replete with speculative generalizations—and worse. At first look, his journals appear to be verbatim transcripts. But, when recording one interview, Tocqueville noted unreflexively, but revealingly: "I have only taken in this conversation what accorded with all the notions I had already received" (Pierson 1938: 302). George Pierson (1938: 302) surmises that "this procedure was characteristic with Tocqueville, whenever he had begun to make up his mind about a question." In many

cases, at least, Tocqueville apparently only recorded what he expected to hear.

Time in the Field

Martineau spent nearly two years (i.e., twenty-three and a half months) in the U.S. Tocqueville's tour lasted only approximately nine months, and a significant part of this time was spent in French Canada, visiting Montréal and Québec. Martineau took a considerably longer, more in-depth look at American social life. Travel in the 1830s was no easy matter, making Martineau's accomplishment all the more adventurous and remarkable.

Research Assistants

Martineau and Tocqueville both engaged traveling companions, but where Martineau enjoyed the services of what today would be called a "research assistant," Tocqueville traveled with an older schoolmate. Martineau, concerned that her partial deafness would prove problematic—and not wanting to travel alone as a woman—eventually chose Louisa Jeffrey to assist her (Wheatley 1957: 148). Of this companion, Martineau (1877b, I: 331) wrote:

> I was singularly fortunate . . . a lady of very superior qualifications, who was eager to travel, but not rich enough to indulge her desire, offered to go with me, as companion and helper, if I would bear her expenses. She paid her own voyages, and I the rest; and most capitally she fulfilled her share of the compact. Not only well educated but remarkably clever, and above all, supremely rational, and with a faultless temper . . . she toiled incessantly, to spare my time, strength and faculties. She managed the business of travel, and was for ever on the watch to supply my want of ears,—and, I may add, my defects of memory.

Jeffrey traveled specifically as Martineau's assistant and personal companion, investing her efforts toward the success of Martineau's investigations.

Tocqueville was accompanied by Gustave de Beaumont, also of aristocratic origin and a school chum two years Tocqueville's senior. Tocqueville and Beaumont were young colleagues, off to see the world together. In contrast, Jeffrey collected data under Martineau's direction, extending the scope and range of Martineau's inquiries. Tocqueville, on the other hand, did not have the helpful service of a dedicated assistant. Rather, he traveled with a friend who shared his own aristocratic presumptions, ambitions, and linguistic limitations.

Liabilities

Tocqueville and Martineau both collected data at a disadvantage, but with very different consequences. Martineau, as noted above, was partially deaf. Tocqueville and Beaumont, on the other hand, spoke but limited English even though Tocqueville concentrated on discourse as a data source. Martineau acknowledged her disability and its direct impact on data collection. Indeed, the reality of her hearing loss may well have led her to stress the epistemological priority of observation over discourse (I am indebted to Shulamit Reinharz for suggesting this insight). She noted, however, the increased willingness of informants to share confidences with her when she used an ear trumpet as a hearing aid:

> I carry a trumpet of remarkable fidelity: an instrument, moreover, which seems to exert some winning power, by which I gain more in *téte-à-têtes* than is given to people who hear general conversation. (Martineau 1837, I: xvii–xviii)

Martineau turned her disability to advantage (as Mary Jo Deegan further explicates in Chapter Three, this volume). Martineau was acutely aware that she could not overhear casual conversations in public places. To remedy this deficiency, she instructed her assistant, Jeffrey, to listen to conversations everywhere she went and to make reports.

Martineau and Jeffrey were English and spoke the same language as the vast majority of U.S. citizens. This, to Martineau (1838b: 67) was an obvious requisite:

> Nothing need be said on a matter so obvious as the necessity of understanding the language of the people visited. Some familiarity with it must be attained before any thing else can be done.

Tocqueville and Beaumont were much less prepared: both were native French speakers and their fluency in English was deficient. Just prior to their departure to the U.S., they rated their linguistic skills as functionally no better than what today we might call "restaurant" English. Whereas Martineau could not easily overhear conversations in the street, she reaped a windfall of unexpected and informative confidences when she used her ear trumpet, and she sent her assistant to fill the gaps in her information by reporting on conversations heard in public places. Tocqueville and Beaumont, by contrast, were severely limited in their ability to understand spoken conversations in English, particularly during the early stages of their relatively shorter journey.

Informant Bias

Tocqueville concentrated on discourse as a source of data, and thus it is crucial to examine the nature of his informant pool. Table 4.1, below, lists the names of the informants with whom Tocqueville recorded detailed conversations, typically in a question and answer format. The striking point is that *all* of Tocqueville's primary informants were *male*. If Tocqueville had extended conversations with women, he did not consider them sufficiently important to record. Tocqueville's (1831: 141) American journals include only *one* conversation with a woman, and it is reported here in full:

> Coming back I go into the house of one of the French people. His wife like an Indian woman, working at a mat. A red child by her side. I ask her if she is French.—No.—English?—No.—What blood? She answers me lowering her head: a savage.

This represents the sum total of Tocqueville's recorded data from women about women or any other matter.

Tocqueville's conversations with male informants are also flawed by extreme class bias. He interviewed not just any men, but purposefully sought those he considered to be "the most enlightened" people. Table 4.2, below, shows that Tocqueville interviewed primarily men from the professional, upper-middle, and upper classes.

Further, Tocqueville was especially pleased to encounter informants who spoke French. For example, Tocqueville (1831: 171) recorded an interview in New Orleans with a lawyer "who speaks French, an advantage we have come to appreciate during our travels." A consequence of seeking French-speakers undoubtedly intensified his reliance on well-educated, upper-class informants, and when he turned to native French speakers like himself he necessarily received Francophone distortions of the culturally dominant Anglo society.

Martineau concentrated on observable data. Nonetheless, she sought and included interview data in her published reports. Unlike Tocqueville, her informants included persons of all classes, people of color, and both sexes. She noted methodologically:

> The Discourse of individuals is an indispensable commentary upon the classes of national facts which the traveller has observed. . . . He must seek intercourse with all classes of the society he visits,—not only the rich and the poor, but those who may be classed by profession, pursuit, habits of mind, and turn of manners. He must converse with young men and maidens, old men and children, beggars and savans, postilions and potentates. He must study little ones at their mothers' knees, and flirtations in ballrooms, and dealings in the market-place. He must overhear the mirth of revellers, and the grief of

Table 4.1. Named Principal Informants in Tocqueville's American Notebooks

1. Mr. ——— (a farmer)
2. Mr. ——— (a land owner)
3. Mr. ——— (a lawyer)
4. Mr. ——— (a recorder)
5. Mr. ——— (a trader)
6. Mr. Adams
7. Mr. Barclay
8. Mr. Biddle
9. Mr. Channing
10. Mr. Clay
11. Mr. Coolidge
12. Mr. Charles Carroll
13. Mr. James Carroll
14. Mr. Coxe
15. Mr. Cronche
16. Mr. Cruise
17. Mr. Curtis
18. Mr. Dallas
19. Mr. Danny
20. Mr. Dens
21. Mr. Drake
22. Mr. Duponceau
23. Mr. Dwight
24. Mr. Everett
25. Mr. Finley
26. Mr. Gilpin
27. Mr. Gray
28. Mr. Guillemin
29. Mr. Houston
30. Mr. Howard
31. Mr. Hyde
32. Mr. Ingersoll
33. Major Lamord
34. Mr. Latrobe
35. Mr. Lieber
36. Mr. Livingston
37. Mr. Lynds
38. Mr. MacIlvaine
39. Mr. MacLean
40. Mr. Maxwell
41. Mr. Mazureau
42–43. Messrs. Mondelet.
44. Mr. Morse
45. Mr. Mullon
46. Mr. Neilson
47. Mr. Poinsett
48. Mr. Quiblier
49. Mr. Quincy
50. Mr. Richard
51. Mr. Richards
52. Mr. Riker
53. Mr. Robertsvaux
54. Mr. Schermerhorn
55. Mr. Serurier
56. Mr. Smith
57. Mr. Sparks
58. Mr. Spencer
59. Mr. Stewart
60. Mr. Storer
61. Mr. Trist
62. Mr. Tuckerman
63. Mr. Vaughn
64. Mr. Wainwright
65. Mr. Walker
66. Mr. Wells
67. Mr. Williamson
68. Mr. Winthrope
69. Mr. Wood

Source: Tocqueville (1831)

Table 4.2. Occupational Annotations of Principal Informants in Tocqueville's Non-Alphabetic American Notebooks

Note: Tocqueville typically annotated the records of his interviews, noting the occupation and reputation of his principal informants. The following list comprises the annotations from Tocqueville's (1831) non-alphabetic notebooks. The annotations are presented without the associated names to focus the reader's attention on the occupations and social strata from which Tocqueville drew his informants. The severe bias toward professional, upper-middle, and upper class males is evident by inspection.

"a judge"
"a district attorney"
"a distinguished man of law"
"a Catholic priest"
"a well-educated man of good sense"
"a good-hearted and enlightened cleric"
"a very zealous Protestant clergyman"
"a planter from Georgia"
"a distinguished Boston literary man"
"president of Cambridge University" [sic., i.e., Harvard]
"a senator from the State of Massachusetts"
"a young German exiled for his liberalness, who has become known in the United States by his work entitled *Encyclopaedia Americana*"
"former United States Minister in Spain and a distinguished writer"
"the former President" [of the United States—Adams]
"the celebrated preacher and the most noteworthy writer in the America of today"
"Son of the Lt. Governor of Massachusetts and a member of the legislature"
"Franklin's disciple, and an old man very much respected in Philadelphia"
"Mayor of Philadelphia and a man who seems to be much regarded in this country"
"the author of several well-considered books, and well known for his learning"
"a distinguished Baltimore doctor"
"a Catholic priest and vice-president of the College of St. Mary at Baltimore"
"last survivor of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence"
"President of the Bank of the United States, is one of the most distinguished men in this country"
"was for a long time the American Ambassador to Mexico, and has the reputation of being a very outstanding man"
"the leading lawyer in Cincinnati"
"most of these gentlemen [with whom Tocqueville spoke at a dinner] belonged to the old families of Maryland"
"a criminal judge"
"a very distinguished young lawyer in Ohio"
"judge of the Supreme Court of the United States"
"the leading doctor in Cincinnati"
"one of the greatest merchants of Louisville"
"a farmer"
"a trader"
"one of the leading lawyers in Louisiana"
"French Consul at New Orleans"
"a well-known New Orleans lawyer"
"a lawyer from Montgomery"
"former French minister in the United States"
"a government official, a Virginian and a very talented man"
"a senior official in the State Department"

> mourners. Wherever there is speech, he must devote himself to hear. (Martineau 1838c: 223–4)

The contrast between Martineau's inclusive interviews and Tocqueville's elitist strategy is especially striking in their respective investigations of prison conditions in the U.S.

Beaumont and Tocqueville (1833) studied prison conditions in the U.S. and co-authored a monograph on the topic, but Tocqueville talked only to wardens and overseers, never to prisoners. Martineau also visited American prisons, but took specific steps to interview prisoners in private—in their cells without guards present (Martineau 1838b, I: 123–39). Although Martineau emphasized discourse as a commentary on observable social patterns, she clearly understood—in ways that Tocqueville apparently could not imagine—the importance of talking to prisoners as well as wardens if one wanted to understand the character of the fledgling U.S. prison system.

Martineau's access to women and domestic scenes stands in sharp contrast to Tocqueville's disputations with elite males. "I am sure," she wrote:

> I have seen much more of domestic life than could possibly have been exhibited to any gentleman travelling through the country. The nursery, the boudoir, the kitchen, are all excellent schools in which to learn the morals and manners of a people: and, as for public and professional affairs,—those may always gain full information upon such matters, who really feel an interest in them,—*be they men or women.* (Martineau 1837, I: xvi, emphasis added)

In sum, the pools from which Martineau and Tocqueville drew informants differed significantly. Tocqueville's informant pool was narrowly patriarchal and aristocratic whereas Martineau's was far more representative of class, race, and gender, and included public and professional settings as well as backstage domestic scenes.

CONCLUSION

Martineau's methodological procedures were thoughtfully planned, reflexive, and surprisingly modern. As a seasoned political economist, she was more experienced than Tocqueville and spent more time (by a factor of nearly three) gathering data in the U.S. In comparison to Tocqueville, her methodological techniques were multifaceted (i.e., triangulated), philosophically rationalized, and systematically more rigorous. Martineau concentrated on direct observation, supplemented by interviews, to examine the "fit" between the reality and rhetoric of American democracy.

Martineau eschewed the ethnocentric temptation to contrast U.S. society with English institutions. Instead, she compared:

> . . . the existing state of society in America with the principles on which it is professedly founded; thus testing Institutions, Morals, and Manners by an indisputable, instead of an arbitrary standard. (*Ibid.*: viii)

And, she was humbly cognizant of the enormity of her empirical task:

> It is in the highest degree improbable that my scanty gleanings in the wide field of American society should present a precisely fair sample of the whole. I can only explain that I have spared no pains to discover the truth . . . and invite correction, in all errors of fact. (*Ibid.*: viii)

Martineau's *Society in America* is a remarkably sophisticated, reflexive sociological study. If we argue seriously on methodological grounds, Martineau clearly deserves a permanent place in the social scientific canon.

Tocqueville, by comparison, is a major methodological disappointment. Whereas Martineau understood the intricate interactions between rhetoric and reality, Tocqueville did not. Lacking a logical plan of inquiry, Tocqueville's data collection procedures allowed rhetoric to wag the tail that eventually resulted in his *Democracy in America*. In the U.S., he spoke primarily to elite, white, male informants; recorded only what he wanted to hear; and failed to make systematic observations of concrete social patterns across the crucial divisions of race, class, and gender. His plan to write *Democracy in America* took shape only after he returned to France, and by then it was too late to make the necessary systematic observations or obtain input from a cross-section of informants.

Where Martineau read as much as she could before going abroad, Tocqueville relied heavily on books and documents sent to him from the U.S. after his return to France rather than on data collected via systematic, first-hand observation. (Interestingly, Martineau's work was brought to Tocqueville's attention during the long interval between the appearance of his first volume in 1835 and the completion of *Democracy in America* in 1840, but he refused to read it). Methodologically, Tocqueville relied in large part on the very type of discursive rhetoric that Martineau sought to test and question through direct empirical observation. *Democracy in America* may indeed be a well-written political tract, but as empirically-grounded social science its well-accepted status as a classic must be seriously reconsidered.

Martineau prefaced *Society in America* with an anonymous comment from the *Edinburgh Review* on the difficulty of exposing intellectual fraud in traveler's reports:

> . . . and so, with a few flowing strokes, [the writer] completes a picture, which, though it may not resemble any possible object, his countrymen are to take for a national portrait. Nor is the fraud so readily detected; for the character of a people has such a complexity of aspect, that even the honest observer knows not always, not perhaps after long inspection, what to determine regarding it. (Martineau 1837, I: v–vi)

For too long, the American intellectual establishment has readily accepted *Democracy in America* as a cogent, empirically-based portrait of American institutions, even though, methodologically, "it may not resemble any possible object." And, as the long record of scholarly adulation of Tocqueville is evidence, such frauds are apparently not readily detected. American society, as the unknown essayist in the *Edinburgh Review* would undoubtedly agree, has an extraordinary "complexity of aspect," and it was Martineau, not Tocqueville, who sought with integrity and methodological rigor to discover the degree of correspondence between the reality and the rhetoric of social institutions in the United States.

Tocqueville purported to write on "democracy" in the U.S., but he did so from the perspective of a privileged, white male at a time when only propertied white men had the franchise. His methodological choices simply confirmed his elite perspective. Martineau, by contrast, embraced a far wider conception of democracy. Hence, methodologically, she pursued empirical strategies that allowed her to see the structural effects of white male privilege on the disenfranchised sectors of American society. In the long run, it is Martineau's more inclusive, progressive conception of democracy, not Tocqueville's, that is institutionalized today in voting rights for women, people of color, and the economically dispossessed.