

Marcel Mauss's Disciples in Algeria

The Anthropology of the Gift and the Shock of Decolonization

In September 1959, Jacques Soustelle – by then Minister of Atomic Energy and the Sahara – wrote to French Prime Minister Michel Debré, “the Algerians exist, but there is no such thing as an Algerian people.”¹ In so doing, this former graduate of the Paris-based Institute of Ethnology, who had become the world’s leading expert in Central American ethnology, opposed the principle of “self-determination,” which President de Gaulle had recently advocated when he announced his decision in the summer of 1959 to let Algerians decide their own fate. In fact, Soustelle expressed both a political statement on the legitimacy (or lack thereof) of Algerians’ claims to independence, and an epistemological claim: indeed, he affirmed the primacy of ethnological knowledge over the manifestation of a political will through a referendum on the question of Algeria’s independence.

For Soustelle, any consultation of the Algerian residents, as decided by de Gaulle, ignored the more important realities discovered by ethnologists and generations of French administrators in Algeria: Algeria was multiple and complex. In fact, Soustelle wrote to Debré, the French government “shall not accept the possibility that the Algerian people could determine, *en bloc*, the destiny of a unified entity conceived as a State” as Algeria lacked the “ethnic and cultural homogeneity which is a necessary condition for the validity of a vote in which the majority can legitimately impose its views on the minority.”² As he added, the “future consultation of Algerians shall thus be conceived in such a way that it leaves to ‘the peoples’ who live in Algeria, rather than to an alleged ‘Algerian people,’ the possibility to express themselves.”³ Deciding otherwise, would, for the Maussian ethnologist turned minister, be equivalent to accepting the “oppression”⁴ of the dominant ethnic group over the less populous ethnic groups. Based on his opposition between ethnographic diversity and democratic voice, Soustelle thus motivated his impassioned rejection of de Gaulle’s pro-self-determination policy in the hope of convincing Debré, who had been a staunch defender of the pro-French Algeria policy, to resist de Gaulle’s choices.

Soustelle’s view may, at first sight, appear to depart from Mauss’s central claim that the colonization of non-European peoples could only be justified as a means to

foster a national consciousness and help create democratically controlled national economic conglomerates. But it also reflected Mauss's attachment to the idea that ethnographic knowledge should be used by colonial policymakers as a guide for action. Soustelle mobilized ethnographic knowledge to answer one of the most important questions of his time: how could European statesmen decide that a colonial people (or group of peoples) had reached a sufficient level of national integration so as to justify granting their national independence? As we have seen, Mauss largely eschewed the question in his interwar writings: he argued that most societies had not yet arrived at that level of national integration,⁵ but he also affirmed the principle that colonialism should foster such national integration so that a true inter-nationalism could be built. The prospect of decolonization seemed so distant that he never got bogged down in the practical details of whether national integration would automatically mean national independence – nor the legal conditions of future secessions.

But in the postwar era, characterized by the revolt of the Vietnamese and then Algerians against continued French tutelage, Mauss's disciples could ignore the practical issue no more. They had to take a position as to whether ethnographic knowledge showed that Algerians were now ready for independence; and, further, whether ethnographic knowledge should be the guide on that question, or whether the expression of political will – expressed by guns or votes – would suffice to gain independence. In this chapter, I thus ask: did Mauss's students draw on the anthropology of the gift exchange to decide this issue, especially in the context of the war in Algeria? How did Mauss's analysis of gift exchange help them justify either the continued integration of Algeria within a greater France, or Algerian independence? Which rhetorical resources were deployed by the mobilization of ethnology for either pro-independence or pro-French Algeria claims?

To answer these questions, the chapter first investigates how two of the few students whom Mauss had trained before the Second World War and who also survived the war, Germaine Tillion and Jacques Soustelle, deployed and reframed Mauss's concepts of gift exchange and intersocietal integration in the context of the Algerian War. The first section shows how they adapted their mentor's theory of integration to the postwar era, when the debate concerned whether the French Republic could move toward a post-national political society, with Algeria and the French metropolis tied together; or whether Algeria could be granted independence without risking its implosion. For them, ethnological findings demonstrated that no Algerian national consciousness united its citizens in a common democratic framework, and more broadly, that Algeria lacked the necessary economic and financial resources for its national autonomy. As there was great risk that Algerian independence would mean “de-development” – e.g. a socioeconomic regression with respect to the period of integration within the French constitutional framework – they thus argued in favor of continued French presence in Algeria as well as for a constitutional reform that would further integrate the various components of the

societies “France” and “Algeria” into a post-national political body. As Giuseppe di Lampedusa had written in 1958 in *The Leopard*, everything needed to change, so everything could stay the same.

The application of the model of gift exchange to rethink economic relations in the colonial context in general, and the Algerian context in particular, was hardly surprising, since Mauss founded ethnology in France at the nexus of colonial administration and academic theorizing. Furthermore, as the French Empire had shrunk by 1954, and as Algeria was at the center of intellectual and constitutional debates about the future of France itself, it was natural that Mauss's students would apply their master's theory of integration (and reformulate it at the same time) to think through the relations between France and Algeria and their possible integration in a French multicultural, postcolonial, and post-national Republic. At the same time, the theory of integration developed by Mauss's students in the Algerian context represented a radical departure from the creation of a society of independent nations, which had been the League of Nation's objective in the interwar period – and the implicit ideological map onto which Mauss projected the possible futures of colonialism.

Among the younger generation of anthropologists and sociologists whom Mauss had directly or indirectly influenced, not all agreed with Jacques Soustelle and Germaine Tillion. But, more importantly, structural transformations in the postwar French academic field led to the emergence of the French discipline of political science, which, as this chapter demonstrates, called into question the very notion that ethnology had anything to say about international relations in general and the future of Algeria in particular. Combined with the end of the French war in Indochina in 1954, shortly followed by the beginning of the insurrection in Algeria, these structural changes led to the rise of new voices who disputed the legitimacy of the application of the model of gift exchange to the analysis of international relations, and the specific conclusions that Maussian ethnologists drew with regard to Algeria. Paradoxically, it was Mauss's cousin, Raymond Aron, who argued most strongly that ethnology in general, and the model of gift exchange which Mauss had developed in particular, should no longer influence the reasoning of the French government with regard to Algeria. Instead, Aron argued that economics and the new science public administration should ground the judgment of policymakers on this most complex question.

Aron's realist vision of international relations, argued the Maussians, doomed the Algerians, as the latter would never be able to attract enough capital to modernize their economy – not to mention their skepticism about the Front de Libération Nationale's (FLN) ability to let Algerian citizens enjoy democratic rights. But the blow that ethnologists had suffered, so this chapter then argues, eventually led to ethnology's downfall, and its relegation to the sciences of the local. The attack against ethnology in general, and the anthropology of gift exchanges in particular, was all the more fatal that it was relayed by ethnographers themselves, as the chapter

goes on to show by focusing on the writings of Pierre Bourdieu in Algeria. To claim that relations between metropolis and colonies could be viewed as gift exchanges was deeply wrong for Bourdieu: remains of gift exchanges could be observed at the local level in Algeria, but not at the international level. With Bourdieu, the idea that the model of the gift could provide a valid heuristic to think through colonial and postcolonial intersocietal relations became anathema, as it smelled too much of the old colonial ideology that marked his elders' political essays. From then on, the chapter concludes, he and younger anthropologists applied the model of the gift solely to talk about socioeconomic exchanges at the local level, thereby closing the historical parenthesis during which the gift had returned as a legitimate discourse about global governance.

1 ALGERIA: A LABORATORY FOR SOUSTELLE'S THEORY OF POST-NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Many debates today, in France as well as in Western Europe, revolve around the notion of "integration." In a context of rising right-wing populism in Europe, fueled by the instrumentalization of women's rights to police the borders of citizenship along the lines of race and religion, we often hear injunctions from politicians that migrants – especially the nationals of former French colonies and Algeria in particular – must better "integrate" into French society.⁶ French populist thinkers and politicians demand that migrants and second-generation Muslims from Algeria, Tunisia, or Morocco conform to newly reinterpreted norms of gender equality and secularism, which are reframed in such a way so as to paradoxically make the very "integration" of Muslim migrants and their children more difficult, as these norms ask them to choose between certain understandings of their own religion and the possibility to work or study in France.⁷ In many ways, integration, in these academic and political discourses, has come to refer to the relation that each individual within minority groups entertains with the political, cultural, and social mores of the dominant group.

Even if not completely reducible to the concept of "assimilation," the concept of integration today has come to characterize the way individuals relate to, and absorb, social norms. It is a social reality, which can be measured by demographers and sociologists. In the United States, mainstream sociologists of migration have framed their contribution to the policy debate on migration by measuring levels of integration of migrant population of different ethnicities or national origins in their host society and by developing what they call "segmented assimilation theory."⁸ This modern use of the term "integration" (used interchangeably with that of "assimilation") is also found in the work of French social scientists who build indexes of "social integration," which they use to compute the relative ease with which individuals of various migrant communities are likely to adopt the dominant social norms and values once they interact with the majority.⁹ Integration is thus a loaded

term, in a context in which French right-wing pundits have saturated the media with their ranting against the alleged evils of multiculturalism.

Integration in the postwar era was not a purely academic term either, but its meaning encompassed a very different political and legal reality than that which today's social scientists and right-wing politicians associate with the term. The question concerned whether all French citizens (including those adhering to the Muslim code in Algeria) could participate in the political life of the French Republic; and what form such political participation should take. Before the Second World War, Algerian Muslim residents seeking French citizenship were presented with the drastic choice between their religion and customary law on one side, and the benefits of French citizenship on the other side, with the effect that very few had pursued French citizenship before 1946. In some sense, it is sad to notice that French citizens are close to being brought back to this era, as the French Parliament has decided that no one in public office (including, since January 2018, members of parliament) can wear "exterior signs of religion," thus forcing practicing Muslims out of state mandates and curtailing their right to hold public office. But this was not the case in the 1950s. With the end of the Second World War, the constitutional architecture moved from an imperial policy of domination to one of federal "association" within an organic federation of "peoples and nations" working for the "harmonious development of each civilization."¹⁰ In the 1950s, the debate emphasized the political dimension of the concept of integration rather than its sociocultural dimension: French politicians discussed how all Algerian citizens, including Muslims, would participate in the political life of the nation, without asking Muslims to abandon their adherence to their socio-cultural mores. This political integration was pushed further in 1958, when the new Constitution of the Fifth Republic was adopted, as I will explain now.

The heavy emphasis on the political rather than sociocultural dimension of integration came in various stages, starting with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Fourth Republic in 1946, whereby the Republic affirmed the constitutional integration of Algeria within France itself. The preamble of the 1946 Constitution put an end to the empire, and replaced it with a Union based "on the equality of rights and duties, without distinction of race or religion."¹¹ This meant that all Algerian citizens could be considered part of the same body politic on equal footing with the metropolitan citizens. The distinction between citizens and colonial subjects (who were to be led through the colonial relation to autonomy and independence) was abandoned, and the 1947 Statute of Algeria considerably enlarged the number of rights granted to French nationals in Algeria. In fact, the *loi-cadre* that the various governments of the Fourth Republic debated in the 1950s in order to fix precisely the terms of the political participation of all citizens in France's overseas territories (including Algerian Muslims) allowed for the possibility that non-white populations who had been previously excluded from political

participation would be fully integrated, without having to adopt all the social mores of the French Christian majority.

The shift was largely a consequence of the war, after which it was recognized that Algeria had played a key role in the establishment of the French liberating army which had crossed the Mediterranean, and which allowed France to sit with the other three great powers at the table of peace negotiations. The colonial subjects had given to the metropolis: they would be granted political citizenship in return. Integration was thus an essential component of the gift exchange between the metropolis and Algeria. This national myth – a “myth” not because it was completely untrue, but because it fostered national cohesion after the trauma of defeat and collaboration¹² – can be summarized in the words of Raoul Girardet: “during the war, it happened that not only the political initiative, but also the locus and principle of French sovereignty itself, had moved from the metropolis to the Empire, from the continental France to the France from overseas,”¹³ and Algeria in particular. This mythical narrative praising the colonies’ participation to the Resistance and France’s ultimate victory was found for instance in the writings of postwar colonial policy-makers like François Mitterrand, the young minister of “France from overseas” (the new term for the Minister of the Colonies) in 1951 and 1952, and then Minister of the Interior (in charge of Algeria) until 1955, who wrote that “with the exception of the mandate in Syria, the Empire had not suffered from any cracks” during the war. As Mitterrand added, “beyond the surface of personal intrigues and political ambitions, the peoples (those of Algeria and Senegal, Tamatave and Conakry, Fort-Lamy and Saigon) had given what they had been asked each time they were asked: their men, their resources, their trust. The Empire of Asia” he continued, “held the fort on behalf of Vichy; the African Empire remained split, with Western Africa in favor of Pétain, and Equatorial Africa for de Gaulle, and Algeria shifting, but always in resistance”¹⁴ against the Germans.

Although the myth of the colonies’ resistance was a greatly simplified reality, it is true that the colonies (and Algeria in particular) participated in the French military effort against the Germans to an extent even greater than during the First World War: already during the German invasion of the metropolis, one-third of the 60,000 French casualties were from colonial armies, which had supplied about 500,000 men on the northern front. After the Allied troops landed in 1942 in the French protectorates of Morocco and Algeria, public authorities in Algiers led an immense effort of mobilization of colonial soldiers to participate in the reconquest of the south of Italy and then France. In 1943, the French colonial battalions (headed by General Giraud and US General Patton)¹⁵ gathered about 170,000 Frenchmen of “European” ethnicity from Algeria and Morocco and 150,000 from the “indigenous” populations of the Maghreb, in addition to 100,000 men from Senegal and other African territories.

This is why French politicians debated the *lois-cadres* which would best acknowledge the wartime African effort in the 1950s. Jacques Soustelle was

a leading voice in these postwar debates about the “integration” of Algerian subjects. Political integration for Soustelle was to be inscribed in the Constitution of the Republic, in statutes and laws. The policy of integration that Soustelle promoted was an ambitious attempt to create a new level of integration beyond the national (and inter-national) integration that Mauss had envisioned as the ultimate step for the colonies. His program was premised on the realization that the implementation of the 1947 Statute of Algeria was lacking on the ground, as elections to the newly formed Algerian Assembly were notoriously manipulated, and French citizens who followed Muslim customs were underrepresented in a segregated college of electors. As in the United States, “separate but equal” was a contradictory motto, as the very maintenance of segregation in political life was meant to preserve inequalities between Algerians of European descent and those of Muslim faith. To be truly complete, the logic of the gift exchange thus needed to reach the political and even constitutional affairs of the French Republic.

Soustelle proposed to create a new level of transnational (and postcolonial) integration for both the French metropolis and Algeria: a level of integration that neither Mauss in his writings on *The Nation* nor any apologist of colonialism writing in the interwar period had imagined.¹⁶ Soustelle aimed at creating a collective consciousness in Algeria that would be completely tied to the political institutions in Paris, rather than to those located in Algiers.¹⁷ He did not advocate the creation of an Algerian national consciousness around a new flag, a new people ruling as an independent sovereign in its territory, and whose relation with an independent French metropolis would be redefined so as to become truly “inter-national.” To the contrary, in Soustelle’s mind, Algeria was to be fully part of the French Republic until the end of time, and Algerian populations were to be integrated in a post-national “greater France” composed of both the Algerian and metropolitan societies.

Integration in the political language of Soustelle was thus a multi-level concept, which aimed at creating a new economic, social, cultural, legal, and political reality – a total social fact – neither previously experienced, nor desired, by colonial empires. As Soustelle wrote to the members of the Union for the Salvation and Rebirth of French Algeria (or, in French, USRAF) – an organization he created for the purpose of “creating a climate of solidarity between the metropolis and Algeria,”¹⁸ and which included the former general governors of the French Empire and ministers of the colonies (like Maurice Viollette, Roger Leonard, and Marcel-Edmond Naegelen), as well as political elites (like Georges Bidault, Michel Debré, and Georges Pompidou) and many central academic and intellectual figures in the colonial field, some of whom had been closely associated to Mauss’s Institute of Ethnology (like Maurice Delavignette, Paul Rivet, or Jean Paulhan)¹⁹ – integration meant in the long term the creation of a “French Algeria in which the Algerian country cannot erect a distinct state, with its distinct diplomacy and army,

and in which the French citizen of the metropolis enjoys the full rights of an *ipso facto* citizenship,²⁰ and vice versa. As Soustelle added, integration meant:

in the economic domain, the suppression of the trade customs between Algeria and France and the abolition of the financial autonomy of Algeria; in the social domain, the implementation of all [metropolitan] social laws to the Algerian territory; in the administrative domain, a vast program of decentralization to the benefit of communes carved around the many tribal boundaries that fractured the Algerian society, and the creation of inter-communal syndicates; in the political domain, the dissolution of the services of the Government General in Algiers, and their reattachment to the various Ministries in Paris, as well as the creation of a Minister of Algeria.²¹

In Soustelle's view, the Minister of Algeria in the future government he called for in the mid 1950s would be in charge of arbitrating conflicts between the various administrative layers of power in Algeria from Paris (rather than from Algiers, which he belittled as a "pseudo-capital of a state").²²

Soustelle thus proposed in 1956 and 1957 to repatriate all legislative sources of law and power in Algeria to Paris, in order to protect the policymaking process from the pressure of both white settlers in Algeria (who were fiercely conservative as far as the protection of their economic and civic privileges were concerned) and pro-independence Muslim populations. Soustelle's proposal of political integration in a greater post-national France thus went well beyond the *loi-cadre* project which, in the version discussed in 1957, would grant all French colonies of the Union a local parliament with a local government in charge of budgetary decisions.²³ In the 1957 project discussed by the French Parliament, Soustelle found riskiest the proposal that legislative and administrative power should be devolved from Paris to Algiers (either to the governor general or to the Algerian Assembly). Although Soustelle's first decisions as Algeria's governor general in 1955 had been to support the creation of a unique college of electors for the Algerian Assembly (which marked the end of the segregated and unequal system of representation in Algeria's consultative Assembly with two colleges, one for the minority of "Europeans" and one for "Muslims"), as time went by, he saw peril in giving this Assembly more legitimacy, as it could turn into a "constituent assembly."²⁴

Translated in political terms, Soustelle's post-national theory of integration meant that the Fourth Republic needed to backtrack the law of September 1947, which gave Algeria a distinct "civil personality, with a special budget, as well as a distinct administrative organization characterized by the regulatory power of the Governor and the monitoring of budgetary matters by the Algerian Assembly."²⁵ The Algerian Assembly would be kept in its purely consultative role; or be disbanded and replaced by a Coordination Council – a kind of socioeconomic council of Algeria – located in Paris, where the diversity of the Algerian society would be fully represented with select members of civil society as well as representatives of municipal councils in

Algeria. This Council would meet to discuss Algerian issues, but its role would remain purely consultative.²⁶ Instead of a strengthened local government, Soustelle wanted to institute a unique college charged with the election of Algerian parliamentarians directly in the French Assembly in Paris. It was the only way he found to integrate the Algerian populations (not culturally, but politically and economically) into a French political society whose heart would beat in Paris, far from the veins of the Algerian body politic.

The reform that Soustelle and the members of USRAF wanted to bring forth in the name of integration was thus not only oriented toward Algeria but also toward metropolitan France, as it involved a deep constitutional reform of the Fourth Republic itself. Indeed, the inclusion of all Algerian voters (no longer segregated into various colleges) in the body politic in charge of electing representatives to the Paris Assembly meant technically that the “Algerians would get about fifty parliamentarians in the French Assembly in Paris, including about fifteen Europeans, thanks to a proper division of the electoral map.”²⁷ In 1956, General de Gaulle seemed to agree with him, as, commenting upon Soustelle’s ideas, he wrote to him that, although Soustelle did what he could as a governor general in Algeria to solve the problem of Algerian claims to independence, the Algerian rebellion required a “very great policy”²⁸ – one that was not in the hands of the governor general of Algeria, but in the hands of a constituent assembly that would give both France and Algeria a new constitution. The “regime” of the Fourth Republic had to die for a new constitution to enshrine the post-national level of integration in which he and Soustelle believed: that which eventually established the Fifth Republic.²⁹

The need to change the French Constitution explains why Soustelle spent the three years after he left the Governor’s residence in Algiers multiplying contacts in the intelligence community to build up momentum in favor of de Gaulle’s return to power and the abolition of the Fourth Republic. This rebellion against the regime in Paris climaxed with the street protests of Muslims and Europeans in Algiers, the storming of the palace of the governor general and the creation of civilian–military *Comités de Salut Public* in May 1958. Shortly after, Soustelle was recognized by the putschists in Algiers as the *de facto* power in Algeria, in defiance of the French government in Paris. Based upon this assertion of statesmanship, and threatening to send paratroopers to Paris, Soustelle called on the government in Paris to abdicate and to call in de Gaulle to form a new government, which would then propose the planned new constitution written by a new constituent assembly. Of course, Soustelle expected to lead the new government as prime minister, but de Gaulle failed to fully honor his debt:³⁰ if Soustelle indeed participated in co-writing the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, adopted by referendum in November 1958, he was given a haphazard portfolio including the Ministry of Atomic Energy and the Sahara in the government of Michel Debré.³¹

In many ways, Todd Shepard is right when he sees in the adoption of Soustelle’s theory of integration and its constitutional translation in the new Constitution of the

Fifth Republic a radical discontinuity in the French legal tradition, with its clear nationalistic viewpoint.³² The new Constitution adopted Soustelle's vision of "integration" between Algerian citizens and French metropolitan citizens in post-national institutions. It clarified that Algeria was part of the French Republic, rather than part of the French Union (Articles 3 and 75, according to which the French metropolitan and Algerian territories were "indivisible"), in contrast to all the other colonies whose status had been revised by the *loi-cadre* of 1957. With the adoption of the new Constitution, the Algerian subjects (whatever their civil status) could now vote in parliamentary elections for the national assembly in Paris, leading to the election of sixty-seven Algerian deputies (including fifty-six Muslims) to the Paris Assembly in 1959.

With the new Constitution, Soustelle and the members of USRAF had thus overcome the three main obstacles to their reform. First:

the fear expressed by the metropolitan citizens to see the political life of the metropolis arbitrated by the hundred or so Algerian deputies sitting in the French Assembly in Paris; second, the opinion voiced by the Algerians of European descent who worry that their interests will be disregarded as a result of the absorption of all electors in a unique college [in Paris rather than Algiers]; third, the fear of the Muslims, that the metropolitan Frenchmen shall not want this reform.³³

And this indeed brought Muslim deputies to the French Parliament. The Algerians, including the Muslims, who were consulted for the first time on the matter of their organic link to the metropolitan body politic, voted largely in favor of the new Constitution in September 1958. They also voted massively in the 1959 municipal elections – with a participation rate of 61 percent in Algeria – despite the threats of the FLN to murder Algerians who voted. For Soustelle, their participation was a sign of positive adhesion to the new post-national Republic.³⁴ Little did Soustelle suspect that de Gaulle would soon change his mind on the Algerian question.

In parallel to these administrative–legal endeavors, Soustelle's integration policy pursued another goal, which may at first seem contradictory, but which was in fact perfectly aligned with the previous objective, as both sought to squash the emergence of an Algerian national consciousness. Like Mauss, Soustelle acknowledged that societies did not all have the same level of integration, that the "national" integration of individuals in metropolitan France was quite unique, and that the Algerians did not represent a "nation" in the Maussian sense.³⁵ But, from this observation, Soustelle drew the conclusion that the French should not help these various Algerian communities coalesce at the national level as a people. Rather, Soustelle and his USRAF followers promoted a multiculturalist understanding of the French state administration in Algeria, which prided itself on the many distinct cultural practices and social groupings that existed within its society (the Arabs, Berbers, Bedouins, etc.), and

which gave to each some visible presence, with no need for anybody to abandon their cultural and religious traditions. Each ethnic group was to be attributed quotas within the Algerian administration, which meant that some positive measure of discrimination would be applied to reserve specific places in public administration for various Muslim ethnicities.³⁶

In that sense, Soustelle's theory of integration was the exact opposite of that by which French populists from the left and right since the 2000s have come to understand the obligations of migrants to assimilate ("integrate," in today's parlance) the dominant customs, norms, and values of the French white majority. In fact, Soustelle denounced the policy of cultural assimilation that the French socialists in the government of the socialist Guy Mollet promoted until 1956.³⁷ For Soustelle, the essential feature of the "Algerian personality" was "its diversity,"³⁸ and the French state had to foster such an ethnic, cultural, political, and administrative diversity at the same time as it had to develop among Algerian subjects a sentiment of political identification with the Paris government. In other words, Soustelle advocated that the French state recognize the Algerians in their ethnological diversity (and indeed distinct personality), at the same time as he denied that they were destined to experience an independent national destiny. As Soustelle wrote to Prime Minister Debré in 1959, "integration and personality were not incompatible terms,"³⁹ quite the contrary. But the danger came from the fact that, too often, those who used the term "personality" to refer to the Algerian society shifted imperceptibly from an *ethno-cultural* understanding of the concept (characterized by a religious, ethnic, and culturally specific reality), which Soustelle neither denied nor tried to reduce, to a *political* understanding – that of a state, which Soustelle found a "deadly" shift.⁴⁰

Lauding Algeria's ethno-cultural diversity at the same time as upholding the ability of Algerians to integrate (economically rather than culturally) into the modern French economy and political system established by the Fifth Republic served the same goal: to avoid the emergence of an (independent) national level of identification in Algiers around which the various fractions of Algerian society would unite. Consistent with this view, he presented the FLN, which claimed to represent the national political will, as a totalitarian "Islamofascist" movement, which "called for the destruction of everything European in the Maghreb and of every Muslim who refuses to submit its will to theirs and which calls for the forced conversion of all the survivors of its extermination policy, as well as to the institution of a theocratic and racist state that will enter into the Arab League."⁴¹ For an ethnologist, that was quite a remarkably unnuanced statement. For a politician, it was not completely off the mark, even though it anticipated the very problematic discourse that burgeoned after September 11 on the perils of "Islamofascism" – a term that Soustelle may have been one of the first public intellectuals to use in reference to the FLN.

2 ETHNOGRAPHIC LESSONS AFTER THE ALGERIAN INSURRECTION: A DISCIPLINE IN SEARCH OF POLITICAL RELEVANCE

The model of post-national integration between citizens in Algeria and in the metropolis that Soustelle – and behind him, the dominant Parisian intellectual and political elites of the USRAF – promoted as part of a broad model of gift exchange between France and Algeria was thus grounded on epistemic claims of knowing a certain ethnographic truth about the intrinsic diversity in Algeria's society, and its incompatibility with the extension of political participation to all citizens in a separate Algerian national polity, independent from France. In general, the articulation between such truth claims and the broader constitutional politics of the postwar era raised the question of the relation that anthropology, ethnology, and French constitutional politics entertained in the 1950s.

Two striking differences distinguished the relationship that the interwar and postwar French anthropologists entertained with the political elites in the field of colonial power. First, Mauss and other interwar ethnological luminaries such as Paul Rivet did not doubt that colonialism would last until Europeans decided to end it – when colonial subjects would have reached sufficient levels of integration. Their purpose was not primarily geared at saving the French Empire, but, rather, at saving the local traditions which were at risk of being destroyed and forgotten as all colonial subjects became further integrated into the French economy. In contrast, after the war, Soustelle and other Maussian anthropologists like Germaine Tillion or Claude Lévi-Strauss doubted that the French state could much longer tame the political will to independence expressed by colonial subjects. The end of the war in May 1945 had been marked by massacres of Algerian subjects carried out by Algerian citizens of European descent, whose criminal action had been covered up by the benevolent silence of the French administration. As a French general, who oversaw the repression against Muslims in May 1945, cynically said to the surviving Muslims in the mosque of Constantine: "I have just given you peace for ten years." In a way, he was right: in 1954, the FLN launched the insurrection.

Second, and even more importantly, Mauss and other solidarists like Charles Gide had discovered and denounced the horrors of colonialism (forced labor, mass killings, natural depredation, etc.) in a colonial context where the exercise of French public law was notoriously inexistent, as the chartered companies had privately organized public affairs, especially in the Congo, where the administration was incredibly weak and embodied by corrupt officials. In contrast, Mauss's students in Algeria were confronted with the evils of colonialism in a context characterized by a dense presence of French public law as well as a thick network of intersocietal and economic exchanges between the metropolitan population and a large minority of European settlers grouped in city centers (1 million out of the 10 million Algerians). Whereas it made no sense for Mauss to envision how the Congolese subjects, almost enslaved by the chartered companies, could be made to participate politically in the

life of the Republic, Maussian students were obsessed with finding ways in which the Algerian subjects of Muslim faith could be made to participate more in the decisions of the Republic's government, so as to avoid the FLN winning the hearts and minds of the majority of non-white residents in Algeria.

These differences between the interwar and postwar concerns of Maussian ethnologists can best be illustrated through the evolution of the work produced by one of the two students whom Mauss sent to Algeria in the 1930s, and who returned to Algeria in the 1950s: Germaine Tillion. The daughter of a judge and an amateur archaeologist,⁴² Tillion worked at the Museum of Ethnology (later the Musée de l'Homme) until her departure for Algeria in 1934. After taking Louis Massignon's (1883–1962) classes on orientalism and religion at the Collège de France, and graduating from Mauss's Institute of Ethnology in 1932, she continued to attend Mauss's seminar until 1934. Tillion could finally do ethnographic work after Mauss secured two grants to support fieldwork in Algeria: one for Tillion, and one for Thérèse Rivière, the sister of Georges-Henri Rivière (Paul Rivet's assistant at the Museum of Ethnology).⁴³ Although Tillion lost her dissertation manuscript when she came back to Paris and was deported to Buchenwald as a result of her participation in the early Resistance movement of the Musée de l'Homme, she continued to practice ethnology after the war, as well as teaching at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE) from 1959 to 1970 and writing on the societies of the Maghreb and the Mediterranean in general.

From 1934 to 1940, Tillion conducted various missions in the Aurès, among the Chaouia tribes who lived in a tiny mountainous region in Algeria. Mauss and Tillion had chosen Berber villages – or as Tillion called them, Berber “republics”⁴⁴ – precisely because they looked as removed as possible from the French and capitalist civilization, which allowed her to conduct an experimental test of Mauss's ideas about the value of commerce and intersocietal exchange on changes in integration levels: even when scarce contacts existed, she hypothesized, these remote colonial subjects in Algeria's mountainous regions would entertain some exchanges with French civilization and law, and she would be able to test whether these exchanges moved these Berber republics closer to the national level of integration.

Mauss encouraged her to study this problem, as he was interested in having his students learn how practices of gift exchange (here exchanges of services, like the administration of justice, the construction of roads and schools, the collection of taxes) between the French administration and local tribes were affected by the differences between the levels of integration reached by each society (the colonial and the local); and whether, in return, such contacts created a dynamic of integration across societies, or not. Tillion found much evidence of the preservation of a Chaouia tribal public law (e.g. their unwritten system of “customary law,” whose “rules are not binding obligations, if it is the opinion of the majority that they should be ignored”)⁴⁵ as well as of “private law” customs (e.g. their rules of marital exchanges). But she also found some form of accommodation and inclusion of the

French system of rule.⁴⁶ The Berbers had very limited interactions with the French administration and colonial settler populations, but they knew perfectly well how to use the French colonial presence as a last resort, for instance, when they had exhausted traditional means of justice and wanted to avoid a bloody settlement of claims.⁴⁷

Tillion's ethnological research in Algeria empirically demonstrated how the dynamic of judicial and cultural pluralism that was created by the colonial encounter worked in a peaceful yet conflict-ridden way. She focused on how local communities practiced law, religion and culture in a pluralist manner, as local populations navigated between various systems of rules. The question of integration that Mauss encouraged his students to raise in the 1930s was unconcerned with whether the Algerian tribesmen and women could be made to participate in the political life of the metropolis through the establishment of a renewed constitutional machinery. To the contrary, Mauss had written in *The Nation* that he wanted his students to move away from the study of constitutions and treaties. In the 1930s, Tillion did not even think about the possibility for an alternative constitutional system in which all the Algerian and metropolitan citizens would equally participate in a common democratic polity.

The purpose of Tillion's postwar ethnographic missions in Algeria was very different,⁴⁸ and this difference, in turn, marked how anthropologists in general, and Tillion in particular, used the concept of integration after the Second World War. When she first came back to the Aurès in the 1950s, the local populations had rebelled against the French administration, leading to a massive envoy of military forces to the region. Indeed, immediately upon the insurrection launched in November 1954 by the Algerian FLN, Germaine Tillion was sent to Algeria by the Minister of the Interior, François Mitterrand, under the pressing recommendation of Louis Massignon, her former PhD co-supervisor and Mauss's former colleague at the Collège de France, to study the root causes of the rebellion and to make sure that human rights were respected in Algeria by the police forces responsible for the repression of the FLN insurrection.⁴⁹ The possibility of integration for Muslim Berber populations, and the form that such integration would take – in a rebellious pro-independence national movement or in the context of a greater France? – was thus no longer an academic question but a pressing political and constitutional issue. The question of integration was now less concerned with the capacity of intercultural exchanges to move the Algerian peasants further from their tribal sense of solidarity and closer to a national sense of belonging, than with the eminently political question of whether these populations wanted to die for the end of the French presence in Algeria.

Quite characteristically, at this point the question of integration in Tillion's research thus changed from an academic endeavor meant to describe how social solidarity among local tribes and between those tribes and the French administration operated, to a political project, ultimately aimed at finding effective ways to

retool Algerian peasants in training centers so as to give them the adequate economic and political skills to fit in with the imperatives of a modern economy whose prosperity would convince newly constituted Algerian voters to remain attached to the French presence in Algeria.⁵⁰ Upon returning to these villages whose families she intimately knew – in particular, the tribe of the Ouled Abderrahmane where she had studied about sixty families – Tillion was no longer an ethnographer collecting stories, dreams, tales, customs, and laws, but an agent chosen by the French government who could be used by the Berbers to publicize their views and negotiate rights for their men and women arrested by the police; or, on the contrary, who could betray them and give names to the French military forces. Furthermore, she had been charged by Jacques Soustelle, Governor General in Algeria since February 1955 and whom she had immediately reencountered when she arrived in Algeria, with the responsibility of designing and leading a large social program to integrate the poor Algerian teenagers and youngsters into the modern economic life of Algeria's urban centers – a program which she went on to lead for several years.

As far as the situation in Algeria was concerned, Tillion and Soustelle did not agree on everything, far from it. For instance, they parted ways during the trial of a leading FLN terrorist, Yacef Saadi, as Soustelle was called by the prosecution as a witness, whereas Tillion, with Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) and Massignon, appeared as a witness for the defense (which condemned the increasing reliance on torture by the army during the Battle of Algiers).⁵¹ During the winter of 1956–7, Tillion had indeed participated in private negotiations for a truce with Yacef Saadi, who had decided to launch a wave of terrorist attacks against civilians in Algiers in retaliation against Mitterrand's decision to execute the political prisoners sentenced to death by the military tribunals.⁵² Tillion had tried to convince the French authorities to de-escalate the conflict by stopping the execution of political prisoners accused of terrorism, in exchange for Saadi's decision to put an end to terrorist bombings in Algiers – but to no avail.⁵³

Still, the two former students of Mauss were deeply engaged in a collective effort to position ethnography as a useful instrument of government that could be used to make the political integration of Muslims in a French Algeria possible as well as desirable to everybody concerned. Tillion's approach to ethnography, and how she articulated the lessons of her scientific approach with governmental logics in the Algerian context, was not unique in that respect: although many of Mauss's students (like Bernard Maupoil, Charles LeCoeur or Mauss's assistants at the Musée de l'Homme) were killed during the war, those who survived, like Soustelle and Tillion, moved their ethnographic studies to bear direct lessons to the authorities at the center of the colonial field in Algeria.

This direct and intense political involvement with the Algerian question also characterized the emotional attachment that anthropologists and ethnologists showed toward debates about the future of Algerian and French political societies.

For instance, another ethnologist who had been inspired by Mauss (although not one of his doctoral students), and who organized big public conferences on the topic of Algeria in the 1950s, was Jacques Berque (1910–95).⁵⁴ The career of Jacques Berque shows the influence of Mauss on ethnologists and colonial administrators even beyond the Parisian alumni of the Institute of Ethnology. Indeed, Berque studied at the University of Algiers, where he was influenced by the Durkheimian legal anthropologist Louis Gernet (1882–1962), an alumnus of the ENS and a member of Durkheim's close circle of editors of *L'Année sociologique* who specialized in the anthropology of ancient Greece. Berque became a colonial comptroller of local tribunals in Morocco in 1934, from where he published essays in legal ethnography – which he sent to Mauss –⁵⁵ and which he saw as being inspired by Mauss's essay on contractual relations, gift exchanges, legal pluralism, and customary legal systems.

After the Second World War, Berque continued publishing on legal pluralism in Morocco, along lines that were not dissimilar to those that Tillion followed in the 1930s. Eventually, the quality of his essays led him to accede to the Collège de France in 1956 to teach on the societies of the Maghreb. He, too, became very involved in debates about the future relation that France should form with Algeria. For Berque, the debate about Algerian independence opposed those who, like Soustelle, defended “a French rule of law in Algeria, at the same time as they acknowledged an Algerian [total social] fact within this system,” and those who, like him, wished to “recognize an Algerian rule of law, and within that Algerian legal system, a French [total social] fact.”⁵⁶ As this summary of the main ideological division on the Algerian question shows, Berque concluded that France should first recognize Algerian political independence and legal autonomy and negotiate with the FLN as a prerequisite for the creation of new relations between France and Algeria as two independent nations with interconnected destinies.⁵⁷ Berque's understanding of inter-national integration between two independent nation-states thus remained much more faithful to Mauss's reading of the direction of history, whose end point they both defined as a society of independent nations, with each nation moving closer to the ideal-type that Mauss had defined in his writings on the nation.

3 THE CONVERGENCE BETWEEN LIBERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ELITES AND POLITICAL SCIENTISTS ON THE ALGERIAN ISSUE

Ethnographers' strong contribution to Algerian politics in the 1950s led them to hold particularly important positions, not only in the field of colonial administration, but also in the mainstream metropolitan public sphere, where the question of Algeria was ardently debated. In so doing, anthropology clashed with competing disciplinary approaches to the international life of nations, in particular, political economy and political science: two disciplines that started from very different epistemological premises and that arrived at divergent policy solutions when applied to the issue of

Algeria's future relation with France. This disciplinary rearrangement in the metropolitan academic field filtered the anthropological voices engaged in public debates.

In the interwar period, anthropology, archaeology, and ethnography had been articulated with international public law and political economy in the explanations of the origins and operation of European solidarity through the circulation of debts and the solidarity between European colonial societies and their metropolis. The postwar era was different in the sense that the two approaches more often clashed than converged. The shift of international power away from Europe toward the United States and the Soviet Union in postwar international affairs partly explains why Mauss's studies of solidarity between European societies and colonial ethnicities were given less relevance to think about East–West relations outside the colonial context: in the age of nuclear deterrence, formal studies on military and political decision-making as well as sociological studies of mass media, party politics, and administrative elites carried more weight to predict the dynamics of the Cold War than ethnographic studies of local tribes and their religious, cultural, economic, and family practices – maybe wrongly so, as the US military soon discovered in Vietnam.⁵⁸

The divorce between anthropology and political economy was also due to institutional logics related to the creation of a new discipline that stood between the two: political science, which was being institutionalized in the early 1950s in the French academic field by a young guard of public law scholars and political sociologists, who found jobs in law schools outside Paris or in the *Instituts d'Etudes Politiques* (IEP). These young men, who founded the *Revue Française de Science Politique* in 1951, were interested in the study of law, state administrations, budgetary policies, and political economy, which they related to the domestic history of political parties and social movements rather than to the evolution of religious belief systems and legal practices found in ethnographic explorations of the private and public lives of African communities.

Ethnology, and Maussian ethnology especially, was notoriously absent from the mix of academic disciplines that coalesced around the new discipline of political science. As Jean Leca writes, institutional and political reasons explained why Maussian anthropology failed to influence the founders of the new science of politics, and vice versa: for him, “Mauss especially . . . but the *École des Annales* at the *École pratique des Hautes Etudes* [EPHE, later the EHESS] in general, did not appreciate the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques*,”⁵⁹ and thus did not want to make the effort of proposing classes in these institutions – in contrast with Mauss and his students' efforts to teach at the Colonial School in the interwar period. Reciprocally, political scientists believed that Maussians saw them as too close to economic power, as Sciences-Po and the universities' law schools had long ranked high among the institutions where the French bourgeoisie sent its children.⁶⁰ Whereas Mauss's former doctoral students had moved to the center of the field of colonial power, thanks to their mobilization of cultural and colonial capital, the newcomers

transformed their economic capital into academic and political capital in the metropolitan academic field.

Ethnography was thus not only increasingly instrumentalized by the colonial authorities in the context of independence wars but also relegated by competing academic disciplines in the metropolis to the study of local communities in colonial contexts, in Algeria and other African countries. Political scientists denied that anthropology had anything to say about international relations, international solidarity (a topic they deemed peripheral to their theoretical endeavor) or relations between states. Most political scientists and public law scholars of this generation shared with the tenants of German-trained “realists” who had migrated to the United States during the war to found the new science of international relations the belief that the realm of international life translated first and foremost the power relations between competing sovereign states, contracting with one another on a limited and temporary basis, and according to their best interests.⁶¹ In France, it was paradoxically Mauss’s cousin, Raymond Aron, a former ENS student (where he had met his nemesis Jean-Paul Sartre), who ranked among the main academic movers and shakers who sidelined the Maussian interpretation of international relations in the academic field.

In the early 1930s, Aron had worked at Célestin Bouglé’s Centre de documentation sociale, where Mauss and Durkheim’s ideas were deeply influential, after which he discovered German (Weberian) sociology during a student exchange in Germany in 1934. This was a revelation for the young man: to Mauss’s dismay,⁶² Aron then became largely influenced by Max Weber’s thought and German sociology in general. After spending the war as the director of a small Free France journal in London, Aron had not only moved to the center of the academic field, as he was elected to a professorship at the Sorbonne, but he also became an editorialist at the right-wing daily *Le Figaro*. At the Sorbonne, he headed the Centre de sociologie européenne, from which he initiated a profound reconfiguration of the social sciences in France, along with political sociologists and public law scholars (including international public law) who wanted to move beyond the confines of comparative administrative law and mix their study of legal and administrative documents with a Weberian perspective on the study of political and administrative elites.

Many among these practitioners of the new discipline of political science, trained in constitutional and administrative law, drew inspiration from the work of Max Weber, partly under Aron’s influence, and partly because of the influence the German sociologist also had on Maurice Duverger (1917–2014), who included sociology and political economy in his analyses of state and international dynamics. Compared to Maussian anthropologists who put the concept of international (or intersocietal) “solidarity” at the center of their analysis, these postwar political scientists placed the study of formal state structures and domestic practices of government back at the center of their concern. Among the scholars who applied this post-Weberian approach to the study of contemporary international relations,

and to cite just a few, we find Charles Eisenmann (1903–80), a comparatist in constitutional law from a long-standing family of French jurists; François Luchaire (1919–2009), a professor of constitutional law in Paris who participated in the drafting of the 1958 Constitution of the French Republic under the authority of Michel Debré; Marcel Merle (1923–2003), professor of public law who wrote about the creation of international criminal law with the Nuremberg Trials before moving on to found a historical sociology of international relations and decolonization movements; Jean-Louis Quermonne (1927–) a professor of law in Grenoble and a founder of the study of the emerging European Union law; Madeleine Grawitz (1911–2008), a professor of law in Aix and then Paris who taught international public law and international institutions; or Jean-Baptiste Duroselle (1917–94), a historian who specialized in the study of international relations; and, at last, Alfred Sauvy (1898–1990), who coined the term “Third World” to designate the new nations who represented the “Third Estate” in the world society.⁶³

The academic competition between political science and anthropology was not without consequences for the public debate about the future of Algeria and the place France should have in the community of Western liberal states. Indeed, in 1957, building on recent economic analyses, Raymond Aron published a small pamphlet that became an immediate bestseller, in which he claimed that the French debt, which continued to grow as a result of France's involvement in the war in Algeria, and the plans of massive investment in Algeria promoted by Soustelle and Tillion, harmed the economic health of the French metropolis.⁶⁴ For Aron, the money spent on keeping Algeria in France was wasted, as it was clear that, one day or another, Algeria would become independent and would cut ties with France. For Aron and other realists – the Gaullists in particular⁶⁵ – Algeria's independence was not only the natural endpoint of history, but it would also benefit the French economy: the examples of the Netherlands and Germany showed that the amputation of the colonial territories from European empires could lead to a highly profitable integration in global capitalist markets.⁶⁶ Aron thus proposed to immediately liquidate all French assets on Algerian territory (including unmovable ones, like properties held by repatriated European elites) and to compensate the European landowners for their loss.

Aron's pamphlet was inspired by new approaches in political economy but it also built on the criticism already articulated in the summer of 1956 by Raymond Cartier (1904–75), a longtime reporter of the Indochina war who published a series of articles in the French popular magazine *Paris Match*, in which he popularized the notion that the preservation of the French Empire cost much more than it benefited the French metropolis – and, more importantly, that the question of the preservation of colonies should be judged from the sole point of view of economic rationality.⁶⁷ As the war in Algeria escalated, with the national assembly voting to grant the president of the council emergency powers to restore order in Algeria, Cartier asked his readers to consider whether the estimated 1.4 trillion francs that the

French had invested in the colonies since the nineteenth century would not have had a higher return if invested in the metropolis. As Cartier, and later Aron, argued, metropolitan France should no longer export its capital to Algeria, but rather to the territories of its European or transatlantic Allies.

By publishing such a provocative essay, Aron not only gave voice to those who opposed the continuation of the socialists' program of integration between metropolitan France and Algeria, but he also articulated a criticism of the continued French colonial presence in Algeria that could speak to the concerns of both conservatives and liberals in France. His reasoning was less controversial than François Mauriac's criticism of the atrocities conducted by France on behalf of colonialism (torture, population displacement, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings) – a position which Soustelle disparagingly attributed to Catholic sense of “bad consciousness,”⁶⁸ which he found both illegitimate and inappropriate as the French army was involved in battling terrorists.

Still, these were polemical proposals. At the time of the publication of Aron's pamphlet, the prime minister, Guy Mollet (1905–75), implemented an “assimilationist” policy, which drew its inspiration from a plan that Blum had prepared in 1936 together with his adviser Maurice Viollette, when they proposed the complete extension to the Algerian workers of the generous social rights that his government adopted for metropolitan workers.⁶⁹ Their proposal had been based on the realization that in 1930, Algeria absorbed 40 percent of the metropolitan commodity exports to the colonies and provided about 45 percent of the products that the metropolis imported from its colonies,⁷⁰ which meant that some form of socio-economic harmonization should be found between the two countries in order to conduct, in the words of Marius Moutet, when he served as Minister of the Colonies, an “altruistic policy”⁷¹ that demonstrated “human solidarity” and rejected a “policy of egoism.”⁷² The Blum–Viollette project, revived in another form by Guy Mollet's neo-Fordist colonial policy, thus received the strong support of the deputies from the cotton-producing regions like Lyon, Normandy and the North. With the legal assimilation of Algerian subjects, Mollet thus bet on the long-term economic benefits that metropolitan industries would derive from the rise in salaries in Algeria: the socialists hoped that France would find in the Algerian markets the economic opportunities that its exporting industries (like the cotton and garment industries) needed to continue generating profits.

Even if Aron's views initially represented a minority view in the French media and among the political parties, they found fertile ground among the liberal financial elites within the French public administration who argued that the assimilationist model wronged the French nation, as it could survive only because the French government hid the costs of the subvention to the dying cotton industries in the balance of payments: the costs of buying some industrial commodities produced in the metropolis at a high price were hidden in the budget of the colonies; and the costs of buying some raw materials also produced at a high price in the French

colonies were hidden in the budget of the metropolis. Some liberal economists and administrators of colonial banks, like Edmond Giscard d'Estaing, thus lobbied in favor of a more open vision of the empire, in which France and its colonies would both find a role as exporters in the global economy – alongside the British Empire and the United States.⁷³ For instance, Giscard d'Estaing did not believe that the colonies' economic development should be concentrated in agricultural or extractive activities only, and he pressured the government to open French colonies to foreign investments in order to turn the colonies into exporters of industrial goods, and thus solve France's balance-of-payments problems.⁷⁴ For him, the preferential treatment between France and its colonies weighed on the colonies' ability to export their raw materials or industrial products (should they produce any) outside of France, and thus on their ability to accumulate foreign currencies. He also believed it was absurd to decide by decree that "all laws should be applicable to the French metropolis and the colonies,"⁷⁵ as Blum's government and then Mollet's government had tried to argue.

Political scientists like Aron and high civil servants like Giscard d'Estaing built on the critical work accumulated for more than twenty years by the liberal economists to criticize the socialist neo-Fordist policy as a misuse of France's scarce capital. Since the mid 1930s, liberal economists argued that exporting industries in the metropolis and in the colonies needed to be competitive worldwide, which meant that French capital should go where labor costs were lower (in Algeria for instance), and that "the Metropolis had to accept immediate sacrifices without guarantees [*sans contreparties*] to the benefit of the Colonies, where, one could hope, but with all the assumed risks, that one day in the distant future, prosperity and industry will blossom."⁷⁶ A truly generous policy toward the colonies meant trusting them with the ability to turn capital investment into profitable joint ventures, so that they would generate a foreign demand for francs by selling their products to non-French clients – thus keeping stable the balance of payments. In general, liberal economists argued that an apparently favorable commercial balance with the colonies had no positive impact on France's balance of payments, since the industrial goods that France exported to its colonies (and which it counted as exports on the commercial balance) were all denominated in French francs (or in local currencies only convertible in French francs).⁷⁷

In many ways, Aron's criticism of continued French economic investment in Algeria only hastened an intellectual and political tendency that had grown within the ranks of administrative public elites since the mid 1930s.⁷⁸ The trade specialists, financial experts, industry and bank representatives dealing from and in the colonies, who gathered at the Economic conference of Non-metropolitan France from December 1934 to April 1935, were already not far from agreeing with the views that Aron expressed twenty years later.⁷⁹ Among them, Israel William Oualid, the Algerian-born lawyer who had worked as Albert Thomas's collaborator at the Ministry of Armament during the war and with Charles Gide when the two assessed

the costs of the Great War in the context of the reparations debate, also claimed that the trade specialization imposed by the cotton industries was a state subvention in disguise which, overall, did not provide any financial advantage to France: it did not bring any foreign currency to the French Treasury, since the imports of cotton fabrics from the metropolis to the colonies were denominated in francs.⁸⁰ During the Second World War, the economists who opposed Blum's neo-Fordist colonial policy mechanically rose in the ranks of the administration in the Vichy government as the socialists were jailed (like Blum), exiled (like André Philip or Jacques Soustelle), or killed (like Jean Zay, Blum's Minister of Youth) by the Vichy regime. Then, they encouraged massive capital investments in the empire because the Nazis occupied most of metropolitan France, which meant that capital should move from the occupied zone to Algeria. But, for these liberals, this relocation of French industries did not mean that the salary levels in Algeria should rise to the levels reached in metropolitan France. In 1942, when Admiral François Darlan, Minister of the Colonies of the Vichy regime, chaired the Economic African Conference, he followed financial specialists, like Paul Bernard (1892–1960), an inspector of finance (like Giscard d'Estaing), who stated that the French metropolis could not extend all social laws to Algeria if France wanted its economy to remain competitive.⁸¹ Following the same logic, the first postwar five-year plan adopted by Jean Monnet in 1947, which integrated the colonies as essential parts of France's postwar development, had already abandoned the redeployment of French industries from the (formerly occupied) metropolis to the colonies in favor of the reindustrialization of the French metropolis thanks to US support.⁸²

The consensus found among these French administrative elites thus reflected the fact that, as Jacques Marseille writes, in the 1950s they had “integrated the problem of the commercial balance in the broader and more complex problem of the balance of payments.”⁸³ In the mid 1950s, they argued that French capital should come back to the European continent and leave Algeria, which was under the threat of a future FLN “occupation”: a prudent investment policy demanded that French capitalists anticipate and protect their assets by relocating them in the metropolis. In many ways, the French capitalists had anticipated on their policy recommendations. In the early 1900s, Europe received about two-thirds (21 billion francs) of France's total capital exports (30 billion francs), whereas French colonies received less than one-tenth of the total (between 2 and 3 billion francs), and the situation was not much better after the Great War.⁸⁴ This was not much, but as Jacques Marseille shows, compared to the 1900s, by the 1950s France even halved its productive investments (in relative terms) in Algeria: although the total of French investment for the period 1947–58 amounted to 12 billion francs (calculated in 1914 francs), which was equal to the absolute amount of public investments from 1880 to 1945, a much longer period,⁸⁵ total colonial investments (of which Algeria received a great part) represented about 7 percent of the French budget from 1900 to 1914, whereas the billions devoted to public investments by France in its colonies from 1950 to 1958

only amounted to 4 percent of France's budget (excluding the costs of war). Most of this spending was directed toward avoiding the collapse of the civilian administration. Jacques Soustelle, when he became governor general in Algeria in 1955, discovered that France's public investments in Algeria only served to provide the local government in Algeria with the minimum amount of cash needed for it to function on an annual basis: the funds coming from France for the budget of Algeria were insufficient to build new schools and hospitals.⁸⁶

In 1957, Aron thus took the conclusions of liberal economists to the next step in his pamphlet: if France had invested so little in the colonies during a half century, now was not the time to do more, but on the contrary, to leave behind the little capital that France had invested in Algeria and invest in Europe and in allied nations instead. Indeed, these were the regions in which the French industries would find the best opportunities to increase their competitiveness. Aron and the economists read in the huge deficit of France's balance of payments a host of problems, but, foundationally, they concluded that the maintenance of the French Empire would be too costly for France in the long term if drastic political changes were not made.

4 THE MAUSSIANS STRIKE BACK: TO GIVE MORE RATHER THAN TO LIQUIDATE

When it was published in 1957, Raymond Aron's defense of Algerian independence and repatriation of French capital and manpower to the metropolis (coupled with French integration in global capitalist markets) spurred an intense public debate which was fueled by Mauss's former doctoral students: for Soustelle and Tillion, stopping the effort, liquidating all French assets, and pulling out would be a demonstration of moral weakness. As good socialists, they argued that Aron's policy of "liquidation" of the empire would be both a failure to honor France's collective responsibility and a prioritization of the petty calculus of financial elites over the French moral grandeur.⁸⁷ It ran in direct contradiction with the logic of gift exchange that they had glorified in their anthropological and political essays.

In a famous essay that followed Aron's publication, Tillion lamented that Aron's position encouraged French policymakers to invest less in Algeria, as it was no longer perceived as a safe environment. She wrote that it showed a vulgar petty bourgeois (rather than statesmanlike) conception of economic affairs: if Mauss had long noticed that the economy of gift exchanges was not "natural" to laymen because gifts escape the everyday commercial logic of the market, which only sanctions transactions that have a calculable risk of default, Tillion emphasized that fortunately, "negotiations, exchanges, quarrels, reconciliations, loans and gifts are managed at the level of Ministries rather than by lay people."⁸⁸ Thus, she hoped that despite their popularity, Aron's financial arguments would be ignored by the French statesmen who could be expected to respect the logic of honor; and that the French bourgeois and Algerian workers would one day "wake up realizing their nations now

form an Entente – like the Entente cordiale [of the interwar period] – from which they will benefit.”⁸⁹ Soustelle used the same Maussian language to counter the arguments served by the “cohort of liquidators” to the French “moderate bourgeoisie, to whom it is better to speak of pragmatic reasons rather than grand principles.”⁹⁰

For Soustelle and Tillion, continued payments and capital investments to Algeria were a question of international – and thus collective – responsibility. Soustelle acknowledged being ashamed at the idea that, as Aron proposed, the French should place limits on the “responsibilities that the [French] Community can acknowledge vis-à-vis a fraction of itself.”⁹¹ For Soustelle, this responsibility was either recognized or repudiated (with the loss of honor that such repudiation would entail, as the Berbers of Tillion or the Kwakiutls of Mauss well knew), but it could not be fractioned and negotiated like a merchant negotiating a price on the market.⁹² To Tillion, Aron’s call to liquidate all French assets held in Algerian territory was offensive for failing to recognize the solidarity that stems from the acknowledgement of a “shared responsibility” (here between the French and Algerians) – a central principle in solidarist thinking. As she wrote about the French responsibility in the “pauperization”⁹³ of Algerians, “we are both responsible and innocent – as innocent and responsible as those who are the victims of pauperization.”⁹⁴

As this debate raged on during 1957 and 1958, economic liberalism and unprotected integration of the French and Algerian economies in the global markets became the two main enemies of the Maussian polemicists, who argued in favor of the renewed circulation of gifts between the metropolis and Algeria. Tillion saw the changes engendered by the introduction of global capitalism that Aron and the liberals promoted as the root cause of Algerian pauperization:⁹⁵ if they acknowledged that two million Algerians of Muslim faith were internally displaced through force by the *regroupement* law that followed the beginning of the insurrection in 1954 (when the French army rounded up village populations in camps to control and “protect” them from terrorist attacks by the FLN), according to her, an additional almost three million people were displaced “voluntarily” – or rather, driven by market logics due to the pauperization of the village farmers.⁹⁶ Thus, for Tillion, it was the process of bringing a capitalist “planetary civilization”⁹⁷ to Algerian communities that was responsible for the pauperization of its displaced persons, and thus for their overall revolt. Economic globalization was responsible for Algerians’ protests, not French colonialism.

To Tillion and Soustelle, Aron’s proposal of immediate independence and unilateral liquidation of French assets was wrong, not only because it ignored the moral dimension of the issue – the duty to respect a sense of honor and solidarity toward the colonial subjects who had to be treated as French citizens – but also because the economic analysis on which it was based was flawed. Soustelle blamed Aron for the ignorance he displayed of Algeria and for the contempt he displayed toward Algerians, both those of “European stock” whom he wanted to repatriate, and Muslims whom he found “not profitable.”⁹⁸ During the 1958 General Assembly of

the USRAF, Soustelle violently criticized the “damage created in the minds of the bourgeoisie by their shameless propaganda, which evoke 800 billion francs or even one trillion francs”⁹⁹ that the war in Algeria would cost to French taxpayers – Cartier even wrote off 1.4 trillion francs. Soustelle disputed the decision to include in the total the operating costs of the army, which had been deployed in 1956 by the government of the socialist Guy Mollet to the whole Algerian territory – a decision that Soustelle regretted, as it gave the impression that the rebellion had escalated to a full-blown war.¹⁰⁰ For Soustelle, after careful examination, these 1 trillion francs were “reduced to 100 billion francs if economists only included the *additional* costs engendered by the war, which was justified as the French government would have paid for its army in any case, whether soldiers were located in West Germany or Algeria.”¹⁰¹

Soustelle went further in his criticism of the economic costs of abandoning Algeria: he found Aron’s proposal to repatriate the one million Europeans in French Algeria to the French metropolis and pay them 500 billion francs in reparations (about 400,000 francs for each individual) upon independence of an Algerian Arab state deeply problematic not only from a moral point of view, but also from an economic point of view.¹⁰² Indeed, Soustelle estimated that at least 4 trillion francs (or the total annual expense budget of the French government) would be needed to fairly compensate the Europeans for their losses – double what Tillion proposed to “give” to Algeria (including both Europeans and Muslims) to develop their economy in an integrated framework with France.¹⁰³ Instead, Soustelle relayed the views of the Maspétion Commission, which had found in 1955 that “the French state should invest 1.3 trillion francs in ten years in order to triple Algeria’s production,”¹⁰⁴ not only in wine and other products from agriculture, but also in the oil and gas sectors, in order to create a modern economy in Algeria. Translated in administrative terms, Soustelle believed that this policy of gift exchange in which France was the first to give could take the form of a complete integration (fusion) of the Algerian budget within the metropolitan budget. Such a budgetary integration avoided charging future Algerian generations for the money raised to develop the Algerian economy in the next decade: the French metropolitan taxpayers would immediately pay for Algerian development in their present taxes.¹⁰⁵

Drawing implicit inspiration from Mauss’s writings about the necessity for France to be the “first to give” in the context of the German reparations debate, Tillion defended the model of gift exchange as a way to accompany the political integration¹⁰⁶ for which Soustelle called before the constitutional revolution of 1958: as she wrote, “Let’s give,” in the form of massive investments in training in local industries, “and we shall receive in return.”¹⁰⁷ As she further stated, “we have to be the *first* to pay the price.”¹⁰⁸ As Tillion recognized, the French government was not going to invest massively if the region did not share the same currency, if it did not belong to the same currency zone and did not share the same budget, and if it did not envision the same political future – as otherwise, it would be in the “national

interest to avoid exporting French francs¹⁰⁹ by spending on expensive oil production technologies and training for a large industrial force in the Sahara when it was cheaper to buy oil on the global market. Only if the two peoples were tied for a long time by the common institutions established by the constitution of the Fifth Republic would French investors and policymakers agree to sustain a massive financial effort.

To make their case even stronger, Mauss's former doctoral students not only attacked the economic diagnosis behind Aron's critique of continued French presence in Algeria, but also Aron's prognosis that Algerian and French economic problems would be solved thanks to the clean political separation between the two. For the Maussians, Algeria's independence was one possible *political* solution to a *political* problem,¹¹⁰ but it was not likely to solve Algeria's economic, social, and cultural problems – the “total social fact” in the language of Mauss that Tillion named the problem of “de-development” or “pauperization.” Siding with Soustelle, Tillion strongly criticized the motivation of Aron and other high civil servants who argued in favor of Algerian independence: as she wrote, “anti-slavery often served as the alibi of colonialism, and one may wonder if anti-colonialism is not the alibi of pauperization,”¹¹¹ furthered by the egoistic tendencies of the French bourgeoisie and their reduction of the colonial issue to a purely economic problem.¹¹²

For Tillion, with independence, the leaders of the new Arab state would be unable to find the necessary resources to respond to the populations' needs and to honor their debts. A “free contract” between two independent sovereign states created a lesser bond than that needed for the type of gifts that Tillion wanted France to spend on Algeria. If Algeria became a newly independent nation, its population would soon lose French aid, as Tillion cautioned that “the money given to the poor countries by prosperous countries is useless to the former – when it does not aggravate their condition – and, at the same time, the money represents a heavy sacrifice for the latter,”¹¹³ which explained why the latter continuously reduced development aid payments. Neither the United States nor the Soviets would make such a large gift as the 2 trillion francs Tillion estimated were necessary for the immediate retooling of a large section of the Algerian population: “to the contrary,” she wrote “independence will not solve this problem . . . and without our collaboration, these problems cannot be solved, whatever happens”¹¹⁴ in the political realm. For Tillion and Soustelle, much greater sums of money than those currently spent by capitalist states on development aid to independent new nations were needed.¹¹⁵

Tillion argued it would be much worse if the Algerian population was no longer sheltered by protective French trade barriers, which maintained some aspects of the gift logic to the relations between France and Algeria: too few Algerians benefited from social security, modern medical facilities, and high attendance rates in French schools (including by Muslim children), which meant that an independent Algeria risked collapsing.¹¹⁶ From raw calculations, done simply by extrapolating the budget of one family multiplied by the total number of Algerian families, Tillion concluded

that the independence of an Algerian state would increase Algeria's problems of economic poverty, cultural alienation, and political resentment: she predicted that the European economic elite would leave Algerian cities to their fate, when it was precisely in these city centers that the social, cultural, and economic problems were being solved by the programs of economic integration she had helped set up since Soustelle hired her in 1955.¹¹⁷ As Tillion wrote, if the French were to pull out of Algeria in the near future, "all that we give now, like the devil's gold, will be turned to dry leaves."¹¹⁸

In many ways, the return of Soustelle to the government in late 1958 and the adoption of the five-year Constantine Plan (1959–63) gave Soustelle and Tillion hope that the French state could finally work to realize their ideas: the Constantine Plan, an investment plan adopted in 1959, exemplified how a gift exchange economy linking the two countries could work. The Plan called for massive investments in Algeria in order to solve the "problems of industrialization and modernization of the Algerian economy," in large part "thanks to the exploitation of natural gas in Lacq and the exploitation of the Sahara for oil extraction," which led to the decision of the French government "to sell oil and gas at such a cheap price to Algeria that Algeria will be one of the countries where energy is the cheapest in the world."¹¹⁹ In parallel, back in the government, Soustelle lobbied for the "suppression of the absurd financial autonomy" of the Algerian population, the integration of Algerian expenses into the French budget, and the maintenance of a distinct fiscal policy, as "the Algerians' standard of living being much lower than in the metropolis, the Algerians could not bear the burden of French taxes to the same extent as the metropolitans."¹²⁰ This integration of the Algerian and metropolitan budgets meant, *de facto*, that the Algerian (present and future, if not past) debt would be erased, and that the French metropolis would pay, according to Tillion and Soustelle's plan, to train 400,000 people in Algeria and to develop oil extraction in the Sahara at a cost of 2 trillion francs.

As Minister of the Sahara, Soustelle also put in place the reform of the oil code in November 1958, which was inspired by the "regimes in place in the Middle East and Venezuela, which equally distributed the benefits to the public authorities [granting the concession] and the shareholders of the companies."¹²¹ Soustelle believed the new code would encourage the French (and foreign) oil companies to invest in oil extraction in Algeria and provide cheap energy to Algerians rather than import it at a high price. It was ironic that Mauss's student hailed the modernized system of concessions as a benefactor to the colonial society, when his former mentor and the previous generation of solidarists had spent so much time campaigning against the abuses of chartered companies in the colonies and writing in favor of their nationalization. Soustelle's plan of massive investment in Algeria (shouldered by metropolitan taxpayers) was supposed to open a new phase of post-national political integration in the relations between the two societies, and close the gap between rhetoric and reality.

But the Constantine Plan came too late, and amounted to too little. The uncertainty over de Gaulle's commitment to keeping Algeria in metropolitan France certainly did not help the political elites solve the problem of underinvestment in Algeria. The investments to which France consented as part of the Constantine Plan were largely insufficient to balance the free movement of capital that was observed in 1959 and 1960: as an editorialist noticed, "during its first two years, the Constantine Plan injected 56 billion francs in Algeria, 18.3 billion coming from Algeria, and 38.4 from metropolitan France. But," the journalist added, "each year, Algeria exports about 250 billion francs of capital to the French metropolis, which means that the overall mass of capital in Algeria has decreased."¹²² The trend, far from decreasing, accelerated, as the rich Algerians anticipated the possibility of independence and hedged their bets by investing their money in metropolitan France. Thus, the only solution to turn the flow of capital investment upside down was to introduce "capital controls" and strictly restrict the export of capital away from Algeria, on behalf of an "economic patriotism, which translated 'pro-French Algeria' slogans into investments in Algeria."¹²³

5 THE GIFT AS DISSIMULATION: PIERRE BOURDIEU AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE GIFT IN ALGERIA

Tillion and Soustelle's 1957 public interventions provoked many disputes in academic and intellectual circles: they were widely commented upon and criticized by other intellectuals, like historian Pierre Nora (1931–), for deploying a purely rhetorical defense of colonial administration in Algeria, and downplaying the role of the institutionalized racism against Arabs found among European populations in Algeria.¹²⁴ The idea that Algeria could remain attached to the French Republic as part of a multicultural and giving post-national society began to look like a mirage. As the decoupling between the rhetoric of the gift and the reality of Franco-Algerian relations grew even wider, a new generation of anthropologists started to question whether the model of gift exchange could be applied to international relations without merely being a form of colonial propaganda.

Within the academic field, the scission between the generation of Soustelle and Tillion and the new generation grew wider as their slogans, and their application of the model of gift exchange to international relations, were increasingly associated with the defense of the French presence in North Africa. Then, it was no longer Berque or Aron who wrote against their use of Mauss's model of the gift, but a doctoral student whose pre-independence writings reshaped the political and anthropological discourse on Algeria and the gift: Pierre Bourdieu. As various historians of sociology like Julian Go and Johan Heilbron have recently demonstrated, the years that Bourdieu spent in Algeria were deeply formative for his later writings.¹²⁵ A freshly graduated philosophy student from the ENS, Bourdieu began thinking about the Algerian issue during his military service, for which he worked in

the information service of the Minister-resident in Algeria, Robert Lacoste, who had replaced Soustelle in 1956.¹²⁶ Bourdieu's job gave him a particularly good vantage point from which to assess the reality of Algerian society as well as the duplicity of colonial propaganda: in the summer of 1957, thanks to his mother's connection with a colonel from his region (the Béarn, in the southwest of France), he participated in the collection of information which rationalized the "psychological action" (aimed at forcing the Algerian masses into compliance with French rule), and he wrote various reports, one of which was designed to support the French position on "the Algeria problem" at the United Nations. Then, from 1957 to 1960, he obtained a lecturing position at the University of Algiers, in an academic context still heavily marked by colonial ethnographic science, which insisted on the "fragmented" ethnic space of Algeria rather than on a unified Algerian "national" society.¹²⁷ As such, Bourdieu had a foot in both worlds: the academic one, where he defended unorthodox positions, and the colonial field, where he wrote small essays that could be useful to the French administration.

Still, Bourdieu did not endorse the French official position, and his rejection of Soustelle and Tillion's opinions on Algeria led him to naturally gravitate closer to Aron, whom he met in 1959 when the latter delivered a lecture at the University of Algiers. Bourdieu not only appreciated Aron's expression of support for Algerian independence but also his Weberian sociological orientation (quite different from Soustelle and Sartre). He asked Aron to be his dissertation adviser (as Bourdieu wanted to transform some ethnographic studies he did in Kabylia into a thesis). Although Aron redirected Bourdieu toward another adviser, he did hire him as his teaching assistant in 1960 at the Sorbonne, where Bourdieu also took his class on international relations,¹²⁸ and where Bourdieu became associated with Aron's Centre de sociologie européenne (a center whose direction Bourdieu later inherited from Aron).

Thanks to this process of "hybridization" between different positions in the field of ethnology and political science, Bourdieu thus managed to completely distance Mauss's mode of the gift exchange from Soustelle's vision of post-national political integration.¹²⁹ Like Berque, Bourdieu argued in his first essay on Algeria (1958, reprinted in 1961) that, in contrast to what Soustelle claimed, a certain unity existed across Algeria: even if some of his books, either published alone or with coauthor Abdelmayek Sayad (1933–98), were articulated around chapters devoted to different ethnicities (Chaouia, Kabylia, Arabs, nomads from the Sahara, etc.),¹³⁰ Bourdieu assumed that there was such a thing as an Algerian "rule of law" or customary law, and that the latter was different from the French "fact" which existed alongside (and corrupted, from Bourdieu and Sayad's point of view)¹³¹ the free operation of Algeria's rule of law. For Bourdieu and Sayad, the first step for ethnographers was thus to get to know who the Algerians "really" were and what united them, rather than assume that they could never coalesce as "a nation." In their endeavor, they found in Mauss's anthropological model of the gift a particularly useful heuristics: conformity to this

system of customary law known as the gift characterized how the Algerians understood economic exchanges as well as questions of sovereignty and morality, which put them at odds with the Europeans, who clearly departed from (and subverted) this logic of the gift, using it as a rhetorical tool in order to advance their narrow and egoistic goals.

Bourdieu found in Kabylia many examples of “gifts” and “counter-gifts” exchanged between families – in particular, “gifts of brides” through which alliances were sealed between families within the same tribe (commonly) or between tribes (in exceptional cases).¹³² To seal these marital alliances no paper was needed, as an exchange of dowries manifested the alliance: the memory of the gifts exchanged was preserved by the community, whose “collective opinion is the law, the tribunal and the agent in charge of implementing sanctions”¹³³ – the highest possible sanction being exile and the loss of honor it represented.

According to this Algerian customary rule of law, the same logic of the gift that ruled over the obligations between humans also ruled those between humans and the land – even among the nomadic tribes from the Sahara, which Soustelle believed to be a *terra nullius*,¹³⁴ but where the boundaries of collective property rights exercised by tribes were in fact fiercely negotiated, and sealed in a network of tacit “contracts, each of which are overcome but latent conflicts.”¹³⁵ The Algerian gift economy was really a “total social fact” beginning with the seasonal rhythms of nature, which required Algerian peasants to plant seeds in some parts of their fields while leaving other parts unplanted in the expectation of some later higher return. This counter-gift that the fields gave to them in exchange for the collective protection of the soil had its social correlation: among fellows of the same tribe, no exchange was monetized. Bourdieu and Sayad cited Algerian peasants who stressed that the “earth only gives to those who give to her” – and that peasants had progressively fewer and fewer means to follow this prescription of their customary rule of law.¹³⁶

Thus, the Maussian inspiration in Bourdieu’s work was direct and clear, as Bourdieu found a common customary basis in Algerians’ recognition of the “logic of the gift” (and its three obligations), which for most tribes represented a form of customary law – an observation he shared with Tillion and Soustelle. But compared to Mauss’s former doctoral students, Bourdieu redefined the relation between contracting agents (e.g. the relation characterized as a gift exchange, with its specific ordering of time and reciprocity) and the types of contracting agents (whether the latter were individuals or sovereign entities). Whereas Tillion and Soustelle asserted that the logic of the gift applied (or should apply) to the relations between European and non-European communities in Algeria, Bourdieu vehemently denied that this was the case.

If Bourdieu and Sayad found that the logics of honor and gift exchange had ruled most aspects of life in Algeria before French colonization, the colonial encounter between Algerian tribesmen and the French Republic could not be characterized as

a “gift exchange” except if by the latter, one meant a deceitful exchange during which one party lost everything. For instance, as Bourdieu and Sayad underlined, colonial legislation, from the *Senatus-Consulte* of 1865 to the Warnier law of 1873 – sponsored by Auguste Warnier (1810–75), a longtime explorer of Algeria, geographer, politician, and military planner – formalized and redistributed property rights in Algeria so as to facilitate French colonists’ access to private property in France’s closest and dearest colony.¹³⁷ For them, the law of the *Senatus-Consulte* was the most powerful instrument of economic warfare against the political economy of gift exchange, as it created a system of formal individual property rights over land in a region where most land had been managed under informal property rights exercised collectively by tribes according to a logic of honor and gift. The destruction of the solidarity between tribes and land was applied continuously until it reached an apex with the military rule known as *regroupement* (1954–9),¹³⁸ which led to the internal displacement of millions of Algerians – a massive breach of human rights.

For Bourdieu and Sayad, these legal measures were emblematic of the colonial enterprise, which consisted in breaking down collective solidarities between fellows of the same tribe and between a tribe and a territory, relationships which were organized juridically and politically through farming, cultivating, and exchanging the products of the land.¹³⁹ As a result of such colonial measures, backed by military force, Bourdieu and Sayad observed the breakdown of the old customary rule of law:

old contracts of association are replaced with contracts of employment . . . and the old community traditions – loans of service, collective labors, tacit conventions, in-kind exchanges – fall into desuetude and when they do not, they are seen as illegitimate constraints by individuals who have learnt to see in money the universal medium of all human exchanges and in the form of a salary the universal compensation for labor.¹⁴⁰

For Bourdieu, this revolution in attitudes toward legal/economic obligations was exemplified in the changing perception of migration to the cities (either in Algiers or in the metropolis): whereas their ancestors migrated to help protect the land and thus the tribe which collectively owned the rights to live on it (by providing remittances that were invested in the protection or expansion of the land controlled by the tribe), Algerians in the 1950s saw their migration as a permanent exit from the original land – an exit with no return, as most of the time, they migrated after a default on debt they had contracted with landowners.¹⁴¹ By the 1950s, migration was thus “no longer the realization of a mission granted by the group but an individual adventure by isolated individuals, forced to confront, with no protection, and no possibility to return, a hostile environment.”¹⁴²

Beyond the words of Soustelle and Tillion, which claimed that exporting capital to Algeria and importing Algerian manpower to the metropolis would suffice to maintain the system of gift exchange alive in Algeria, Bourdieu, and Sayad found

a much darker reality in Algerian cities: marked by decades of alienation, acculturation, and exploitation, Algerian populations were at risk of no longer being able to practice gift exchanges among themselves and between themselves and others. The corruption of gift exchanges in Algeria was made manifest for instance in the changing relation known as the *khammès*:¹⁴³ this system had long been used to project a powerful family's status in the public eye by providing gifts ensuring subsistence for the poorer fellows employed to help farm the land on a seasonal basis. In the 1950s this system continued to exist, but it took a decrepit form, as it transitioned toward a system of written contracts of monetized exchanges between employees and employers. The gift exchange had evolved: when poor farmers failed to honor the contracted debts, they faced a loss of honor and fled to the cities, preferring anonymity to shame, and becoming part of the internally displaced population.¹⁴⁴

For Bourdieu and Sayad, the socioeconomic and cultural outcomes identified by Tillion – like “pauperization,” or the “acculturation” of Algerian peasants – were thus the result of deliberate political and legal mechanisms meant to create poverty and anomy rather than the result of natural market forces led by demographic processes. As they wrote, “only by masquerading the context – e.g. the colonial situation – in which economic exchanges take place can we interpret the present revolutionary changes in Algeria in terms of acculturation”¹⁴⁵ led by the natural forces of capitalism. Generalizing from this example of the *khammès*, Bourdieu thus asserted that in such “pre-capitalist” societies as colonial Algeria, he saw in the logic of circulating gifts and debt the operation of a “symbolic violence,” e.g. a “violence that is soft, invisible, unknown as such, chosen as much as suffered, a violence that is full of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, gift and debt, from mutual recognition and piety, and all these notions associated with the morality of honor.”¹⁴⁶

Still, according to Bourdieu and Sayad, the gift exchange economy – based on unwritten but binding rule – continued to exist in Algeria, even if it was limited to local and hidden exchanges within the Muslim population. Its persistence was made manifest with the difficulty with which Algerian Muslims adopted “modern” formally written rules: unlike “market specialists, peasants ignore the market guarantees, the witnesses, and the acts of writ in which market relations are now embedded.” As they wrote, some Algerian peasants still ignored “economic calculus, conceived both in terms of accounting techniques and in terms of speculation on the future.”¹⁴⁷

But, for Bourdieu, it would have been a travesty of truth to claim, like Tillion and Soustelle did, that the Europeans (both in Algeria and Paris) partook in such a gift economy: the French administrators and European settlers did not respect the logic of honor, as they consistently violated their promises and sought to exploit the Algerian (Muslim) population for short-term economic gains. For more than a century, they had worked to destroy this native Algerian customary rule of law known as the gift exchange, first, by explicitly denying that it was a “rule of law” as

the French considered the Muslims they encountered in Algeria to be “savages”; second, by working to subvert it through a series of laws and policies, like the creation of a capitalist market of property rights that weakened collective Algerian landholding solidarities; and, third, and most perversely, by “mimicking” the discourse of the gift through the colonial appropriation of the terms as Soustelle and Tillion did in their writings.

For Bourdieu, when French administrators like Soustelle used the language of the gift – with their emphasis on “honor,” “gift,” and “generosity” – to frame their pro-integration projects, they went to new heights of cruelty by capturing the language and concepts of that customary law and attaching new meaning to each term. As Bourdieu and Sayad wrote, “politicians, administrators and military men cannot conceive of a higher generosity as that which consists in granting to Algerians the right to become what they should be [according to French standards], e.g. the right to be like the Europeans, which, in fact, denies them the right to be who they really are.”¹⁴⁸ This use of ethnology for propaganda purposes was absolutely illegitimate for Bourdieu.

The act of mimicking – by using the language of the indigenous to frame a proposal whose goal was the exact opposite of the preservation of the customary rule of law – produced particularly tragic results, associated with what Bourdieu later called the lifting of the “*illusio*.”¹⁴⁹ Indeed, paradoxically, the Algerian peasants who had developed strong moral notions of rectitude within their customary rule of law were those who became the most cynical about the (European and Algerian) discourses on the gift. As Bourdieu and Sayad wrote, those peasants who still believed in notions of “good faith,” “honor,” and “tacit obligations” were now seen as “fools” and “idiots”¹⁵⁰ by the younger generations, who no longer saw in these words the logic of honor of the customary law of their ancestors, but a ploy used by the colonial administration to exert its rule over pauperized populations. Thus, while some Algerians still understood social relations and relations with the land as their ancestors had, and continued their practice of farming the land – although in a disillusioned way, no longer believing in the magical link that united the tribe with the land – others who left to the cities saw the Algerian peasants as “fools” or poor fellows trapped in extreme poverty.

By using Maussian concepts of gift exchange to analyze a specific local reality (e.g. the working of a pre-capitalist customary rule of law), Bourdieu could claim to be more Maussian than Tillion and Soustelle – but only by ignoring the “political writings” on sovereign debt crises that Mauss had published in parallel to *The Gift*, whose traces could be found in Tillion and Soustelle’s essays. In doing so, Bourdieu managed to reclaim ethnology on the side of the realist political scientists who, like Raymond Aron, had condemned France’s sustained involvement in Algeria while keeping his distance from the FLN – in contrast to Aron’s former classmate at the ENS, Jean-Paul Sartre, who wrote an apology of terrorism in Algeria in his preface to Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*.¹⁵¹

Mauss's analytical model gave Bourdieu a viewpoint from which to not only criticize the rhetoric of Soustelle and Tillion, but also the abstract thinking of revolutionary intellectuals like Sartre and Fanon,¹⁵² who wished to change reality by applying great plans which assumed a liberty and freedom among individuals that, according to Bourdieu, did not exist as such. Indeed, Bourdieu and Sayad believed that one of the main dangers faced by Algeria when the latter became an independent republic was a "petty bourgeoisie of bureaucrats who tend to magically deny the contradictions of [the Algerian] reality, as if they were a shameful ghost of the deceased colonial giant."¹⁵³ If they denied the permanence of weakened but still persistent traditional expectations about land and social obligations, the new Algerian rulers risked destroying the social pact that had long served to produce peace between tribes, leading to an increasing tendency to act cynically, like the younger generations who found no wisdom in Algerian customary law of gift exchange. To prevent this tragedy from happening, Bourdieu thus proposed to revivify Maussian concepts, but, this time, and in contrast to Soustelle and Tillion, to apply them to the reality to which they claimed it belonged: at the local level.

6 THE TURN TO THE LOCAL IN THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF GIFT EXCHANGES

Even if President de Gaulle accepted to govern under the framework defined by the 1958 Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which Soustelle's theory of integration had deeply influenced, he soon turned his back on Soustelle's policy of post-national integration of the metropolitan and Algerian societies into one republic. In the summer of 1959, de Gaulle decided to instead give considerable "autonomy" to Algeria, thus paving the way for a referendum on the question of Algerian independence – whose terms he started to secretly negotiate with the FLN after 1960. De Gaulle's reversal signed the demise of Soustelle's conception of integration, whose economic translation would have taken the form of a vast system of gift exchanges between the two sides of the Mediterranean Sea.

After de Gaulle started negotiating with the FLN, his new Algerian policy reaffirmed the assimilationist and nationalist character of the concept of integration: those citizens who chose to remain French after the independence had to decide to live in the French metropolis and share the social and cultural mores of the majority there. The support of the French population for de Gaulle at the end of the war in Algeria, when they voted in April 1962 in favor of the Evian Agreements – signed between the French government and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA, in French) in March 1962 – left him free to implement his vision of France as a pure nation-state, characterized ethnically as a white Christian majority,¹⁵⁴ and free to apply a simple distinction at the time of independence: the Muslims in Algeria were (except for a few exceptions) to be considered Algerians, and the Europeans in Algeria (most of whom had migrated to the metropolis in the

summer of the independence in any case) were to be considered part of the French body politic.¹⁵⁵ There was some Charles Maurras in Charles de Gaulle. Despite the doubts of both Tillion and Soustelle as to the ability of a new Algerian state to constitute a new independent “nation” – as they believed that distinction corresponded to a stage of social and political integration that Algerians had not yet achieved – de Gaulle’s views prevailed.

Sensing the swing of pendulum, Soustelle left the government in 1960, and when he failed to publicly condemn the new attempted putsch in 1961 by four retired generals in Algeria asking for de Gaulle’s resignation, he was forced into clandestine exile for eight years.¹⁵⁶ His exile did not stop him from denouncing the Evian Agreements between the French government and the GPRA as a clear violation of the constitution of the Fifth Republic, in its letter (as the president had to safeguard the “integrity of the territory” rather than give away three departments in Algeria), in its process (as any change to the Constitution had to be made by a supra-majority vote of the Congress rather than adopted by referendum),¹⁵⁷ and in its outcome (as the result of the Evian negotiation with the FLN led to the stripping of French citizenship of those (Muslim) French citizens who could not emigrate from Algeria to the French metropolis between the summer of 1962 and the end of that year). But he had lost the fight: the secession of Algeria put an end to his dreams of integration of various communities in a post-national and postcolonial Republic.

The demise of Soustelle’s model of gift exchange in international (or rather, intersocietal) relations did not mean that Mauss’s 1925 essay disappeared from the range of classical studies in anthropology. In 1975, the President of the French Republic, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing – son of Edmond Giscard d’Estaing and a center-right and formerly pro-French Algeria politician – asked Jacques Soustelle, by then deputy of Lyon at the National Assembly, to write a report on the future of French research in anthropology and archaeology. As Soustelle acknowledged at the beginning of his report, Mauss continued to determine the intellectual horizon under which French anthropologists constituted their scientific agenda: “Mauss’s essay *The Gift* had left a profound mark on [his] generation of researchers in anthropology,” even if the generations which came after Mauss often departed from the comparative and “total anthropology that Mauss ambitioned to create,” and conducted in its stead original fieldwork in specific communities: “Paul Rivet in Andean America, Maurice Leenhardt in New Caledonia, Marcel Griaule in Ethiopia and Sudan, Alfred Métraux in Chaco, Claude Lévi-Strauss in Brazil”¹⁵⁸ – he could have, but did not, mention Pierre Bourdieu in Kabylia.

In many ways, Soustelle’s 1967 *The Four Suns* – a book he published while in exile, when he was chased away by de Gaulle’s hitmen – may have been the last attempt by a French anthropologist to articulate the “total anthropology” that Mauss had in mind: it was a comparative attempt to understand and explain “how civilizations die.”¹⁵⁹ As he wrote, “all civilizations died”: “some, like the Aztecs, because they were murdered by foreigners; others like the Mayas, because of an inner

cancer”; and “there was no reason that our civilization would constitute an exception.”¹⁶⁰ It is not too hard to read his essay as an anthropological and political reflection on the breakdown of the French Empire and the demise of the French civilization. And, then, “when civilizations died,” Soustelle found, “the ethnic groups which such civilizations had constituted fell back to the level of culture, until their culture would constitute again the primary material that a new civilization would rework, as had happened for the Gallo-Romans and the Germans after the collapse of the Roman Empire.”¹⁶¹ Knowing Soustelle’s preoccupation for the fate of Algeria, it is impossible to believe that he did not have in mind the fate of the Algerian ethnic groups, which, after being reorganized by the French civilization for a century or more, would now be integrated into new civilizations, either Muslim, communist, or from a rising Third World.

In this context, what was left for ethnologists to study in the 1970s, Soustelle asked in his report to the French president. If they could no longer study the intersocietal gift exchanges that made the life of a civilization, they could study these cultural practices that were observable within ethnic groups at the local level. Even Soustelle came to legitimate the association between the study of gift exchanges and the local level of action: as he wrote in his 1975 report, future ethnologists should focus on the contemporary evolutions of ethnic groups in the French metropolis rather than restrict ethnography to the study of “archaic societies” – a confusing notion which “rested on the wrong perception that human evolution was linear.”¹⁶² Indeed, in the “new context of cooperation with newly independent states, [which accelerated migrations in both ways] French ethnographers should devote more resources to studying their own populations” in their ethnic diversity, as was already being done by a “rich body of ethnographic research which proved that the peasant of the Dordogne and the city dweller of Montpellier constitute as legitimate objects of ethnographic study as the African or the Indian.”¹⁶³ In particular, Soustelle wrote, echoing the xenophobic ideas of Giscard d’Estaing’s government, new generations of ethnologists should observe local processes, be attentive to the local circulation of gifts, and conduct ethnographies of “populations of allogenic workers” from Algeria “whose high density in metropolitan city centers represented a threat to integration,”¹⁶⁴ now conceived in the contemporary sense of “assimilation.” Again, many anthropologists who call themselves Maussian should be wary of the explicit political goals that Mauss’s students have attached to their master’s research program, even after former colonies gained their independence.

The “return of the gift”¹⁶⁵ – to cite Harry Liebersohn – as a political discourse on global or least intersocietal governance, grounded in the new disciplines of anthropology and ethnology, was thus short-lived, at least in the French field of power. The publication of *The Gift* opened this new era; Pierre Bourdieu’s writings on gift exchange in Algeria, as well as Raymond Aron’s pamphlets, participated in closing the parentheses. Between Mauss and Bourdieu, one generation of ethnologists and colonial administrators had used the anthropology of the gift as a normative model

for the economic and financial relationships between the metropolis and the colonies. But after Algerian independence was granted in 1962, the reconfiguration of the colonial field of power, which was disrupted overnight, largely relegated Mauss's influence on international economic exchange to the dustbin of history. Or did it? If the end of the war in Algeria, and the shock waves it sent through the colonial field, relegated the anthropology of the gift to the study of migrants' assimilation at the local level, could it be that the gift exchange had survived as a model of international economic governance, although in another form, and attached to a discipline other than anthropology?