Women's Political Agency in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1793

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore women's agency in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793. Focusing upon the October Days of 1789; Louise de Kéralio, Sophie de Condorcet, Rosalie Jullien and Madame Roland; and the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, the individual and collective actions of women during this period will be examined to highlight the complex and varied nature of women's political agency. Inspired by Dominique Godineau, Katie Jarvis, Olwen Hufton and Siân Reynolds, amongst others, this research seeks to bring women's agency to the forefront of studies on women in revolutionary Paris. By foregrounding women's revolutionary experiences in the initial phase of the Revolution, this thesis offers a way of combining gender history with studies of the French Revolution as a means of considering how women viewed their own actions, how they represented themselves compared with how others represented them, and the extent to which their political agency was recognised, celebrated or feared by fellow revolutionaries. The overall goal of this thesis is to present the multiplicity of women's revolutionary experiences and the varied nature of their political agency based upon the sites of action available to them during the Revolution.

Key Words: French Revolution, women's political agency, eighteenth century.

Contents

List of Tables 5

Acknowledgements 6

Author's Declaration 7

Abbreviations 8

Introduction 9

The State of the Field 9

Agency 14

Methodology 16

Chapter One. October 1789: The Rise of Female Political Consciousness 28

1.1 The Narrative of the October Days 29

1.2 Food Riots: The Traditional Method of Female Protest 31

1.3 Background of the Châtelet Inquiries 33

1.4 The Composition of Female Deponents 38

1.5 A Closer Examination of the Women's Testimonies 48

1.6 Responses to the October Days 59

1.7 The Value of the Châtelet Inquiries for Understanding Women's Political Agency 74

Chapter Two. Female Journalists and Translators in Revolutionary Paris: Louise de Kéralio-Robert, Sophie de Condorcet and Rosalie Jullien 80

2.1 Journalism and Translation 81

2.2 Political Power Couples 84

2.3 Louise de Kéralio-Robert (1758-1821) and *Le Mercure National* 86

2.4 Sophie de Condorcet (1764-1822), *Le Républicain* and *Letters on Sympathy* 99

2.5 Rosalie Jullien (1745-1824): The Family Journalist 112

2.6 The Significance of Journalism and Translation in Relation to Female Agency 123

Chapter Three. The Letters and Memoirs of Madame Roland 124

3.1 Encouraging Action 129

3.2 Spreading Information 151

3.3 Formulating Policy 158

3.4 Marrying the Letters and Memoirs with Roland's Political Agency 170

Chapter Four. The Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, Militancy, and the Turning Point for Women 174

4.1 A Club is Born 174

4.2 Women and Political Societies Before 1793 179

4.3 The Regulations of the SRRW 187

4.4 The Relationship between the Market Women and the *Citoyennes* 197

4.5 The Reactions of Male Revolutionaries to the SRRW 203

4.6 Legacies 219

Conclusion 222

Bibliography 230

List of Tables

Table 1.1 39

Table 1.2 40

Table 1.3 41

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Finally, to my family. Thank you for everything.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Name: Samantha Dobbie

Signature:

Abbreviations

American Quarterly (AQ)
Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française (AHRF)
Committee of General Security (CGS)
Committee of Public Safety (CPS)
European Review of History (ERH)
French History (FH)
French Historical Studies (FHS)
Gender & History (GH)
History of European Ideas (HEI)
Journal of Historical Sociology (JHS)
Journal of Social History (JSH)
Journal of Women's History (JWH)
Past & Present (PP)
Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (SRRW)
The Journal of Modern History (JMH)
Women in French Studies (WFS)

N.B. Translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

The originality of this research stems from its emphasis upon the varied nature of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793, by considering the spheres of action that were readily accessible or made accessible to women during the early years of the French Revolution. Taking Dominque Godineau's work as its inspiration, this project will re-examine a variety of sources including the Châtelet inquiries of 1790; the memoirs and letters of Madame Roland; the journalism of Louise de Kéralio-Robert, Sophie de Condorcet and Rosalie Jullien; and the police reports from 1793, which detail the presence of women in the streets. In doing so, it will explore the attitudes and mentalities of both male and female revolutionaries and contemplate the ways in which traditional gender roles were destabilised. The overall aim of this thesis is to document how women exercised agency within the Revolution and how far this agency was acknowledged, magnified, praised or feared by fellow revolutionaries.

The State of the Field

It has been well-established that women were not bystanders during the French Revolution. Until the 1970s, scholars generally interpreted it as a masculine phenomenon. Ground-breaking works by the likes of Albert Soboul and George Rudé emphasised the elements of this event that were driven by male revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. For example, in his account of crowd action in revolutionary society, Rudé concluded that collective insurrectionary behaviour demonstrated that crowds were active agents in the Revolution; yet his study merely mentioned women in passing, discussing events such as the October Days briefly, implying that they were an afterthought in his arguments which focused primarily upon men.[1] This is confirmed by Olwen Hufton, who declares that Rudé treated women dismissively by implying that they were only involved when 'food was a critical issue'.[2] Further evidence of this can be found in his summary of October 1789 as the event that completed the work of 14 July.[3] This suggests that it was men leading revolutionary action and that women merely built upon their successes, whilst remaining within the constraints of preconceived gender boundaries. In comparison, Soboul acknowledged the

[1] George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1959), pp.73-74.
[2] Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992), p.6.
[3] Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution*, p.61.

militant participation of women, especially in 1793; but, as with Rudé's work, emphasis was placed upon how the actions of women complemented those of men.[4] This older historiography, which largely neglects the role of women in the French Revolution, remains useful to a point because it demonstrates that the impact of the Revolution rippled across the social hierarchy, affecting all men and women to some extent, and allows questions around the extent of female participation in revolutionary society to be raised. This thesis aims to explore the diverseness of women's revolutionary experiences between 1789 and 1793, by engaging with the more recent historiography that emerged from the rise of second wave feminism onwards and brought women to the forefront of revolutionary studies. First examined intensively in cutting-edge works such as Darline Levy, Harriet Applewhite and Mary Johnson's *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (1980), and Godineau's *Citoyennes tricoteuses* (1988), Joan Landes, Hufton, Suzanne Desan and Katie Jarvis are amongst those leading discussions on women in revolutionary society.

Notwithstanding the considerable difference in opinions concerning the significance and extent of female participation in the Revolution, there is a consensus that many women pushed the boundaries of eighteenth-century society. Despite lacking formal citizenship rights, women successfully established individual and collective identities within the traditionally masculine domain that was the political sphere. Levy, Applewhite and Johnson introduced translated documents illustrating the political participation of women in revolutionary Paris. Amongst these documents are the petition of the women of the Third Estate to Louis XVI (1789), an extract from the Châtelet depositions detailing the October Days (1790), and the regulations of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (1793). Divided into six chronological sections, this volume distinguishes the multifarious ways that women portrayed an understanding of the conflicting political, social, economic and cultural contexts of late eighteenth century Paris. The structure of the work is indicative of the increasing political awareness of women as the Revolution progressed.[5] Whereas in 1789 women learned the revolutionary principles of *liberté* and *égalité,* forming their own reactions to events; by 1792 they possessed a political consciousness, obtained through spectating in the galleries and discussing politics in the streets and in cafés.[6] However, as this volume also demonstrates, social status, age, occupation and marital status influenced

[4] Albert Soboul, *Understanding the French Revolution,* trans.by April Ane Knutson (London: Merlin, 1989), p.158.
[5] Darline G. Levy, Harriet B. Applewhite and Mary D. Johnson, eds., *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795: Selected Documents* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p.3.
[6] Ibid.

female participation.[7] This is confirmed by Godineau, who offers a refreshing account of the everyday lives of Parisiennes in the 1790s.

Mapping the social, economic, political and cultural positions of Parisiennes, the strength of Godineau's study is its rigorous examination of archival material. Like Levy, Applewhite and Johnson, Godineau analyses a wide range of sources such as the 1789 Cahiers de doléances; petitions and addresses to Louis XVI and the National Convention; and police reports from the Terror. On the other hand, her study is more inclusive of women of this period, providing a clearer understanding of the realities facing those in revolutionary Paris. Despite Levy, Applewhite and Johnson's selection of sources introducing the ways in which Parisiennes interpreted and participated in the Revolution, they focus primarily upon exceptional women. Exceptional in this context refers to individual women, usually from a high-profile marriage, privileged background or unconventional way of living, who left a written record of their experiences. Many works on women in revolutionary France prioritise studying these exceptional women. Examples include John R. Cole's *Between the Queen and the Cabby: Olympe de Gouges's Rights of Woman* (2011), a biographical examination of Gouges and her most famous work; Siân Reynolds' *Marriage and Revolution: Monsieur and Madame Roland* (2012), which depicts the private and public relationships of Jeanne-Marie Roland and Marie-Jean Roland, and their political roles in the early 1790s; and Lindsay Parker's *Writing the Revolution: A French Woman's History in Letters* (2013), a detailed commentary on Rosalie Jullien, a bourgeois Jacobin wife and mother.

Studying these unique cases is useful because they symbolise women transcending the cultural constraints placed upon them by patriarchal institutions. On the one hand, they represent the spectrum of opportunities available in revolutionary society determined by the fluidity of political, economic, cultural and social structures. On the other hand, when viewed in the wider context of women's political agency between 1789 and 1793, their actions appear less exceptional because their agency shares common features with that of more ordinary women. Women's interests varied considerably. For educated women, equality within marriage; economic rights, including property rights for widows and single or divorced mothers; increased training opportunities for midwives and nurses to improve women's health; and increased education and employment, shaped their demands of the Revolution.[8] In contrast, starvation and fear of destitution were the concerns of women of

[7] Ibid., pp.4-5.
[8] Ibid.

the working population. These women dominated the marketplace, as vendors and consumers, responsible for nourishing their families and the nation. Their participation in revolutionary society included interrupting political meetings in the galleries of sectional assemblies; circulating petitions; insulting government officials; initiating food riots and insurrections, such as the October Days and the 1793 February Riots; and seizing food supplies to sell them at prices they deemed fair.[9] By exploiting their role as mothers to access the political sphere beyond the marketplace, these women created a feminine space within revolutionary society. The importance of this space, as Bonnie Smith underscores, emerged from women visualising 'themselves and the issues concerning them in terms of national politics'.[10] This illustrates that the French Revolution provided women with the space and means to imagine a more inclusive society. It also underscores that, regardless of one's position on the social scale, all women adapted traditional practices to facilitate their participation in revolutionary society. The adaption of the traditional food riot by the market women during the October Days to justify their presence in the political sphere, was mirrored by female writers and the *citoyennes* of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, who employed their pre-existing networks with family members, friends and co-workers to organise politically and disseminate ideas. These networks were shaped by social status and political affiliation, rendering the agency of these women to be expressed very differently to that of other female revolutionaries. Godineau asserts that the actions of women during this period were of greater importance to women's history than the history of revolution, despite women being central actors in the French Revolution.[11] This idea holds significant influence in modern scholarship, with few texts directly tackling this issue. As a result, this study of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris is needed because it ties gendered experiences to broader studies of the French Revolution, to demonstrate that gendered approaches are relevant to fields other than women's history and to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to studying women's history more generally.

Karen Offen, Jennifer Heuer, Anne Verjus and Denise Davidson are amongst those who more recently have prioritised women's claims on citizenship and their push for greater familial power.[12] This focus upon the individual experiences of women demonstrates

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[9] Ibid., p.5.
[10] Bonnie G. Smith, *Changing Lives: Women in European History Since 1700* (Lexington: D.C. Health and Company, 1989), p.99.
[11] Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and their French Revolution*, trans.by Katherine Streip (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p.xvi.
[12] Suzanne Desan, 'Recent Historiography on the French Revolution and Gender', *Journal of Social History 52(3)* (2019), 566-574 (p.567).

considerable variations in different subgroups of women, contributing to expanding knowledge on understudied women throughout history.[13] For Heuer, the formal exclusion of women from citizenship rights did not prevent them from participating in local and national politics: this challenged the idea that women were excluded from the sovereign nation.[14] Offen extends this, arguing that the Woman Question exemplified the importance of gender issues in constructions of national identity and a secular state in which men claimed authority in creating new laws.[15] Crucially, this determined the dialogue between masculinity and femininity, redefining traditional definitions of these concepts. These recent studies draw upon the seminal work of scholars like Lynn Hunt, who championed this idea in *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (1984). She noted that 'the Revolution paved the way for reinterpretation and the creation of new meanings from political language, rituals, and organisation'.[16] The Revolution witnessed the explosion of newspapers, plays and political clubs.[17] These areas opened many opportunities for women to participate in the public arena, expanding political vocabulary amongst this excluded group. This highlights that female political agency was connected to the revolutionary experience; an idea that Hufton emphasises in *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (1992). According to Hufton, the October Days were the turning point for women. She asserts that, by returning Louis XVI to Paris, the women ended the political deadlock between court, king and Constituent Assembly.[18] Moreover, they restored political power to the capital, increasing the accessibility of the king to his subjects.[19] This helped to reduce the court's corrupting influence on the king, signifying that the women knew where power resided and used this knowledge to resolve pre-existing tensions that were influencing their abilities to adequately feed the nation.

These studies suggest that women exerted significant political agency during the French Revolution. This research aims to document how and in what ways women exercised agency during the first five years of the Revolution, by marrying approaches that focus on individual 'exceptional' women and ordinary women in the street and in political clubs. Whilst it will

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Jennifer Ngaire Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789-1830* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), p.50.
[15] Karen Offen, *The Woman Question in France, 1400-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.2.
[16] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.2.
[17] Ibid., pp.12-13, pp.19-20.
[18] Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500-1800* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), p.458.
[19] Ibid.

be noted that some of the agency exercised by the women studied within the scope of this research influenced the wider context of the Revolution, the focus of this thesis is the varied nature of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris in relation to the spheres of action that were both readily available and made accessible to women between 1789 and 1793. To do so, it is essential, first and foremost, to define women's agency in relation to the current project.

Agency

The complexity of agency rests upon its interdisciplinarity. Many philosophers, historians and theorists define agency as an umbrella term encompassing human action, intention, will and choice. This approach states that agency is assumed when an individual carries out a premeditated action based upon a set of beliefs and available choices, with reason and desire being motivating factors.[20] As Margaret Archer confirms, agency requires one to care deeply about something to act upon it.[21] Human actions derive from strong emotion and attachment to a view or cause. Essentially, Archer concludes that agency and social structures are interdependent: an individual's relationship with their environment shapes both their agency and the social structures around them.[22] This notion is augmented in the agency-structure debate. The premise of this debate, labelled 'structuration theory' by Anthony Giddens, is the degree to which structure determines human agency and vice versa. According to Giddens, agency equals power; one's agency is determined by the ability to carry out actions, not the specific intention of doing things.[23] This definition is adopted by some gender historians to explain female agency across historical contexts.

The current research project draws influence from the gender history field, which is a relatively modern area of research. It developed academically amidst the backdrop of the civil rights movement and second wave feminism, when scholars increasingly turned towards the continuities and changes in the lives of women. For many in this field, female agency concerns the ways that women exert power and influence within hierarchical,

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[20] Hugh J. McCann, *The Works of Agency: On Human Action, Will, and Freedom* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp.113-114.
[21] Margaret S. Archer, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.10.
[22] Ibid., pp.86-87.
[23] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), p.9.

patriarchal societies. Joan Scott argues that gender is key to signifying power relations.[24] The degree of power one has depends upon a multitude of factors including gender, sexuality, race, age, occupation, social status and nationality. Many men are as disadvantaged as women in relation to wielding power and influence. Occasionally, on grounds of social status and race, women possess greater power than their male counterparts. Some gender theorists, such as Judith Bennett and Toby Ditz, assert that agency is shaped by patriarchy.[25] As defined by Sylvia Walby, patriarchy is 'a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women'.[26] However, as Bennett highlights, masculinity, like femininity, is complex and fragile.[27] This is because there is not one form of masculinity or femininity; these concepts are culturally constructed. Thus, patriarchy oppresses both men and women. Nevertheless, those oppressed by patriarchy are not merely victims. They also 'collude in, undermine, and survive' it.[28] This is what Deniz Kandiyoti coined 'patriarchal bargains'.[29] Behind this idea is the creation of opportunities by those who are oppressed. Take motherhood for instance. Due to the importance of women in child-rearing, women negotiate roles and responsibilities for themselves, providing them with greater influence. The role of women in the political sphere during the French Revolution personifies this. Many women, to justify their presence in previously male dominated spaces, argued that they could not raise competent citizens if they were refused entry to the political sphere. To study gender is to emphasise the diversity of experiences both between and within the sexes across time and place, enriching historical accounts. Traditionally, historical accounts are masculine interpretations of events. Gender history addresses this partiality by removing women from the margins and placing them at the heart of historical studies: this challenges the way history is recorded and increases the accuracy of historical accounts.[30] Within this approach, there is a framework, labelled 'her-story' by Scott, that accounts for women from all social backgrounds.[31] This highlights female agency by prioritising uncovering 'the role that women played in shaping their history'.[32] Women

[24] Joan Wallach Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', in *Feminism and History,* ed.by Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.152-180 (p.167).
[25] Toby L. Ditz, 'Masculine Republics and 'Female Politicians' in the Age of Revolutions', *Journal of the Early Republic 35(2)* (2015), 263-269.
[26] Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp.55-56.
[27] Ibid., p.26.
[28] Ibid., p.59.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.xi.
[31] Ibid., p.19.
[32] Ibid., p.20.

have always been agents. Like their male counterparts, they develop their identities through meaningful relationships that contribute to the opportunities available to them.

Within the context of this research, agency is a hybrid of pre-existing definitions. In relation to revolutions, agency is, as Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Godwin emphasise, the behaviours and interactions of individuals with their environment.[33] Eric Selbin furthers this, stating that revolutions are 'created by people, led by people, fought and died for by people, consciously and intentionally constructed by people'.[34] Revolutions cannot occur without agency because agency drives revolution; the creation and continuation of revolutions require human action. The research question of this project concerns women's political agency in Paris between 1789 and 1793, which can be understood on different levels. It is important to note that the agency that women exerted during this era and the methods of participation available to them depended upon status, age, marital status and geographical loyalties, amongst other factors.[35] Women demonstrated political consciousness, both interacting with and reacting to the continuities and changes in their environment. Their presence in the public arena threatened patriarchal control, and the reactions of many male revolutionaries to female participation illuminates the anxieties this deviation caused. Women were principal actors in the French Revolution, and they both influenced its progression and were influenced by the revolutionary process. Thus, to briefly summarise, female agency in revolutionary society encompassed the ways in which women interacted with the world around them. It rested on their abilities to communicate their views and to challenge patriarchal authorities directly and indirectly. With this definition in mind, a breakdown of the methodology undertaken when researching this project is required.

Methodology

The research for this thesis was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic when it was not possible to travel to the *Archives nationales* or the *Préfecture de police.* As a result, the sources consulted during the research process were digitised copies made available on platforms such as Gallica, RetroNews and Stanford Libraries. In some instances, most notably in the discussion of Louise de Kéralio-Robert's journalism in chapter two, access to

[33] Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, 'Symbols, Positions, Objects: Toward a New Theory of Revolutions and Collective Action', *History and Theory 35(3)* (1996), 358-374 (p.371).
[34] Eric Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance: The Power of Story* (London: Zed Books, 2010), p.14.
[35] Levy, Applewhite and Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, pp.4-5.

the original copy of *Journal d'état et du citoyen* (1789) and *Le Mercure National* (1790) was not readily available, so extracts of these texts present in secondary works were consulted. The primary issue with this is that the extract provided is a shortened, translated version of the original text, which may not be wholly reflective of the original author's sentiments. This does limit access to the contemporary voices that this project strives to uncover. Where this is the case, reference to these sources is limited and serves as supplementary evidence for the arguments being made, rather than being the focus of the section or chapter that they appear in.

Chapter one commences with the October Days of 1789 and the market women, who incited the gathering crowd to march to Versailles to complain about the bread shortages in Paris. To explore women's agency during this event, analysis of the thirty-nine female testimonies from the Châtelet inquiries will be carried out. These testimonies will be contrasted with some of the 349 male testimonies to analyse male and female perceptions of what occurred across these two days. The October Days will also be studied within the context of the traditional food riot to demonstrate how this event incorporated the basic elements of these generally female driven methods of participation in society but symbolised the rise in female political consciousness because of the more political dimensions of this riot. This was a key turning point in the first year of the Revolution, with the women returning power to Paris by moving the royal family back to the capital city, and the earliest defining moment of women's agency in revolutionary society. It will be concluded that the October Days symbolised the first notable example of women exerting pressure on government officials to acknowledge their grievances and intervene on their behalf within the revolutionary context. The decision to move outside their local communities to protest propelled women onto a national stage and set the precedent for female participation in the Revolution.

The use of the Châtelet testimonies is inspired by the work of Jarvis, which explores the origins of the October Days and the judicial response to this event. This thesis takes a different approach to that offered by Jarvis, by exploring the testimonies of female deponents in relation to the complex nature of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793. The Châtelet depositions are a useful source both quantitively and qualitatively because, in addition to allowing one to see the overall representation of women during this official process, they give detailed insight into the unfolding of the October Days. Whilst these records are formed from notes taken by male clerks present at the hearings, they do give a sufficient picture of female agency. Although it is difficult to ascertain how far the

written versions deviated from the spoken accounts, they highlight male attitudes towards women and their role within society. Moreover, they demonstrate the significance of gender norms in shaping the individual and collective identities of women. On the other hand, the limitations of these testimonies must also be considered. The testimonies were recorded within the grim, fortress-like Châtelet, with its fearsome reputation, in an all-male environment, something which would have been intimidating for many of the female interviewees and may have affected how they felt and what they said during their interviews. Something else worth noting in relation to the information women offered during their interviews is the time lapse between the October Days and the Châtelet's investigation, which commenced in December 1789, with most interviews recorded between January and July 1790. Memory is fragile and susceptible to environmental influences including emotion and bias.[36] As time goes on, what is remembered or forgotten and the reasons why change.[37] This suggests that caution must be taken when reading the Châtelet inquiries because a considerable period of time had passed before the investigation was carried out, and the accounts of interviewees may have been influenced by their surroundings and the agenda of the interviewers. Furthermore, the sample of women interviewed is restrictive when their ages, occupations, marital status and place of residency are considered. Of the thirty-nine women interviewed, over half were of child-bearing age and either married or widowed. This implies that it was the desperation of these women to nourish their families that determined the extent of their individual participation. Coupled with marital status, this trend follows that of the riots of 1725 and 1775, suggesting that there was nothing novel about the October Days, insofar as they were initially reactionary and impulsive.

However, as this chapter indicates, this is far from the case. The October Days contributed to what Peter McPhee describes as the 'unstable and contested' political legacy of the Revolution.[38] As McPhee notes, there was more than one revolution when individual decisions are contemplated.[39] This is something which the Châtelet inquiries fail to highlight. It is possible that this is because the inquiries were not conducted randomly; all

[36] Matthew Campbell, Jacqueline M. Labbe and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., *Memory and Memorials, 1789-1914: Literacy, and Cultural Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.3; Alan Baddeley, 'The Psychology of Remembering and Forgetting', in *Memory: History, Culture and Mind,* ed.by Thomas Butler (Oxford Blackwell, 1989), pp.33-60 (p.53).
[37] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives,* 2nd edt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p.24.
[38] Peter McPhee, *Liberty or Death: The French Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), p.361.
[39] Ibid., p.364.

individuals interviewed were specifically selected to attend the Châtelet.[40] Furthermore, as Jarvis indicates, one's place of residence significantly determined one's interpretation of the events: those living in or around Versailles may have felt that the Parisians had invaded their town, and portrayed an unflattering image of the October Days in retaliation.[41] The witnesses generally offered chronological accounts, which insinuates that they relied primarily upon personal interpretation because there was not an extensive list of predetermined questions.[42] All these points confirm that this source must be approached with caution when exploring the October Days and female agency. The specific selection of witnesses, via invitation and monetary incentive through compensation for their time, illustrates that the National Assembly had a particular set of goals when conducting this research. Everyone interviewed was respectable to a considerable degree. In the case of the male interviewees, they typically possessed some form of honorific title or paid occupation. In comparison, the female interviewees were mostly middle-aged wives or widows. The experiences of these women differed greatly to the single women who were present. It is arguable, as Jarvis notes, that those interviewed were chosen because it was thought they would offer accurate and credible accounts.[43] It is also feasible that the National Assembly selected those that would accept as little financial compensation as possible for their time. Had they interviewed those from lower social backgrounds, they would have suffered greater financial loss; something they could not afford given the dire state of France's finances. Hence, the Châtelet testimonies present a rather skewed understanding of the October Days.

Nonetheless, this source remains valuable because it allows conclusions around the spheres of action that were readily available to women in revolutionary society to be drawn. By utilising traditional methods of protest to step outside of the boundaries associated with their sex, the women of the October Days contributed to the political instability present within France at this time. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of motherhood in encouraging militant behaviour. Their actions contributed to the redefining of femininity and masculinity. As Lynne Taylor argues, the moment women decide to move outside their local communities and appeal to higher powers, they alter the nature of the vertical networks of

[40] This is because decision-making in matters of the law and possible criminal activity generally prioritised the needs or motivations of the state and not the convicts or victims. Deirde Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion 1780-1830* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), p.172.
[41] Katie Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez Braves Citoyennes': A Study of the Popular Origins of, and the Political and Judicial Reactions to, the October Days of the French Revolution' (Dissertation, Boston College, 2007), p.116.
[42] Ibid., p.110.
[43] Ibid., p.101.

society.[44] This is precisely what happened in October 1789. There was a sizeable political shift in the centres of power: by shifting sovereignty to the people, the October Days offered excluded groups the opportunity to carve out spaces for themselves in the political sphere. Chapters two and three will continue to explore how women carved out political roles for themselves in society, by studying the works of female writers. Rioting did not suit all women, especially those of a higher social standing, because it was too public an activity to be deemed respectable. Writing was more suitable because it did not necessarily involve being present on the streets for significant periods of time and published works could appear under a pseudonym or anonymously. These chapters will analyse case studies of individual women as a means of underlining that there was not solely one form of writing carried out by female revolutionaries.

Chapter two will consider Louise de Kéralio-Robert, Sophie de Condorcet and Rosalie Jullien, who were connected by their journalistic and translation ventures. Both Kéralio and Condorcet were journalists and translators. Jullien, in contrast, was what could be described as a family journalist, acting as an informant on behalf of absent friends and family members, recording her observations in her letters. Something which bound these women together and will be a common thread throughout chapters three and four, were their high-profile marriages. These women were one half of what could be termed a revolutionary power couple. Inspired by modern understandings, power couple in relation to this project refers to a marriage or partnership between a man and woman in which both partners held significant individual agency, but as a collective they mutually benefitted from and influenced one another's successes. For instance, Kéralio and François Robert were co-editors of *Le Mercure National,* a journal originally established by Kéralio under *Le Journal d'État et du citoyen.* The Roberts also assumed control of the Fraternal Society of Both Sexes in the early 1790s, transforming this space into political apprenticeships for men and women. Moreover, in the case of the Rolands, it was Madame Roland who convinced her spouse to accept the role of Minister of the Interior, gaining access to revolutionary institutions by drafting official legislation on his behalf. He, on the other hand, benefitted from her hospitality skills which she frequently used by holding dinner parties at their home, offering him the opportunity to network with fellow revolutionaries. Naturally, this short description of these two couples does not do complete justice to the central role that these women occupied in their marriages; but this concept of power couples will enrich the discussion of women's agency by emphasising how understandings of marriage had shifted in the late eighteenth

[44] Lynne Taylor, 'Food Riots Revisited', *JSH 30(2)* (1996), 483-496 (p.490).

century, and the ways in which spouses could work closely together. It will also underline the ways that female writers could utilise their marriages in a similar manner to that of the patronage system of the Enlightenment. This chapter will analyse how these women structured their works, what sort of issues they were most interested in, and how they publicly presented their work. Jullien is an exception to Kéralio and Condorcet because although she was reporting on revolutionary events and figures, she never intended to publicly share these views. Yet, she successfully merged the public with the private by being present at the street level and creating a respected reputation for herself as the mother and devoted wife of a Jacobin family, continuing to enjoy this public presence into the Terror when most women were retreating into the domestic sphere.

The source base for this chapter primarily consists of articles from *Le Mercure National, Le Républicain,* and letters written by Rosalie Jullien and published in *Journal d'une bourgeoisie pendant la Révolution, 1791-1793* (1881) and *Les Affaires d'État sont mes affaires de cœur: Lettres de Rosalie Jullien, une femme dans la Révolution 1775-1810* (2016). As Sandrine Bergès notes, uncovering the works of female writers during the French Revolution can be difficult because their works have not always received the same care as those of their male counterparts during the preservation process.[45] Although this is changing and the process of digitisation makes these sources more readily accessible to researchers, many female writers, as the examples of Kéralio and Condorcet illustrate, did not sign their works or wrote under a pseudonym. As a result, finding the works of female writers from this period can be a time-consuming process which involves relying upon other contemporary sources such as letters, memoirs, and the minutes from political clubs like the Jacobin Club, to uncover the kinds of issues these women were interested in discussing. Despite the laborious process behind uncovering the written works of women such as Kéralio and Condorcet, it is rewarding because it permits the researcher to study the real and imagined perceptions of women's political agency, the reactions of male revolutionaries to women's agency, and it allows these women to be rewritten into the broader narrative of the French Revolution. The case of Jullien is different to that of Kéralio and Condorcet because greater care was taken in the preservation of her letters.

[45] Sandrine Bergès, *Liberty in their Names: The Women Philosophers of the French Revolution* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), p.13.

Initially, they were preserved by Jules Jullien, the eldest son of Rosalie, who kept them in two large chests and annotated some of them in the hope of publishing a memoir.[46] Failing to achieve this, the letters passed to his daughter, Stéphanie, whose son, Édouard Lockroy, published a sample of Rosalie's letters in *Journal d'une bourgeoisie*.[47] Lockroy's intentions were far from selfless. He wished to create the impression that he descended from a patriotic, moderate, bourgeois, republican family to secure himself a position of importance within society.[48] Later, following Lockroy's death, his family sifted through the letters and separated them. Some were given to the National Archives in the middle of the twentieth century and others were sold to a Bolshevik intellectual in 1929, who placed them in an institute for Marxism-Leninism in Moscow.[49] It was during the bicentennial of the Revolution that a search for Rosalie's letters commenced, when a group of historians and teachers from Romans realised that someone from their area was a patriot of significance during the Revolution.[50] Under the direction of Jean Sauvageon, a microfilm of Rosalie's letters from the National Archives was brought to Romans to be transcribed.[51] The collection in Moscow, however, lay undiscovered until 1991 because the intellectual who had the letters was executed in 1938: Pierre de Vargas copied the contents of this collection onto microfilm.[52] It was not until 2016, that Rosalie's letters became accessible to the general public through Annie Duprat's edited collection of her letters entitled, *Les Affaires d'État sont mes affaires de cœur,* which remains the most detailed account of Rosalie's revolutionary correspondence.

The way in which Jullien's revolutionary experiences were publicised was a very detailed process, with many ulterior motives behind the sharing of these documents. Transcribing documents risks significant subjective interpretations. Any researcher analysing historical works grapples with this issue when consulting contemporary material. The benefit of hindsight often obscures interpretations of events, resulting in misleading translations. Another thing to consider is that cultural expectations or norms determine how works are

[46] Lindsay A.H. Parker, *Writing the Revolution: A French Woman's History in Letters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.8.
[47] In this work, a total of eighty-nine of Rosalie's letters are published: three from 1785, one from 1789, three from 1790, ten from 1791, fifty-eight from 1792, and fourteen from 1793. Rosalie Jullien (1745-1824), *Journal d'une bourgeoisie pendant la Révolution, 1791-1793*, ed.by Édouard Lockroy (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1881), p.vi.
[48] Lockroy stresses Rosalie's love for 'her husband, her two sons and her country', which were central to the image of the republican mother. Jullien, *Journal d'une bourgeoisie*, pp.357-360.
[49] Parker, *Writing the Revolution*, p.8.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

translated. What is acceptable in one country, may not be in another. For instance, the revolutionary principles of liberty and equality, typically praised and encouraged in France, faced much criticism in other countries, especially England. Thus, context is important. Lastly, transcription and translation rests upon language and one's abilities within multiple languages. Information can be misinterpreted because of language barriers; notably, an inability to directly translate a sentence, phrase or word from one language to another. Alternatively, transcribers and translators have some agency over their copies and may annotate the wording of original works, with the final product failing to reflect the true sentiments of the original author. Thus, it is likely that the presentation of Rosalie's letters did not portray an accurate representation of her views or intentions. Nonetheless, these letters are invaluable and the way in which Jullien's letters reached publication is telling of their qualitative richness. In addition to allowing the mapping of the progression of Rosalie's life before, during and after the Revolution, these letters offer an understanding of the emotions she experienced.[53] One of the most attractive qualities of her letters is that they were often unedited, completed a few moments before being sealed and sent.[54] This confirms the rapidity of which revolutionary society moved and Rosalie's eagerness to remain in touch with current circumstances. Hence, the overall advantage of using sources such as the letters of Jullien and the journalism of Kéralio and Condorcet, is that they signify how women successfully connected their private lives with their public lives.

This merging of public life with private continues in chapter three, of which Madame Roland is the main protagonist. Like Jullien, she favoured a private style of writing via letters and her memoirs. Yet, she was one of the most politically active women of the Revolution, at least until 1793 when she was guillotined. By investigating her private correspondence and integrating evidence from her memoirs, this chapter proposes that Roland possessed a significant amount of agency, which manifested in three distinct roles: inciting others into action, spreading information or acting as an informant, and helping shape official policy. This draws upon the research of Susan Dalton, who studied this three-role model of Roland's participation in revolutionary society in works entitled, 'Gender and the Shifting Ground of Revolutionary Politics: The Case of Madame Roland' (2001) and *Engendering the Republic: Reconnecting Public and Private Spheres in Eighteenth Century Europe* (2003). As Dalton's work highlights, it was Roland who secured the networks with fellow like-minded revolutionaries and frequently wrote to those she established friendships with to keep these

[53] Ibid., p.7.
[54] Ibid.

bonds tight. She had enough political consciousness to realise that alliances were fluid and could deteriorate rapidly within the ever-evolving Revolution. Her letters, of a far more private nature than her memoirs, contain terms of endearment and personal information about her family which helped her gain the confidence of some of the most important revolutionary figures like Bosc, Lanthenas and Brissot. They were also used at times to reach out to potential allies, such as Robespierre, with varying degrees of success. Her frosty relationship with Robespierre is a fundamental aspect of this chapter because it offers a strong example of Roland using her charm to network on behalf of her husband. Her memoirs, in comparison, will be used to explore Roland's own interpretations of her situation and how she perceived her role in the Revolution. Written during her imprisonment in 1793, the memoirs are more public than her letters because they were written with the intention of being published. Across two volumes, she explores her childhood, her revolutionary experiences, and her observations of leading revolutionaries. Alongside her letters, this source sheds light on one of the most controversial figures of the Revolution and allows the degree of political agency that she had within revolutionary society to be traced. That she was one of the few women guillotined indicates that she was an important character in the Revolution's narrative.

As with the Châtelet testimonies, Madame Roland's letters and memoirs are well-known documents that have been examined in numerous studies, including Reynolds' *Marriage and Revolution* and Dalton's *Engendering the Republic of Letters.* The current research project is interested in drawing upon these sources to examine the gendered dimensions of the Revolution, and the ways in which Madame Roland challenged the confinements her sex imposed upon her. As a woman, Roland was not expected to meddle in politics; but, as a mother, she was expected to raise citizens by physically and intellectually nourishing her family. Her letters portray this conflict. Arguably, by communicating her political opinions with male revolutionaries, Roland secured enough political consciousness to fulfil this task. Despite this networking lacking total selflessness, Roland was a bright woman who resented her legal inferiority, it underscores the significance of women as political mediators. Roland was content with this role as it provided her with considerable influence in a sphere that was overwhelmingly masculine. Nevertheless, caution must be applied when researching the letters and memoirs of Madame Roland.

The letters are one-sided, composed only of those sent by Roland, making it difficult to see the epistolary relationship at work. Whilst she mentions in her letters that she received

previous letters from her correspondents, no copies of these letters are provided. Thus, it is a time-consuming process to link Roland's personal experiences to the events of the broader timeframes in which the letters were constructed. Additionally, letters are not always private. Often, as is the case with Roland, the individual constructing the letters must anticipate that few of their letters will remain private. Collective letter sharing during times of conflict allowed news to be shared with loved ones. Thus, some of Roland's letters may have been read by more than the individual recipient. In anticipation of this, Roland opted for self-censorship and did not explicitly include all her opinions. In many respects censorship, regardless of whether it is self- or third-party, reduces the authentic voice of the individual. So does intersubjectivity. As chapter three will highlight, this issue of having multiple audiences and having to address each of these groups is present throughout Roland's letters and memoirs. This influenced how Roland fashioned herself because she was both revered and despised by fellow revolutionaries, so faced the added pressures of striking a balance between gaining support for her ideas and suffering harsh criticism.

Finally, in chapter four, discussion of the SRRW will end where the story began: in the streets. Although composed of a small group of militant women, this society did not appear in a vacuum. Established in May 1793, the women's society took its lead from other popular clubs that welcomed the presence of women. Created by Pauline Léon and Claire Lacombe, the *citoyennes* of this exclusively female club established links with fellow revolutionaries, especially the Enragés, and took part in some of the most decisive revolutionary *journées*. Toleration towards this club was temporary and the women were disbanded on 30 October and prohibited from joining other popular societies. Despite its short lifespan, the *citoyennes* enjoyed a noteworthy presence in Paris and this chapter seeks to determine just how important this club was in permitting women to exercise political agency in revolutionary society. To begin with, some context around 1793 will be given, with particular attention paid to the presence of women, most notably Etta Palm d'Aelders and Théroigne de Méricourt, in political societies in the early 1790s and how this paved the way for the creation of the SRRW. Then analysis of the organisation of the women's club will be carried out, with an examination of the society's regulations. Lastly, male and female perceptions of the *citoyennes* will be examined with reference to police reports from September 1793, speeches by Fabre d'Églantine and André Amar, and reference to the violent relations between the *citoyennes* and the market women composing the source base for this chapter. It will be noted that the SRRW was not the most important club for women in revolutionary

Paris but offered a limited number of *citoyennes* the opportunity to exert an impressive amount of agency in the political sphere.

The police reports consulted within this chapter are from Pierre Caron's edited collection, *Paris pendant la terreur: rapports des agents secrets du Ministre de l'intérieur* (1910). Spanning from 27 August to 25 December 1793, these reports offer a glimpse into the activities that women were involved in during the Terror. Naturally, the police reports are problematic. These individuals were tasked by the Ministry of the Interior to report on any significant activity in local neighbourhoods. Amongst those appointed were Dutard, Dugas, Latour-Lamontagne, Grivel, Rolin, Beraud, Bigeot, Le Harivel, Mercier, Roubaud and Rousseville.[55] Each man had his own area that he was responsible for and his own approach to carrying out observations. For instance, as outlined in Caron's collection of the reports, Grivel was a good observer who had given several useful reports on commerce, agriculture, the spread of livestock, the maximum, and provisions within Paris.[56] On the other hand, Beraud and Latour-Lamontagne were as good at observing as Grivel, but their reports focused mostly on the destitute.[57] They were well-acquainted with the local inhabitants of their designated areas, and this knowledge served them well because they could easily identify figures of interest and were aware of what sort of activities were deemed suspicious in their sections. What this implies is that the reports were far from objective and were heavily influenced by the interests of the individual agents. Further, as officially appointed agents, these men had a specific agenda, notably justifying their position and earnings, so their reports concentrated solely on what they thought their bosses wanted to know. Consequently, these reports give a rather limited account of the goings on across the Parisian sections. Despite this, when combined with speeches by d'Églantine and Amar, these reports shed light on male attitudes towards politically active women by 1793. They also offer insight into how the mentalities of many women altered amidst the initial years of the Revolution.

None of the sources explored within this thesis are novel; they have all been utilised to some extent in existing works on the French Revolution. They are, however, worth revisiting. The role of women in revolutionary Paris, though increasingly being researched by individuals from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, remains an under-researched topic. This

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[55] Pierre Caron, *Paris pendant la terreur; rapports des agents secrets du Ministre de l'intérieur,* Tome Premier (Paris: Picard, 1910), pp.xi-xv.
[56] Ibid., p.xx.
[57] Ibid.

project seeks to employ a broad-brush approach by considering different groups of women living in revolutionary Paris and the ways in which they exerted agency through various spheres of action. All the sources examined within this thesis are strong examples of women's political agency. They allow male and female perspectives of women's agency to be examined, whilst keeping women's experiences at the forefront of their focus. This allows three questions to be addressed: What were the sites of women's revolutionary action between 1789 and 1793 and in what ways did these sites allow women to exert political agency? Were these readily accessible spheres of action or were they made accessible during the early years of the French Revolution? To what extent was women's political agency acknowledged, celebrated, feared, tolerated or exaggerated by others?

Chapter One. October 1789: The Rise of Female Political Consciousness

We are going to Versailles to ask the king for bread,
for us, our husbands, our children, and the capital.

Jeanne Martin, forty-nine-years-old, caregiver and wife of Jean Lavarenne.[1]

Someone whom she did not know, but later came to understand was called Maillard, urged the women armed with pikes, sticks and pieces of iron to disarm en route to Versailles.

Jeanne-Dorothée Délaissement, twenty-eight-years-old, widow and seamstress.[2]

Several of the women asked for eight-ounce loaves of bread to be priced at four pounds, and meat at the same price.

Madeleine Glain, forty-two-years-old, housewife.[3]

Some of the women wanted the king to come to Paris so that he could better understand their situations and improve them.

Françoise Rolin, twenty-years-old, flower seller.[4]

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[1] *Procédure Criminelle, instruite au Châtelet de Paris, sur la dénonciation des faits arrivés à Versailles dans la journée du 6 octobre 1789*, Vol.I (Paris: Chez Baudouin, 1790), p.133.
[2] Ibid., p.138.
[3] Ibid., p.137.
[4] Ibid., Vol.II, pp.30-31.

1.1 The Narrative of the October Days

On Monday 5 October 1789, the scene that greeted Paris was unremarkable: queues of women lined the streets, waiting to obtain bread to feed their families for the day. When it became apparent, once again, that not all would succeed in this task, the expected outrage surfaced. For days, significant shortages had plagued the city and people were starving. By 8 a.m. a crowd of women formed outside the Hôtel de Ville. They demanded Lafayette's authorisation of a march to Versailles to complain to Louis XVI and the National Assembly about the shortages.[5] Forcing their way into the building, they ransacked rooms and set fire to papers they found.[6] Following this, they acquired what weaponry they could, including cannons and pikes, and sounded the tocsin to signal the start of the gruelling twelve-mile journey to Versailles.[7] Stanislas Maillard, a twenty-six-year-old member of the National Guard and *vainqueur* of the Bastille, unable to prevent the march, headed the women and tried to maintain order as they accosted others to join them. Once at Versailles, they raucously descended upon the National Assembly.[8] Though many of the women demanded entry to the Assembly, a small deputation of no more than fifteen were admitted alongside Maillard to present their case to the deputies. Acting on their behalf, Maillard addressed the deputies and Mounier, the president. After his speech, some of the women were granted the opportunity to outline their demands from their own perspectives, before Mounier reluctantly agreed to arrange an audience with Louis.[9] At this meeting, to calm the situation, Louis agreed to the decrees of 4 August and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, expressing his sorrow at the shortages in Paris. By the time Lafayette and his troops appeared in Versailles, Louis' decision to accept the decrees had temporarily placated the women, who dispersed to find accommodation for the night.

However, on Tuesday 6 October, a crowd, dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous day, which failed to guarantee increased provisions to Paris, forced their way into the palace. When royal guards tried to remove them, things escalated violently and two guards were killed and decapitated.[10] A fearful Marie-Antoinette was hurriedly dressed by Marie-

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[5] Jeremy D. Popkin, *A New World Begins* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), p.177.
[6] David Garrioch, 'The Everyday Lives of Parisian Women and the October Days of 1789', *Social History 24(3)* (1999), 231-249 (p.232); Thomas Munck, *Conflict and Enlightenment: Print and Political Culture in Europe, 1635-1795* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p.289.
[7] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution,* 3rd edt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.121.
[8] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.178.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

Elisabeth Nolle and Henriette-Adelaïde Genet, her chamber maids, and led to Louis via the passageway connecting the two apartments.[11] Recognising the severity of the situation, Lafayette convinced the royal family to address the crowd. By late morning it was apparent that they had no choice and the king reluctantly agreed to move to Paris. A crowd of around sixty-thousand strong accompanied the royal family on their journey.[12] This story of the October Days is relatively well-known. What makes revisiting it worthwhile is how it represented a rise in female political consciousness in the initial stages of the Revolution. Whilst women were involved in every stage of the Revolution from its inception, the October Days marked a turning point for the political agency of women.[13] Though they enjoyed a public presence before October 1789, it was the events of 5 and 6 October that brought women to the forefront of revolutionary activity. As David Garrioch stresses, it was the first revolutionary event that was solely organised and initiated by women.[14]

This chapter will engage primarily with the works of Katie Jarvis, Suzanne Desan and Garrioch to demonstrate that the October Days was the first big event to define women's participation in the Revolution within a political capacity. In line with Garrioch's argument, this chapter proposes that the October Days were a turning point for female participation in revolutionary society because it was the first time since the outbreak of revolution that women organised and executed a mass event.[15] It considers the significance of this by briefly comparing the October Days to examples of food riots from 1725 and 1775, to highlight how this food riot was more radical than its predecessors. It also engages with Jarvis' and Desan's work by drawing upon evidence from the Châtelet inquiries of 1790 into the events of the October Days. By considering the women's testimonies and contrasting them with some male testimonies, it will be concluded that these riots were of a more political nature than the traditional food riot because they contributed to altering the course of the Revolution. By returning the king to Paris, the women portrayed a strong understanding of the political workings of society and an awareness of where power, or at least perceptions of power, was situated. This is crucial to the question of women's political agency because it allows one to study where women entered the Revolution and their motivations for doing so. The market women helped set the standard for female participation in the Revolution by drawing upon the significance of motherhood. By combining tradition with modernity, the October Days

[11] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.139-140, pp.149-150.
[12] Doyle, *The Oxford History*, p.122.
[13] Linda Kelly, *Women of the French Revolution* (London: Hamilton, 1987), p.xi.
[14] Garrioch, 'The Everyday Lives of Parisian Women', p.232.
[15] Ibid.

highlight how women challenged ancien régime perceptions of femininity without pushing boundaries too far. To understand how the women successfully achieved this, it is important to open with a discussion of food riots as the traditional method of female protest.

1.2 Food Riots: The Traditional Method of Female Protest

As Andy Wood argues, for subordinated groups to exert collective agency, they must have a strong awareness of their own past.[16] In other words, popular memories mould collective identities.[17] The October Days did not occur randomly; French culture possessed a long tradition of women participating in food riots which stemmed back centuries. Previous examples included those of 1725 and the Flour War of 1775. Arguably, the driving force behind these riots was a combination of poor harvests with the sharp increase in the price of staple foods.

In 1725, a series of bread riots occurred across France. For example, on 23 June, Desjardins, the wife of a cabinet maker, travelled to Charier's bakery, located in a side-street off the grande rue du faubourg Saint-Antoine, in search of bread. She had visited several other bakeries but was unsuccessful. Radot, Charier's brother-in-law, was minding the shop. Desjardins offered twelve *sous* for a four-pound loaf of bread, which Radot demanded thirteen *sous* for. Ordered to leave, her exit was barred by Radot, his sister and two journeymen when she tried to steal a loaf of bread. Her husband arrived and was informed by the large crowd, composed mostly of women, gathered around the shop, that the baker was in the wrong because his prices were unjust; the crowd then attacked the shop.[18] Following this event, on 9 July, in the faubourg Saint-Antoine, a woman offered ten *sous* for a four-pound loaf of bread priced at twelve s*ous.* She snatched a loaf and escaped. However, realising that this would not change the dearth that she and others in her community suffered, she returned with her son and some friends. They broke into fifty-year old widow Louise Chaudron's shop and stole between six and nine-hundred pounds of bread, eighteen pewter platters, three dozen dinner plates, four dozen napkins and four candleholders. Two journeymen were wounded, and bakery equipment was vandalised.[19] As Steven Kaplan

[16] Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.214.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Steven L. Kaplan, 'The Paris Bread Riot of 1725', *FHS 14(1)* (1985), 23-56 (pp.28-30).
[19] Ibid., pp.30-31.

stresses, the choice of Chaudron's shop was not coincidental: she was renowned for being a hard-nosed businesswoman, with a stall at the bi-weekly bread market near the Saint-Jean cemetery, and the shop that the crowd attacked.[20] As these examples highlight, food riots were typical of early modern French society. Kaplan notes that the July riots represented two voices: the citizens of the faubourg Saint-Antoine, famed for their decisive action, and that of the suffering Parisians.[21]

In comparison, the Flour War of 1775, studied extensively by Cynthia Bouton, was a series of riots that broke out across Paris, Versailles, and neighbouring provinces in April and May, in response to the poor grain harvests. Whilst there was nothing exceptional about the way in which the riots were conducted or the crowd composition, what was unusual was the enthusiasm of the authorities in searching for, arresting and interrogating rioters.[22] Of those arrested, ninety-two were women and, of these ninety-two, sixteen were leaders of the riots.[23] Similarly to the Châtelet inquiries into the October Days, clerks recorded the marital status, age and occupation of either the individual or her husband. The average age of the typical female arrested was late thirties or early forties, with several young children.[24] This is intriguing because it is likely for one to assume that most women participating in riots were either younger or older women, who were single or widowed: women who had less to lose, in terms of their individual and collective circumstances, if caught by authorities.[25] That it was mostly mothers involved in food riots suggests that there was a strong sense of desperation to provide for one's family. The power of women rested in their ability to turn traditional assumptions of the gendered systems within society into ways to defend their communities against those who failed to respond to their plight.[26] This is a prime example of Deniz Kandiyoti's 'patriarchal bargains', where women manipulate the oppressive aspects of their lives to challenge patriarchal authority and recast the boundaries delineating their sex.[27] Food riots allowed women to test the fluidity of society by providing them with a presence within their local communities.[28] They pushed the boundaries of their sex, redefining both masculinity and femininity, whilst successfully connecting themselves to the

[20] Ibid., pp.31-33.
[21] Ibid., p.53.
[22] Cynthia Bouton, 'Gendered Behaviour in Subsistence Riots: The French Flour War of 1775', *JSH 23(4)* (1990), 735-754 (p.736).
[23] Ibid., p.737.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., p.743.
[27] Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Bargaining with Patriarchy', *Gender & Society 2(3)* (1988), 274-290 (p.275).
[28] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* p.18.

revolutionary movement. Women assumed ownership of their grievances in a way that was radical enough to bring attention to the issues surrounding their place within society, but not so radical as to completely overhaul stereotypical eighteenth-century norms. This highlights the issue of continuity and change throughout the revolutionary period. For many women, the Revolution ushered in new opportunities that were not previously available to their sex. Yet, caution must be taken when considering how much the lives of women really changed during this period. Changes in the lives of women were relatively slow and laborious, facing significant opposition throughout the eighteenth and long-nineteenth centuries. Therefore, the October Days were the beginning of the journey that women faced in future centuries.

1.3 Background of the Châtelet Inquiries

The Châtelet inquiries, published as three volumes entitled *Procédure criminelle instruite au Châtelet de Paris, sur la dénonciation des faits arrivés à Versailles dans la journée du 6 octobre 1789,* were recorded between 11 December 1789 and 29 July 1790. Over the course of this period, 388 testimonies were recorded, thirty-nine of which belonged to women.[29] In the documents proceeding the testimonies, included in volume one of the inquiries, it is stated that the purpose of the investigation was to search for the authors of the deplorable activities which 'soiled the palace of Versailles on the morning of Tuesday 6 October'.[30] The activities in question were those of 'armed bandits accompanied by women and men disguised as women', who broke the peace enforced by the Parisian National Guard by 'forcing their way into the palace, breaking down the doors, rushing to the apartments of the queen and massacring some of the guards who were responsible for her safety'.[31] Although this investigation was initially approved by the Commune and the National Assembly, confrontation between the *comité des recherches* and the Châtelet resulted in the uncovering of the true intentions of the investigation: to implicate the duc d'Orléans and Mirabeau in a conspiracy to dethrone Louis XVI, which dated back to July 1789.[32] Evidence of this

[29] There is dispute over how many testimonies were recorded. Katie Jarvis argues that there were 395 testimonies, whilst Suzanne Desan states that there were additional witnesses interviewed, taking the total number of testimonies to 398. The 388 testimonies referred to here are the testimonies that were taken by the judges at the Châtelet in Paris and were assigned a deposition number. See Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.95; Desan, 'Gender, Radicalization, and the October Days: Occupying the National Assembly', *FHS 43(3)* (2020), 359-390 (p.362).

[30] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I., p.6.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Barry M. Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice in Paris, 1789-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.119.

deviation from the original task of the inquiry can be found across journal articles from this period. For example, Jean-Louis Carra, in issue 202 of *Annales Patriotiques et Littéraires,* declared that, 'across Paris at this moment it is being said that the Châtelet is carrying out a secret investigation into the best patriots and bravest defenders of the rights and liberties of the people in the National Assembly'.[33] This resonated with Antoine Tournon's assertion in the *Révolutions de Paris,* that the 'Châtelet is the greatest enemy of liberty' and that 'the Patriotic Society is not the party of the duc d'Orléans, nor the comte d'Artois, nor of such deputies, nor of such members of the court'.[34] In other words, as Barry Shapiro emphasises, the information that the Châtelet collected served the broader purpose of investigating the political activity of the Orléanists since the outbreak of the Revolution.[35] Albert Mathiez further contextualizes this by noting that Orléans desired popularity and sought the favour of the revolutionaries.[36] He was considered a prime suspect in orchestrating the October Days for the following reasons.

Should anything happen to Louis, he would assume his cousin's throne.[37] He was also one of the richest members of society, owning the Palais-Royal, which was frequented by members of the National Guard and political groups who rented the café of the arcade to conduct their meetings and rallies.[38] Although this increased his popularity amongst the people, it simultaneously increased the suspicions of his political opponents, most notably Lafayette. As commander of the National Guard, renowned for his role in the American War of Independence, Lafayette enjoyed a prestigious political and military role within society, which earned him loyalty from men of all social ranks.[39] Liberal minded and influenced by the Enlightenment and the American Revolution, Lafayette's vision for France included a government consisting of two chambers, with a senate appointed by the provincial assemblies for six years or more, and limited authority for the king via a suspensive veto.[40] One of his most prominent opponents on this issue was Mirabeau, whom Lafayette was equally suspicious of because of his role as an unofficial advisor to the court which he

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[33] Jean-Louis Carra (1742-1793), 'Observations sur la marche du châtelet de Paris', *Annales Patriotiques et Littéraires de la France, et affaires politiques de l'Europe,* ed. M. Mercier, No.202, 22 April 1790, p.3.
[34] Antoine Tournon (1754-1794), 'Agitation des esprits', *Révolutions de Paris,* No.42, 24 April to 1 May 1790, p.210; Ibid., 'Sur la fameuse procédure qui s'instruit au châtelet', pp.212-213.
[35] Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice,* p.120.
[36] Albert Mathiez, 'Étude Critique sur les Journées des 5 & 6 Octobre 1789', *Revue Historique 67(2)* (1898), 241-281 (pp.257-258).
[37] Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.77.
[38] Ibid., pp.77-78.
[39] Louis Gottschalk and Margaret Maddox, *Lafayette in the French Revolution: Through the October Days* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp.3-4.
[40] Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), *Mémoires, correspondances et manuscrits du Général Lafayette, publiés par sa famille,* Vol.II (Paris: H. Fournier, 1837), p.323.

received regular payment for.[41] Lafayette's suspicions of a coalition between Mirabeau and Orléans first emerged in July 1789. Both Mirabeau and Lafayette played a role in trying to calm the storminess present in Paris in the lead up the fall of the Bastille on 14 July. At a meeting held on 8 July, at which Lafayette, Mirabeau, Bergasse, Duport and Mounier were present, Mirabeau proposed sending an address to the king asking that he withdraw the troops surrounding Paris.[42] With all in agreement, Lafayette left the meeting. Following Lafayette's departure, Mirabeau mentioned a conversation he had with Orléans the day before, during which he suggested that Louis XVI could soon be replaced with Louis XVII and Orléans made lieutenant-général of the kingdom, something which Orléans allegedly approved of.[43] Although Lafayette was not present for this conversation, he was made aware of Mirabeau's sentiments a few days later, when Mounier, following a second conversation with Mirabeau, revealed that Mirabeau had declared, 'what does it matter that we have Louis XVII instead of Louis XVI, and that we need a toddler to govern us?'[44] Lafayette vowed 'to keep an eye on M. le duc d'Orléans' in the hope that he would be in a position to 'denounce M. le Comte d'Artois as a factious aristocrat and M. le duc d'Orléans as factious in more popular ways'.[45]

As captain of the National Guard, Lafayette was responsible for the system of political justice, of which the *comité des recherches* and Châtelet were key components.[46] According to Shapiro, Lafayette used this position to get rid of his main political competitor.[47] When Lafayette's actions in the aftermath of the October Days are considered, Shapiro's assessment of Lafayette is justifiable. Three days after the king's arrival in Paris, Lafayette spoke to Orléans about the events of 6 October and made his suspicions known to the duc, who fled to England despite Lafayette's admission that he did not have any proof of Orléans' plan to dethrone the king.[48] When coupled with Orléans' friendship with the Prince of Wales; his frequent trips to London, which inspired him to introduce English fashions to Paris; and rumours that Orléans was receiving money from the English government, his flight to

[41] Albert Mathiez, 'Étude Critique sur les Journées des 5 & 6 Octobre 1789 (suite)', *RH 68(2)* (1898), 258-294 (p.282).
[42] Jean-Joseph Mounier (1758-1806), *Appel au Tribunal de l'Opinion Publique, Du Rapport de M. Chabroud, et du Décret rendu par l'Assemblée Nationale le 2 Octobre 1790. Examen du Mémoire du Duc d'Orléans, et du Plaidoyer du Comte de Mirabeau, et nouveaux Eclaircissemens sur les crimes du 5 et 6 Octobre 1789* (Geneva : 1790), p.11.
[43] Ibid., pp.11-12.
[44] Ibid., p.13.
[45] Lafayette, *Mémoires,* Vol.II, p.313.
[46] Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice*, p.14.
[47] Ibid., p.95.
[48] Lafayette to M. Mounier, 23 October 1789, in Lafayette, *Mémoires,* Vol.II, pp.415-420 (p.416).

England appeared to confirm Lafayette's suspicions of Orléans' bid to take the throne.[49] However, within the women's testimonies, there is little evidence to suggest that Orléans was involved in orchestrating the October Days.

Only four testimonies mention the presence of Orléans. Both Marie-Louise Pierret and Jeanne-Antoine Bessous, claimed that they saw Orléans on 6 October. On the morning of 6 October, Pierret was on the balcony of M. de Boullainvilliers along with the children of Orléans.[50] From here, she overheard Orléans tell his children that 'he had been to Versailles and was happy with the *cent-suisses*'.[51] Following this, a crowd returning from Versailles spotted Orléans behind his children on the terrace and shouted, 'here is Monseigneur, here is Monseigneur; we respect him infinitely', to which Orléans responded, 'go, go, continue your journey', before retiring from the terrace.[52] Bessous' observation of Orléans differed to that of Pierret because she stated that, 'she saw m. le duc d'Orléans in the midst of the people, cross the royal courtyard and enter the marble courtyard, where she lost sight of him'.[53] From these testimonies, it appears that Orléans played a significant role on the 6 October and had a strong relationship with some of the guards present at the palace. Pierret and Bessous seemed to be suspicious of Orléans and considered his appearance in Versailles to be noteworthy. That said, these women were interviewed further into the Châtelet's investigation, when the judges started to ask more structured questions to lead the testimonies in a particular direction; so, it is possible that Pierret and Bessous were reacting to the direction of the authorities.[54] Thus, Pierret and Bessous' sightings of Orléans must be treated with caution.

This caution must also be applied to the testimonies of Anne-Marguerite Andelle and Jeanne Mongin. These women did not personally witness Orleans' presence but heard his name being spoken by others. Andelle, according to her testimony, heard armed women say that they were going to 'throw her [Marie-Antoinette] head through the windows', and a member of the National Guard reply, 'we must spare only M. le Dauphin and M. le duc d'Orléans'.[55]

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[49] Mathiez, 'Étude Critique', p.260.
[50] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, pp.216-217.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., Vol.III, p.21.
[54] Although the questions that the judges asked are not included in the published proceedings, Jarvis notes that the testimonies recorded further on in the investigation begin to give very similar answers which stray away from the timeframe of 5-6 October. This suggests that the questions became more direct and focused on a particular task, notably pinning the blame on Orléans. Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.98.
[55] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, p.97.

In comparison, Mongin declared that, 'she heard, without being able to say by whom, 'that M. le duc d'Orléans was also there'.[56] Later on, she heard cries of 'vive le duc d'Orléans'.[57] These descriptions of Orléans' involvement in the October Days are too vague to draw any definitive conclusions on whether Orléans did play a leading role in organising the march or whether he was at Versailles during the time of the protest. Furthermore, there is no concrete proof that Orléans received any money from England, and he did not try to assume any leadership positions. As a result, this affair demonstrates the intensity with which the political climate had shifted since the summer of 1789.[58]

With the Tennis Court Oath, the fall of the Bastille, the Great Fear that spread through the countryside, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the October Days and the subsequent inquiry into them were part of the broader political crisis that emerged during the first year of the Revolution. Consequently, the published version of the *Procédure criminelle* does not contain full details of the witness testimonies. Like the Old Bailey accounts from London, the testimonies solely contain the details considered most useful to serving the interests of those carrying out the investigation. All witnesses interviewed at the Châtelet were specifically selected to attend via invitation. The result of this was that most of the witnesses were of a more conservative nature than the individuals who instigated, led or willingly participated in the October Days.[59] Prior to any questions being asked by Eustache Ollivier or Antoine-Louis Olive, the judges appointed to oversee the investigation, the name, age, occupation, marital status (in the case of female deponents), and place of residence were recorded for each witness.[60] Next, the deponents were asked to swear that, 'they would say and present the truth' during their interview, before they presented the summons they had received from Fayelle, the bailiff of the court.[61] Ollivier and Olive then read out the 'above-mentioned order and requisition, and the decree of the 1 December'.[62] Finally, each deponent was asked to confirm that they were not a 'relative, ally, servant or domestic servant of the parties', and then their testimony was recorded.[63]

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[56] Ibid., Vol.III, p.13.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Mathiez,'Étude Critique', p.261; Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice,* p120.
[59] Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.3.
[60] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, p.3, pp.10-11.
[61] See, for example, *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.10-17 (pp.10-11).
[62] Ibid., p.10.The order and requisition consisted of finding the 'authors, perpetrators, accomplices and adherents of the attacks and assaults that occurred at the Palace of Versailles on Tuesday 6 October'.
[63] Ibid.

The questions were structured in such a way that emphasis was placed upon the key figures, leadership roles, and the scale of the actions of the crowd across the two days. On the one hand, then, the Châtelet's investigation was a formality with the purpose of creating an official record of the events as they developed and the primary leaders inciting the riot. The specific structuring of the questions influenced the answers supplied by witnesses and the way in which answers were given. Essentially, those questioned at the Châtelet were scapegoats, used to signal the power of local authorities in dealing with deviant behaviour. The investigation was intended to deter events of a similar nature from occurring. On the other hand, most testimonies recorded offered chronological accounts of events based upon the deponents' interpretations of what they thought the officials wanted to know, which implies that there was not an extensive list of predetermined questions and interviewees were free to interpret the boundaries of the investigation as they wished.[64] After each testimony was recorded, the deponent was asked whether they required any financial compensation for their time and the testimony was signed by the witness, the judges and the clerks.[65]

1.4 The Composition of Female Deponents

Of the women interviewed at the Châtelet, nine lived in Versailles and thirty lived in Paris. Moreover, the mean age of those interviewed was thirty-eight or thirty-nine, with twenty-one of them married, nine widowed, and nine who failed to disclose their marital status. Table 1.1 contains the names, ages, marital status and occupational status of all the women interviewed at the Châtelet.

[64] Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.98, p.110.
[65] See, for example, *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, p.17.

Table 1.1 The names, ages, occupations and marital status of all the women interviewed at the Châtelet.

Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status
Elisabeth Pannier	30	Unlisted	Married
Claudine Normand	39 or 40	Perfume Merchant	Widow
Magdeleine Normant	30	Perfume Merchant	Unknown
Françoise-Agnès Blanc	47 or 48	Unlisted	Married
Anne Pottevin	40	Unlisted	Widow
Soeur Marie-Anne Favier	45	Superior of the Royal Infirmary of Versailles	Unknown
Jeanne Martin	49	Caregiver	Married
Madeleine Glain	42	Housewife	Married
Jeanne-Dorothée Délaissement	28	Seamstress	Widow
Marie-Elisabeth Nolle	61	First Chamber Maid of the Queen	Widow
Elisabeth Girard	29	Unknown (Member of the Parisian Bourgeoisie)	Unknown
Henriette-Adelaïde Genet	31	Chamber Maid of the Queen	Married
Julie-Anne Bury	37	Chamber Maid	Married
Françoise Miallon	44	Clothes Merchant	Married
Marie Pierre Louvain	29	Oyster Merchant	Married
Marie-Catherine-Victoire Sacleux	31	Laundress	Married
Catherine Potheau	45 or 46	Shop Worker	Unknown
Anne Forets	20	Shop Worker	Unknown
Gabrielle-Thérèse Paillet des Brugnières	54	Unlisted	Married
Marie-Pauline-Jacqueline Gauthier	38	Unlisted	Married
Marie-Anne-Renée Desprez	31 or 32	Unlisted	Married
Marie Chulot	30	Unlisted	Married
Louise-Marguerite-Pierrette Chabry	17	Sculptress	Unknown
Anne-Elisabeth Rabier de la Baume	40	Unlisted	Married
Françoise Rolin	20	Flower Seller	Unknown
Marie-Anne Durothée Krapper	53	Unlisted	Widow
Anne-Marguerite Andelle	35	Laundress	Widow
Jeanne-Marie-Magdeleine Lebrun	54	Unlisted	Married
Madeleine Poinsignon	26	Servant	Married
Jeanne-Louise-Constance d'Aumont	59	Unlisted	Married
Pauline-Marguerite-Madeleine Blangie	22	Boarder of the King	Unknown
Marguerite Paton	40	Stockbroker	Widow
Marguerite-Claire Saunier	44	Unlisted	Married
Marie-Rose Baré	20	Lace worker	Unknown
Marie-Louise Pierret	50	House keeper	Widow
Jeanne Mongin	64	Unlisted	Married
Jeanne-Antoine Bessous	44	Unlisted	Married
Marie-Madeleine Simon	43	Unlisted	Married
Marie-Anne Bon	36	Unlisted	Widow

Further analysis of this information is important for understanding how the women responded to the Châtelet's questioning, how much information they provided, and the extent of political agency they exhibited when giving their testimonies. The first thing to note is the significance of the mean age of the interviewees. Like the women interrogated in the aftermath of the Flour Wars, the typical female deponent interviewed at the Châtelet was of childbearing age. This ties in with the arguments put forth by Arlette Farge and Dominique Godineau, amongst others, concerning the central role of women within society as mothers. Godineau, for instance, highlights that to be a woman was to be a mother and wife, regardless of whether one was a peasant, an artisan worker, or a member of the nobility.[66] Farge's work can be used to flesh this assertion out further by emphasising the intimate connection between a mother and her children, established during the maternity period and consolidated during the birthing process, and the subsequent need of mothers to ensure the survival of their children.[67] This was achieved through ensuring that children had adequate food provisions and by contributing financially to the family economy, which is the second point worth teasing out. Twenty-two of the women's testimonies have a paid occupation listed. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 list the different occupations provided by the female deponents, how many deponents carried out each occupation, and the occupations of the spouses of female deponents.

Table 1.2 The occupations listed by female deponents and the total number of deponents carrying out each occupation.

Women's Occupations	Total Number of Female Deponents
Caregiver (including nurses)	2
Laundress	2
Clothes Merchant	1
Perfume Merchant	2
Oyster Merchant	1
Seamstress	1
Housewife	1
Domestic Service	5
Sculptress	1
Lace worker	1
Shop Worker	2
Flower Seller	1
Stockbroker	1
Boarder of the King	1

[66] Dominique Godineau, *Les femmes dans la société française : 16^{e}-18^{e} siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), p.16.
[67] Arlette Farge, *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris,* trans.by Carol Shelton (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), p.189.

Table 1.3 The occupations of married deponents compared with the occupations of their spouses.

Name	Occupation	Spouse	Spouse's Occupation
Elisabeth Pannier	Unlisted	François Basset	Café owner and Member of the National Guard of Versailles
Françoise-Agnès Blanc	Unlisted	Pierre Martin	Custodian of the Hotel Queen Garni
Jeanne Martin	Caregiver	Jean Lavarenne	Doorman of the small hotel of Aligre
Madeleine Glain	Housewife	François Gaillard	Office Worker in the Oratory district
Henriette-Adelaïde Genet	Chamber Maid of the Queen	Pierre-César Augué	Receiver-general of finances of the Queen
Julie-Anne Bury	Chamber Maid	Jacques-François Mestrioux	Unlisted
Françoise Miallon	Clothes Merchant	Pierre-François Carpentier	Master Cobbler
Marie Pierre Louvain	Oyster Merchant	Denis Collinet	Journeyman Carpenter
Marie-Catherine-Victoire Sacleux	Laundress	Jean Nemery	Writer
Madeleine Poinsignon	Servant	Pierre Aribert	Unlisted

These tables indicate that occupational identity was deemed significant by women in this era. Of the married women interviewed at the Châtelet, only two did not provide an occupation. However, the occupations of their spouses are listed. In the case of Elisabeth Pannier, her spouse was a café owner and a member of the National Guard of Versailles, so she frequently helped him in his café in a front-of-house role.[68] The same can be said for François-Agnès Blanc, who was married to the custodian of the hôtel de la Reine garni situated on the rue des Bons-Enfants in the parish of Saint Eustache. This type of establishment, typically cheap lodgings which rented out cheaply furnished rooms by the night to workers who could not afford to pay regular rent, differs to modern day images of the hotel because it offered guests little privacy and was a space in which communal eating, drinking, and business deals were carried out.[69] From this, it can be surmised that Blanc did not list an occupation of her own because she most likely helped her husband manage the lodgers, serving in a front-of-house role as the landlady or hostess. This was not the case for Madeleine Glain who, in comparison to Pannier and Blanc, listed her own occupation as

[68] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.43-45.
[69] Jeffry Kaplow, *The Names of Kings: the Parisian Labouring Poor in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), pp.67-69; Beat Kümin, 'Useful to Have but Difficult to Govern. Inns and Taverns in Early Modern Bern and Vaud', *Journal of Early Modern History 3(3)* (1999), 153-175 (p.161).

'housewife', whilst noting that her spouse was an office worker.[70] Office work required significant literacy skills and, as a result, was limited to members of the bourgeoisie. This indicates that Glain, unlike Pannier and Blanc, enjoyed a relatively luxurious lifestyle, was financially well-provided for by her spouse, and did not have to go out to work to contribute to the family economy.

The remainder of the women listed their occupations as well as those of their spouses. In most of these examples, both spouses carried out skilled occupations. For example, Marie Pierre Louvain, an oyster merchant, was married to Denis Collinet, a journeyman carpenter.[71] Furthermore, Françoise Miallon, a clothes merchant, was married to Pierre-François Carpentier, a master cobbler.[72] It can be deduced from this that few of the individuals interviewed at the Châtelet were leaders or key participants of the October Days. Those credited with leading the October Days were the market women of Les Halles, but those interviewed at the Châtelet were men and women who were typically from skilled or semi-skilled occupations. This, as Jarvis rightly emphasises, signifies the narrow scope of the witness pool drawn upon during the investigation into the October Days.[73] The men and women interviewed did not offer a fair representation of those who led or willingly participated in the October Days because their experiences were somewhat different to those of the market women. Nevertheless, what is apparent is that occupational identity was as integral to the individual identities of the female deponents as their marital status, age and place of residence.

Amy Louise Erickson's work on married women's occupations in eighteenth century London confirms this by concluding that occupational identity was as important as marital status for women appearing before the criminal court as defendants, prosecutors or witnesses.[74] They offered their occupational status as a means of making them appear legal and respectable, and as a tool for covering up any illicit activity that they were involved in.[75] Whilst the women interviewed at the Châtelet were not being accused of any illicit activities as such, there are examples from the testimonies which provide evidence for Erickson's argument concerning legality and respectability. There is a tendency throughout several of

[70] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.136-137.
[71] Ibid., pp.159-160.
[72] Ibid., pp.158-159.
[73] Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.166.
[74] Amy Louise Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change 23(2)* (2008), 267-307 (p.292).
[75] Ibid., p.278.

the women's testimonies to deny or partially deny having any personal knowledge of what passed during the October Days. This denial, though plausible that it was genuine, could alternatively be interpreted as an effort to maintain one's respected status within the community. For instance, sisters Claudine Normand and Magdeleine Normant admitted to knowing of the events in the same way that all living in Versailles knew of them.[76] According to these women, their occupations as perfume merchants and place of residence enlightened them of the events of 5 and 6 October: they gleaned information from their customers and those in surrounding neighbourhoods.[77] This is similar to the testimony of Pannier, whose account is based primarily upon the remarks and rumours she heard from her customers. One such example is her claim that,

> she remembers hearing women who had come from Paris say they had brought 'bacquets' to take away the faces of the king's guards, and others applauded that. One of the individuals, she had previously reported, said: 'I have already killed a king's guard, and I still count on killing others'.[78]

Interestingly, the testimonies of these three women do share something in common: they all name Charpentier, a local wine merchant, and state that he drunkenly told them that, 'he was the one who had broken the arm of M. de Savonnieres [who was standing sentry at the palace gates] because he raised his sword to the women of Paris, who wished to enter the palace'.[79] Normant also notes that Charpentier returned the following day and repeated the story when he was sober, but altered the details by declaring that, 'he was the one who shot at M. de Savonnieres, who wanted to slash the women'.[80] Their evasiveness in relation to the specifics of where and from whom they obtained information, combined with their denouncing of Charpentier, is indicative of the political agency that these female deponents possessed. Through their occupations, these women mingled with individuals from across the social hierarchy and political spectrum. They were empowered by the ties of friendship and kinship they established within their local communities, which, as the cases of Normand, Normant and Pannier demonstrate, permitted them to engage with national politics by forming a connection with prominent political and military figures.[81] From their front-of-house role, these women, much like the market women, could observe the comings and

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[76] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.45-46, p.52.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., pp.44-45.
[79] Ibid., p.45, pp.45-46, p.52.
[80] Ibid., p.52.
[81] Harriet Applewhite and Darline Levy, eds., *Women and Politics in the Age of the Democratic Revolution* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p.3, p.14.

goings in their neighbourhood and identify suspect behaviour. An extension of their domestic space because their shops were situated below where they lived, they created an informal space for individuals to meet and freely exchange gossip, news, ideas and opinions. This brought them into local politics because, as Farge emphasises, 'knowledge of public affairs began with a knowledge of other people's business'.[82] In some senses, they acted as guardians of their neighbourhoods, observing the actions and words of others and determining to what extent certain individuals posed a threat to their daily lives. This provides a possible explanation for the denunciation of Charpentier: Normand, Normant and Pannier were trying to protect their own statuses and those of others around them.

Rumours thrive during periods of anxiety and uncertainty and can be used to incite violence or encourage slander against rivals with each retelling.[83] The reliability of rumours also depends upon the status of the individual(s) spreading them.[84] As an established wine merchant, it is conceivable that Charpentier enjoyed considerable status within his local community and that his rumour surrounding M. de Savonnieres carried weight. With imprisonment a possibility during the Châtelet inquiry, Normand, Normant and Pannier may have used Charpentier to distance themselves from accepting responsibility for any direct or indirect part they played during the October Days.[85] Perhaps, this is because they could not risk betraying the trust of their customers, which had the potential of resulting in a loss of trade; something they were reliant upon for survival. Or their failure to name individuals, other than Charpentier, may have emerged from a fear of betraying neighbourhood relations that composed their support networks. Loyalty to one's community was often a key determinant in an individual's actions, especially in relation to depositions. As Garrioch argues, this is because communities forged a sense of belonging. This ensured protection in times of emergency: neighbours were often the first people that individuals turned to in times of need because of their close physical proximity.[86] However, familiarity, established by meetings and the exchange of news and gossip in the street, was also central to neighbourhood relations.[87] To betray the trust of neighbours was to leave oneself vulnerable.

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[82] Arlette Farge, *Subversive Words: Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century France,* trans.by Rosemary Morris (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p.197.
[83] Lindsay Porter, *Popular Rumour in Revolutionary Paris, 1792-1794* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p.6, p.241.
[84] Ibid., p.13.
[85] Shirley Elson Roessler, *Out of the Shadows: Women and Politics in the French Revolution, 1789-95* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p.38, p.43.
[86] David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.18-19.
[87] Ibid., p.20.

This was something that Normand could not afford as she was a widow running a business with the help of her sister, so her respected status was essential to her economic survival. Hence, the testimonies of Normand, Normant and Pannier were structured in such a way that the women were both present and absent in their accounts through their occupations, indicating that occupational status was as important to a woman's individual and collective identities in late eighteenth century France as her marital status.

In relation to the married women interviewed during the inquiries, the emphasis upon occupational status of both spouses illustrates, as Olwen Hufton argues, that for most women and men of the Third Estate, the wages of both husband and wife were crucial to supporting the family unit and were often the difference between poverty and destitution.[88] It also demonstrates that many women, regardless of marital status, had a prominent place within society prior to the Revolution and could mould their public identities to fit the context of revolution. The prime example of this is the market women of Les Halles. From the thirteenth century, the importance of these women in feeding Paris was recognised by the king, and the market women enjoyed significant political influence as they represented the Third Estate during royal births, baptisms and feasts.[89] Drawing upon their unique relationship with the king, these women frequently directed their grievances to him via petitions, as the examples of 1787, 1788, and January 1789 confirm; this was more about their perception of where power lay rather than a general acceptance of the king's 'absolute' power. By October 1789, political power was a compromise between Louis and the National Assembly, so the market women showed their awareness of this shift in where perceived power was situated by expressing their grievances to both the National Assembly and the king when they arrived in Versailles.

That said, and as previously noted, the women interviewed at the Châtelet were from a variety of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Few of these women were required to spend significant periods of time in the streets or marketplace, the domain of the market women. The market women, renowned for their bawdiness, directness and self-confidence, were the inspiration for many songs, poems, plays and pamphlets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[90] In *Tableau de Paris,* Louis-Sebastien Mercier

[88] Olwen Hufton, 'Women in Revolution, 1789-1796', *Past & Present 53* (1971), 90-108 (p.95); Olwen Hufton, 'Women and the Family Economy in Eighteenth-Century France', *FHS 9(1)* (1975), 1-22 (p.1).
[89] Katie Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace: Work, Gender, and Citizenship in Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.3, p.18.
[90] Margaret R. Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.181.

described the 'dirty, disgusting, chaotic, odorous, loud' marketplace as being commanded by the *poissardes*.[91] The forceful nature of these women was further confirmed in the memoirs of Claude Fournier l'Héritier, later known as Fournier l'Américain due to his colonial connections, who noted that they used and responded to the uncouth language of *le Père Duchesne*.[92] Author of *le Père Duchesne,* Jacques René Hébert, provided a more positive assessment of the market women, labelling them 'good devils […] most people allow themselves to be led by their influence'.[93] This praise of the market women mirrored that present within an anonymous pamphlet entitled, *Avis important d'une dame des Halle pour la diminution des vivres* (1789). Told through 'charming *poissarde'* Madelon Friquet, who was deemed a 'good patriot capable of inspiring those around her' by her neighbours, this pamphlet focused on the economic importance of the dames.[94] Addressing a group of neighbours surrounding her, Friquet, adept at 'making herself heard' above the crowd, demanded that bread, wine, meat and cheap brandy (rôgomme), be priced at eight *sols* each.[95] Though a small selection of the contemporary sources available on the market women, these sources speak directly to the question of women's political agency by portraying the central role the market women occupied in Paris: they set the prices of goods, sold goods to customers, and formed networks with fellow traders, neighbours and local authorities.

The female deponents, in comparison, were from a variety of social backgrounds. For those from a bourgeois background, such as Marie-Anne Bon and Elisabeth Girard, the hustle and bustle of the street was a sharp contrast to the more luxurious lifestyle they were accustomed to. In Bon's testimony this manifested as a complete denial of any personal knowledge of what occurred across 5 and 6 October because 'she did not leave her home on these days'.[96] Girard, contrary to Bon, admitted to being present amongst the crowd on both days, but only because 'several women came to her home […] and forced her to follow them, threatening to cut her hair if she refused'.[97] Girard's shock at the threatening behaviour of the women, combined with later descriptions of their 'impatience' with the deputies at the National Assembly and the 'abominable words spoken against the queen', indicates that she was not

[91] Louis-Sebastien Mercier (1740-1814), *Tableau de Paris,* Vol.I (Hamburg: Chez Virchaux, 1781) , pp.97-98.
[92] F.-A. Aulard, ed., *Mémoires secrets de Fournier l'Américain* (Paris: 1890), p.34.
[93] Jacques René Hébert (1757-1794), *Grande colère du Père Duchesne contre les jean-foutres de calomniateurs des Dames de la Halle, & des bouquetières du Palais-Royal, au sujet du beau discours qu'elles ont fait au roi* (Paris: Imprimerie de Tremblay, 1791), p.7.
[94] Anonymous, *Avis important d'une dame des Halle pour la diminution des vivres* (Paris: 1789), p.3.
[95] Ibid., pp.6-7.
[96] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.III, p.50.
[97] Ibid., Vol.I, pp.144-145.

acclimatized to the loud and uncouth market women, as described by Mercier and Fournier. Bon and Girard's testimonies signify that they were from refined backgrounds where the art of conversation was based upon exchanging pleasantries, stories and opinions, and was conducted in private or semi-private spaces such as the salon or the escorted promenade.[98] Their world was closer to the experiences of the court of Versailles.

In contrast, Françoise Rolin, a flower seller, and Marie Pierre Louvain, an oyster merchant, were more accustomed to the streets. Like the market women, the streets for these women were a means of existing rather than somewhere they willingly chose to be.[99] With its markets, cafes, theatres, shops and high levels of prostitution, the flurry of activity in the street allowed Rolin and Louvain to make a living.[100] Moreover, it was a place of life and death, where communities supported one another and grieved together.[101] Conversation and gossip was exchanged, and information passed rapidly, via oral transmission, across and within communities. The experiences of Rolin and Louvain were closer to those of the market women than those of the Parisian bourgeoisie. This is confirmed in Rolin's testimony, when she admits to willingly following the market women, 'whom she did not particularly know', who stopped her and told her of their plans to go to the Hôtel de Ville and then to Versailles.[102] This implies that she sympathised with their motivations for the march, notably to 'inform the king of the bread shortages in Paris'.[103] These examples support Hufton's claim that experiences of the Revolution were not generic, and suggest that women were required to choose between loyalty to their sex and loyalty to their social status.[104] The issue with this, however, is that there were a series of complex relationships between several identities at play, and wealth, social status and gender horizontally cut across vertical identities influencing the individual priorities of women. Where the women from lower down the social scale, such as Rolin and Louvain, prioritised economic security and subsistence, the wealthier members of society, like Bon and Girard, could concern themselves with more leisurely activities including charity work and formal visits to friends, family and neighbours. Therefore, the testimonies of the female deponents cannot be considered representative of the activities, views and priorities of the leading figures of the

[98] Antoine Lilti, *The World of the Salons: Sociability and Worldliness in Eighteenth-Century Paris,* trans.by Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.163.
[99] Arlette Farge, *Vivre dans la rue à Paris au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), pp.19-20
[100] Ibid., p.16.
[101] Ibid., p.21.
[102] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, p.28-31.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* p.37.

October Days. Nevertheless, what is clear from the sample of female deponents is that each of these women, regardless of social status and whether they were from Paris or Versailles, were affected by the *journées* of October to some extent, and this influenced both the quantity and the quality of the information they provided the Châtelet with.[105]

1.5 A Closer Examination of the Women's Testimonies

The content of the testimonies is indispensable because it allows insight into the lived experience at the grassroots level: history is not solely about the collective, personal stories allow a closer examination of cultural and societal expectations across time and space. At least three recurring themes can be identified throughout the women's testimonies. Firstly, fourteen of the female witnesses stated that they were coerced to join the march to Versailles. Some of the women, notably Jeanne-Dorothée Délaissement, Françoise Miallon, Louvain, and Marie-Catherine-Victoire Sacleux, denied playing any significant part in the events that unfolded, despite their presence in Versailles. Délaissement declared that she 'did not go to the National Assembly nor the palace', and that she spent the night at the home of M. Baille, an officer of the king, with four other women.[106] This account corresponds with those of Miallon and Louvain. Miallon spent the night with some of the other women, one of whom was Louvain, at the home of a café owner, who 'received eight of them'.[107] Sacleux's narrative differed somewhat to these testimonies.

According to Sacleux, 'she was carried to rue de Vergennes, to the home of the schoolmaster of Montreuil, where she spent the night in a state of unconsciousness'.[108] Remarkably, even though these women denied actively participating in anything that occurred in Versailles, three of them - Miallon, Louvain and Sacleux – admitted to being near the palace on the morning of 6 October. Louvain allegedly 'did not see anything that happened', however Miallon 'saw the head of a bodyguard mounted on a pike' and Sacleux 'heard the voices of women and members of the National Guard coming from the marble courtyard'.[109] Sacleux also admitted to seeing 'the king, queen, and royal family on the balcony'.[110] Their presence

[105] Jarvis, 'Allez, Marchez, Braves Citoyennes', p.116.
[106] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.138-139.
[107] Ibid., pp.158-159, pp.159-160.
[108] Ibid., pp.161-162.
[109] Ibid., pp.158-162.
[110] Ibid., pp.161-162.

at the palace is a distinct contrast to their claims that they were forced to go to Versailles and did not personally witness anything that happened. On the one hand, Miallon, Louvain and Sacleux distinguished themselves from the leaders and active participants of the riot by claiming that they were 'dragged along to Versailles' but distanced themselves from the rioters once they arrived.[111] This suggests that they did not consider themselves to be central actors during the October Days and did not wish to be identified as such. They tried to portray themselves as victims of the market women, helpless against the mass crowd who used violence and verbal threats to coerce them into joining the riot, despite their reluctance to leave Paris on 5 October. On the other hand, by choosing to go to the palace on 6 October, they signified that they had more political agency than they originally insinuated. Although it is unclear what their motives for doing so were, the presence of these women near the palace exemplified what was novel about the October Days: they were an invasion of national politics.[112]

Miallon, Louvain and Sacleux may not have gone to the National Assembly or entered the palace, but their presence near the palace contributed to the pressure placed on the deputies and the king by the growing crowd, whose targeting of these political institutions represented a claiming of popular sovereignty.[113] Furthermore, that these women could have returned to Paris ahead of the crowd who escorted the royal family but chose to go to the palace instead, confirms Chandler Freeman-Orr's assertion that women perceived themselves as politically viable participants in the Revolution.[114] To observe, comment upon, and judge the actions of others was to 'have a stake in the nation'.[115] Whether intentionally or not, Miallon, Louvain and Sacleux participated in what Hufton labels 'a notable consciousness raising exercise', and it is arguable that their desire to go to the palace was indicative of their independence and political consciousness.[116]

This independence and political consciousness were also present in the testimonies of some of the other women who claimed to have been forced to go to Versailles but played a noteworthy role across the two days. Jeanne Martin, Glain and Girard were amongst the

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[111] Ibid., pp.158-162.
[112] Colin Lucas, 'The Crowd and Politics', in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture,* ed.by Lucas, Vol.II (Oxford: Pergaman, 1988), pp.259-285 (p.277).
[113] Desan, 'Gender, Radicalization, and the October Days', p.371.
[114] Chandler Freeman-Orr, ''Et nous aussi nous sommes': Perceptions of Women's Political Activity in the French Revolution, 1789-1793 (Unpublished Thesis, Queen's University, 2016), p.iii.
[115] Ibid., p.59; Lucas, 'The Crowd and Politics'. P.269.
[116] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* p.18; Garrioch, 'The Everyday Lives of Parisian Women', p.232.

group of women who entered the National Assembly. Martin was one of the twenty women admitted to the bar of the Assembly alongside Maillard, where, she claimed, 'they were received with great joy and affability'.[117] The women, according to Martin, sat on the benches whilst Maillard asked the Assembly for bread for the women, their husbands and their children, and an increase in provisions within the capital city.[118] Following this, nine women, along with two deputies, received an audience with the king; Martin remained at the bar of the Assembly.[119] Upon the return of the women, Martin was handed the documents signed by the king and tasked with handing these over to Maillard, who was to take them to the Hôtel de Ville as soon as possible.[120] From Martin's account, it appears that the women acted respectfully in the National Assembly and were content with having Maillard represent their grievances. This was disputed by both Glain and Girard. In Glain's account, a large group of women forcefully entered the National Assembly and demanded eight-ounce loaves of bread and meat to be priced at four *livres*.[121] Glain took charge of the situation and assured the deputies that the women wanted bread to be available, but not at the price stated.[122] Like Martin, she was not one of the women who went to the palace. However, she was one of the women, alongside Martin, who went with Maillard to the Hôtel de Ville with the documents signed by the king.[123] Girard's testimony confirmed Glain's assertion that the women asked for bread and meat at a reduced price.[124] Yet, it also described the women as disruptive, noting that the Assembly were busy discussing matters other than subsistence and 'the women showed their impatience by interrupting the deputies several times'.[125] This resulted in Mirabeau complaining and the session being postponed.[126] Regardless of the accuracy of the testimonies of Martin, Glain and Girard concerning the behaviour of the women, several important conclusions surrounding their political agency can be drawn.

Fundamentally, the women who went to the National Assembly, whether they claimed that they were coerced or not, engaged with leading political figures by discussing politics with the deputies. Politics was a masculine sphere and these women challenged this by displaying political knowledge.[127] They pressured officials into listening to their demands, harassed

[117] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.132-136 (p.134).
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., pp.136-137 (p.137).
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., pp.144-145 (p.144).
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Desan, 'Gender, Radicalization, and the October Days', p.380.

some of the lawmakers, and took part in debates and voted on the matters being discussed.[128] In other words, they signified that they understood that 'the deputies at Versailles were their representatives, not their rulers, and that they could playact at being their own representatives'.[129] This, according to Jennifer Heuer and Bonnie Smith, highlights that the formal exclusion of women from politics did not prevent them from participating in political discussions and that they envisioned their grievances in the context of national politics.[130] Their actions represented a carnivalesque inversion of the natural order, with women dominating men, working people challenging elite members of society, and the governed defying the governing.[131] The testimonies of Martin, Glain and Girard illustrate that the women who entered the National Assembly on 5 October connected issues of subsistence to the broader context of the Revolution, which included an aristocratic plot to starve Paris, the debate over who had the right to make laws in the new nation, and the king's refusal to sign the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the first nineteen articles of the Constitution.[132] These testimonies also shed light on how far one can consider the female deponents as victims or bystanders rather than active participants in the riot.

None of the women who claimed to be forced to go to Versailles can definitively be labelled victims or bystanders. Although true that there are instances where some of these women were injured, which could justify them being labelled victims to some extent, the context in which their injuries occurred contradicts the notion that they were innocent bystanders at the time of being injured. Martin, Andelle, Sacleux, Rolin and Marguerite Paton stated in their testimonies that they received injuries. Martin's hand was injured when she intervened to prevent a woman with a rusty blade and a man with a bayonet from attacking a Swiss guard, who refused to let the crowd pass through the Tuileries gardens.[133] Andelle and Rolin shared similar experiences to one another, each being beaten up. Andelle received several blows for defending the reputation of the queen and refusing to support anyone considering to murder the king, and these injuries took six weeks to heal.[134] Rolin, like Andelle, received several blows as she was knocked to the ground by a Swiss guard, who refused to let her meet the

[128] Ibid., p.362.
[129] Darline Levy and Harriet Applewhite, 'Women of the Popular Classes in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795', in *Women, War, and Revolution,* ed.by Carol Berkin and Clara Maria Lovett (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), pp.9-35 (p.17).
[130] Heuer, *The Family and the Nation,* p.50; Smith, *Changing Lives*, p.99.
[131] Desan, 'Gender, Radicalization, and the October Days', p.376.
[132] Ibid., p.365, p.367.
[133] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, p.133.
[134] Ibid., Vol.II, p.97.

king with Mounier.[135] Paton received two strikes to her left shoulder.[136] Meanwhile, Sacleux received a blow from a sword to her left hand.[137] In each of these scenarios, the women were not merely observing events when they were injured. Martin intervened in a violent situation which did not initially concern her. Sacleux and Paton were both on the parade ground in Versailles with a large crowd who were refused entry to the palace by the king's bodyguards. Andelle was in the National Assembly when she confronted the women and member of the National Guard making threats against the king and queen, and Rolin followed a deputation of women led by Mounier to the palace. Therefore, by engaging with the rioters, government officials, and members of the National Guard, Swiss Guard and the king's bodyguards; entering political institutions; and willingly intervening in violent situations that did not directly concern them, each of these 'victims' or 'bystanders' of the October Days played a more active role in events than suggested in their testimonies.

This is equally true for the cases of Louise-Marguerite-Pierette Chabry, Catherine Potheau, Anne Forets and Marie-Rose Baré. Both Chabry and Baré were amongst the five women selected to enter the room with Mounier when he was received by Louis.[138] Chabry presented the women's grievances over subsistence to the king, who greeted the women with great affability, and was handed a signed document with the instruction to give this to the mayor of Paris upon her return.[139] Baré confirmed Chabry's account, noting that the king said he saw their suffering and promised to provide escorts for the convoys of flour destined for Paris.[140] From these testimonies, it can be concluded that, even though these women claimed that they were coerced into going to Versailles, once there they fully embraced the responsibilities placed upon them by the other marchers and exercised considerable political agency in communicating the demands of the marchers to the king. In contrast, Potheau and Forets were outside the palace on 5 October, where Potheau spoke with two of the king's guards and Forets witnessed the group of women accompanied by members of the National Assembly being admitted to the palace.[141] Both women managed to escape from the marchers and spent the night at the home of a friend, Sieur LeBrun, who stayed on avenue de St.Cloud.[142] That they could have returned to Paris but decided to remain in Versailles,

[135] Ibid., p.30.
[136] Ibid., p.151.
[137] Ibid., Vol.I, p.161.
[138] Ibid., Vol.II, pp.23, pp.214-215.
[139] Ibid., pp.23-24.
[140] Ibid., p.215.
[141] Ibid., Vol.I, pp.162-163, pp.164-165.
[142] Ibid., p.163, p.164.

much like Délaissement, signifies that they had greater agency over their actions and decisions during the October Days than they acknowledged in their testimonies. Hence, it is arguable that the women who reported that they were taken to Versailles against their wishes were not the victims or bystanders that they portrayed themselves to be. They exerted political agency to varying degrees and built upon their political consciousness. Furthermore, they took advantage of the opportunity to connect traditional methods of female protest with national politics. This point is closely connected to the second key theme which is the composition of the crowd.

Several of the women's testimonies agreed that there were hundreds, if not thousands, of women involved, with some accounts stating that there were men disguised as women present and others arguing that the Parisian crowd was mixed sex. It is in the accounts of Marie-Pauline-Jacqueline Gauthier, Marie Chulot and Bessous where men disguised as women are mentioned. Chulot and Bessous declared that, 'a lot of men disguised as women were amongst those who came from Paris', and made this distinction based upon their long beards and hairy chests.[143] Gauthier added to the observations of Chulot and Bessous, asserting that she 'saw a big, fat woman who looked to be a man disguised as a woman, and was later confirmed to be by people in the street'.[144] Each of these women were from a comfortable background, were married, and Chulot and Bessous were inhabitants of Versailles. This provides insight into the possible motivations behind offering the Châtelet this information. As inhabitants of Versailles, it is likely that Chulot and Bessous felt bitter about their space being invaded by the rioters and resented the violence that occurred on 6 October. Both women were involved in running shops which sold refreshments, and Bessous and her husband, who was a caterer, often fed 'no more than sixty of the king's bodyguards and lodged twenty-five of them'.[145] Giving this unflattering depiction to the officials at the Châtelet may have been their way of retaliating to the disturbances caused by the marchers. Portraying the October Days as an almost theatrical performance, with individuals disguising their identities through costumes, could have been Chulot and Bessous' way of devaluing the significance of the riot. Often, cross-dressing men were used to entertain audiences, whether at a theatre or popular festival, with their portrayal of grotesque, lusty women.[146] It could be argued then, that Chulot and Bessous emphasised the presence of cross-dressing

[143] Ibid., Vol.II, p.17; Vol.III, pp.20-21.
[144] Ibid., Vol.I, p.187.
[145] Ibid., Vol.III, pp.19-20.
[146] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp.137-138.

men to exaggerate the outrageousness of these Parisiennes protesting outside of their local communities. Alternatively, their focus upon cross-dressing individuals being present amongst the crowd could have been a manifestation of their fears over the uncertainty of the Revolution and the place of women within society. By emphasising the presence of cross-dressing individuals, Chulot and Bessous played into the assumptions of the interrogators: first, that the women involved in the October Days could not all have been real women because some of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour had been broken. This also served the purpose of allowing the testifiers to distance themselves from the hard-core rioters. Second, that the presence of men dressed as women confirmed that the October Days were part of a sinister conspiracy, something which the interrogators wanted to hear, at the behest of Orléans and Mirabeau.

The food riot may have been a primarily feminine affair due to the importance of mothers in the family economy, but the arming of some of these women contradicted traditional notions of women as the fragile sex. To arm oneself was to claim citizenship because this was a prerequisite for active citizenship. The female marchers arming themselves was a transgression from the boundaries associated with femininity. This offers further evidence for the argument that the October Days were highly politicized and different to previous examples of food riots. Not only did the women move outside of their local communities and target the centres of political power, but they also armed themselves with pikes, sticks and cannons, to symbolize their commitment to defending the new regime ushered in by the Revolution.[147] They wanted to be taken seriously by the deputies and the king and used weaponry to communicate this.[148] For women like Chulot and Bessous, the violence associated with weaponry could have convinced them that the women had set out with violent intentions and were determined to act unruly. Chulot mentioned that, 'due to the fright and the horrors of 5 and 6 October, she could see everything and nothing, and could not explain any details with precision'.[149] Bessous, on the other hand, described the 'multitude of men and women from Paris, who appeared very animated against the bodyguards and announced their intention to exterminate them all'.[150] Unaccustomed to the misery and desperation that the Parisiennes experienced daily, Chulot and Bessous' perceptions of the women's intentions were at odds with the overarching goals of the marchers: to inform the king and the deputies of the shortages in Paris and obtain guarantees

[147] Garrioch, 'The Everydays Lives of Parisian Women', p.232.
[148] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* p.14.
[149] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, pp.16-17.
[150] Ibid., Vol.III, p.20.

from both parties that this would not continue. For these women, the disturbance that the marchers allegedly caused disrupted their normal business and brought chaos to their neighbourhoods, influencing their recollections of the October Days and the crowds from Paris.

Gauthier's testimony, in contrast to those of Chulot and Bessous, is more complex because she did not go to Versailles and based her knowledge of the events upon popular stories that she heard from others.[151] Yet, it is probable that it was the career of her spouse, coupled with her comfortable lifestyle, that determined her opposition to the female rioters, as exemplified through her unflattering description of the cross-dressing individual she allegedly observed. Jean-Jacques-Marie Michau de Montaran was a *maître des requêtes*. As a senior officer responsible for dealing with the petitions and grievances addressed to the king and deputizing for the chancellor, the women's march questioned the authority and capabilities of Montaran and his colleagues in dealing with the complaints of the popular classes of Paris.[152] It was also a direct attack upon ancien régime practices and offices because these women went straight to the deputies of the National Assembly and the king, the core of political power, rather than through the representatives of the king and court. This was a deviation from the established route of voicing one's political opinions and concerns. Had their grievances been listened to and grain supplies to the capital city increased, the October Days may have been avoided. That this was not the case and that the women felt compelled to take matters into their own hands, implied that they were not being taken seriously by the likes of Montaran, and the banquet for the Flanders Regiment held on 1 October added further insult to their plight.

Mentioned in four of the women's testimonies, it was rumoured that the tricolour cockade was trampled underfoot, whilst the drunken officers donned white and black cockades and toasted the king and queen, at the traditional banquet held for the officers of the Flanders Regiment.[153] In the testimony of Anne-Elisabeth Rabier de la Baume, who was married to François de Commeyras, a knight of the royal and military order of Saint-Louis, she recounted a conversation she had with Sieur de Chevannes, a member of the king's guard, on Sunday 4 October. She asked him about the banquet in question and the trampling of the national cockade, to which he replied that it was false that any such incident had taken place

[151] Ibid., Vol.I, pp.186-187.
[152] J.H.M Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London: E. Benn, 1975) p.348.
[153] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I., p.138

during or after the meal.[154] This account contradicts the claims made in Pannier, Normant and Délaissement's testimonies. According to Pannier and Normant, the banquet caused considerable upset in Versailles and turned many of the inhabitants of Versailles against the Flanders Regiment.[155] Délaissement furthered this by stating that, prior to their arrival in Versailles, she spoke to a soldier of the Flanders Regiment, who alleged that the national cockade had been trampled underfoot by members of the king's guard and not the Flanders Regiment.[156] From these testimonies, it is apparent that the political and economic situations in both Paris and Versailles were fraught, and that there was considerable discontent and suspicion amongst the inhabitants of both cities. Food shortages were not solely a Parisian phenomenon. The poor harvests between 1787 and 1789 were felt across France, with many starving as the prices of grain increased sharply: the price of bread rose sixty-five per cent between the periods 1726 to 1741 and 1785 to 1789, whilst wages rose a mere twenty-two per cent.[157] This is related to the third and final key theme to be addressed, which is the bread shortages as a motivating factor for the marchers.

Nine of the female deponents - Soeur Marie-Anne Favier, Martin, Glain, Girard, Sacleux, Potheau, Chabry, Rolin and Baré - touched upon the bread shortages. In the testimonies of Martin and Glain, an identical narrative is present. Both women asserted that the group of marchers were stopped at Sèvres and asked where they were going. Martin, in her account, said that two men asked, 'where are you going, mesdames?' To which they responded, 'we are going to Versailles, to ask the king for bread, for us, for our husbands and our children'.[158] These men replied, 'go, my children, behave well and do not be insolent to anyone, peace be with you'.[159] Glain's testimony confirmed that the women were stopped at Sèvres, asked where they were going, and told to behave themselves.[160] It appears from these accounts that the men approved of the women's intentions, so long as they maintained decorum. This is telling of how some of the marchers viewed themselves and how they were perceived by others. That Martin and Glain emphasised the women's desire for bread, highlights that they perceived this as the overall goal of the October Days. These women, like many of the female protestors, may have been mothers who were desperate to feed their

[154] Ibid., Vol.II, pp.25-26.
[155] Ibid., Vol.I., p.43, p.52.
[156] Ibid., p.138.
[157] Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution,* trans.by R.R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p.105.
[158] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, p.133.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., p.136.

families. This desperation is captured in the testimony of Sacleux, who recounted the 'public outcry' during which she 'heard that women were going to the Hôtel de Ville to get bread'.[161] Martin, Glain and Sacleux most likely empathised with the frustrations of other women who rose at the crack of dawn every morning to join the bread lines and who often went hungry to ensure their children and spouses were adequately provided for. In some senses then, it is arguable that Glain and Martin felt a degree of solidarity with the market women who recruited them to join their protest. For these women, as Joan Landes argues, the October Days were part of a longer tradition of popular protest.[162] This explains the approval of the men who stopped the marchers at Sèvres.

Food supplies, as Garrioch notes, was primarily the domain of women.[163] The central role that women occupied in their local communities permitted them to legitimately act upon issues surrounding subsistence.[164] To do so was within the boundaries of their sex and, as Jarvis points out, they framed their political interventions as 'civic responsibilities that served public interests'.[165] On the one hand, then, so long as the women carried out a peaceful, non-violent protest, they could muster some support for their actions, as the testimonies of Martin and Glain attest. On the other hand, the October Days were not like previous food riots. Not only did some of the women symbolically arm themselves, but they occurred on an unprecedented scale and involved women from many districts of Paris.[166] Moreover, as Lynne Taylor argues, the moment women decide to move outside their local communities and appeal to higher powers, they alter the nature of the vertical networks of society.[167] This is precisely what happened in October 1789. In the testimonies of Girard, Potheau, Chabry, Rolin and Baré, the governing was dominated by the governed. Each of these women linked bread to the political awareness of the female protestors. Girard stressed the increasing impatience and disruption caused by the women who entered the National Assembly.[168] Potheau spoke to two of the king's guards upon her arrival in Versailles and when asked what the women wanted, she responded 'that they had come to ask for bread'.[169] Rolin, en route to Versailles, asked two bands of around twenty dragoons where they were

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[161] Ibid., p.161.
[162] Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p.109.
[163] Garrioch, 'The Everyday Lives of Parisian Women', p.234.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace,* p.52.
[166] Garrioch, 'The Everyday Lives of Parisian Women', p.234.
[167] Taylor, 'Food Riots Revisited', p.490.
[168] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, p.144.
[169] Ibid., pp.162-163.

going. They replied that, 'they were going to Paris for bread and that all in Versailles were expecting the arrival of the women'.[170] Meanwhile, Chabry and Baré voiced the women's desire for bread at the palace. Chabry 'had the honour of bringing the grievances of the women and the people to the king, to ask him for bread'; whilst Baré was present when M. de Saint-Priest and the king were informed of the plight of Parisians, and the king allegedly declared that 'he saw their suffering'.[171]

Every one of these instances involved women communicating with leading revolutionaries and figures of authority. They made these politically influential men listen to their demands and promise to resolve subsistence issues, whilst simultaneously convincing the king to sign the August Decrees, by occupying the National Assembly and the palace. This point was touched upon earlier but is worth revisiting in relation to local issues becoming national concerns. As Harriet Applewhite and Darline Levy contend, during the Revolution the governed and governing came into frequent contact over affairs, such as tax collection and the regulation of food supplies, which were previously resolved by municipal authorities.[172] Government, they argued, became 'an immediate daily experience' for the women and disenfranchised men of Paris.[173] It was, one could argue, because of the October Days that political power was centralised in Paris during the first year of the Revolution. As Edmond and Jules de Goncourt neatly summarised, women commanded the eighteenth century and were 'the origins of events, the source of things'.[174] Had the women not marched to Versailles, the movement would not have been as memorable, nor would it have had as great a legacy. They turned the world upside down for male revolutionaries by sitting in the chairs of deputies and ridiculing the authority of government officials through their refusal to be silenced and to restrict themselves to the galleries of the debating chamber.[175] They utilised traditional methods of protest to step outside of the boundaries associated with their sex, contributing to the political instability present within France at this time. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of motherhood in encouraging militant behaviour. Their actions contributed to the redefining of femininity and masculinity. There was a sizeable political

[170] Ibid., Vol.II, p.29.
[171] Ibid., p.24; Vol.III, pp.214-215.
[172] Harriet Applewhite and Darline Levy, 'Women, Democracy, and Revolution in Paris, 1789-1794', in *French Women and the Age of Enlightenment,* ed.by Samia I. Spencer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p.64.
[173] Ibid., p.66.
[174] Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896) and Jules de Goncourt (1830-1870), *La Femme au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: 1862), p.321.
[175] Applewhite and Levy, 'Women, Democracy, and Revolution in Paris', p.71; *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.136-137, pp.144-145.

shift in the centres of power when the women convinced Louis to sign the decrees of the National Assembly: as a result, sovereignty belonged to the people. By shifting sovereignty to the people, the October Days offered excluded groups the opportunity to carve out political roles for themselves in society. Thus, the October Days were a crucial turning point in the Revolution for the political agency of women. That the National Assembly ordered an inquiry into the October Days and the march received significant attention from journalists, indicates the perceived importance of this event by patriarchal authorities.

1.6 Responses to the October Days

The market women's adoption of a traditionally feminine activity, which aligned with the stereotypical roles and duties of eighteenth-century women, allowed them to push the boundaries of their sex by carving a political space for themselves within revolutionary society.[176] They acted as concerned wives and mothers who were failing to fulfil their responsibilities of nourishing their own families and, by extension, the nation. The market women bore the burden of feeding the people. As a result, their actions earned them considerable support from the gathering Parisian crowds.

Some of this support came from government officials and male journalists. Tournon's *Révolutions de Paris,* described the banquet held for the Flanders Regiment at which, the report claimed, there were shouts of 'down with the coloured cockade, long live the black cockade, it is the right one', followed by the tricolour cockade being trampled underfoot.[177] The report also mentioned the bread shortages in the capital city, noting that the 'women of the people, notably the market women of Les Halles and the workers of the faubourg Saint-Antoine, gathered all the women they met in the streets […] and brought them to the Hôtel-de-Ville'.[178] These 'brave amazons', unable to direct their grievances at Lafayette or Bailly because they were not present at the Hôtel de Ville, armed themselves with canons, rifles and munition, and set out for Versailles.[179] By doing so, the article argued, 'they carried the destiny of France'.[180] This admiration and praise for the women was backed by Jacques

[176] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, p.18.
[177] Tournon, 'Conjuration formée par les aristocrates contre notre liberté; preuves et suites de cette conjuration', *Révolutions de Paris*, No.8, 3-10 October 1789, pp.5-6.
[178] Ibid., p.9.
[179] Ibid., pp.10-11.
[180] Ibid., p.15.

Pierre Brissot de Warville and Carra. In his *Le Patriote Français,* Brissot declared that the intentions of those who marched to Versailles were 'to express to the king their general concerns surrounding events in Versailles and to seek from him a resolution to calm the people of Paris'.[181] Carra, in contrast*,* criticised the *Comité des subsistances* for failing to increase provisions in Paris and emphasised the shortage of food as the motivating factor behind the women's march to Versailles.[182] Fournier also contributed to this praise with his problematic account of the October Days.

In comparison to Tournon, Brissot and Carra, Fournier focused more generally upon his role in organising troops. Written during the Terror, when it was fashionable to associate oneself with the grand *journées* of the Revolution, Fournier's description of the October Days depicted his willingness to defy figures of authority and glorified his contributions.[183] However, he also successfully captured the interactions between the women and the National Guardsmen, and it is this that makes his account valuable to the study of women's political agency in the early stages of the Revolution. According to Fournier, it was the ability of the women to negotiate with the battalion of the Vainqueurs de la Bastille that sparked the beginning of the journey to Versailles.[184] The significance of this statement is that it depicts how the women semi-organised an event that had a spontaneity to it. They may not have formed a detailed plan of how they would present their arguments at Versailles or in what order they would address the king and the deputies, but they successfully secured military support for their march. This support was central to the women's agency for two reasons.

First and foremost, it provided them with the masculine support they failed to rouse from the men in their local communities. One of the driving forces behind this march was the inaction of their male counterparts, which resulted in the women refusing to wait for them to take the initiative in protesting against the shortages. The support from the battalion of the Vainqueurs leant the women's actions a sense of legitimacy due to their official capacity and the degree of power they possessed at local and national levels. On the other hand, the presence of male troops also served as a barrier which protected the reputation of the women. To proceed without a male presence was to risk slanderous comments against one's

[181] Brissot de Warville (1754-1793), 'Journées de 5 et 6 Octobre', *Le Patriote Français,* No.64, 8 October 1789, p.2.
[182] Carra, 'Projet proposé pour l'approvisionnement de Paris', *Annales Patriotiques et Littéraires de la France, et affaires politiques de l'Europe*, No.4, 6 October 1789, p.2; Ibid., 'Paris, 5 Octobre 1789', No.5, 7 October 1789, p.3.
[183] Aulard, *Mémoires secrets de Fournier*, p.ii, p.xviii.
[184] Ibid., p.28.

reputation. The public support of the battalion added a layer of respectability to the food riot. This showed initiative on the women's part, indicating that they were aware of social conventions and the consequences of deviating too far from them. When coupled with the presence of Maillard, Fournier's portrayal of this interaction between the women and the troops exemplified the negotiation between the two parties and painted the women in a rational light, signifying their willingness to compromise and reason. The women never set out on their journey with violent intentions and Fournier's initial description of them confirmed their desire for a peaceful protest. Yet, as Fournier's account of his arrival at Saint-Eustache emphasised, the women were capable of utilising violence where needed. There, after hearing d'Ogny, commander of the *troupes de Marseillais* and the Parisian National Guard under Lafayette's authority, try to convince the protestors to return home, Fournier persuaded the women to attack d'Ogny by labelling him a traitor and reminding them of their starving children.[185] Kicking and punching him, they coerced him into joining their march, but he died en route shortly after their beating; something which Fournier revelled in.[186] Even though it appears that Fournier manipulated the women and that they had little agency in this scenario, it can be viewed from another position.

To commit violence is often to consciously choose to act in a particular way. That the women opted to violently attack d'Ogny illustrates that they understood what they were doing and that they possessed agency because part of this concept requires having the capacity to comprehend one's actions whilst carrying them out.[187] This agency was also evident on 6 October when, according to Fournier, he spoke to a group of five or six *poissardes* in a bid to prevent the massacres. He stressed that he spoke to them in the language that they understood – the uncouth one of Père Duchesne – and they responded with cries of, 'To Paris! To Paris with the King!'.[188] Although Fournier depicted himself as being the one in control, it was the women who held the power over the crowd. His decision to consult a small group of them is proof that he recognised their superior influence over the other female marchers. They used their shared experiences of motherhood and second-rate citizenship to persuade the group that the king would be better alive and in Paris. The praise of the women

[185] Ibid., p.ii, p.30.
[186] Ibid. Fournier stated that d'Ogny's death was something he 'merited only too well'. This indifference may have stemmed from Fournier's relief that there was one less challenge to his military career.
[187] Giddens, *The Constitution of Society,* p.xxii.
[188] Aulard, *Mémoires secrets de Fournier,* p.34.

from this account, combined with that from Tournon, Brissot and Carra, demonstrates that the women's actions were interpreted as an aid to revolutionary efforts.

Whilst not all officials agreed –Maximilien Robespierre argued that the decrees signed by the king during this period were only accepted because of the circumstances surrounding their presentation and not because Louis approved of them, and Bertrand Barère described the action that unfolded across the two days as 'deplorable scenes of violence and cruelty'– the support that the women received justified their actions.[189] Arguably the most extreme of the women's actions was the removal of the royal family from Versailles. This was radical because political power had resided there since 1682, and the forcible removal of the royal family from Versailles was an attack upon the ancien régime and its court politics, which many of the female rioters believed corrupted the royal family. The presence of Louis in Paris permitted the people to scrutinise the actions of the monarch. It also had the twin effect of forcing the deputies to move the National Assembly to Paris to conduct their business. Due to the actions of these women, Paris regained its status as the most politically important city in France. Thus, the women of the October Days contributed towards changing the course of events during the early days of the Revolution. What initially began as a demand for an end to bread shortages, ended in a shift of political power from Louis XVI to local institutions. This was a direct progression from the traditional food riots that occurred before the Revolution.

Evidence from some of the male testimonies can be used to confirm that this riot was of a different nature to previous examples. It is not possible within the constraints of this thesis to discuss all the male testimonies recorded at the Châtelet. Nonetheless, it is useful to consider a small sample of these testimonies when exploring the political agency of women during the October Days. Perhaps the most detailed account of the women's political agency is that of Maillard, which was recorded over several days and fifteen pages. According to Maillard, at 7 a.m. on 5 October 1789, the rooms of the Hôtel de Ville were filled with women who were destroying official papers amidst their protest over the bread shortages. They complained that the town was composed of aristocrats and that their male relatives were not exerting enough force against this corruption. When Maillard suggested taking a small group of the women to the Commune to express their grievances, they refused because

[189] Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), *Œuvres complètes,* Vol.6 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1910-67), p.106 ; Bertrand Barère (1755-1841), *Mémoires de B. Barère: Membre de la Constituante, de la Convention, du Comité de Salut Public, et de la Chambre des représentants,* intro.by Hippolyte Carnot (Brussels: Meline, Cans et Compagnie, 1842), p.239.

they believed that the Commune was composed of bad citizens.[190] In the next stage of his account, recorded on 3 March 1790, Maillard noted his discussion with M. Derminy, *aide-major-général*, whereby, Maillard argued that the women refused to listen to reason and were intent upon travelling to Versailles. He obtained permission to lead these women, on the understanding that he would maintain order.[191] He stressed that, before their departure the women split up and gathered other women to join them, often through threatening and forceful behaviour; behaviour which, Maillard asserted, occurred throughout the journey from Paris to Versailles.[192] For example, he mentioned a particular incident at Viroflay, where two bourgeois men on horseback, wearing black cockades, were stopped, insulted, and one was pulled from his horse whilst his cockade was removed.[193]

Maillard stopped the women from further attacking the man upon the understanding that he surrendered his horse to them, walked behind them, and that they make it public knowledge that he had insulted the national cockade.[194] A similar incident occurred further on in their journey, when two men wearing hats with black cockades were stopped by several women and forced to walk behind them after their cockades were removed.[195] In addition to demonstrating that many women involved in the October Days supported the revolutionary movement and took offence at those demonstrating public opposition to the revolutionary efforts, these incidents highlight that the women could defend their own interests. Whilst it is likely that Maillard brought these alleged incidents to the attention of the authorities to further his own reputation, possibly in the hope of some form of promotion, he unintentionally emphasised the degree of political agency that the women possessed. It was the women who decided to go to Versailles and who gathered support for their march, whether voluntary or not. It was the women who demonstrated commitment to the Revolution by actively insulting and shaming those who symbolically opposed what it stood for. Liberty and equality. When they reached Versailles, it was the women who decided to go first to the National Assembly and to the palace afterwards, to complain about the situation in Paris. At the National Assembly, Maillard escorted a group of around fifteen women to address the deputies. He allegedly spoke on their behalf as a means of maintaining order and pleading their case in a coherent manner.[196] Perhaps, Maillard did this because, as

[190] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol. I, pp.117-119.
[191] Ibid., p.119.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., p.125.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid., p.126.
[196] Ibid., pp.126-127.

someone indirectly connected to the circumstances of these women, he was less influenced by emotion and more likely to communicate their grievances rationally. Or he may have taken control as a means of demonstrating authority. It is also possible that it was a combination of these factors. He was revered by the revolutionaries for his actions on 14 July, and his credentials made him the ideal porte-parole for the women.

Traditionally, masculinity was linked to one's ability to exert control over dependents and coherently represent their needs in public. That said, masculinity at this time was fragile because the Revolution reshaped the ways in which men and women perceived themselves and their roles within society.[197] Many women, as those involved in the October Days illustrated, manipulated their roles as wives and mothers to carve out a place for themselves in the relatively fluid and unstable political sphere. As William Sewell and Heuer assert, the creation of the *citoyenne*, the feminine form of the *citoyen*, legitimated the public presence of women.[198] They may have lacked formal citizenship, but they redefined virtue. Previously, female virtue was associated with chaste, moral and obedient behaviour; in contrast, male virtue relied upon being the principal breadwinner of one's family and the successful exertion of control over dependents. However, in the early years of the Revolution, it became clear that both masculinity and femininity were cultural constructs that were influenced by every stage of the Revolution.[199] Women, by displaying loyalty to the French nation in their attempts to obtain adequate provisions, emphasised that they were as capable as men at understanding the political situation within France, supporting revolutionary ideologies, and exemplifying patriotic behaviour. They widened the boundaries of femininity to include republican motherhood, a hybrid of motherhood and political activity that was generally confined to maternal and marital duties. This was tolerated so long as it benefited revolutionary efforts, and, in response to this, masculinity was redefined.

As R.W. Connell argues, masculinity did not exist independently of femininity because femininity was the incomplete version of masculinity.[200] Thus, masculinity expanded to

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[197] Jennifer Heuer, 'Did Everything Change? Rethinking Revolutionary Legacies', in *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution,* ed.by David Andress (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.625-641 (p.625).
[198] Heuer, *The Family and the Nation,* p.5, p.49; William H. Sewell, 'Le Citoyen/ la citoyenne: Activity, Passivity, and the Revolutionary Concept of Citizenship', in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture,* Vol. II, ed.by Lucas, pp.105-123.
[199] Sean M. Quinlan, 'Men Without Women? Ideal Masculinity and Male Sociability in the French Revolution, 1789-1799', in *French Masculinities: History, Culture and Politics,* ed.by Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp.31-50 (p.32).
[200] R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.68.

encapsulate political participation, patriotism and, later during the revolutionary wars, a willingness to sacrifice one's life defending French interests. Hence, when taking this into consideration, Maillard's over-exaggeration of the role he played in the October Days can better be understood. Masculinity, according to Connell, was complex and composed of four distinct forms: hegemonic, the norm within a society and the most desired; subordinate, oppressed forms of masculinity, such as homosexuality; complicit, in which some hegemonic traits are present, but not all; and marginal, which is similar to hegemonic, but applies to minority groups based upon factors such as race.[201] By emphasising his leadership skills and ability to organise the women's march coherently, Maillard strove to display hegemonic masculinity. This is something which was replicated in some of the other male testimonies recorded at the Châtelet. Arguably, this assertion of hegemonic masculinity across the male testimonies came from a wounded sense of masculinity; men should have taken the initiative, but they were compelled to participate because women acted first.

Further evidence for this can be found in the testimony of Lafayette, which focuses primarily upon his organisation of the National Guard and the central role he played on 6 October at the palace. From the outset, he established connections between the National Guard, the nation and the king, by making his troops swear an oath of loyalty to the nation, law and king when they arrived at the National Assembly.[202] Upon entering the debating chamber of the National Assembly, he found it occupied by several Parisian men and women. Following a conversation with Mounier, he went to the palace and was told by the king, 'to take the old posts of the French Guards and return to the head of his column. The bodyguards, Swiss and *cent-suisses* were to remain in their posts'.[203] On 6 October, 'he addressed the people from the balcony with the king and some of the royal family because his experiences allowed him to understand the sentiments of the Parisians'.[204] After announcing the king's plans to return to Paris, he escorted the king to the Hôtel de Ville and then to the Tuileries.[205] In the aftermath of the October Days, Lafayette, according to his deposition, 'took the necessary measures to ensure public peace'.[206] From Lafayette's testimony, the following conclusions can be deduced.

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[201] Ibid., pp.79-80.
[202] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II., p.37.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., p.38.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.

As Louis Gottschalk and Margaret Maddox highlight, Lafayette was accustomed to being the one in charge and had not suffered any significant defeats in his public life.[207] He was 'an object of admiration and trust on all sides'.[208] Confirmation of this can be found in his ability to act as a spokesperson on behalf of the royal family, whilst simultaneously commanding the Parisian National Guard and sympathising with the grievances of the Parisians. However, the actions of the women and men who marched in October 1789 challenged his authority in ways that he had not experienced before. Firstly, Lafayette's absence from the Hôtel de Ville on the morning of 5 October was one of the primary reasons for the women marching to Versailles. This is verified in the testimony of Rolin, who stated that, prior to setting out for Versailles, 'several of the women went to the Hôtel de Ville to ask for M. Bailly and then M. de Lafayette but were told neither were there'.[209] As a result, they convinced sympathetic members of the National Guard to accompany them on their journey, which was a direct attack upon Lafayette's control over his troops.[210] If Lafayette's command over the Parisian National Guard was as tight as he alleged in his testimony, it is unlikely that the female marchers would have secured the support of some of his men. That they successfully engaged with members of the National Guard and convinced them to join their march, indicates the politically fluid environment of revolutionary Paris and the strength of the loyalty of members of the National Guard to their communities and districts.

Secondly, the overwhelmingly female presence amongst the protestors influenced Lafayette's response to the growing crowd. Despite the crowd being composed of women and men, and several members of both sexes being armed, Lafayette prioritised talking to these individuals rather than employing violence to disperse them.[211] Although he claimed that he was the one to address the Parisians because he was better placed to understand their grievances, his reluctance to use force against the crowd of the October Days is telling of gendered experiences during the first year of the Revolution.[212] In contrast to a few weeks previously, when the National Guard were commanded to block an estimated 1,500 men from marching to Versailles to complain about the royal veto and return Louis to Paris; by 6 October, Lafayette was willing to seek a peaceful, non-violent resolution with the

[207] Gottschalk and Maddox, *Lafayette,* p.3.
[208] Ibid., p.257.
[209] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, p.29.
[210] Levy and Applewhite note that it was when Lafayette hesitated to head the women's march that they recruited members of the National Guard. Levy and Applewhite, 'Women of the Popular Classes in Revolutionary Paris', p.14.
[211] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, p.38.
[212] Ibid.

marchers, even if this meant the return of the king to Paris.[213] The main difference between this march and the one from August is that women were the leading figures. This suggests that Lafayette was unwilling to incite violence against the women. Traditionally, violence was typically associated with men. This is evident from several of the women's and men's testimonies. Typically, where physical violence was mentioned, it was frequently linked to the actions of men or men disguised as women. For example, Madeleine Poinsignon declared that Armand, a servant of M. de Saint-Maixant, took pistols belonging to her employer, M. le marquis de Bellemont, to the palace, where he lost one of them.[214] Upon returning the other pistol, he bragged that he had stolen a pistol from the guard he killed.[215] Similarly, Martin's testimony described the killing of two bodyguards at the palace on 6 October and 'a man from the faubourg Saint-Antoine, with a long beard, armed with an axe' cutting off the heads of said bodyguards.[216] Girard, in comparison, observed a guard of the king 'being killed and bathed in his own blood', whilst in another courtyard 'a different member of the king's guard received two rifle butts to the head and was left for dead' by individuals wearing the uniform of the National Guards.[217] This association of violence with men was replicated in several of the male testimonies.

Sieur Jacques-Marie-Joseph Regnier, a thirty-two-year-old member of the Parisian bourgeoisie, witnessed a member of the National Guard of Versailles shoot sieur la Savonnieres, a guard of the king.[218] M. Honoré-Marie-Nicolas Duveyrie, a thirty-five-year-old lawyer in the Parlement of Paris, a substitute deputy at the National Assembly, and a representative of the Paris Commune, recounted the narrative shared by his cousin, M. Bouchard, who was a member of the king's guard. According to Duveyrie, M. de Varicourt was sentinel at the door of the queen's apartment when a crowd of men armed with pikes, rifles and other weapons, rushed into the room where five or six guards of the king and Varicourt were stationed.[219] Varicourt entered the queen's antechamber and shouted to Madame Thibaut to save the queen, then left the chamber and received a blow to the hand by a saber for trying to shut the door behind him.[220] He shot at the men with his musket and

[213] Gottschalk and Maddox, *Lafayette,* pp.231-235; André Vaquier (1886-1976), *Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution*, annotated by Sigismond Lacroix, Tome I (Paris: 1894), pp.412-414.
[214] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, p.142.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid., Vol.I, p.135.
[217] Ibid., pp.144-145.
[218] Ibid., p.21.
[219] Ibid., p.32.
[220] Ibid.

was massacred instantly by them.[221] Sieur Joseph Valdony, a twenty-six-year-old member of the *cent-suisses,* verified Duveyrie's account by stating that 'le sieur Varicourt lost his life'.[222] Sieur Philibert-Augustin Lefevre, a twenty-year-old military engineer-geographer, saw the corpses of two of the king's guards and was told that they were massacred by a man with a big beard.[223]

In contrast, accounts from the likes of thirty-eight-year-old Sieur Simon-David Lesieur, a bailiff in Versailles and captain of the National Guard; thirty-three-year-old François-Aimé de Miomandre de Sainte-Marie, member of the king's guard*;* and thirty-year-old Sieur Charles-Augustin Dupuy de Saint-Martin, officer of the Flanders regiment, over-exaggerated their role, stating that the women and men were armed with various weapons.[224] Lesieur reported that a group of around two hundred women and men, some of whom were armed with pikes, entered the marble courtyard and stood under the balcony of the king.[225] He also noted that the two French Guards stationed in the guardhouse had their heads removed from their bodies.[226] Miomandre freed one of his comrades, sieur du Repaire, from a man who had knocked him onto his back and taken a pike to his stomach.[227] When leaving the king's room, where Repaire was attacked, he heard threats uttered against the king, such as 'we want to cut his head, his heart, and stew his kidneys'.[228] Dupuy de Saint-Martin 'saw a great young man, a member of the king's guard, perish before his eyes, despite the presence of several members of the National Guard'.[229] A bearded man cut the guard's neck whilst he continued to struggle against his attackers.[230]

The evidence from this selection of testimonies feeds into Garthine Walker's argument that the aggressive behaviour of men in early modern society was depicted as violent and capable of committing serious damage, whilst the actions of women were deemed non-violent or trivial.[231] What must be considered, however, is the status, occupation, geographical loyalties and gender of the deponent being interviewed. In the cases of Martin, Girard and

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[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid., p.64.
[223] Ibid., p.112.
[224] Ibid., pp.34-36, pp.38-42, pp.153-154.
[225] Ibid., p.35.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid., p.39.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid., p.153.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.23.

Poinsignon, it is possible that they did not want their reputations to be tarnished through association with violent or unruly behaviour. A woman's reputation was vulnerable to slander and deviant behaviour often resulted in vicious rumours that permanently damaged her honourable reputation. Female honour was based upon chastity and maternal abilities. Martin described herself as a *garde-malades* when having her personal information recorded at the Châtelet. Roughly translated, this was someone who cared for the sick. There is no indication as to whether this was a paid or voluntary occupation for Martin but, considering that caregiving and healing were traditionally associated with women, it is surmisable that she carried out this role as an extension of her domestic duties and was a respected and trusted member of her community.[232] Poinsignon, on the other hand, was a domestic servant and married woman. Interestingly, and in contrast to the testimonies of the other female deponents who were married, there is no occupation listed for her spouse. This suggests that she may have been the sole provider for her family at the time of being interviewed and structured her responses to the questions the judges asked her in such a way that no shame could be brought upon her own reputation or that of her employer. For these women, distancing themselves from the violence carried out during the October Days and attributing it primarily to male rioters was in keeping with traditional understandings of the maternal role of women and their centrality to their families and local communities as moral guardians. Arguably, Martin and Poinsignon did not wish to be labelled deviant or unruly because this had the potential for decreasing their respectability, which was connected to their occupational status and ability to contribute financially to the family economy.

Girard is a more complex case than Martin and Poinsignon because she was a member of the Parisian bourgeoisie and did not disclose her marital status but mentioned that she lived in the home of a hosier. In contrast to other wealthy women interviewed, such as Pauline-Marguerite-Madeleine Blangie and Madeleine Simon, who completely denied knowing anything about the October Days; Girard spoke freely about her experiences and owned up to being present in the National Assembly when the women made their demands.[233] A case can be made for this when Sarah Maza's analysis of the term bourgeoisie is considered. Bourgeoisie, within a modern context, is recognised as a large group of people who were not members of the nobility or the clergy but were of greater social status than manual workers; whereas in early modern France, bourgeoisie was frequently employed to describe the

[232] Leigh Whaley, *Women and the Practice of Medical Care in Early Modern Europe, 1400-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), p.2.
[233] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, pp.150-151; Vol.III, pp.21-22.

inhabitants of a town.[234] If one takes Girard's labelling of herself as bourgeoisie to mean both an inhabitant of Paris and someone of significant wealth, the paradoxical nature of her individual identity can be explored. To be Parisian was to be more than someone merely living in the capital city, it was someone who felt that they belonged in Paris and had a sense of loyalty to the town and its other inhabitants through charitable actions and economic activities.[235] Yet Girard appeared to feel little solidarity with her fellow Parisians, was reluctant to join their march, and her obvious discomfort in witnessing the acts of violence insinuates that she was out of touch with the everyday experiences of those who were starving and living on the margins of poverty and destitution. Furthermore, she was unaccustomed to the threats of violence which were a feature of life on the streets and were fundamental to the repertoire of the protestors.[236] Evidence of this can be found in her emphasis upon the threats made by some of the female marchers to cut her hair if she did not join them, and 'the abominable words spoken against the queen' on 6 October.[237] Had Girard empathised with the desperation of the marchers and spent greater time in the spaces they occupied on a daily basis, it is unlikely that these verbal threats would have shocked her so much. Thus, Girard's wealth was of greater significance than any loyalties to her hometown in determining her reaction to the October Days.

For male deponents, social status and occupation played a central role in determining personal interpretations of the October Days. Whether Lesieur, Miomandre and Dupuy played as active a role in deterring the alleged violence of the Parisian crowds as they suggested remains difficult to prove as one only has access to their individual accounts. Nevertheless, one can conclude, considering their ages and occupations, that the overdramatization of the events and their "heroic" actions served the purpose of furthering their careers. As young men, they had much to prove and greater opportunities for promotion. Standing out from the crowd was a sure way of being recognised. This explains, to a considerable extent, the aim of many young men to conform to both old and new definitions of masculinity. They existed at a time when notions of masculinity and femininity were unstable. Neither of these concepts were universal and they were defined in relation to one's social status. Masculinity for men of an aristocratic or bourgeois background was

[234] Sarah Maza, 'Bourgeoisie', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancien Régime,* ed.by William Doyle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.127-140 (pp.127-128).
[235] Deborah Simonton, *Gender in the European Town: Ancien Régime to the Modern* (London: Routledge, 2023), p.11, p.15.
[236] Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.188.
[237] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.144-145.

generally associated with the civility, *sensibilité* and reason that characterised the Enlightenment. Some of the male deponents, particularly those with honorific titles, such as *sieur* and *messire,* and a connection to the royal family often denied knowing anything or based knowledge upon the accounts from other individuals. Testimonies from the likes of fifty-six-year-old Sieur Jacques Campy, secretary to the king; fifty-five-year-old Sieur Claude Carlemen de Rulhières, a knight of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis and member of the académie Françoise; and forty-four-year-old Sieur Jean-Jacques Louis Sirot, a drapery merchant and Lieutenant of the National Guard of Versailles, explicitly denied any knowledge of the October Days.[238] This is intriguing given their proximity to the royal family within an official capacity and raises a key issue about masculinity. These men clearly valued their status consolidated by their careers. For these middle-aged men, their careers were central to their identities, and they may not have wished to say anything that would adversely affect their success or position, which, when their ages are accounted for, were most likely bought titles rather than achieved through talent and merit. They belonged to a generation where senior officers were 'merely on the lists and the payrolls' of the army and did not necessarily offer any active service.[239]

This contrasted with the experiences of soldiers such as Lesieur, Miomandre and Dupuy, who occupied a very masculine world based upon comradeship, military discipline and solidarity with one's fellow soldiers.[240] As Robert Nye notes, for these men, the connection between duty and honour was close and 'hotly defended'.[241] Fundamentally, they had to take elements of the ancien régime definition of masculinity, notably the ability to assert patriarchal authority and to defend one's honour against personal affronts via physical retaliation, and combine them with new elements, such as an open display of respect, honour, patriotism and the ability to defend French interests. Furthermore, they were to demonstrate a commitment to the new regime by swearing an oath of loyalty to the nation and promising to maintain peace, defend fellow citizens, and oppose disorder.[242] This depicts the importance of the Revolution in altering cultural aspects of society. The uncertainty and

[238] Ibid., Vol.I, pp.18-19, pp.23-24, p.33.
[239] David Parrot, 'Armed Forces', in *The Ancien Régime,* ed.by Doyle, pp.59-74 (p.71)
[240] Alan Forest, 'Citizenship, Honour and Masculinity: Military Questions under the French Revolution and Empire', in *Gender, War and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830,* ed.by Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele and Jane Rendall (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), pp.93-109 (p.98).
[241] Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honour in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.27.
[242] Gottschalk and Maddox, *Lafayette,* p.189.

loose definitions of masculinity and femininity permitted members of either sex to reshape their identities.

Where Maillard, Lesieur, Miomandre and Dupuy appear to have embraced the opportunities the Revolution offered them to reconstruct their personal and collective identities, other male deponents did not, and this is confirmed by their reaction to the female rioters. As with the women's testimonies, there are some distinct themes running through the men's testimonies. These include the threatening behaviour of the female rioters, bread as a motivating factor for the protest, and violence being the main intention of the women from the outset of the October Days. Twenty-one of the male deponents named bread as the motivating factor behind the march, with a further seven stating that the primary intention of the women was to obtain bread but that they simultaneously had other motivations.[243] According to Sieur François-Marie de Mathei, a fifty-year-old lieutenant-colonel of the Flanders Regiment and knight of the royal order and military of Saint-Louis, at 4.30 pm on 5 October, a great number of women vehemently asked him for bread as they had not eaten in thirty-six hours. He offered them money which they refused, declaring 'it is not money that we need, it is bread'.[244] This desire for bread was also emphasised in the testimonies of M. Jacques Delavigne, a forty-six-year-old lawyer in the parlement of Paris, and thirty-six-year-old Sieur Louis Duval de Grandmaison, who was also a lawyer in the parlement. Delavigne stressed 'the cries over the rarity of bread', whilst Grandmaison stated that, 'the women wanted bread'.[245] These deponents focused on the role of women as providers as a means of justifying the women stepping outside of their local communities and of understanding the October Days as they developed. They successfully captured the anguish of the market women and appear to have sympathised with them. By placing the women's actions within the traditional frameworks of the food riot and maternal duties, they sought to maintain a sense of equilibrium within the continuously evolving context of the Revolution. This intimates that these men felt some anxiety around the October Days, possibly because of the scale on which it was carried out and sought to make sense of the uncertain world they occupied by maintaining established gender roles.

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[243] The testimonies that identify bread as the motivating factor for the women's actions are XXXVII, XLIII, XLIX, XCII, CXI, CXIV, CXVI, CXXXVI, CLXV, CCXI, CCXX, CCXXXVII, CCXVI, CCLXIX, CCLXXII, CCLXXIV, CCCXII, CCCXX, CCCLXXXVI, CCVI, CCCLXXXII. The seven testimonies that mention other motivating factors are CXL, CLIV, CCXXI, CLV, CLXXVII, XXX, LXXXI.

[244] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.I, pp.70-71 (p.70).

[245] Ibid., pp.77-78 (p.78), pp.85-86 (p.86).

For those that disapproved of the women acting outside of the boundaries of femininity, there was a distinct attempt to maintain patriarchal control and reinsert authority by painting the women in a negative light. One of the most vitriolic accounts of the October Days is that of M. Charles-François Bernardy, a thirty-three-year-old bodyguard of the king. Bernardy alleged that a group of women at the gates of the palace said 'it is not bread that we want, it is your blood […] Your queen is a hussy, and we want to skin her into ribbons'.[246] He also recalled stepping in to save M. de Saint-Martin, the quartermaster of the guards of the king, from the blow of a lance wielded by one of the women.[247] This emphasis upon the violent intentions of the women is also present in the testimonies of M. Pierre-Victor Malouet, a forty-nine-year-old navy steward and deputy of the National Assembly; Messire Thomas-Louis-César Lambert de Frondeville, a thirty-year-old deputy of the National Assembly, advisor in council of the king, and president of the parlement of Normandy; and Sieur Jean-Louis Brousse des Faucherets, a forty-three-year-old lawyer of the parlement of Paris and lieutenant-major in the department of public establishments. From these accounts it appears that the women had violent intentions from the outset and refused to listen to reason. Malouet, despite noting that the group of women and men that he met on his journey home from the Assembly stated their intentions to ask the Assembly for bread, highlighted that they were armed with pikes and rifles, and insulted the deputies of the clergy upon entering the Assembly.[248] Lambert noticed that the 'cohort of women' who arrived at the Assembly were accompanied by a great number of cannons and that they 'penetrated the first courtyard and then the palace'.[249] Brousse's account furthers that of Lambert by describing the women crying 'that they were missing bread', saying that they wanted 'to punish the authors of the famine', and blaming Marie-Antoinette for their suffering.[250]

The descriptions of the women in these accounts were unfavourable and fed into the notion that women were naturally unruly. It is likely that the negative reactions of Malouet, Lambert and Brousse stemmed from their fears over the political agency of the women and the challenge it posed to their authority. Each of these men played a significant political role within society and were involved in lawmaking to some degree. For a country that was trying to establish a new regime, a strong and capable government was necessary. To have the Parisiennes turn up at the National Assembly complaining that they were not being listened

[246] Ibid., Vol.II, pp.81-82 (p.81).
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid., Vol.I, pp.167-171 (p.169).
[249] Ibid., Vol.II, pp.10-15 (p.11).
[250] Ibid., Vol.I, pp.58-61 (p.58, p.61).

to, was to have questions raised around their ability to efficiently execute their official duties. Intriguingly, although it is mentioned that the women were armed and that there were some instances of physical violence, these deponents placed greater emphasis upon the verbal threats that the women made. This is explained by Walker, who argues that male victims, such as the deputies who were ridiculed and heckled by the women who entered the National Assembly, often downplay the physical actions of women and focus on alternative forms of disorder like abusive language.[251] The reason for this is that the physical assaults from a woman was more emasculating and humiliating than if they were to come from another male.[252] Physical retaliation was an appropriate masculine response within the context of male-on-male violence because it emerged from an established code of honour.[253] Female violence, especially against a man, was subversive and unnatural. Malouet, Lambert and Brousse's focus on the verbal aggression of the female marchers can thus be interpreted as an attempt to prevent further attacks upon their masculinity. The contrasting views of the women of the October Days studied within the scope of this chapter are evidence of the cultural conflicts created by the Revolution and its break with the past. This argument is also applicable to those that emphasised the violent behaviour of the women or attributed violent acts to cross-dressing individuals. As previously noted, violence was not a trait that was commonly associated with respectable women. Although women were generally treated more leniently than men for such behaviour, female violence threatened masculinity. Those who portrayed the women as violent or stated that the violence was carried out by men dressed as women likely did so to discredit the success of their march.

1.7 The Value of the Châtelet Inquiries for Understanding Women's Political Agency

Overall, the Châtelet depositions are a useful source both quantitively and qualitatively. As Walker emphasizes, court records cast light on the various social interactions and diversity of early modern society.[254] In addition to allowing one to see the overall representation of women during this official process, they give detailed insight into the unfolding of the October Days. The women and men interviewed at the Châtelet were not the leaders of the October Days. Nor were all of them key participants. They typically came from respectable backgrounds. In terms of the women interviewed, more widowed and married women were

[251] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order*, p.81.
[252] Ibid., p.80.
[253] Ibid., p.37.
[254] Ibid., p.3.

interviewed than single women, and they either had an occupation or considerable social status. The experiences of these women differed greatly to one another and to the market women who led the march. Whilst it has been ascertained that married and widowed women were typically driven by economic motivations, this is not necessarily true for single women. For these women, political motivations may have been of greater significance than economic ones. This is because they possibly had less responsibility for dependents and a greater amount of time to devote to political participation. Something else worth noting is the importance of social status in determining individual perceptions of the October Days.

For women such as Julie-Anne Bury and Poinsignon, it is conceivable that their employment in domestic service influenced their responses to the interviewers at the Châtelet. By the time of the Revolution, domestic service was salaried and one of the biggest employers of individuals from the lower echelons of society.[255] A servant was employed, above all else, as a symbol of social status – they represented the wealth of their employer.[256] Respectability, honour and loyalty were key to maintaining a job in service. Few employers were willing to employ servants who were held in ill repute because this would reflect badly upon their own public image. This, in part, explains Bury and Poinsignon's reluctance to admit to any first-hand knowledge of the October Days: they relied upon the income from their service and did not wish to jeopardize their employment by admitting to any direct or indirect part they may have played in the October Days. That said, it is possible that these women, due to the pace and environment in which service was carried out, truly knew very little about what occurred on 5 and 6 October. Most of their tasks were carried out indoors and it is feasible that they did not leave the homes of their employers during the events of the October Days. However, be that as it may, the status of those in service and how little this changed during the Revolution is worth considering. As Cissie Fairchilds' study of the relationship between servants and their masters concludes, the Revolution treated servants with considerable suspicion and hostility.[257] They were denied active citizenship due to their perceived dependency upon their masters and were abused or targeted when they appeared in public because they were deemed to be symbols of the privilege of the nobility.[258] Why Bury and Poinsignon would offer their support to a regime which failed to offer them any material benefits can be questioned when the status of domestic servants is examined from

[255] Cissie Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p.2, p.17.
[256] Ibid., p.6.
[257] Ibid., p.233.
[258] Ibid.

this perspective. They would have little to gain from helping the Châtelet investigators with their inquiries.

In contrast, the testimonies of women like Jeanne-Louise-Constance d'Aumont and Marie-Anne-Renée Desprez were shaped by their wealthy status. D'Aumount admitted to being present at the palace on 6 October, but took care to emphasise that she was staying at the palace as a guest alongside her spouse, who was the duc de Villeroy.[259] She made a sharp distinction between herself and the rioters by painting herself as a victim who had to witness the 'horrors' carried out by the 'armed men and women of the people'.[260] In her account she was both present and removed from what occurred in the palace, in that she observed some of the violence carried out but could not identify any of the rioters' motivations and clearly did not approve of how they conducted themselves. In other words, despite being an inhabitant of Paris herself, d'Aumount failed to understand the plight of fellow Parisians because her circumstances were very different: she was not accustomed to living on the margins between poverty and destitution and the desperation this brought with it. Desprez, in comparison, completely removed herself from any association with the October Days by claiming that, 'she did not leave her home or that of a friend's, where she spent some of 6 October to see the arrival of the king'.[261] Desprez had spent much of the summer at Passy with her spouse and returned to Paris at the end of September.[262] As a result, she had not personally witnessed the desperation of the women in the bread lines or the increasing agitation in the streets and the marketplace over the shortage of grain, and failed to sympathise with the female rioters. Much like d'Aumount, Desprez's comfortable background, determined primarily by the occupation of her spouse, influenced her perceptions of the October Days and how she responded to questions at the Châtelet. The Châtelet, a small fortress prison with greater notoriety than that of the Bastille, which also contained a torture chamber and the city's morgue, created fear throughout Paris.[263] Consequently, it is unlikely that this was somewhere that women of significant social standing willingly chose to occupy. D'Aumount and Desprez's distancing of themselves from the actions of the female rioters underlines the importance of conforming to societal expectations and links to concerns around social status. Like gender and age, social status

[259] *Procédure criminelle,* Vol.II, p.150.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid., Vol.I., p.252.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ministère de la Justice, 'Le Châtelet de Paris', *Ministère de la Justice,* 2012 <http://www.justice.gouv.fr/histoire-et-patrimoine-10050/la-justice-dans-lhistoire-10288/le-chatelet-de-paris-24777.html> [accessed: 22 October 2020].

contributed to the differing experiences between and within the sexes. Bury, Poinsignon, d'Aumount and Desprez were from very different walks of life. Where Bury and Poinsignon had to tread carefully to avoid dismissal from the occupations that permitted them to contribute to the family economy, d'Aumount and Desprez were more concerned with defending their own reputations and those of their spouses. Those of a higher status like d'Aumount and Desprez, were more likely to prioritise defending their respectability because they did not have the same economic motives as Bury and Poinsignon for either participating in the October Days or colluding with authorities to pin the blame on Orléans and his associates.

This highlights, as Karen Hunt concludes, that power is relational and is as much about the power one has over someone or something, as it is about the power to carry out a particular action or set of actions.[264] It also confirms that political agency was not universal and that the ways in which women could exhibit political agency were unique to their personal circumstances. Nevertheless, the testimonies of the female deponents offer valuable insight into the roles that they did play and the extent to which they portrayed themselves as victims or bystanders. Moreover, they highlight how the women adapted a traditional method of protest to fit the context of revolution. The October Days became a symbol of collective female militancy. The women directly intervened in the legislative process by targeting government officials and symbolically replaced the representatives whom they believed were failing to represent them.[265] For every time they made a violent threat or gesture, carried out a physically violent act, engaged with members of the National Guard, Swiss Guard and king's guard, heckled and menaced the deputies of the National Assembly, and discussed politics with leading revolutionaries, the women displayed political agency. It can be concluded from the testimonies examined in this chapter that the political agency of the women caused significant agitation. Their actions were a departure from the traditional methods of collective activity available to women and were a step towards 'participatory democratic politics'.[266] That they targeted bakers, grain merchants, deputies and the king, signifies that they were politically motivated, politically aware, and possessed some political skill in directing their grievances towards key figures of influence.[267] Above all else, what the October Days demonstrated was that politics was not a binary between those who held

[264] Karen Hunt, 'Women as Citizens: Changing the Polity', in *The Routledge History of Women in Europe Since 1700,* ed.by Simonton (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.216-258 (p.217)
[265] Ibid., p.225.
[266] Levy and Applewhite, 'Women of the Popular Classes in Revolutionary Paris', p.9.
[267] Ibid., p.10.

official power and the disenfranchised: women were excluded from possessing formal political authority, but their mass food riot threatened public order and forced authorities to respond to their demands.[268] Composed of thousands of women from across various Parisian sections, who gathered in such a short period of time, the scale of the October Days was unmatched by any previous food riot.[269] The Revolution offered women entry to spaces that were previously closed off to them and which allowed them to pose as active citizens despite legal exclusion from this title. As Godineau asserts, 'they were engaging in an act of citizenship; they were appropriating a right that they did not have'.[270] That the National Assembly ordered an inquiry into the October Days, indicates the perceived importance of this event by patriarchal authorities. Furthermore, that women were interviewed during the investigation suggests that male revolutionaries recognised the notable role women played across the two days.

Regardless of whether female deponents denied any knowledge of the October Days, admitted to witnessing events, or declared that they were coerced into being a part of the crowd, they exerted political agency. In this context, women's political agency did not solely encompass crossing what Mona Ozouf labels 'the revolutionary threshold' – that is, the extent to which one was willing to participate in revolutionary society.[271] It also included picking and choosing what they told officials during the Châtelet investigation and how much they revealed about the true nature of their participation. At the core of this decision making was one's marital status, social status and loyalty to one's place of residence. As the analysis of many of the women's testimonies has highlighted, the experiences of women in both the ancien régime and revolutionary society lacked a universality. Every individual living through the revolutionary period had their own story to tell, as the testimonies attest, and this illustrates that the Revolution was felt at all levels across society to varying degrees.[272] The October Days brought women to the forefront of revolutionary activity by allowing them to become more vocal about what they wanted, and set the standard for their subsequent participation in the Revolution.[273] Nowhere is this clearer than in the *Procédure*

[268] Ibid; Maartje van Gelder, 'Street Politics' in *Early Modern Streets: A European Perspective,* ed.by Danielle van den Heuvel (London: Routledge, 2023), p.111.
[269] Garrioch, 'The Everyday Lives of Parisian Women', pp.244-245.
[270] Dominique Godineau, 'Masculine and Feminine Political Practice during the French Revolution, 1793-Year III', in *Women and Politics in the Age of the Democratic Revolution,* ed.by Harriet Applewhite and Darline Levy, pp.61-80 (p.69).
[271] Mona Ozouf, *Women's Words: Essay on French Singularity,* trans.by Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p.241.
[272] McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, p.365.
[273] Antoinette Wills, *Crime and Punishment in Revolutionary Paris* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), p.112.

criminelle, which allows connections between women and the Revolution to be reconsidered, making it a valuable source for those interested in studying women's political agency, what this term meant for different kinds of women, and how they understood their role within revolutionary society.

Chapter Two. Female Journalists and Translators in Revolutionary Paris: Louise de Kéralio-Robert, Sophie de Condorcet and Rosalie Jullien

Whereas the women of October 1789 modernised traditional methods of female protest to adapt to the new opportunities presented in the first revolutionary phase, others opted for less vociferous participation. Writing offered women a platform from which they could freely express their views and was considered an acceptable activity for them to immerse themselves in. According to Carla Hesse, this is because writing could be confined to the domestic sphere and did not necessarily imply an attack upon the control exerted by patriarchal authorities.[1] Writing was an art, a form of expression, which may have been intended for public consumption but was often a private affair. Women typically adopted writing to record daily events, helping them compartmentalise the political, economic, cultural and social shifts occurring around them. Of course, there were forms of writing that women exerted agency through which failed to conform to writing as a private act. Two such forms that fall into this category are journalism and translation.

To understand how these genres allowed women significant agency in the 1790s, this chapter will open with a discussion around the processes behind journalism and translation. It will be noted within this section that these genres offered women considerable leverage because they engaged with political and cultural ideas and shared their views with broad audiences. They also worked alongside other individuals, whether editors, publishers or fellow writers, forming networks that cultivated intellectual exchange. At the crux of this were Louise de Kéralio-Robert, Sophie de Condorcet and Rosalie Jullien, and the privileged position these women held due to their high-profile marriages. They constituted one half of what could be referred to as revolutionary power couples. This concept will be defined in relation to eighteenth century French society and used to develop an awareness of how marriage was politicised during the Revolution. This builds upon Leigh Whaley's study of the Roberts as 'partners' in revolutionary action and Suzanne Desan's assertion that marriage was a political tool throughout the Revolution that was exploited by both sexes.[2] By examining

[1] Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.46.

[2] Leigh Whaley, 'Partners in Revolution: Louise de Kéralio and François Robert, Editors of the Mercure National, 1789-1791', in *Enlightenment and Revolution: Essays in Honour of Norman Hampson,* ed.by Malcolm Crook, William Doyle, and Alan Forrest (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), pp.114-131 (p.114); Suzanne Desan, 'The Politics of Intimacy: Marriage and Citizenship in the French Revolution', in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment,* ed.by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), pp.630-648 (p.643).

Kéralio, Condorcet and Jullien, this chapter will highlight women's political agency in revolutionary Paris through journalism, translation and high-profile connections. These women have been selected for the following reasons: they are amongst the most documented women from this period; they were all writers in some capacity; and they did not, on the surface, appear to radically push the boundaries of their sex. Each of these women realised the constraints that their sex placed upon them and manipulated their high-profile marriages to enter the political sphere. As Susan Dalton asserts, the Revolution did not permit women to ignore eighteenth century gender norms but did provide the space for them to adapt these norms to their needs.[3] As journalists, letter-writers, memoirists, *salonnières,* political mediators and *clubbistes*, these women helped shape the political dimensions of revolutionary society.

2.1 Journalism and Translation

To be a journalist or a translator in revolutionary France involved being part of a unique process influenced by complex networks. The specific processes behind these genres differed. For journalists, revolutionary society was so politically polarised that there was a wide scope for up-and-coming writers to launch their careers. Between 1789 and 1792, over five-hundred political journals were founded.[4] The absence of stringent policing of published works allowed journalists to devote time to the events, individuals, institutions, laws and ideas that most appealed to them.[5] Whilst journalists tailored their articles to suit the stance of their editors and the desired audience of whichever journal they wrote for, they had relative freedom over what they prioritised. Journals during the Revolution became more focused, with events reported on in finer detail and a central story each week, resulting in a wider array of topics being covered across issues.[6] Editorial decisions were a collaboration between publishers, editors and journalists, with everyone involved being granted considerable sway. Furthermore, pseudonyms protected the identities of journalists who wished to remain anonymous. For female writers, revolutionary journalism symbolised a new era for those who wanted to share their political opinions with a public audience. They

[3] Susan Dalton, 'Gender and the Shifting Ground of Revolutionary Politics: The Case of Madame Roland', *Canadian Journal of History XXXVI* (2001), 259-282 (p.261).
[4] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class*, p.19.
[5] Jack R. Censer, *Prelude to Power: The Parisian Radical Press 1789-1791* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.xi.
[6] Jack R. Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.29.

were granted access to spaces that were previously exclusively male. To write about developing issues, journalists had to be present at the street level, occupying spaces such as galleries and cafés, mingling with all sorts of people to accurately capture a sense of the rapidly changing events taking place daily. With so many options available in terms of which journals one could contribute or subscribe to, women could be selective about the issues they reported on and the people they networked with. These networks were like those that the market women developed, providing a sense of security and professional support. On top of this, journalism permitted women to further develop their political consciousness. A career in journalism was about political transparency, where possible, with every journalist required to publicly take a firm political position; something which deviated from the traits of traditional femininity. Consequently, it can be summarised that journalism presented women with a platform from which they openly expressed their opinions on topics they were previously discouraged from discussing outside their homes.

In contrast, translation was a collaboration between the author, the translator, and the context in which translations occurred. Whereas the aim of journalism was to disseminate information as quickly as possible, translated works served to educate members of society by sharing ideas and stories across borders. Translators, therefore, served as a bridge that fostered national and international relationships. They developed pathways of exchange across cultures and contributed to pre-existing and new readership markets.[7] Women were often asked to translate works because it was perceived as an inferior style of writing, requiring few skills and little talent.[8] However, their role in making new works accessible to broader audiences confirms that their work was of greater importance than it was credited. Female translators were 'negotiators and producers of discourse'.[9] Translation was more than merely copying a text into an alternative language. Translators had some agency over how they translated works, often altering aspects of texts, and adding some of their own views to the original version. This was, according to Mirella Agorni, one of the main criticisms of translators: they lacked originality.[10] At the heart of this critique was the notion that the writing process inspired creativity and intellectual opinions to develop, and that translation did not undergo this activity. Yet, translators entered multiple conversations with the author of the original work, the discourses of the space in which the text was initially

[7] Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.80.
[8] Mirella Agorni, 'A Marginal(ized) Perspective on Translation History: Women and Translation in the Eighteenth Century', *Meta 50(3)* (2005), 817-830 (p.818).
[9] Ibid., p.819.
[10] Ibid.

created, and their own environments, to produce a compromise between the author's sentiments and those of the translator. Therefore, translation consisted of a creativity of a different nature and was no less important than the works it aimed to disseminate. It offered a way into the world of letters, to engage with and promote political causes, and form valuable relationships with fellow writers.[11] Additionally, it may have been described as inferior, but translating required considerable literacy skills, so was limited to a select few individuals.

This brief analysis of journalism and translation shows that these modes of participation were exclusive in that they were available to those with a substantial education. They demanded literacy skills beyond those of signing one's name. Additionally, an education of this standard, which included bilingual elements, was mainly available to affluent members of society. Translation demanded access to an array of texts via a private library and lengthy periods of leisure time because it was a time-consuming activity. Thus, it was generally aristocratic and bourgeois women who partook in translation. The final thing to note about journalism and translation, linked to this previous point, is that the women who enjoyed these activities were typically from high-profile marriages or relationships. They were often engaged in other pursuits including hosting salons, where they acted as patrons for talented men and established influential relationships. These relationships benefitted both parties because men secured the patronage required to be successful in their chosen fields and were introduced to other talents, and women could participate in lively, intellectual discussions that opened their minds to enlightened ideas. For Kéralio, Condorcet and Jullien, their high-profile marriages and friendships with male revolutionaries significantly defined their ventures in journalism or translation. Their marriages are a prime starting point when trying to gauge how they successfully gained so much political agency through their writing. They belonged to what can anachronistically be described as power couples. To comprehend what this meant for eighteenth century couples some unpacking of this concept is required.

[11] Simon, *Gender in Translation,* p.37.

2.2 Political Power Couples

> The defects or faults of women are the works of men, as the vices of people are the crime of their despots.[12]
>
> The Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794).

This quotation by Condorcet, though appearing rather negative on the surface, can be viewed in a more positive light when assessing the power couples of revolutionary Paris. Power couples within the context of the Revolution refers to married or cohabiting couples within which both partners are equally politically accomplished.[13] Although a twentieth century term, it is applicable to certain couples of this period, amongst whom were the Marquis and Sophie de Condorcet, Camille and Lucile Desmoulins, François Robert and Louise de Kéralio-Robert, Jean-Marie and Marie-Jeanne Roland, Marc-Antoine and Rosalie Jullien, Jean-Paul Marat and Simonne Evrard, and Théophile Leclerc and Pauline Léon.[14] In view of Condorcet's idea of the intimate connection between the failures of men and women, these couples exemplified how women and men could forge intimate relationships with one another, mutually benefitting one another simultaneously. Each of these couples depicted the complexity of the political spectrum of revolutionary Paris. The Rolands and Condorcets were moderates who supported the Girondins. The Roberts were Cordeliers who believed in political inclusion, but not universal suffrage. Marat, Evrard, and the Julliens were ardent Jacobins. The Desmoulins', as followers of Georges Danton, were Dantonists, whilst Léon and Leclerc represented the Enragés and militant sans-culottes. Despite the male halves of these couples possessing political power through various official capacities, as deputies of the National Assembly, members and leaders of political clubs, journalists and *philosophes*, their female counterparts were central to their successes. Roland drove her husband's career as Minister of the Interior, seeking out political allies through her dinner parties. Kéralio was

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[12] Marie Jean Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), *Œuvres complètes de Condorcet,* Tome II (Paris: Henrichs, 1804), p.443.

[13] The Cambridge Dictionary definition is: 'two people who are married to each other, or in a relationship with each other, and both have extremely successful careers, especially in politics or entertainment'. 'Power Couple' in the *Cambridge Dictionary* [online], <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/power-couple> [accessed: 22 January 2021].

[14] Sam Dobbie, ''Applying Modern Concepts to Historical Contexts': Power Couples and the French Revolution', *Women's History Scotland*, blog by Valerie Wright, <http://womenshistoryscotland.org/2021/04/18/sam-dobbie-applying-modern-concepts-to-historical-contexts-power-couples-and-the-french-revolution/> [accessed: 23 April 2021].

a writer, publisher and translator; a member of the Cordeliers Club, the Fraternal Society of Both Sexes and the Society of Indigents; and a *salonnière*. Condorcet, like Kéralio, was a translator, writer and *salonnière*. Desmoulins was a journalist and diarist. Jullien was a diarist and political informant on behalf of absent family members. Evrard funded Marat's *L'Ami du Peuple*. Finally, Léon was a founder of the SRRW, which had close ties with the Enragés.

To put this more succinctly, the female counterparts of these couples were aware of the political importance of the Revolution and utilised their privileged positions to participate in revolutionary society. It is often argued that marriage in early modern Europe was a restrictive patriarchal institution under which women suffered considerable oppression. Yet, this was circumstantial, as these women in high-profile relationships emphasise. An equal partnership between the spouses, the success of one half of these couples relied upon the political activities of the other half. As Desan argues, this demonstrates that marriage during the Revolution encompassed a social contract between man and woman, containing significant political importance, from which the public and the private benefitted from gender complementarity: in other words, economic motivations no longer defined marriage.[15] Marriages developed a companionate aspect and there were, at times, greater opportunities for women to exert substantial agency. The Revolution, with its instabilities and uncertainties, was a turning point for female participation in society. Though never fully excluded from society, particularly because those from a working background often had to leave their homes to contribute financially towards the family economy, the Revolution opened new opportunities to women that contained political nuances. For women within power couples, access to revolutionary institutions and figures of authority were the foundations of their overall revolutionary experiences. They helped shape the political dimensions of society and, at times, as the examples of Kéralio, Condorcet and Jullien reveal, recorded their experiences through their writings which allowed them to be remembered in future accounts of the Revolution.

[15] Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p.68.

2.3 Louise de Kéralio-Robert (1758-1821) and *Le Mercure National*

Of the three women of this chapter, Louise de Kéralio-Robert fits most comfortably within the category of revolutionary journalist. Born in 1758 to Louis-Félix Guynement de Kéralio, a Breton noble, translator, professor at the École Militaire and member of the Academy of Belles Lettres, and Marie-Françoise Abeille, a translator and *salonnière,* Kéralio experienced the luxuries of a privileged background. What makes her most striking, despite little attention being paid to her because she left few personal papers, is that she had a public identity before the Revolution. Part of her ability to do so was attributable to the unusual situation of her parents. Shunned by their aristocratic relations because they married for love rather than economic necessity, a progressive idea for the time, they encouraged Kéralio to pursue her studies.[16] Hence, she gained an impressive amount of agency before her marriage. Access to Kéralio's life comes primarily from accounts of contemporaries and the works of other researchers. Greater attention should be paid to Kéralio because she was a prominent character in the early 1790s. However, to fully appreciate her importance in revolutionary society, a brief sketch of her experiences in the years leading up to 1789 must be observed, to gain a sense of her character and how she was already pushing gender barriers in eighteenth century France.

That she was a dominant figure in the public sphere is indisputable. In addition to translating works from her father's library, she also wrote novels and historical works, including *Adélaïde* (1785), her first novella, a memoir-novel published anonymously when she was eighteen years old, unusual given that this was typically a male genre; *Histoire d'Élisabeth, reine d'Angleterre* (1786-1788), a detailed account of Elizabeth I and her relationship with Mary Queen of Scots; and *Collection des meilleurs ouvrages français composes par des femmes* (1786-1788), a record of some of the best works by French female writers.[17] These historical works were produced in the years immediately following her experience as a silent partner in a printing company established by Jean Lagrange in 1785. It is arguable that her experiences, regardless of Lagrange being an unreliable business partner, permitted her to better understand the process behind publishing.[18] She became unpopular for her historical

[16] Karen Green, 'Louise Kéralio-Robert: Feminism, Virtue, and the Problem of Fanaticism', *Early Modern French Studies 43(1)* (2021), 106-122 (p.106).
[17] Ibid., pp.107-108; Megan Alexandra Valois, ''The Most Eminent and Capable of Revolutionary Women Journalists': Louise de Kéralio and the French Revolution' (Undergraduate Thesis, Acadia University, 2006), p.26.
[18] Hesse notes that in the *Archives de Paris* there are bankruptcy papers, filed under Lagrange's name on 30 March 1789, which reveal that Kéralio was his silent business partner. Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p.30.

works because she published them under her own name as an unmarried woman; this offers insight into the possible reasoning behind her adoption of a pseudonym for some of her works published after this period and the absence of a signature on others.

Unlike many female writers of the time, she did not embellish her language. Short, sharp and direct, Kéralio's anonymous works were often confused for those of a man because of the frankness of her arguments.[19] Perhaps, this style of writing was an attempt by Kéralio to have her work taken seriously. Hesse furthers this, highlighting that whilst there was no strict genre for women writers to adhere to, the public recording of facts was generally a male genre.[20] This is because history, in its most public of senses, was the male experience.[21] Thus, it is likely that she adopted a masculine style of writing due to her awareness of the expectations of writers, and did not wish her work to be dismissed on the basis that it went against the grain. This is very telling of the conventions of writing in eighteenth century France and the assumptions associated with specific styles and tones in relation to gender and agency. Regardless of this backlash and her early setbacks in her printing career, writing and translating aided her in carving a public identity for herself in the years preceding the Revolution. She was also active in the public domain as a *salonnière* and joined the Breton Club, where she developed interests in prison and hospital reforms.[22] In 1787, the Academy of Arras received her as an honorary member. This is significant because the society did not usually grant women membership. When combined with the knowledge of her literary background and *salonnière* status, it is evident that she manipulated her privileged background and relationships with men of means to consolidate a public reputation for herself that was political, but not so radical as to attract the attention of officials. She had the means and skills to gain support for her political participation and this served her well, particularly in August 1789, when she successfully launched the *Journal d'État et du Citoyen*. As Thomas Munck asserts, this broke new ground for her.[23]

Established in the months following the calling of the Estates-General, the Tennis Court Oath, the fall of the Bastille, and the decreeing of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the *Journal d'État* symbolised the ways in which Parisian society had adapted to the Revolution. These events marked a change in attitudes towards the role of *le peuple* and where

[19] Jules Michelet (1798-1874), *Les Femmes de la Révolution,* 2nd edt (Paris: 1855), p.173.
[20] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment,* p.86.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Valois, 'Louise de Kéralio and the French Revolution', p.26.
[23] Munck, *Conflict and Enlightenment*, p.293.

sovereignty belonged. Acceptance of the inequalities in political representation between and within the Estates and absolute monarch was in sharp decline. Individuals who would not have done so previously were challenging the powers of the king; especially his right to veto legislations. Women, as well as men, were swept along by revolutionary fervour and exploring ways to participate in traditionally exclusive spaces. Kéralio's political journal was one such example of the spaces some women successfully occupied. Initially published on a Thursday, and then a Thursday and Sunday by October 1789, Kéralio and her father were its primary contributors, with the goal of providing the wider public with literary and political material.[24] Existing until July 1791, it experienced around six transformations. Each transformation represented a change in the staffing of the journal, with Kéralio remaining its chief editor and only female contributor.[25] December 1789 marked the first significant transformation, with the name changing to *Le Mercure National* and the pages per week increasing from sixteen to seventy-two. To Kéralio and her father, were added Bassville, Carra and Robert as contributors.[26] By September 1790, the journal operated under *Le Mercure National et Révolutions de l'Europe*, following a merger with Alexandre Tournon's *Révolutions de l'Europe*. This partnership lasted until early 1791, when Kéralio married Robert and the journal became a collaboration between the couple. Becoming *Le Mercure National ou Journal Politique,* it was a merger with Pierre Lebrun-Tondu, increasing to five *livres* per month and printing sixteen pages daily.[27]

There are a few interpretations that can be deduced from these changes. In addition to showing that all the contributors, besides Kéralio, were educated men of relative means and liberal professions; it is also evident that she was naturally intuitive and understood the significance of being surrounded by such men. Not only did their associations with her journal provide it with the credentials required for it to be taken seriously, but their presence allowed her to write about the issues she most connected with, whilst ensuring that other issues were reported on by her colleagues. This permitted the journal to cover a variety of topics, lending it the legitimacy it needed to attract the relevant attention essential for its survival within the thriving revolutionary society. Furthermore, by going into partnership with men, Kéralio successfully deflected the attention of the authorities, appearing as a

[24] Subscription rates were two *livres* eight *sous* per month in Paris and three *livres* in the provinces. Whilst not exorbitant, these prices restricted subscription to the wealthy because workers prioritised spending their wages on necessities. However, they most likely received news from this paper through the traditional method of oral culture, especially in the clubs and streets. Ibid., p.33; Censer, *Prelude to Power*, p.13.
[25] Censer, *Prelude to Power*, p.13.
[26] Ibid., pp.14-15.
[27] Ibid., p.16.

dependent closely monitored by male relatives and friends. Arguably, this manipulation of her personal relationships and her status as a dependent solidified her presence in the political sphere. This demonstrates the substantial degree of agency that Kéralio exerted in the initial years of the Revolution. As the main editor of the journal, she was responsible for staffing. Her unwillingness to employ another female contributor to the journal is telling of her anti-feminist stance, which Annie Geffroy coins Kéralio's 'sexist republicanism'.[28] In contrast to the likes of Etta Palm d'Aelders and Olympe de Gouges, who openly promoted improvements that could alleviate some of the burdens women faced, Kéralio stated that women should not participate in government matters because they belonged in the home, where they educated their children on republican values and guided them morally.[29] Her praise of the women during the October Days rested on her interests in reform. She did not believe that these women acted outside of gender boundaries; after all, the perceived motivating factor behind this event was the bread shortages.[30] Further traces of this argument are present in her response to A.B.J. Guffroy's *Le Franc en Vedette* (1790).

Guffroy proposed that women be admitted to the primary assemblies to deliberate on the choice of municipalities.[31] He argued that a public mind and morals could not be achieved if women were excluded from local politics.[32] Marie-Antoinette promised to raise her sons guided by the principles of constitutional freedom and all French mothers had to commit to this, otherwise the immorality of society would lead to no fatherland.[33] Kéralio's response to Guffroy was as follows:

> I do not believe that women can ever have any active part in government, and I believe that the greatest good that the Constitution can do for public morals is remove them from it forever. Women rule in despotic states, which is enough to say that they must be null in the administration of a free country. […] The more they comply with what nature has granted them, the least they will want to undertake tasks beyond their physical and moral strength. Content with teaching their children the

[28] Annie Geffroy, 'Louise de Kéralio-Robert, pionnière du républicanisme sexiste', *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française 344* (2006), 107-124.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Valois, 'Louise de Kéralio and the French Revolution', p.34. Whilst this was not solely an economic protest, as E.P. Thompson's work on food riots summarises, this view is useful for gauging contemporary reactions to the October Days and how justifications for the actions of the market women were framed. E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth-Century', *PP 50* (1971), 76-136.
[31] A.B.J. Guffroy (1740-1800), *Le franc en vedette, ou, Le porte-voix de la vérité, sur le tocsin* (Paris: 1790), p.17.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

> decrees of the Assembly, they will have no ambitions to make nor dictate them.[34]

Kéralio supported women having a public role if it was for the benefit of their families. She believed that women should comply with traditional gender roles because nature intended for them to be different to men. Women with excessive power corrupted the nation and were inadequately prepared to lead with success.[35] Kéralio was a contradiction because she felt that women did not belong in the political sphere, claiming that they lacked the necessary time to fully understand its concerns: yet she devoted her time to politics.[36] She had the authority to grant a rare opportunity to a fellow female writer, but opted not to, and this unwillingness to employ another female contributor to *Le Mercure National* could be considered as evidence of her 'anti-feminist' stance. Finally, her partnership with Robert cemented their identity as a power couple. Whaley confirms this by referring to the couple as 'partners in revolution', implying that her career was entwined with that of her spouse and that it is challenging to discuss one in the absence of the other.[37] As one half of a power couple, there was an almost implicit expectation that she would have a public presence as a show of support for her husband's revolutionary career. That being the case, it was not unusual for Kéralio to be prominent within Parisian society.

Nevertheless, society had not changed so much as to fully embrace women in the political sphere. There remained an expectation that they would limit their tasks to the domestic sphere, as far as their circumstances permitted. Although writing was something which could be carried out from home, journalism was an exception. A career in journalism rested upon being at the heart of action as it developed. This gives another possible explanation for Kéralio's reservations towards signing her articles. In addition to wanting her work judged for its quality, she faced the added complication of preventing slanderous damage to her reputation. Her consciousness of this can be traced through the production of *Le Mercure National.* Across the seventy-nine issues of the journal, which lasted from mid-April to July 1791, a total of sixteen articles bears her signature. However, there are at least a further twenty-six articles that are attributable to her based upon their subject matter. Most of the

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[34] Geffroy, 'Louise de Kéralio-Robert', p.112.
[35] Louise de Kéralio (1758-1821), *Histoire d'Élisabeth, Reine d'Angleterre, tirée des écrits originaux anglois, d'actes titres, lettres & autres pièces manuscrits qui n'ont pas encore paru,* Tome Premier (Paris: 1786), pp.4-5.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Whaley, 'Partners in Revolution', p.115.

articles that contain her signature present her name in brackets.[38] The articles consulted were digitised copies of the journal available through Gallica, so it is possible that the editor added the signatures before digitisation. Whilst there is no definitive way to ascertain whether this is the case because it is not explicitly stated if any changes were made to the articles; this presents some interesting discussion around the question of agency. If one assumes that Kéralio added her signature at the time of publication, the degree of agency that she had comes under scrutiny. Why these articles and not all her articles? Do these articles provide insight into the issues that she was most willing to publicly support at the risk of her own reputation? What was the context at the time in which the signed articles were produced? Does adding a signature posthumously detract from the work or restore agency to the individual? Although interconnected, some of these questions are more easily answered than others.

In relation to the issues that most interested Kéralio, one can count literature reviews, promoting up-and-coming writers, the fraternal societies, and freedom of the press. Her focus on these topics is unsurprising when context is contemplated. For example, as a writer and journalist, she may have felt a loyalty towards promoting the works of new talents because she understood how the literary world operated and acted in a manner comparable to the patrons of the ancien régime. Promoting works allowed the establishment of support networks like those created by women within their local communities. Take her relationship with fellow journalist, Brissot, for instance. She may not have acted as Brissot's patron, but undoubtedly promoted his works orally, if not in writing, as a means of forming a bond. This relationship was reciprocal because he promoted *Le Mercure National* in his journal, *Le Patriote Français,* published between 1789 and 1793. He described it in the following manner: 'Mlle Kéralio has published the first issue of her journal. It breathes pure patriotism and contains the most rigid and sound political principles'.[39] He believed that this 'democratic' journal lent space to 'the best principles', and he frequently supported the Roberts financially as a result.[40] Thus, this example is useful for underlining the ways in which Kéralio established networks to support her revolutionary efforts, particularly her

[38] Another important aspect surrounding her signature is the dropping of the prefix 'de', which was associated with the aristocracy. Including this in her signature would have emphasised her noble background. Removing 'de' from her name was a shift away from ancien régime practices to promote equality. As someone who wished to tackle pre-existing gaps in the social hierarchy, using 'de' in her signature would have made her appear disingenuous. Mhairi-Louise Martin, 'A Political Union: An Analysis of the Revolutionary Personalities of Louise-Félicité de Kéralio-Robert and Pierre-François Robert' (Undergraduate Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2020), p.31.

[39] Brissot, *Le Patriote Français,* No.22, 21 August 1789, p.4.

[40] Whaley, *Radicals,* p.35.

written works. In contrast, her interests in the fraternal societies and freedom of the press derived from her individual circumstances. Her emphasis on the importance of the press emerged from the Comité de Police denying her the right to establish a printing company in November 1789, entitled the *Imprimerie Nationale du district des Filles-Saint-Thomas*, which she intended to run from her home.[41] When submitting her intentions to the Administration of the Book Trade, Kéralio invoked article eleven of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the right to the freedom of print.[42] This was countered by Thiebault, who stated in his report to the keeper of the seals that,

> The article Mlle de Kéralio cites does not state that everyone will be free to print. Never has a woman been permitted to acquire a printing shop. She can only keep one if she is the widow of a master printer.[43]

Like others of her sex, such as Mesdames Roland and Condorcet, she suffered the frustrations of being an intelligent woman with much to say but was restricted in what she could say. Her prioritisation of the freedom to print symbolised the venting of these frustrations. On 29 April 1791, she succinctly expressed the pivotal role of the press in informing the masses of ideas being discussed within the revolutionary institutions and society more broadly; whilst underlining the fears of authorities concerning the influence of the press over public opinion.[44]

> Grand Mayor of Paris, you oppose patriotic writings, complain […] where public opinion denounces you but you have never asked the National Assembly […] to prevent the publication of venomous aristocratic writings […] the fraternal societies are composed of merchants, known artists, domiciled, married and fathers of families. If there are those who have debts, they are the cause of the Revolution, great events inflame great misfortunes, misfortunes are not crimes, and the Revolution has not granted all citizens with the salary of a mayor or commander general, and did not put the millions of the court into their hands.[45]

As she asserted, the motivating factor behind efforts to control the press was that journals and pamphlets educated a greater proportion of society, possessing the potential to incite

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[41] Valois, 'Louise de Kéralio and the French Revolution', pp.33-34; Isabelle Bourdin, *Les Sociétés Populaires à Paris Pendant la Révolution* (Paris: 1937), pp.142-143.
[42] Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics*, p.30.
[43] Ibid., p.31.
[44] Keralio, 'Liberté de la Presse', *Le Mercure National*, 29 April 1791, pp.210-211.
[45] Ibid., p.211.

insurrections.[46] The criticism against the mayor of Paris' efforts to censor pro-revolutionary works, coupled with her description of the social composition of some of the popular societies, was her way of stressing to government officials that it was the people of Paris who held political power. It was also a warning to the mayor that censorship was a sure way to make enemies with those who were gaining a political consciousness because restricting information was an attack on their right to freedom of expression and sovereignty. By favouring the aristocracy and allowing others to 'breathe in the most dangerous poison', the mayor displayed counterrevolutionary behaviour.[47] It can be summarised from Kéralio's article that she considered the mayor's attitude to be worthy of the ancien régime and believed him to be undeserving of a position of authority. Moreover, it was a manifestation of Kéralio's own stubbornness and unwillingness to comply with patriarchal expectations, as demonstrated by her establishment of a political journal, and was a challenge to revolutionary officials who wished to limit the opportunities available to excluded groups. Her journalism showed that women were as capable as men of documenting and discussing serious political issues. She was not feminist in a modern sense because she did not promote equality between the sexes or women's rights, but she supported women being educated in the principles of the Revolution to ensure the competency of future citizens.

This explains her interest in promoting the fraternal societies. To fully capture the atmosphere of these societies and their values, attendance was required. This was not a problem for Kéralio because Robert became president of the Fraternal Society in March 1791, following the departure of its founder, schoolmaster Claude Dansard. Initially created as an educational institution for those of a lower social status to learn about the ideologies of the Revolution, the Roberts transformed its purpose. Kéralio understood the importance of these societies in supporting revolutionary efforts, describing them as indispensable in educating the masses and gaining traction for the Revolution.[48] On 23 April 1791, she wrote an article entitled 'Sociétés fraternelles'. Written before her piece on freedom of the press, this served as a prelude to her defence of the press by discussing the importance of these societies in developing the political consciousness of the working population, which was elaborated upon in the latter article. According to Kéralio,

> The fraternal society feels that the supervision of the elected officials of the nation is not only a right of any society, but is one of the most sacred duties

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Kéralio, 'Sociétés fraternelles', *Le Mercure National,* 23 April 1791, pp.113-114.

> of free men; that any deliberation that does not produce a goal is useless, and that the society has failed to reach a goal if it deliberates on laws and not on the conduct of the law enforcers.[49]

This tied into Kéralio's republican values which stemmed from her interest in antiquity, especially the politics of the Romans and Greeks. She believed that these societies were far more than educational institutions, arguing that they could serve as political apprenticeships for all citizens.[50] These apprenticeships would allow individuals to build connections with fellow revolutionaries, and gain the level of political consciousness needed to participate fully in the process of electing representatives, whilst exercising their individual rights. R.B. Rose furthers this, emphasising that Prudhomme, Marat, Tallien and the Roberts, who led the shake-up of the Fraternal Society, saw them as 'permanent institutions of popular pressure'.[51] This explains Kéralio's focus on the need to scrutinise those responsible for passing laws. A true democratic republic was only achievable if most active citizens contributed to the laws that their representatives decreed. As Jack Censer highlights, it was common for radical journalists like Kéralio to stress inclusion over exclusion, favouring a society that encompassed most individuals within its definition of *le peuple*.[52] This is because these journalists were educated people influenced by *philosophes* like Rousseau, who promoted the general will and the right of individuals to determine how they were governed. Kéralio's emphasis upon these societies was influenced by her belief in the complementarity of the sexes and the need for improved working conditions.

As a member of the Society of Indigents, she frequently complained of the pitiful existence of those from destitute backgrounds. She recorded discussions of this society in various issues of *Le Mercure National*, which were signed 'Louise Robert, *de la soc. des Indigents'*.[53] On 10 May 1791, Kéralio accentuated the importance of the clubs and sections in creating a space for poorer members of society to gather at the end of their working day and debate issues including their rights. She implored wealthy members of society to attend

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[49] Ibid., pp.114-115.

[50] This argument was replicated by the sans-culottes in 1793, who argued that education should be available to all and was more than intellectual ability. They argued that practical skills were as important in reducing the gaps in the social hierarchy, which is comparable to Kéralio's notion of political apprenticeships because these were about engaging with political discussions regardless of citizenship status.

[51] R.B. Rose, *The Making of the Sans-Culottes: Democratic Ideas and Institutions in Paris, 1789-92* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p.101.

[52] Censer, *Prelude to Power*, pp.41-42.

[53] Kéralio, 'Société des Indigents', *Le Mercure National*, 10 May 1791, p.376.

one of these meetings to witness these remarkable people without whom the elected would not exist.

> Come and see the workers, the craftsmen of your luxurious commodities, overcome with the fatigue of the day, listen with silence to the reading of the decrees of the National Assembly, think about them, make simple, but fair, observations, broaden and deepen these reflexions, and study their rights and duties to observe the former and respect the latter.[54]

Kéralio's argument rested on the premise that the wealthy remained privileged so long as the majority of the Third Estate remained politically ignorant. She asserted that they increased their agency by educating themselves via their local sections and clubs. No longer would they merely accept the decrees that were legislated, they would ponder them and decide whether they were a true representation of their wants and needs. This indicated a shift in power, suggesting that the individuals who were elected to the National Assembly were there to serve the electors and not prioritise their personal ambitions. Their power was dependent upon how adequately they fulfilled their role. If the electors were dissatisfied, careers could come to a swift end. Kéralio's views were like those of the sans-culottes. Although not a coherent social unit with a clear social and economic programme, the sans-culottes were progressive because they successfully established comprehensible political ideals, including 'the autonomy and permanence of the Sections, the right to approve legislation, control over elected representatives, and the power of revoking their mandate'.[55] They also promoted the creation of educational institutions to provide intellectual learning, moral guidance, and occupational training.[56] Despite coming to prominence in 1793, their arguments lacked originality because they were brought into existence by the likes of Condorcet, Kéralio and Nicolas de Bonneville, via the Cercle Social's journal *La Bouche de Fer*, in the early 1790s.[57]

From her article on the fraternal societies, Kéralio urged all members to refer to one another as *frère* and *soeur,* as opposed to *monsieur, madame* and *mademoiselle*.[58] This was a radical departure from the past because it moved away from traditional discourse to try and tighten gaps in the social hierarchy. However, radical in this sense does not only relate to a shift

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Albert Soboul, *The Parisian Sans-Culottes and the French Revolution, 1793-4*, trans.by Gwynne Lewis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp.98-99.
[56] Ibid., p.92.
[57] Ibid., p.64, p.102.
[58] Kéralio, 'Sociétés fraternelles', p.114.

from the established ideologies and institutions of the ancien régime*;* it also refers to a challenge to the 1791 Constitution's explicit division of society into active and inactive citizens. According to Kéralio, the decrees and ideas legislated by the deputies, particularly the Rights of Man, stemmed from discussions involving wider society and were, by extension, applicable to the various groups constituting the social order: therefore, the whole nation was integral to sovereignty.[59] Interestingly, this article was written before the Flight to Varennes, implying that she did not oppose the overall institution of the royal family, but did not believe that they should play a fundamental part in governing France. As a staunch republican, she envisioned a representative government, elected and governed by *le peuple*, as the central goal of the Revolution. She considered the practices of the royal family to be outdated. This is confirmed in her article from 15 May 1791, which discussed the case of Madame Mallard. Mallard claimed she was owed money, via the civil list, due to unfulfilled financial promises made by Louis XV, when she served as the wet nurse of Louis XVI.[60] Seemingly, Louis XVI recognised Mallard's claims, declaring that the state owed her the three-thousand *livres* she was promised because she had personally nourished its child.[61] Kéralio disputed this, stressing that it was not *the* child of the state that Mallard had nourished but another citizen, and that this perceived debt was a personal one belonging to Louis.[62] This was a criticism of the civil list and its unreasonable financial rewards made in compensation to individuals who were driven by personal ambition and self-interest at the expense of the collective good of the nation.[63] Kéralio's focus on this case is illustrative of the changing priorities of revolutionary society and the increasing decline in the power attributed to the royal family. Again, this article appeared prior to the Varennes episode. However, it emphasises the change in public opinion towards the royal family and what they ultimately represented: corruption.

She expanded upon this notion of tyranny and oppression in her article entitled, 'Reflections on the real dangers', published two days after her observations of Mallard's case. The central argument here concerned those tasked with directing the affairs of Paris, both civilians and the military, lacking talent and integrity.[64] Compared to the king, who inherited his

[59] Ibid.
[60] Kéralio, 'Departement de Paris', *Le Mercure National,* 15 May 1791, p.459.
[61] Ibid., p.460.
[62] Ibid.
[63] This argument of self-interest was capitalised on by the Jacobins during the Terror, when they aimed to justify fears over conspiracies. Marisa Linton, ''Do you believe that we're conspirators?': conspiracies real and imagined in Jacobin politics, 1793-94', in *Conspiracy in the French Revolution,* ed.by Peter R. Campbell, Thomas E. Kaiser and Linton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp.127-149 (pp.128-129).
[64] Kéralio, 'Réflexions sur les dangers actuels', *Le Mercure National,* 17 May 1791, p.481.

unenviable position of power, those in government and the army were described as egotistical, driven by personal interest, and willing to sacrifice the common interests of society to gain power.[65] To be truly free of tyranny, Kéralio argued, the French had to fight the war that was preventing them from gaining their liberty, a civil war whereby the struggle against patriots and counterrevolutionaries prevented freedom from oppression being achieved.[66] This further explains her interest in the fraternal societies and their potential as educational institutions for the less fortunate.

With regards to the question of why these articles were signed, it is possible that Kéralio did so because they did, to an extent, conform to traditionally feminine behaviours and concerns. To increase the awareness of marginal groups through educational opportunities offered by the fraternal societies, could be fashioned to support the arguments put forward by others, such as Aelders and Méricourt, that it ensured that future generations of citizens were equipped to protect and promote the nation's interests. Moreover, she never explicitly challenged the patriarchal status quo by advocating women's rights, such as enfranchisement. Thus, putting her name to these articles framed her as a patriotic woman carrying out her duties, albeit in a less conventional way than the experiences of most women, on behalf of the state and the Revolution. The final remark to make here is that the articles were published within her journal, which was a collaboration rather than a solo project. This made a difference to how her activities were perceived at the time. She knew how to manipulate her relationships with men in a way that made them appear as though they were her superiors, when she was evidently successful of her own accord. That her husband worked alongside her implied that he exerted control over her contributions to *Le Mercure National*. The extent to which this was true is, of course, debatable. Regardless, it illustrates the unique dynamic of power couples within revolutionary Paris and the ways in which men and women successfully complemented one another.

Answers to the questions concerning the context in which articles were constructed and whether the placement of the signature, at the time of publication or posthumously, influenced the degree of Kéralio's agency can be framed in the following manner. Context was crucial to the articles. 1791 was a particularly politically charged year. The increase of clubs and sections in the early 1790s culminated in an increase in political awareness of excluded groups, which posed a threat to the control of authorities; the king's attempted

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., pp.483-484.

flight from Paris symbolised a failure to support revolutionary efforts; and the Champ de Mars massacre spelled the end of Kéralio's public career with the collapse of her journal. All the articles within *Le Mercure National* were published before its demise, which emerged from Kéralio and Robert's significant role in drafting the petition calling for a republic, that ended in the National Guard opening fire on the unarmed, 20,000 strong crowd at the Champ de Mars, killing around fifty people and wounding numerous others.[67] Jules Michelet proposed that the petition, with its sharpness and staccato flow, like the wrath of a woman, betrayed the fact that it was most likely dictated by Kéralio and penned by her husband.[68] L. Antheunis expands Michelet's argument by suggesting that it was the intelligence of Kéralio that allowed the mediocre and undistinguished Robert to pursue a short but brilliant revolutionary career.[69] These views could be labelled misogynistic criticisms of Kéralio's individual agency. However, evidence of her significance in Robert's career can be gleaned from the fact that it was Kéralio who successfully established a journal prior to her marriage, presenting Robert with the platform he required to launch his revolutionary career. The relatively conservative approach, most likely determined by Kéralio, who was responsible for the journal's layout, could be deemed a tactical attempt to gain as wide a following as possible. This also accounts for her only signing some of her articles, as many readers may have been intolerant towards a female journalist taking ownership of her work. These tactics appeared successful, at least until the Champ de Mars massacre, and the journal's survival is testimony to this.

Context is also relevant to the discussion of Kéralio's signature. To firstly answer the question surrounding posthumous credit for her works, it can be concluded that this increases the degree of agency that she had. This is because someone has taken the time and effort to research the possible interests of Kéralio and felt it important to reinsert her into the narrative of the French Revolution, by having her work recognised through restored authorship. For a researcher to dedicate time to this laborious task indicates that she was an important character in revolutionary society and deserved to have her experiences mapped in the retelling of this momentous period. If, on the other hand, her signature was added at the time of publication, this suggests that she had a notable amount of agency over her publications. For Kéralio, journalism led to the creation of three distinct personas: the writer, the

[67] David Andress, *Massacre at the Champ de Mars: Popular Dissent and Political Culture in the French Revolution* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p.6.
[68] Michelet, *Les Femmes de la Révolution,* p.173.
[69] L. Antheunis, *Le Conventionnel Belge François Robert (1763-1826) et Sa Femme Louise de Kéralio (1758-1822)* (Wetteren: Editions Bracke, 1955), p.14.

journalist, and the *clubbiste*. She successfully established a career and identity for herself in the initial years of the Revolution, that certainly benefitted further from her high-profile marriage. Through both her career and her marriage to Robert, she enjoyed relationships with leading revolutionaries, such as Danton, Brissot and Robespierre, who moved in similar political circles. Friendships were important to her because they served as a network which fostered her political opinions. That she had these multiple personas makes her more endearing. She is a prime example of the ways in which women could challenge gender barriers. She illustrated considerable political consciousness and understood contemporary attitudes towards women. The title *Mercure National*, which was quite conservative and perhaps adopted to avoid backlash, serves as evidence for this.[70] Therefore, it is arguable that she skilfully adapted to revolutionary society through her journalism. She epitomised resilience and patriotism in an environment that failed to offer any significant long-term changes to her own status or that of other women living in the eighteenth century.

2.4 Sophie de Condorcet (1764-1822), *Le Républicain* and *Letters on Sympathy*

In contrast to Kéralio, Sophie de Condorcet, married to the Marquis de Condorcet, a leading *philosophe* of the eighteenth century, was undoubtedly a product of both the Enlightenment and the Revolution. One of four children from a devoted Catholic, aristocratic background, she was educated at home before attending the convent School of Neuville, near Macon in Normandy, at the age of eighteen. It was at this time, upon discovering the works of Rousseau and Voltaire, that she became an atheist.[71] As Bergès highlights, by the time she met Condorcet they had much in common.[72] Though twenty years his junior, Condorcet valued Sophie's opinions and, like the Rolands and the Roberts, they formed an intellectual partnership and established a salon. Sophie's salon, brought to life by her grace, charm and spirit, was the primary meeting place for enlightened thinkers from across Europe and the Atlantic, such as Thomas Paine, David Williams, Anacharsis Cloots and Étienne Dumont.[73] This mixture is intriguing because they were all political activists and it shows that in the years preceding the Revolution, Condorcet surrounded herself with forward thinking men

[70] Martin, 'A Political Union', pp.22-23.
[71] Sandrine Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy', *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* ed.by Edward N. Zalta <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/sophie-de-grouchy/> [accessed: 29 January 2021].
[72] Ibid.
[73] Élisabeth Badinter and Robert Badinter, *Condorcet, 1743-1794: Un intellectuel en politique* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), p.217.

who challenged the political restrictions of the ancien régime. Her own husband is a strong example because, during his brief stint in the government of Louis XVI, he befriended Turgot, the Minister of State and Controller-General of Finances, so had the opportunity to put reformist ideas into practice. Meanwhile, she provided a lively environment for the ideas of these men to flourish. For instance, aware of Paine's inability to communicate in French, she translated his arguments for him, making them accessible to the wider public.[74] This ability to nurture talented individuals, as a patron would traditionally have done, served her well. In addition to gaining a support network for her husband, she successfully earned the admiration of many male revolutionaries.

Unlike Madame Roland, the subject of chapter three, who was considered overly ambitious and guilty of emasculating her husband through her dominating nature, Condorcet was described as 'more modest' because 'she did not seek her husband's merit for herself'.[75] She also, unlike Roland, welcomed other women into her gatherings, which offers good evidence for her feminist qualities. Had Condorcet lived in a world in which this term existed; she would have been a strong candidate for being labelled a feminist. She did not explicitly speak out against women bettering themselves through education or wishing to improve their means, nor did she directly support notions of equality between the sexes in a public sense. However, her marriage to Condorcet, a champion of improvements to women's education and the civic rights of women, coupled with her admission of select women to her salon, including Gouges and Germaine de Staël, confirm that she, too, agreed with the rights of women to improve their lot.[76] By playing the role of the devoted wife and *salonnière*, Sophie successfully situated herself in the political sphere which, despite challenging eighteenth century perceptions of women, was tolerated because it straddled the political and the private spheres without being deemed too radical.

Journalism, as it did for Kéralio, offered Condorcet the space to form ideas and opinions on issues that she considered important. Like Kéralio, she was involved in the creation of a revolutionary journal. In the lead up to the Flight to Varennes in June 1791, alongside her husband, Paine and Brissot, Sophie co-established *Le Républicain*. Whilst this journal lasted a mere four issues and she was not cited as a contributor or editor, as Kéralio was to her *Mercure National*, there is, as Sandrine Bergès concludes, evidence that Sophie played a

[74] Ibid., p.228.
[75] P.R. Choudieu (1761-1838), *Mémoires et notes de Choudieu,* ed.by Victor Barrucand (Paris: Plon Nourrit, 1897), p.477.
[76] Jean Haechler, *Le règne des femmes 1715-1793* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2001), pp.412-413.

definitive role in its production.[77] Of the four issues published, at least three contain traces of her contributions. Paine, who submitted articles for issues one and three, required a translator for his works. Sophie was a highly skilled translator, fluent in French, English and Italian, with the advantage of being an aristocratic woman with substantial leisure time. Ergo, it is more than probable that she translated Paine's work. Translation posed questions over agency and originality because translators became entangled in complex networks with the likes of contemporaries, friends, critics, readers, patrons, figures of authority, authors, other translators and dissenters, who all influenced the translation process.[78] It was informed by multiple factors ranging from the translator's social background and education to what salons, academies and other institutions of cultural exchange they benefitted from.[79] For Condorcet, translation was an avenue for exerting agency because she was used to collaborating on projects and translation was an extension of the collaboration process. It allowed her to experience a degree of creativity, as the producer and consumer of texts, without appearing to directly challenge patriarchal control of culture and cultural productions.[80] Building upon the relationships established within her salon, translation offered her greater access to the political sphere. To translate works such as Paine's required belief in the ideas being spread and a dedication to making these accessible to the wider population, whether nationally or transnationally. Therefore, translating works for *Le Républicain* was one such way in which Sophie engaged with a broader audience. This, however, was not the full extent of her participation in the journal. There are articles throughout that appear to belong to her.

Issue one of the journal contains an article entitled *Aux Étrangers, Sur la Révolution Française*, which is signed '*La Vérité*'. There are several factors attributing this article to Sophie. Firstly, the use of the pseudonym *'La Vérité'* was not a coincidence. Sophie's stationary was stamped *La Vérité*, meaning the truth, and this article explores the truth of republicanism.[81] Recognising the public misconception that republicanism threatened liberty, this article detailed the need for the Revolution, its republican principles, and the benefits these principles would bring to France and surrounding nations. Presented as seven articles, authoritative in tone because this format mirrored that of official decrees, Condorcet

[77] Sandrine Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination in the 'Letters on Sympathy' and Two Anonymous Articles in 'Le Républicain'', *The Monist 98(1)* (2015), 102-112 (p.104).
[78] Julie Candler Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity, and Culture in France and England, 1600-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p.17, p.19.
[79] Ibid., pp.14-15.
[80] Simon, *Gender in translation*, p.44.
[81] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy'.

provided well-informed arguments for the necessity of the Revolution. As she rightly asserted, all men possess the same rights and must recognise these rights in one another.[82] Though it is unclear whether she solely meant men or humanity, it may be assumed that it is the latter. Discourse, particularly during the French Revolution, was vague. Typically, the use of the word 'man', as exemplified by the Declaration of the Rights of Man, was open to interpretation, and interpretations depended significantly upon the individual. As a member of an oppressed group, it is unlikely that she interpreted 'man' as the male sex because she empathised with those excluded from this label. It is more probable that her interpretation of 'man' referred to humanity because she was a republican with strong views on equality and liberty. Condorcet, like most women in revolutionary society, faced prejudices. Considered physically and mentally inferior to her male counterparts, she was, in the eyes of the law, answerable to her husband. As a young, married woman, she was to be obedient and submissive. As an aristocratic woman, she faced the added pressures of being expected to remain at home, busying herself with domestic matters. An intelligent woman, as the issues she wrote about attest, she found her oppressive situation frustrating. This explains her interests in marginal groups and the need to end the tyranny these groups faced. She empathised with the feelings of the disenfranchised, and believed that all persons living within a society, regardless of sex and race, were entitled to change the constitutions governing them.[83] In other words, sovereignty resided with the people and not the king. As Elisabeth and Robert Badinter conclude, she was passionate about ending the oppression of marginal groups and her views complemented those of her husband, who was an advocate of human rights and an abolitionist.[84] For Condorcet, as with Kéralio, the creation of a republic was only attainable if the powers of the king were limited. She expanded this idea in *Laissé par le roi, en fuyant, et adressé à l'assemblée national*, published in issue two of *Le Républicain*.

Originally drafted by Dumont, a Swiss political writer who supported the idea of reforming the French political system in a manner similar to that of the British system, and who agreed with the Condorcets on the need to limit the role of the king as a means of avoiding a return to monarchical despotism; this article was rewritten in a style similar to that of Sophie's

[82] 'La Vérité, Aux Étrangers, Sur la Révolution Françoise', *Le Républicaine, ou le Défenseur du Gouvernement Répresentatif; par une société de républicains,* No.1, ed.by Condorcet, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) and Achille Du Châtelet (1759-1794) (Paris: 1791), p.13.
[83] Ibid., p.14.
[84] Badinter and Badinter, *Un intellectuel en politique*, p.220.

Letters on Sympathy (1798).[85] Dumont confirmed this, stating that he had composed a piece for *Le Républicain*, but that the finished piece failed to portray his opinions or character.[86] Whilst he did not confirm whom the article was edited by, it can, as Bergès suggests, be assumed that it was Sophie.[87] Dumont's piece, unpublished before he travelled to England, was left in the care of the Condorcets.[88] The tone in which it was written was closer to that of Sophie than of her husband. In contrast to the Marquis de Condorcet, who adopted a consistently respectful tone in his writings, Sophie was often driven by emotion and her works were guided by how she was feeling at the time of writing. It is arguable that this made her endearing to readers and won readers round to her presence in the political sphere, by stirring up their individual and collective emotions. This specific article responded to the letter penned by Louis XVI to his people in the days preceding the Flight to Varennes. To begin with, the article set out the grievances of Louis XVI: the Constitution, which he blamed for destroying royal power, and his perceived victimisation at the hands of the revolutionaries.[89] Finally, it analysed the economic costs of the royal family, including the king's civil list and his salary, which entailed a tax levied on the poorest percentage of the population, for the luxurious upkeep of the royal family.[90] Condorcet's primary interest was reconstructing society in a way that human relations were not influenced by tyranny.[91] As a robust republican with an interest in human rights, she criticised the oppression that the royal family placed upon French subjects and viewed the Revolution as a necessary step towards modernity. This article with its scathing disdain of the economic and emotional expenses of the royal family, combined with the reconstruction of society in such a way that tyranny became obsolete and family relations were reordered, alludes to Sophie being its author.

According to the obvious contempt of the author, historically the king was above the people, and the immature, emotional attachment of the French to this figurehead was symbolic of the oppressive ancien régime.[92] This argument is also evident in Condorcet's *Letters on Sympathy*. In letter seven, she discussed societal inequalities, what caused them, and how they could be addressed to reduce the gaps in the social hierarchy. Firstly, she described the

[85] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy'; Richard Whatmore, 'Etienne Dumont, the British Constitution, and the French Revolution', *The Historical Journal 50(1)* (2007), 23-47 (p.25).
[86] Étienne Dumont (1759-1829), *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau et sur les deux premières Assemblées législatives* (Brussels: Meline, 1832), p.250.
[87] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination', p.106.
[88] Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau,* p.250.
[89] 'Laissé par le roi, en fuyant, et adressé à l'assemblée nationale', *Le Républicain,* No.2, pp.17-18.
[90] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination', p.106.
[91] Ibid., pp.103-104.
[92] 'Laissé par le roi', p.17.

four interests that led to social injustice: passion and love; money to satisfy one's needs or acquire a level of wealth that brought some sense of enjoyment; ambition, which was sometimes tied to money; and vanity, which was frequently the driving force behind money and ambition.[93] These interests represented the foundations of the ancien régime and all things that had to change during the Revolution. They emerged from self-interest and threatened the interests of the greater good of society. Whilst they remained the priorities of individuals, corruption and oppression would continue to exist. She then argued that:

> The interest of being unjust which is born from vanity and ambition, is more so the work of social institutions: they alone make it so that it is man and not the law that dominates man […].[94]

At the heart of this argument is the idea that natural inequalities existed between individuals, most of which were caused by the pre-existing institutions of society that favoured the wealthy. The main institution being the monarchy and court system. This statement further hints at her being, if not the leading author of the article*,* then a co-author. Sophie openly opposed the overall institution of the royal family rather than its individual members. Much of this opposition emerged from the influence of the upkeep of this institution on French resources. In addition to the twenty-five million *livres* taken from taxation, the estates and palaces cost the nation more than three billion *livres*.[95] Moreover, the sacrifice of human life was considerable. The *gardes de corps* conditioned to serve the king, were involved in some of the bloodiest scenes of the Revolution; given that this piece was written on 10 July 1791, nineteen days after the Flight to Varennes, it is likely that the scenes being referred to are those from 6 October 1789.[96] Condorcet's views of this bloodshed were influenced by various factors. As a woman, wife and mother, she most likely experienced a sense of bitterness and sorrow over the loss of hundreds, if not thousands, of lives. Arlette Farge's study of the importance of women within the community provides broader context for this. Women were intimately connected to the life cycle in a way that men were not. They were present at all stages of life and death: they gave birth, nurtured their children, cared for the sick and wounded, and tended the dead.[97] They were the heart and soul of their families and communities, and experienced sorrow at the meaningless loss of life through violence. The loss of husbands, fathers, sons and brothers created a greater financial and physical burden

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[93] Bernier and Dawson, eds., *Les Lettres sur la Sympathie de Sophie de Grouchy*, p.88.
[94] Ibid., p.90.
[95] Anonymous, 'Laissé par le roi'*,* p.17.
[96] Both civilians and members of the guard were killed during the invasion of the palace. However, those who suffered most casualties were members of the National and Swiss Guard.
[97] Farge, *Fragile Lives,* p.189.

for women as they assumed more responsibilities, in addition to their own duties. Condorcet viewed the *gardes de corps* as a symbol of the tyranny exercised by the absolute monarchy. She felt that the only just form of power belonged to a centralised government, with the deputies being elected by the people.[98] An opinion similar to that of Kéralio and the cornerstone of the republican society, *la Société républicaine,* established by the Condorcets, Paine, Achille-François de Lascaris, the Marquis du Châtelet, Bonneville and Dumont.[99] This society compiled *l'appel en faveur de la République*, inspired by the ideas of Condorcet, composed by Paine, signed by Du Châtelet, published by Bonneville, and translated into French by Sophie.[100]

Founded ten days after the Flight to Varennes, Sophie's involvement with this group explains her arguments concerning the captivity of the royal family. She argued that their captivity was a necessary precaution against the evils exercised by this oppressive institution; amongst which she included the bloodshed of innocent civilians by the *gardes de corps* and the expenses of keeping the royal family in luxury.[101] As she emphasised, the royal family were not maltreated because they were not confined to their palace, guarded by mercenary soldiers of varying national and ethnic backgrounds, who shared few political interests with the nation.[102] Rather, they could freely wander the palace and its grounds, were guarded by French citizens, and were not stripped of their titles or honours.[103] Additionally, blame for the flight was attributed to ministers, princes, court favourites and Marie-Antoinette, but never Louis XVI.[104] Nevertheless, there was an underlying optimism that the captivity of the royal family would permit the nation to expand their political awakening which commenced with the taking of the Bastille and the October Days.[105] For Condorcet, the next level of this political consciousness was emotional growth exhibited through a decline in adulation for Louis, which would narrow the social hierarchy by reducing the degree of social inequalities.[106] These inequalities were attributed to the king's civil list, of which the author is especially critical. As the article declared, the civil list was a means for the king to exercise secret influences and powers not granted by the constitution, by

[98] 'Laissé par le roi', p.27.
[99] Jean-Paul de Lagrave, 'Sophie de Condorcet, l'égérie du bonheur', *Dix-huitième Siècle 36* (2004), 87-98 (p.93).
[100] Ibid.
[101] 'Laissé par le roi', p.19, pp.26-27
[102] Ibid., p.18.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., p.25.
[105] Ibid., p.19.
[106] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination', p.106.

rewarding court favourites with titles, offices and salaries they were not qualified for, at the expense of the people.[107] It was asserted that any support for the king from those named on the civil list derived from self-interest.[108] This implies that any pre-existing unconditional devotion for the royal family had, by this point in the Revolution, deteriorated. As the author correctly asserted, the king was not indispensable. His duties, whether it was sanctioning laws or electing officials, did not rely upon his talents and virtues, and could be carried out effectively by an elected government; in fact, this very point was proven by the National Assembly during the Flight to Varennes and its aftermath, when it proceeded to govern the country.[109] In other words, the expenses of the royal family were an unjustified burden on the already fragile economy. This idea was further developed in *Lettre d'un jeune méchanicien,* from issue three of *Le Républicain.*

Once again, this article was anonymous. However, there are distinct indications that Sophie wrote it. As the wife of the man who served as Inspector General of the Monnaie de Paris, she possessed a sound understanding of economics.[110] The crux of this article rested on the replacement of the royal family with automata. It argued that this machinery would carry out the same duties as the royal family, sign all documents upon presentation, and cost less to maintain than the real institution.[111] This would reduce financial costs and potential threats to liberty and the principles of the Revolution.[112] The author calculated the costs as follows: one-hundred-thousand *livres* per year to maintain the machinery; less than two-hundred-thousand *livres* for the civil list; and half a *denier* per person per year for the upkeep of the robotic royal family and its entourage.[113] By emphasising these figures, it was stressed that the financial costs of the royal family were exorbitant and unnecessary, and that either a change of dynasty or the abolition of the monarchy would not impede upon the country's ability to be effectively governed for a fraction of the pre-existing costs. This would alleviate the burden of taxation on the poor, contributing towards reductions in the social hierarchy. This argument appeared in letters seven and eight of Condorcet's *Letters on Sympathy*, confirming that she was the author of the article. Within these letters, she discussed social inequalities and their influence upon one's ability to sympathise with the less fortunate. In letter seven, she argued that a country of six million families with an estimated land revenue

[107] 'Laissé par le roi', p.28.
[108] Ibid., p.29.
[109] Ibid., pp.27-28.
[110] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination', p.106.
[111] Ibid., p.105.
[112] Ibid.
[113] 'Lettre d'un jeune méchanicien', *Le Républicain,* No.3, p.56.

of twelve hundred million *livres*, would provide every family with two-hundred *livres* worth of rentable land.[114] She also highlighted that, even if three quarters of this sum was consumed by the rich, each family would still have fifty *livres* worth of land.[115] Her overall argument rested upon the idea that social inequalities prevented respect between individuals and contributed towards crime levels.

According to Condorcet, the consecration of hereditary rights through social institutions, such as the civil list discussed in *Laissé par le roi*, promoted tyranny and contributed towards criminal activity throughout France.[116] In letter eight, she asserted that the creation of laws applicable to all individuals within society and the use of elections would reduce crime levels because the most oppressed would be able to express their own opinions.[117] Whilst she did not explicitly demand universal enfranchisement, this argument was a foundation of republicanism because it encapsulated the exercise of natural rights. For Condorcet, the granting of natural rights to individuals was pivotal to increasing compassion and sympathy throughout society. As she correctly identified, money and ambition were motivations for all social backgrounds; those living in poverty were more likely to resort to crime, not only as a means of survival, but as a result of envy.[118] She blamed the numerous and ambiguous laws, the dominance and hypocrisy of religion, and the inequalities in wealth for the disunity present throughout France; communities existed independently of one another and individuals of the same nationality were foreign to one another. [119] These ideas, though published in 1798, were drafted between 1791 and 1792.[120] Thus confirming her influence upon the development of *Le Républicain*. Every idea has an origin, an inspiration, a basis. Condorcet's *Letters on Sympathy* contained strong republican principals, which undoubtedly emerged from her relationship with her husband and their collaborative projects, including *Le Républicain* and the republican society. Therefore, it can be surmised from analysis of the articles of *Le Républicain,* when compared with *Letters on Sympathy*, that Condorcet played a greater role in the promotion of republicanism than she is credited. As with Kéralio, there is an almost public shyness around her journalism.

[114] Adam Smith (1723-1790), *Théorie des Sentimens Moraux, ou Essai Analytique,* trans.by S. Grouchy, Tome Second (Paris: Chez Buisson, 1798), pp.474-475.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., p.479.
[117] Ibid., pp.479-480.
[118] Ibid., p.481.
[119] Ibid., p.501.
[120] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy'.

In addition to translating Paine's works and contributing to the journal, one can also gain insight into the extent of Sophie's involvement through the context of the journal. As already stated, it emerged in 1791 and was a collaboration between known republicans. Yet, of greater interest is the possible reason for its demise, which was indisputably like *Le Mercure National*. The journal ran for one month between June and July 1791. It ceased production following the Champ de Mars massacre. This connection is significant because it involved some of the power couples, notably the Roberts, the Condorcets and the Rolands. The petition itself was drawn up by Robert and Kéralio. In contrast, the Rolands and Condorcets played a less conspicuous role. Both Mesdames Roland and Condorcet, along with Condorcet's fourteen-month-old daughter, Eliza, were present in the crowd when the National Guard opened fire.[121] In her memoirs, Roland acknowledged her attendance at the Champ de Mars. Noting that she had witnessed the sad events when standing outside the Jacobin club, she returned home at 11 p.m. to find the Roberts on her doorstep.[122] Aware that their involvement in the events of that day were public knowledge, they sought protection. Roland accommodated them for the night and ensured they escaped safely the following morning.[123]

In comparison, Condorcet's presence at the Champ de Mars was confirmed by her husband. In 1793, he stated that, before the event itself and the creation of the petition, he had no knowledge of it.[124] His anger stemmed from the threat to the lives of his family, who narrowly missed being victims of the National Guard.[125] This raises two very important points. Firstly, it demonstrates that, regardless of loyalties for specific political factions, one did not often subscribe to all its ideologies. Revolutionary politics developed rapidly, and divisions appeared within factions, which were not cohesive political parties but groups with some shared ideals, who were connected very loosely through these similar interests. Consequently, revolutionary politics were fluid and individuals often moved between factions. Secondly, it highlights the independent nature of women, such as Kéralio, Roland and Condorcet. All these women from high-profile marriages were passionate and, as the example of Roland and the Roberts demonstrates, were not averse to supporting one another. This served as a loose network, like those forged by women of the Third Estate. They often acted of their own accord, as proven by Condorcet and Roland's presence at the Champ de

[121] Badinter and Badinter, *Un intellectuel en politique*, p.340.
[122] Marie-Jeanne Roland (1754-1793), *Mémoires de Madame Roland,* ed.by Claude Perroud, Tome Premier (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1905), pp.170-171.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Badinter and Badinter, *Un intellectuel en politique*., pp.340-341.
[125] Ibid.

Mars. Often, the female halves of these power couples were far more radical in their actions and words than their male counterparts. For example, Roland risked the lives of her family when she decided to hide the Roberts. Though unlikely that this was for purely altruistic reasons, after all, she wished to strengthen her husband's career at every turn; it is possible that women acted more radically because they had less to lose in the long-term. As legally defined inactive citizens, the actions of women were the responsibility of male relatives. Coverture within marriage put husbands in control of their wives, making them reliable for any unlawful behaviour. Additionally, women frequently hid behind pseudonyms or anonymity, thus protecting their identities. On the other hand, it is arguable that their radical actions stemmed from their frustrations over the oppression they suffered because of their sex and social status, and the solidarity that arose during the republican surge in June and July 1791. The women of these high-profile marriages proved that they were the intellectual equals of their spouses. Hence, Condorcet's presence at the Champ de Mars potentially reflected a rebellious streak, influenced by society's expectations of a woman from an aristocratic background. However, it also symbolised her solidarity with other women from varying social backgrounds, who attended the Champ de Mars to sign the petition. The Marquis de Condorcet admired the feisty spirit of his wife, and she inspired his *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité* (1790).

Based upon ideas conceived in 1788, Condorcet argued that women belonged in public alongside their male counterparts. He realised the worth of women because Sophie complemented all aspects of his life. From their first encounter, in the summer of 1786, he found in her everything that he sought in a woman: a seductress, a lover, an accomplice.[126] They shared the same passions, were inseparable, and were the prime example of a power couple. Whereas he was cold, shy and bashful; she was warm, caring and made him appreciate things that he had little interest in, such as social gatherings.[127] They were opposites, but shared a love that endured the trials and tribulations of the Revolution. This love and admiration inspired Condorcet to rethink the role of women and influenced the way he approached his arguments for the inclusion of women within society. Accounting for the abilities and talents of Sophie, he asserted that the rights of man and woman were the exact same, and those who denied these rights, based upon religion, race or sex, forfeited their own

[126] Ibid., p.211.
[127] Antoine Guillois, *La Marquise de Condorcet: Sa Famille, Son Salon, Ses Amis, 1764-1822,* 2nd edt (Paris: Paul Ollendorf, 1897), pp.61-62, p.75.

rights.[128] For Condorcet, depriving anyone, especially women, citizenship rights was tyrannical because there was no evidence that they were incapable of rational thought.[129] On the contrary, he asserted that women were ignorant because of the state of their education: if better educated, women would be able to eloquently represent their own needs in public, without abandoning their domestic roles.[130] Sophie was his proof for this argument. Not only was she a nurturing mother and attentive wife, but she was also an accomplished writer and *salonnière*. This demonstrated to Condorcet that women were equipped with the skills to be responsible citizens without neglecting their natural duties. Like many male revolutionaries, they displayed love for liberty and were willing to make sacrifices on behalf of the republic.[131] For Condorcet, his wife represented a shining example of how women could balance civic duties with domestic responsibilities. She was his muse. She encouraged him to continue to fight for what he believed in, even during his imprisonment. Their story as a couple was much more than an intellectual partnership, it was one of devotion. In 1793, when forced into hiding to prevent his arrest, Sophie, disguised as a peasant, made the treacherous journey on foot, from Auteuil, twice a week to visit him.[132] This was a risk to both their lives. If discovered that she had knowledge of his whereabouts, she would undoubtedly face the guillotine for concealing information from the government.

Consequently, six months after Condorcet was reported absent, Sophie filed for divorce. This difficult decision, reached by the mutual agreement of both parties, resulted from fears over the safety of mother and daughter. However, Condorcet was also acutely aware that if he were arrested and tried for treason, with a guilty verdict, all the couple's property would be confiscated by the state. Therefore, divorce was an attempt to protect his family from destitution. This stratagem failed because they faced extreme poverty following the divorce, but Sophie refused to be ashamed by this reversal of fortunes. She was, as her *Letters on Sympathy* depict, an advocate of divorce rights for women and illegitimate children.[133] She believed that women had the right to live independently and that single mothers were entitled to support from the state.[134] Denied any financial help from the government, and with her husband publicly disgraced, Sophie supported Eliza and her younger sister, Charlotte de

[128] Condorcet, 'Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité', *Journal de la Société de 1789,* No.5 (Paris: 1790), p.2.
[129] Ibid., p.3.
[130] Ibid., p.7, pp.10-11.
[131] Ibid., pp.5-6.
[132] Guillois, *La Marquise de Condorcet*, p.137.
[133] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy'.
[134] Condorcet, *Les lettres sur la sympathie,* ed.by Bernier and Dawson, pp.35-36.

Grouchy, through her writing and translation skills. Between 1795 and 1822, along with Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis and Joseph Garat, she successfully edited twenty-one volumes of her husband's works. This monumental task commenced with the publication of *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795), which was written during the Terror.

Though the extent of her input is unclear, as the one most aware of his intimate thoughts, she had considerable agency in relation to the presentation of the works. After all, it was she who convinced him to continue writing during his darkest days.[135] She did not wish for his views to be misinterpreted or misrepresented, so played a notable role in composing the volumes and the final version of *Sketch of the Human Mind.* Thus, she committed much of her time to securing her husband's legacy. Yet, she also devoted time to translating *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* providing her own reaction to Adam Smith's arguments, which she attached at the end of volume two under *Letters on Sympathy*. This is arguably her greatest achievement. In addition to being published under her own name, this translation remained in print until the late twentieth century.[136] This is because her translation was exact: she did not summarise, interpret, or omit anything during the translating process.[137] To create an exact translation of a work was unusual because translation was widely perceived as projects that recreated past writers, 'to make them speak again in one's own voice, and also to recuperate one's own language, one's own voice'.[138] Providing an exact translation was a very intelligent move on Condorcet's part. Despite preconceived notions that she denied herself agency by remaining faithful to Smith's arguments, she broadened her own degree of influence. She successfully engaged in an intellectual conversation on moral sentiments, allowing Smith to have his say, and then responding via a series of letters which constituted a critical essay. This permitted her to display her own intellectual abilities and to partake in cultural exchange. The Revolution had altered the values attached to translation works, rendering them key to cross-cultural communications, and Condorcet's translation of Smith was at the heart of this. That she published it under her own name indicates a shift in the way that she perceived her role within society. When she was married, it is probable that she published under a pseudonym or anonymously to protect her family. She did not wish to damage the reputation of her husband. Moreover, like Kéralio and her journalism, she was aware of societal expectations in relation to both her sex and status. Therefore, she refrained

[135] Badinter and Badinter, *un intellectuel en politique*, p.589.
[136] Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy'.
[137] Bernier and Dawson, *Les Lettres sur la sympathie de Sophie de Grouchy,* p.5.
[138] Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity, and Culture,* p.117.

from publicly attaching herself to her works. However, following her husband's death, she had little to lose. She would not ruin his respectability by taking ownership of her works, and she had to find a means to survive. This explains her deviation from anonymity.

As far as high-profile marriages go, arguably the Condorcets were the most formidable. They complemented one another, encouraged one another, respected one another, and loved one another. Their marriage was one of the greatest love stories of the Revolution. This may seem a rather romanticised image of the Condorcets, but it was pertinent to their success as a couple. Both partners shared the same ideals and fought the same battles. They were interested in the progression of humanity and ending social inequalities. Sophie inspired her spouse to consider female oppression and champion women's rights. She ensured that his legacy continued long after his death. This couple were crucial to contributing to and raising interest in the rights of women, slaves and the disenfranchised. They were ardent republicans who wished the French to end their oppression by realising that the monarchy suppressed liberty through emotional and economic domination. They were kindred spirits. Sophie's loyalty to her husband helped consolidate networks on his behalf and permitted her to escape the guillotine. She understood the workings of revolutionary society, successfully navigating her way through the first phase of this lengthy process, encompassing much of the long nineteenth century. Like Kéralio, she embraced her writing and translation skills as a way of publicly engaging with revolutionary ideologies, whilst failing to attract the attention of authorities for being too radical. Anonymity allowed her to conceal her identity and protect her husband, until she cast it aside following his death.

2.5 Rosalie Jullien (1745-1824): The Family Journalist

Whereas the agency of Kéralio and Condorcet was most fruitful in 1790 and 1791, the trajectory of Rosalie Jullien's revolutionary career is at variance with this because it was initiated through the domestic sphere but required her participation within the public sphere. Unlike both Kéralio and Condorcet's political activity which declined from July 1791, Jullien's political participation climaxed in 1793. This is significant because the Terror witnessed a serious backlash against female presence in the political sphere and measures were introduced to reduce women's political agency. The closure of the SRRW in October 1793 was the defining moment of this backlash. Chapter four will discuss this club, but it is important to note that this closure restricted the ways in which women could justifiably be

politically present within society. For Rosalie, the matriarch of a staunch Jacobin family and ardent supporter of Robespierre, motherhood and her marriage to Marc-Antoine Jullien, a deputy of the National Convention, was the excuse that legitimated her actions. With both Marc-Antoine and her eldest son, Jules, frequently away from home, Jullien assumed the role of the family journalist. Unlike the journalism carried out by Kéralio and Condorcet, Jullien did not write for the public but rather for herself and her loved ones.[139] Insight into Rosalie's interpretations of revolutionary events, views of revolutionary figures, and her increasing prominence in the political sphere can be gleaned from her letters to family and close friends.

Covering the period 1775 to 1810, there are over eight-hundred surviving letters composed by Rosalie, which allow the charting of the unconventional story of the Jullien family. In some ways, the background of Rosalie and Marc-Antoine is paramount to understanding how this couple came to embrace the Revolution. Rosalie was not Marc-Antoine's first wife. Before their union, he was married to Louise Marguerite Metayer, with whom he had a child. However, mother and child died following the birth, and it was Rosalie's father, Philippe Ducrollay, who signed Metayer's death certificate.[140] This proves that both Rosalie and Marc-Antoine knew one another and moved in similar social circles prior to their relationship. Further proof of this comes from Rosalie's close friendships with Claire, Marc-Antoine's youngest sibling, and his sister Virginie, who was eleven years his junior.[141] Yet, their story, in contrast to the Condorcets or Roberts, was rather unconventional. In addition to Marc-Antoine being married and having a child before marrying Rosalie, the couple did not rush to get married, opting to do so in early 1775, months before the birth of Marc-Antoine 'Jules' Jullien. Although there is no indication of the exact date of their union, no documents containing precise details survived, it is evident that Rosalie was pregnant out of wedlock; unusual for a woman of her status in the ancien régime.[142] This raises several crucial questions. Firstly, why did the couple not feel obliged to get married upon discovering Rosalie's pregnancy? Could this be because they were progressive in their attitudes towards the place and roles of the sexes within society? Or did they genuinely not care about how they were perceived within their local community? The latter seems unlikely given that they were members of the bourgeoisie, who would have been rendered social pariahs had Jules been illegitimate. Thus, it is arguable that the couple were relatively

[139] Jullien, *Journal d'une bourgeoisie*, pp.ii-iii.
[140] Parker, *Writing the Revolution*, p.14.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

modern, by eighteenth century standards, in their views. After all, both Rosalie and Marc-Antoine experienced the Enlightenment and enjoyed the works of many *philosophes*, including Rousseau, who guided the couple in raising their family.

Secondly, was the decision to conceal their marriage an attempt at privacy? During this period, arranged marriages, particularly for the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, were the norm. By keeping their union secret, the couple awarded themselves agency in deciding their future. It can be speculated that Rosalie and Marc-Antoine wished to enjoy the honeymoon period of their relationship before going public with it. The couple were besotted with one another, Marc-Antoine admired the intellectual abilities of his wife and may have decided to keep their marriage exclusive to establish their marital roles. Rosalie had substantial responsibilities in running the family estate in Romans and overseeing its multiple business ventures, including raising silkworms, rearing livestock, growing crops, handing out loans and renting property.[143] Thus, it is plausible that the couple opted to keep their marriage private until they had set distinct boundaries surrounding the responsibilities of husband and wife. Regardless of the reasons for this concealment, the couple shared a companionate marriage, strengthened by their love of literature and education. They had two sons, Jules and Auguste. Jullien evidently trusted his wife to successfully manage affairs at home because he was often away on business, leaving Rosalie to head domestic matters, including the care of their sons, his frail mother and his younger sisters. This formation of an extended household was common in the eighteenth century, particularly in families where men were frequently absent.[144] It permitted women to form and consolidate their support network and divide tasks appropriately. Fortunately for Rosalie, she had a close bond with her in-laws and organised the household with competence. Rosalie's contentment with her rural setting ended when the couple and their children moved to the Left Bank of Paris in 1787. From this point, their lives were considerably altered.

In addition to being away from home regularly, Marc-Antoine joined the Jacobin club, with Jules shortly following in his footsteps. Unlike her husband and sons, Rosalie felt differently towards the Revolution in its initial stages. Far from her beloved rural setting, Rosalie

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[143] Lindsay A.H. Parker, 'Family and Feminism in the French Revolution: The Case of Rosalie Ducrollay Jullien', *Journal of Women's History 24(3)* (2012), 39-61 (p.42).

[144] According to Julie Hardwick, this resulted in the need to negotiate authority in the household which was determined 'across gender and generational lines'. Rosalie achieved this by maintaining harmony in her home. Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p.84.

observed the events surrounding her with fear and confusion.[145] She was particularly fearful of the crowds and the uncertainty of the fast-paced life of Paris, especially in relation to political changes.[146] However, this was temporary, and she eventually embraced the Revolution. This change in attitude can be charted via her letters. Between 1789 and 1791, there was an inconsistency in her letters. The first letter written during this period was dated 1 August 1789. Then, the following pattern ensued: four for September and one dated 5 October; one from 4 April 1790; four from August 1791, five in September, and four in October; finally, regular correspondence resumed in April 1792.[147] Most of Rosalie's letters covered the years 1792 to 1794.[148] This irregularity in her letters until 1792 suggests that from 1789 to 1791 Rosalie felt disorientated at being removed from the environment to which she was accustomed. These years were about her acclimatising to her unfamiliar situation.

By 1792, Rosalie, due to the prolonged absences of both Marc-Antoine and Jules as government officials, assumed the position of family journalist, reporting on the evolution of the Revolution. She fully immersed herself in this role and came to value it. It gave her agency because she was required to attend meetings at the National Assembly, alongside Auguste and Marion, the family's domestic servant, and spend greater time in the streets listening to conversations. She commented upon the unusualness of her situation, stating to Jules, 'my timid neighbours look at me in amazement as I dare to cross my apartment's threshold'.[149] This statement is valuable for those examining the role of women in revolutionary society. The first thing to note is that, though not uncommon for women to be present within the streets or as spectators in the galleries of political clubs, Rosalie's status resulted in the expectation that she would remain at home. This is because the public arena was considered a dangerous place for respectable women, especially in relation to one's reputation. As a married woman, whose husband was often absent, it was important for Rosalie to be chaperoned. To be present in public on her own would raise suspicions, and gossip spread rapidly at the local level. Although Rosalie and Marc-Antoine may have previously cared little about gossip, as their delay in getting married suggests, to have his reputation called into question in the 1790s would negatively impact upon his revolutionary

[145] Parker, *Writing the Revolution*, p.49.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid., p.50.
[148] Ibid., p.7.
[149] Rosalie Jullien to Marc-Antoine Jullien Fils, 1 June 1792, in *Les affaires d'État sont mes affaires de cœur: Lettres de Rosalie Jullien, une femme dans la Révolution 1775-1810,* ed.by Annie Duprat (Paris: Belin, 2016), p.99.

career. Furthermore, chastity remained a central component of a woman's respectability and individual identity. Thus, navigating the public arena with others limited any potential damage to her reputation. Her intelligence and knowledge of the roles of the sexes within society served her and her family well, allowing their presence as revolutionaries to grow in some of the most critical phases of the Revolution.

What is most surprising about Rosalie's revolutionary experience, is that her political participation increased in the years that male revolutionaries were restricting the participation of women. Whereas many women, including Roland, Robert and Condorcet, enjoyed greater access to the political sphere in the initial years of the Revolution, Rosalie's participation peaked in 1793 and 1794, at the height of the Terror. In contrast to these women who either retracted from the public arena or were imprisoned and executed due to their political alliances and meddling, Rosalie continued to remain an active political participant until the late 1790s, when she ceased discussing the Revolution in her letters. As Lindsay Parker asserts, the quality of Rosalie's surviving letters permits researchers to pose three questions: Did women have a revolution? How did female oppression contribute towards creating a revolutionary discourse and help shape the political order of the new regime? In what ways, given the differing nature of women's priorities and political expression, did women participate in revolutionary society?[150] Timothy Tackett supports Parker's argument by highlighting that circumstance determined one's path to becoming a revolutionary, rendering revolutionary experiences unique to everyone.[151] This argument is applicable to all the women who belonged to revolutionary power couples. These women participated in the Revolution within various capacities. Some, like Jullien, Condorcet and Robert, as journalists, either publicly or domestically. Most as *clubbistes*, frequently attending meetings at local clubs. Some, notably Roland and Jullien, as diarists, memoirists and letter writers, recording personal and collective experiences. Others, most significantly Condorcet, as translators. All, as the wives of leading revolutionaries, assisting their spouses.

Compared to her letters from the years preceding the Revolution, which mostly discussed domestic matters, it is Rosalie's letters between 1789 and 1794 which are the most important for interpreting her increasing agency. The Rosalie of the early years of the Revolution was

[150] Parker, 'Family and Feminism', p.39, pp.40-41.
[151] Timothy Tackett, 'Paths to Revolution: The Old Regime Correspondence of Five Future Revolutionaries', *FHS 32(4)* (2009), 531-554 (p.551).

timid and feared the Parisian crowds. An excerpt from a letter dated 5 October 1789, addressed to Marc-Antoine, illustrates this:

> This morning, Paris was as agitated as it was on the famous 14 and 15 July. The food shortage, which has had us by the throat for four days, disheartens everyone. […] They say that the king's guards and the officers from the Flanders Regiment trampled on the national banner. […] an innumerable cohort of citizens of every sex, of every age poured down the streets here, there, and everywhere. Hunger from one corner, terror from another. There is nothing as pitiful as this spectacle and nothing as frightening as the scene it produces.[152]

This observation regarding the crowds of the October Days helps gauge Rosalie's mindset in this early revolutionary phase. On the one hand, it is indicative of her emotional intelligence and ability to sympathise with others. She seemingly feared the Revolution at first because she felt confused about what was occurring around her. However, this astute observation of 5 October highlights that she understood more than she either realised or was prepared to acknowledge. It is possible that she downplayed her ability to understand political events because this domain was a patriarchal one, from which women were excluded. To demonstrate a political consciousness was unfeminine and, at this stage, Rosalie's most treasured roles were those of mother and wife. Furthermore, to exhibit such an unfeminine trait, even in revolutionary times when boundaries lacked stability and durability, was to question the masculinity of Marc-Antoine. Something which may have jeopardised any future career opportunities. Alternatively, it is plausible that Rosalie genuinely did not realise how important and perceptive her observations were, considering them solely as a personal interpretation of events. As a mother, responsible for feeding her children, she was able to empathise with the crowd because hunger is something that she, too, feared. Her sympathy, in comparison, arose from her bourgeois status. As someone from a comfortable background, she would not face the same economic hardships as women from lower down the social hierarchy. Therefore, she pitied their situation without fully relating to it.

On the other hand, her account of 5 October is essential in uncovering general attitudes towards this event. As testimonies from the Châtelet inquiries confirm, this widescale event had distinctly economic motivations behind it, particularly where women were concerned. Rosalie's observations also support evidence from the Châtelet's findings surrounding the composition of the crowd, noting that it was composed of individuals from both sexes of

[152] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine, 5 October 1789, in *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien,* pp.51-52.

varying ages. Whilst a preliminary investigation of the inquiries found the mean age of participants to be around thirty-eight, details from the testimonies demonstrated that women and men belonging to different age groups were affected by this event. However, Rosalie's observations also provide support for the arguments suggesting that this mass food riot was political. She emphasised the disrespectful behaviour of some members of the National Guard and the Flanders Regiment, who allegedly trampled on the tricolour cockade during a banquet on 1 October. This account is particularly poignant because it comes from the eyes of a mother. In detailing her interpretations of 5 October, Rosalie gives a glimpse into the anxieties of many women. Although she was in a more comfortable position than most, her experiences of living in Paris resulted in an unwillingness to take her situation for granted. She witnessed the desperation of many daily and, despite being afraid of the raucous crowds, understood the reasons behind their behaviour. Her emphasis upon the role of both sexes in this event follows a similar pattern to many of the testimonies from the Châtelet inquiries, especially those from members of the bourgeoisie. Generally, those who mentioned the presence of men did so for a particular reason. Whether it was to decrease the agency attributed to women because this threatened masculinity; contextualise the new uncertain world they were living in, by noting the actions and roles of the sexes; attempt to reassert traditional notions of patriarchal authority and masculinity; or, further one's career prospects, the presence of men, particularly cross-dressing men, was mentioned in several accounts. In the case of Rosalie, her mention of the presence of both sexes in the crowd can be interpreted as an attempt to make sense of what was happening around her. As a bourgeois woman who valued her domestic role, she felt that women were responsible for raising their families and obeying their husbands. Although she often experienced feelings of frustration at having to obey Marc-Antoine, she accepted it nonetheless because she considered it her duty and was proud of her husband, 'whom she loved as he deserved to be loved'.[153] Consequently, it is possible that, by noting the presence of men during the October Days, she was seeking comfort in ancien régime distinctions between women and men. Her emphasis on the economic motivations expands this idea because women played a crucial role economically within the family by providing adequate food provisions. Therefore, one can deduce that Rosalie's interpretations of the October Days was a way for her to find some comfort amongst the increasing turmoil in Paris: but it was also the beginnings of her family journalism.

[153] Rosalie to Virginie, 24 January 1777, in *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien*, p.18; Rosalie to Marc-Antoine, 5 October 1789, p.51.

From 1792, with Marc-Antoine and Jules away from home, Rosalie joined the revolutionary crowds. In addition to meeting with friends and family members on a weekly basis, she spent greater time in public places and as a spectator at political meetings. Unable to vote or formally join the Convention, she mingled with the crowds, debated with friends, wrote letters, and helped organise festivals to further her political consciousness.[154] In a letter addressed to Marc-Antoine from 6 June 1792, it is apparent that this Rosalie was different to the Rosalie of 1789. She wrote that she had dined with his brother and Madame Dejean, a close friend, the previous day and that they appeared more aristocratic in nature than ever before. She believed that they no longer had interests in common, describing it as them 'seeing black where I see white and white where I see black'.[155] That she so openly criticised the opinions of her loved ones suggests that the Revolution offered her the space to fully explore her own opinions and to form views that went against the grain for someone of her status and sex. Although she does not mention which opinions she is alluding to, that she describes them as unoriginal and deliberately opposing her own indicates that Rosalie possessed strong political consciousness at this stage of the Revolution. Describing them as 'more aristocratic than before', not only highlighted that Rosalie remained acutely aware of her own status, but also that she wished to distance herself from her privileged background. This is comparable to Kéralio dropping the 'de' prefix from her name when claiming authorship of her works. The reason for this, one may assume, is the instabilities that the Revolution introduced into society. Whereas being aristocratic or bourgeois during the Enlightenment may have guaranteed a certain degree of respect and authority, the Revolution was about *le peuple*, of whom the largest percentage belonged to the lower levels of the Third Estate. Thus, having a wealthy background was not necessarily deemed a positive attribute by the revolutionaries, whose claims of liberty and equality could be perceived as an attempt to bridge the gaps in the social hierarchy. Distancing herself from her status is an example of Rosalie adapting to the environment around her, establishing an identity that could be situated comfortably within revolutionary society. Further confirmation of this is in a letter addressed to Marc-Antoine from 14 June.

As the mouthpiece of a devoted Jacobin family, she idolised Robespierre. She described him as 'a true Roman' with unwavering principles.[156] She sometimes failed to find him a convincing writer or orator, as she hints in this letter, but held him in great esteem

[154] Parker, *Writing the Revolution*, p.84.
[155] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine, 6 June 1792, in *Journal d'une bourgeoise*, pp.109-112.
[156] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine, 14 June 1792, in *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien,* pp.104-108 (p.105).

regardless.[157] It was her role as the family journalist which is the most crucial to understanding her agency. As mother and wife, she was under considerable restraint because she was obliged to follow Marc-Antoine's instructions; but as the family journalist she enjoyed greater freedom in her opinions and the way that she expressed herself in her letters reflects this. Whilst guiding her children successfully through revolutionary society remained her priority, and her letters to Jules were typically instructive in nature, her letters to Marc-Antoine were very informative on the situations occurring within Paris. Though her letters to Jules also contained crucial political details, Rosalie's main concern with regards to her son was ensuring his safety and respectability. For example, her letter to Jules from 16 June, who was acting as a diplomat in London at the time, is a hybrid of political news and maternal affection. She mentioned her fears over the news from London, which she considered troubling, and referred to him as 'my child'.[158] This phrase implies that Jules still required maternal protection and that any news she imparted was toned down to reduce his fears and anxieties. The remainder of the letter discussed the changes to the ministers, noting that those selected to replace Roland, Servan and Clavière were suspicious.[159] She developed this by noting that there was a storminess present within Paris owing to the political changes taking place. She accused Louis XVI of causing much of the discontent, highlighting his duplicity and bad faith in relation to his collusion with counterrevolutionaries.[160] Her report served the purpose of keeping Jules informed of the everchanging political landscape of Paris and warning him of where the balance of power was situated. This latter point is noteworthy given that it would undoubtedly have contributed towards the development of Jules' revolutionary career. Any prospects rested upon political alliances and showing support for the leading revolutionary figures, who were grappling for dominance in the Legislative Assembly and, latterly, the National Convention. This served Jules well, as he enjoyed several prominent posts throughout the Revolution, based upon quasi-diplomacy, intelligence, and a close relationship with leaders of the Revolution.[161] It offers a reason for Rosalie's need to educate herself and her family on the events of revolutionary society. To remain ignorant was to jeopardise the safety of loved ones. Therefore, as the family journalist, Rosalie was in a unique position, spending most of her time learning about

[157] Ibid.
[158] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine Jullien fils, 16 June 1792, in Ibid., pp.108-110.
[159] Ibid., p.108. Although she does not explicitly mention their replacements, it is surmisable that there was considerable discontent across Paris.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Parker, *Family and Feminism in the French Revolution*, pp.46-47.

revolutionary ideologies and forming coherent opinions on individual situations within Paris which she imparted to her family.

That is not to say that Jullien's role as the family journalist was totally selfless. As chapter three on Madame Roland will demonstrate, being married to someone in the revolutionary government offered unique opportunities to develop networks with leading revolutionaries, which allowed some women insight into the intricate workings of politics during this period. In Jullien's case, this is particularly apparent between 1792 and 1793. It was, in many senses, because of Jullien that Jules secured his appointment as a diplomat in London. In a letter to Marc-Antoine from 10 May 1792, Rosalie detailed her networking on behalf of Jules to secure his posting to London.

> He has received letters from MM. Pétion, Dumouriez, Condorcet, Sillery, which contain their recommendations for London. M. Dumouriez, in two letters, assures him that if he stays in the ministry, he will have a place as legation secretary […]. Around twenty deputies have recommended him and shared their knowledge of London with him.[162]

Although the extent of Rosalie's involvement in securing Jules these letters of recommendation is unclear, there is the suggestion that she played some hand in it. She demonstrates a strong awareness of the individuals who offered Jules their advice and does not appear to be surprised by their support for her son. At this point in the Revolution, Rosalie frequently spectated in the galleries of the National Assembly and could identify the leading political factions, their key figures, and their primary ideologies. She was also an ardent reader of revolutionary journals, such as *Le Journal de Perlet, La Révolution de Paris,* and *Le Courrier des 83 départements*.[163] Consequently, she had sound knowledge of whom Jules should approach in his bid to further his revolutionary career and could share this knowledge with her son. Rosalie did, at times, actively engage with revolutionaries on behalf of family members. For example, she often held dinners for Barère and Robespierre. On 20 June 1793, she reported to Jules that Barère and Robespierre had dined with her and Marc-Antoine after a lively day of debating, during which both men had spoken with such 'justice and eloquence' and received 'sincere applause'.[164] From the buoyancy of Jullien's letter, it can be surmised that the excitement of the day's debates carried over to dinner and that the

[162] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine, 10 May 1792, in *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien*, pp.80-83 (p.80).
[163] As Duprat notes, Rosalie frequently cited from revolutionary journals, especially *Le Journal de Perlet*. Duprat, *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien,* p.83.
[164] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine fils, 20 June 1793, in *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien*, pp.246-248 (p.246).

men willingly discussed politics in front of Jullien, who, unlike Madame Roland, dined alongside her guests. This implies that Jullien's tact and discretion were appreciated by some of the leading revolutionaries and that they trusted her enough to discuss politics in her presence.

This trust that they placed in her can also be gleaned from the fact that Robespierre invited her and Marc-Antoine to his home for dinner. Rosalie was delighted to find herself seated next to Robespierre, who asked her about Jules and admitted that he wished that Jules 'could be multiplied so that he could be in several places at once'.[165] Furthermore, she helped care for Robespierre when he was ill; an honour considering that the only other woman trusted with such a task was the daughter of the carpenter Duplay, who owned the house in which Robespierre rented a room.[166] These examples highlight that Robespierre, rather uncharacteristically, trusted Rosalie implicitly. Robespierre, the 'incorruptible', was known to be guarded and did not often divulge his personal thoughts or vulnerability. That he chose to share some of his innermost thoughts with Rosalie signifies that she had developed a close bond with him and that he wanted to share his fears and anxieties with her. This shows how central a role Rosalie truly played within the Jacobin circle, comparable to that which Madame Roland played within the Girondins, and counters Noah Shusterman's argument that no woman associated with Robespierre played as considerable a role in a political faction or politics as Madame Roland.[167] From this, it can be concluded that Rosalie enjoyed greater agency in the political sphere than she cared to admit, and achieved this by balancing her role as a caring and nurturing mother with her friendships with leading revolutionaries such as Robespierre. She prioritised the needs of her family above all else and adopted the role as the family journalist as a means of keeping her loved ones up to date with events in Paris and ensuring their safety during the Terror. By doing so, she successfully carved a public role for herself within the political sphere which cast her as the ideal republican mother, whilst simultaneously granting her the opportunity to develop her own political consciousness and participation in revolutionary society. Her letters are testimony to her intelligence and skill in handling the uncertainties and fluidity of the Revolution.

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[165] Rosalie to Marc-Antoine fils, 6 January 1794, in Ibid, pp.280-281.
[166] George Rudé, *Robespierre* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p.85; Rosalie to Marc-Antoine fils, 17 February 1794, in *Lettres de Rosalie Jullien*, p.284.
[167] Noah C. Shusterman, 'All of his Power lies in the Distaff: Robespierre, Women and the French Revolution', *PP 223,* 129-160 (p.152).

2.6 The Significance of Journalism and Translation in Relation to Female Agency

The importance of journalism and translation in relation to female agency in revolutionary Paris cannot be overstated. These activities allowed the women engaging with them to create identities for themselves that were unique to them. As the examples of Kéralio, Condorcet and Jullien highlight, they could be carried out in very different ways, depending upon the intended audience and the individual. These women were in the fortunate position of belonging to power couples, so were granted exclusive opportunities. This underscores that the revolutionary experience was not universal. For these women, a relatively comfortable existence, combined with a decent education and high-profile marriage, opened spaces that would otherwise have remained closed to them. The world of journalism for instance, whether public or private, became more accessible to these women. Manipulating their marriages to influential men, they successfully established writing careers for themselves and embraced the opportunity to engage more directly with the political sphere. Their public presence as writers and translators was tolerated because they did not appear to be radically challenging revolutionary authorities. Kéralio is arguably the best example to demonstrate this point. All her revolutionary personas were enabled through her connections with influential men. This bold stratagem prevented her actions from being scrutinised by revolutionary authorities, allowing her to continue to develop her very public profile. These women, in many senses, paved the way for future socialist and feminist arguments to develop within the frameworks they created in the 1790s. They helped record key events, institutions and figures. In doing so, they committed to national and international memory the unfolding of the Revolution and its legacies.

Chapter Three. The Letters and Memoirs of Madame Roland

> Today on the throne, and tomorrow in irons.[1]

> Daughter of an artist, wife of a scholar-come-minister and a good man, today a prisoner, destined to face a violent and unexpected death. I have witnessed glory and suffered injustice.[2]
>
> Madame Roland (1754-1793)

Marie-Jeanne Roland. One of the most outstanding characters to emerge from the revolutionary period. Her story, full of highs and lows, is at best unconventional, at worst a tragedy. Throughout the entirety of her short life, Madame Roland defied eighteenth century expectations of a woman of her status. Born in 1754, to an engraver and the daughter of a haberdasher, 'Manon', as she was referred to by loved ones, experienced relative comfort throughout her childhood. In the typical fashion associated with the bourgeoisie she was educated at home by her mother. However, and in accord with the experiences of Kéralio and Condorcet, her father encouraged her to read as broadly as possible. As a result, she developed a fondness for the works of Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot and David Williams. Astute and shrewd, she frequently spent time with her father and his apprentices in the workshop. It was within this space that the first moment that profoundly shaped her life occurred. Twice, as an adolescent, she was sexually assaulted by one of her father's apprentices.[3] Upon revealing this to her mother, she was sent to a convent school to complete her education. Whilst not unusual, as Condorcet also finished her education at a convent school, the circumstances were somewhat abnormal. The assault, an attack upon her honour and chastity, fast-tracked her entrance into the school. Her mother, a devout catholic, hoped this was enough to save her daughter's reputation. It appeared to work, though whether this was due to such assaults being normalised or the length of time that had elapsed since the attacks is unclear. Regardless, in the years following her departure from the school, she received several marriage proposals from potential suitors. Unusually, as eighteenth-century

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[1] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, ed.by Perroud, p.1.
[2] Ibid., Tome Second, p.1.
[3] Ibid., pp.29-30.

marriage was typically a business transaction borne out of economic necessity, and most women of her ilk were married by the age of twenty, she rejected these proposals.[4] Rather, she favoured her acquaintance with Jean-Marie Roland, whom she initially encountered in 1775. Until the summer of 1776, he regularly visited her to partake in intellectual exchange. The couple established a firm friendship and married in 1780, when she was twenty-five years old, the age of majority for a woman.[5]

Despite their twenty-year age gap, they enjoyed an amicable marriage which produced their daughter, Eudora. It also, more interestingly, created one of the most significant marriages of this era. Another strong example of a high-profile couple, the Rolands made their mark in revolutionary Paris. Moving to the capital in 1791, they followed the progress of the Revolution with much intent prior to their arrival. Already an established figure of authority, as Inspector of Manufactures in Lyon, Monsieur Roland was appointed Minister of the Interior twice under the constitutional monarchy. Madame Roland, on the other hand, prohibited from holding an official position, embraced revolutionary society in other ways. As dawn broke each morning, she queued outside the National Assembly, awaiting admittance to the galleries.[6] Additionally, she attended political meetings alongside her husband four evenings a week and held bi-weekly dinners at their home for her husband and his colleagues. There has been much debate surrounding the dinners of Madame Roland and to what extent they were a salon. Those at the heart of this debate are Siân Reynolds, Antoine Lilti and Marisa Linton.

According to Linton, inspired by the work of Reynolds, Roland's gatherings cannot be labelled a salon because this word originally referred to the room in which these meetings were held, and were not applied to the events themselves until the nineteenth century.[7] She expands upon this, noting that Roland did not class her gatherings as a salon and preferred the term 'little committee' because it had political connotations.[8] This raises the importance of anachronistic interpretations, placing the focus squarely on Roland's own use of language to reframe the debate. That she did not consider her gatherings as a 'salon' is vital to developing an awareness of not only societal expectations of women during the eighteenth

[4] Siân Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution: Monsieur and Madame Roland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.49.
[5] Ibid., p.55.
[6] Ibid., p.136
[7] Marisa Linton, *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship, and Authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.89.
[8] Ibid.

century, but the ways in which women adapted these expectations to refashion their identities. There is much pre-existing scholarship on the relationship between salons and women's agency, and equally as much focus on Roland, that it seems futile to explore these areas. That said, these issues have a dynamic connection to the revolutionary process, which remains under-explored and merits further attention. Salons and *salonnières* were reminders of the ancien régime; the antithesis of the Revolution, which represented modernity, hope and ambition, at least in its initial years. Whereas Kéralio and Condorcet willingly incorporated elements of their aristocratic backgrounds, such as salons, with revolutionary beliefs of liberty and equality; others, like Roland, severed ties with the ancien régime to construct an identity that was compatible with the Revolution. It is possible that this is because, unlike those of Kéralio and Condorcet which were established before 1789, when salons were aristocratic institutes, Roland's was new and had the potential for being recast. To describe her dinners as a 'little committee' was to demarcate them from the traditional salons. Women were, intentionally or not, drawn into the political complexities of the Revolution and this shift in discourse symbolises the impact that the Revolution had on some women. Yet, there is a convincing case, as made by Lilti, for the application of the word salon to Roland's dinners. In his study of eighteenth century sociability, Lilti identifies dinners, suppers and visits as forms of salons.[9] Visits were generally intimate and modest affairs, but dinners and suppers were convivial and offered opportunities for networking.[10] Held in domestic spaces, they had a continuity about them with fixed days, times and conditional admittance.[11] Those attending salons were admitted on one of three conditions: through direct invitation from the hostess, presentation via a regular attendee, or through a letter of recommendation from a distinguished member of society.[12]

Whilst Roland disputed that her gatherings were like those of the early eighteenth-century salon because she did not play the role of mediator in discussions, it can be concluded that she hosted a salon of sorts. Her guests received direct invitation. The dinners were held on the same two nights each week, Monday and Friday, and every dinner had a purpose, notably one of a political nature. Finally, as the hostess, she decided who attended each week, the meal that would be served, and where guests would be received. Hence, it is justified to label Roland's soirées a salon because they did follow the pattern of those from the ancien régime. She networked on behalf of her husband at these events, surrounding him with potential

[9] Lilti, *The World of the Salons*, p.18.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., p.19.
[12] Ibid., p.33.

allies and establishing connections with those of a similar disposition to the couple. This was much the same as the role that Jullien played when she hosted Robespierre and his siblings. Or that of Kéralio and Condorcet when they not only hosted the friends and colleagues of their spouses in their homes, but also co-created revolutionary journals with them. It was the role of a political convenor. Roland wholeheartedly embraced this role, and her political meddling rendered her unpopular with many male revolutionaries. This unpopularity was especially evident in 1793. For the Rolands, much like for the Condorcets, as discussed in chapter two, 1793 marked the end of their revolutionary experience. Monsieur Roland resigned as Minister of the Interior, the Girondins were expelled from the Convention, and Madame Roland was arrested in June 1793 when she pleaded her husband's innocence outside the Convention. Whilst he went into hiding, Roland was incarcerated in the Abbaye before being transferred to Saint-Pélagie. Following her trial, she was guillotined on 8 November. In the aftermath of her death, Monsieur Roland stabbed himself to death.[13]

Why is the story of the Rolands, and Madame Roland more specifically, relevant to studies of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris? Though works by female journalists and translators depict the various methods some women employed as a means of participating in the political sphere, they fail to capture the everyday experience. For this, a more private style of writing is required. Letters and memoirs from the revolutionary period are ideal for glimpsing the experiences of individuals and their families, and the changes and continuities occurring across society. Though shaped by the epistolary relationship and awareness of the readership of the memoirs, they were exceptionally effective tools for recording the feelings and observations of women. They permitted a sense of authority and authenticity. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson summarise, authority and authenticity is the right to tell a certain story: it encapsulates how the story is narrated and how the narrator casts themselves in their narrative.[14] They also, by accounting for factors such as intended audience and historical moment, provide an understanding of the personal and collective experiences of the writer.[15] James Daybell and Andrew Gordon expand upon this, arguing that the contexts in which letters are created allow women to exert agency in new and unexpected ways.[16] For Roland and Jullien, they served as a space to act as political messengers on behalf of loved ones and to connect individuals across political factions. Just as translators such as Condorcet served

[13] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.288.
[14] Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, pp.236-237.
[15] Ibid., pp.236-238, pp.242-243.
[16] James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, 'Living Letters: Re-reading Correspondence and Women's Letters', in *Women and Epistolary Agency in Early Modern Culture, 1450-1690*, ed.by Daybell (London: Routledge, 2016), pp.1-19 (p.15).

as bridges between cultural exchange, letter-writers communicated ideas across groups. Roland was one of the most prolific letter-writers and memoirists of the Revolution. Her letters and memoirs are rich in private details that would not have been accessible to all living in this era. They also, as Mona Ozouf emphasises, are contradictory in nature and present conflicting interpretations of her role within society.[17] This chapter will interweave discussions of Roland's memoirs and letters as a means of proving that these sources are invaluable to those interested in gaining a broader sense of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793. To do so, it will draw upon and expand Susan Dalton's argument that Roland's revolutionary experiences were defined by the three political roles she carried out: encouraging action, spreading information about revolutionary events, and formulating policy.[18]

The first section will explore how Roland used her letters to encourage male revolutionaries into action. This is most evident in her letters to Bosc, Bancal, Robespierre, Buzot and the section of Beaurepaire, which will make up the source base for this section. It will be argued that the ways in which she encouraged action depended upon her relationship with the recipient(s) of her letters and her own agenda. This will also provide insight into how she gelled the Girondins faction together and networked on behalf of her spouse. Section two will expand upon this by focusing on Roland's friendship with Brissot and how this enabled her to spread information on revolutionary events and figures to a public audience. In addition to analysing her letters to Brissot, Roland's contributions to *Le Patriote Français* will also be considered. The way in which Roland used her relationship with Brissot to develop her political consciousness and confidence in sharing her own opinions will be at the heart of this discussion. It will be noted that this relationship provided Roland with the space to correct what she deemed factual inaccuracies and to contribute to political debates as they developed. In section three, attention will be turned towards how Roland utilised her marriage to Monsieur Roland to help shape official policy during his time as Minister of the Interior. This feeds into discussions of revolutionary power couples which was introduced in chapter two. Prior to writing her memoirs, Roland maintained that she merely acted as her husband's secretary, reading over his works and adding little details to smooth out his arguments.[19] However, as this section will highlight, she occasionally wrote official correspondence on his behalf, which contradicted Roland's claims that she 'knew the role

[17] Ozouf, *Women's Words,* p.49.
[18] Dalton, 'Gender and the Shifting Ground of Revolutionary Politics', p.270.
[19] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.81, p.242.

appropriate to her sex and never strayed from it'.[20] Finally, the last section will explore the unique relationship between Roland's memoirs and letters. The aim of this section is to demonstrate how these sources work together to establish a fuller picture of Roland's political agency between 1789 and 1793. It will argue, in agreement with Dalton, that Roland's agency did not solely stem from her marriage to Roland. The political agency that Roland exhibited throughout the Revolution emerged from a combination of her networking skills, her marriage to Monsieur Roland, her friendship with journalists such as Brissot and Champagneux, and her attendance at meetings in the National Assembly and various political societies.

3.1 Encouraging Action

The *Lettres de Madame Roland* were published by Claude Perroud between 1900 and 1902. Documented across two volumes, with volume one spanning 1780 to 1787 and volume two focusing on 1788 to 1793, there are 563 letters in the collection; of which, 323 were unpublished before Perroud's publication. Amongst the recipients of Roland's letters were Monsieur Roland, 171 letters; Louis Augustin Guillaume Bosc, 195 letters; François-Xavier Lanthenas, 28 letters; Jean-Henri Bancal des Issarts, 69 letters; Brissot, 12 letters; Robespierre, 4 letters; and François Buzot, 5 letters.[21] This preliminary investigation verifies that Roland was far more politically active than she admits. Many of her correspondents were leading revolutionaries who served various capacities, including deputies, journalists, and leaders and members of the popular societies. Amongst the rare exceptions were Henriette and Sophie Cannet, two childhood friends; Sophie Grandchamp, a close friend and intellectual equal, who smuggled extracts of her work out of prison; Fleury, the nanny of Eudora; and Eudora. Two important conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, unlike many early modern women, Roland had no interest in gossip. She explicitly confirmed this in her memoirs, stating that she had little time for gossip and failed to keep much female company for this reason.[22] In this respect she is like the other women from high-profile marriages, who limited their social exchanges to friends and colleagues of their spouses. The rare exception of this being Jullien, who preferred the company of her family and close friends over that of male revolutionaries until the early 1790s. Secondly, her communication

[20] Ibid., pp.63-64.
[21] Marie-Jeanne Roland, *Lettres de Madame Roland, 1780-1787,* Tome Premier (Paris: Claude Perroud, 1900-1902), p.xxi.
[22] Roland, *Mémoires*, Tome Premier, p.82.

with male revolutionaries highlights that she was aware of the importance of establishing formal networks. Belonging to a high-profile marriage, as the cases of Condorcet, Kéralio and Jullien have shown, was both liberating and isolating. Although these women enjoyed limited access to exclusive spaces, they were anomalies with regards to their sex and status. They had unique experiences that many women could not relate to and had to form networks that ensured some degree of protection in times of hardship or, as was the case in 1793, political danger. In Roland's situation, these networks not only consolidated professional relationships on behalf of her spouse, but also presented the opportunity to gain an education from these men who had access to the political sphere. She manipulated her position to ensure she experienced the full advantages of it: compared to many women, Roland had greater knowledge and understanding of the workings of the National and Legislative Assemblies because of her marriage. This mirrored the tactics employed by Kéralio and Condorcet who, through their marriages and ability to charm their male counterparts, collaborated successfully with their husbands and other revolutionaries. Thus, Roland was a distinctive character because, as one half of a high-profile marriage, she had greater opportunities available to her during the Revolution and willingly capitalised on them.

One such way that she capitalised on these opportunities was by using her letters to incite male revolutionaries into action. From as early as 1788, Roland engaged in conversations about a revolution and its possibilities for French society. She observed events from Lyon with a critical eye, sharing her honest opinions with close friends. According to Dalton, Roland spent a significant amount of her time and energy trying to persuade men to act because they were in a better position to do so: not only were they in Paris, where the National Assembly resided, but they had access to the most influential political clubs and journals.[23] Moreover, in contrast to Roland, their opportunities for participation in the political sphere were not limited by their gender. Gender norms were something that Roland was acutely aware of throughout the Revolution.[24] On 21 March 1789, she wrote to agronomist Philibert Charles Varenne de Fenille:

> I know very well, Sir, that silence is the ornament of women. The Greeks said it; Madame Dacier recognised it, and whatever opposition this century may have to this kind of morality, three-quarters of sensible men and especially husbands, continue to

[23] Dalton, 'Gender and the Shifting Ground of Revolutionary Politics', p.274.
[24] Ibid., p.261.

profess it.[25]

Although, on the surface, Roland appeared to accept that women occupied an inferior status within society, upon closer examination there is more to this exchange than is initially apparent. The tone is sardonic and implies that Roland's acceptance of the pre-established gender norms was reluctant. Despite being an ardent follower of Rousseau, Roland believed that nature intended for men to be fathers and citizens and women to be devoted to domestic concerns, so that the sexes could harmoniously work alongside one another without having to make sacrifices for one another.[26] She argued that men were not born to be writers and that the natural sensitivities of women could soften their works by adding flourishing touches.[27] Her allusion to Madame Dacier, a scholar and translator of classical works from Greek and Latin into French, contradicts the notion that women were supposed to remain silent in intellectual and political debates. Although Roland states that Dacier accepted silence as part of the female condition, this can be disputed. She may not have made significant oral contributions to the intellectual sphere, but by translating works such as Homer's *the Iliad* and *the Odyssey*, she partook in political and cultural exchange in the same way that Sophie Condorcet did. Both women served as cultural mediators by making texts accessible to the French public and allowing these texts to be discussed during intellectual gatherings such as salons. By doing so, they inadvertently contributed to political and cultural debates through their written works, refuting Roland's assertion that 'silence is the ornament of women'.[28]

Something else worth noting about Roland's observations concerning the inferior status of women is the contradictory nature of her arguments in contrast to her reality. She declared to Fenille that 'three quarters of sensible men and especially husbands' continue to promote the oppression of women by silencing them.[29] For some women this may have been true, but the same cannot be said for Roland. Monsieur Roland valued her intellectual prowess and encouraged her educational pursuits. Although Roland claimed in her memoirs that, 'from the outset of our marriage, Monsieur Roland did not wish me to see my good friends often and desired that I bowed to his wishes', she also admitted that he enjoyed their conversations, he listened to her with intent, and she 'plunged herself into working with him' on his

[25] Roland to Varenne de Fenille, 21 March 1789, in *Lettres de Madame Roland, 1788-1793,* ed.by Claude Perroud, Tome Second (Paris: 1900-1902), pp.43-49 (pp.43-44).
[26] Roland to Bancal, 28 October 1790, in Ibid., pp.186-189 (p.187).
[27] Ibid; Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.242.
[28] Roland to Fenille, 21 March 1789, p.43.
[29] Ibid., pp.43-44.

writing.[30] This suggests that their marriage consisted of a collaboration between husband and wife, and that Roland had greater agency within her marriage than she admitted. Nevertheless, when writing to male revolutionaries she manipulated preconceived perceptions of women as the inferior sex as a means of appealing to them and inciting them into action. This permitted her to exert a considerable degree of political participation without appearing too conspicuous in her actions.[31] The way in which she approached this depended upon her relationship with the individual she was addressing. For example, Roland enjoyed a close friendship with Bosc, whom she consulted with on botanical matters on behalf of her spouse, who had been tasked with contributing to the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* prior to the Revolution. By the time of the Revolution, she felt able to speak frankly with him. On 26 July 1789, in the aftermath of the fall of the Bastille, Roland asserted:

> No, you are not free; nobody is free yet. Public trust is betrayed and letters are intercepted. […] You are only children: your enthusiasm is a flash in the pan […] If this letter does not reach you, let the cowards who read it blush at the knowledge that it was written by a woman, and tremble at the thought that she can make one hundred enthusiasts who will make millions more.[32]

Dalton argues that Roland spoke with 'the urgency of someone who was fighting for a cause in which she believed', and this extract provides strong evidence for this argument.[33] The Bastille symbolised the tyranny and oppression of the ancien régime.[34] The fall of this symbol of corruption and political repression represented a new era built upon hope and a desire for freedom. For Roland's generation, it presented the opportunity to restructure society based upon the principles of liberty and equality. It was possible to imagine a republic founded upon natural rights and sovereignty belonging to the people with a centralised government composed of elected representatives to represent their interests. However, in the aftermath of the fall of the Bastille, the Great Fear spread throughout the countryside and there were rumours of new conspiracies within the royal court. It was within this context that Roland's letter to Bancal was constructed and the range of emotions she experienced is palpable.

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[30] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Second, p.237, p.251, p.255.
[31] Susan Dalton, *Engendering the republic of letters: reconnecting public and private spheres in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), p.3.
[32] Roland to Bosc, 26 July 1789, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, p.53.
[33] Dalton, *Engendering the republic of letters,* p.65.
[34] Jacques Godechot, *The Taking of the Bastille, July 14th, 1789,* trans.by Jean Stewart (New York: Scribner, 1970), p.87.

Roland experienced frustration at the lack of progress made since the attack on the Bastille. In some ways, this frustration was the result of her anxiety over the Great Fear rampaging through the countryside. On 25 and 26 July it struck Bourg-en-Bresse and Mâcon, where manor houses belonging to the nobility and wealthy landowners were set on fire and mysterious brigands arrived.[35] Even though Roland claimed, 'I have not grieved anyone in the countryside; I have neither grounds nor titles', she was worried enough about the attacks on properties to flee from Lyon to protect the family property in le Clos.[36] She recognised that social and political progress could only be made with the establishment of a strong constitution and well-organised government, but that the violence sweeping through rural areas posed a barrier by serving as a distraction from the task in hand. This provides an explanation for her fury and emphasis upon the interception of letters and the decline in public trust. To intercept letters was to attack the right to freely communicate one's opinions and ideas. Whilst this continued, it was unlikely that public trust in governing institutions could be restored. Sovereignty belonged to the people, and for them to exercise it efficiently they had to be educated on what their rights and duties were. By highlighting this to Bosc, it is probable that Roland hoped to encourage him to promote and engage in focused discussions around the creation of a constitution and the rights of French citizens. Further evidence for this can be found in Roland's decision to stress her gender when making her arguments.

Although true that her resentment at the perceived inferiority of her sex shines through in this letter to Bosc, she channelled it in such a way that it appears as though she was provoking him into acting. Her parting shot about 'the cowards' who read her letter 'blushing' because it was written by a woman, implies that Roland was discussing issues deemed outside of her remit and she was aware of this. She justified this foray into revolutionary politics by arguing that women were as capable, if not more so, as men at provoking revolutionary sentiment.[37] This fed into fears over the unruly and irrational behaviour typically associated with women during this period, and simultaneously challenged patriarchal authority over dependents. For many men in late eighteenth century French society, honour and virility were key components of masculinity, and exerting control over dependents was integral to this.[38] Roland's description of those intercepting letters as 'cowards' was an attack upon their manhood and struck at the core of her agenda: to incite male revolutionaries to act quickly

[35] Roland to Bosc, 26 July 1789, pp.53-54.
[36] Ibid., p.54; Roland to Brissot, 3 August 1789, in Ibid., pp.54-55.
[37] Roland to Bosc, 26 July 1789, p.53; Dalton, *Engendering the republic of Letters,* p.64.
[38] Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honour in Modern France,* p.10.

and decisively to establish a constitution worthy of national revere, and educate French citizens on the ideals of the Revolution as a means of developing their political consciousness.

This agenda is also apparent in a later letter to Bosc, dated 4 September 1789, in which she stated,

> Your good letter gave us very bad news; we roared as we learned of it and read the public papers: we complain of a bad constitution as we have ruined our incomplete and faulty Declaration. […] It is up to you, Parisians, to set an example; through a wise and vigorous address show the Assembly that you know your rights, that you want to keep them and are prepared to fight for them […]! Our small cities are too corrupted, and our country people are too ignorant.[39]

According to Roland, ignorance was the biggest obstacle to solidifying a constitution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. It was, she claimed, up to people like Bosc, who were at the heart of revolutionary activity and had immediate access to leading clubs and journals, to educate the masses. She admired the Fraternal Societies and wished to see these created in every section and led by men like Bosc because she believed that they carried out significant work in conserving and perfecting a free government.[40] Every relationship Roland forged was carefully crafted and was, as Dalton asserts, 'mobilized towards political ends'.[41] A prime example of this is her relationship with Bancal. In comparison to Bosc, whom Roland knew before 1790, it was on 22 June 1790 that Roland reached out to Bancal. She noted in this letter that she did not have the pleasure of personally knowing him but mentioned their mutual friendship with Lanthenas by means of introduction.[42] She acknowledged that he was in Paris with their mutual friend, suggesting that, like Bosc, he was at the heart of revolutionary action and was better placed than the Rolands to act.[43] As a means of creating a bond, Roland regretfully admitted that it was not Monsieur Roland writing to him: 'it is only his wife who writes to you today, but one soul expresses the same sentiments as the other'.[44] She went on to express their hopes at seeing Bancal at the civic

[39] Roland to Bosc, 4 September 1789, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.61-63 (pp.61-62).
[40] Roland to Bosc, 6 February 1791, in Ibid., pp.232-233.
[41] Dalton, *Engendering the republic of letters*, p.56.
[42] Roland to Bancal, 22 June 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.97-99 (pp.97-98).
[43] Ibid., p.98.
[44] Ibid.

festival of Lyon and concluded, 'if you must send us useful notes and observations to publish in our provinces, we have a way to favour publication'.[45]

What is most interesting about this letter, is that it was the first of many. Bancal became a frequent recipient of Roland's letters, and she came to appreciate and respect his views. The way in which she constructed this letter is evidence of the importance of etiquette associated with letter-writing. First and foremost, the mention of a mutual friend created an initial block of trust to build a relationship upon. This worked in a similar manner to having a letter of recommendation for entry to salons. Having a mutual acquaintance often resulted in a good character reference, which contributed towards one's honour. It also established common interest between the parties involved in the correspondence. In the case of Roland and Bancal, spreading information and revolutionary ideologies and sentiments were shared interests. Both wished to see the Revolution succeed, especially in its early stages, and the journals established between 1789 and 1792 played a central role in shaping public opinion. Roland tapped into this by highlighting her connections with local journalists and emphasising her willingness to pass Bancal's observations on to these individuals who could share them with a wider audience, as a means of developing a bond with him. Relationships formed during the Revolution did not rely so much on the length of time one had known someone, compared with the degree to which those in question shared common interests and beliefs. Revolution was an intense experience and finding those of similar ilk determined one's successes and failures. Michel Biard, Linton and Leigh Whaley provide excellent context for this argument. As Biard and Linton assert, friendship for the revolutionaries influenced how they conducted politics.[46] They were drawn to others who 'shared purpose, hopes, and camaraderie, as well as the risks they faced together'.[47] Whaley's view of the significance of power bases in the rise of conflicts furthers this, confirming that most revolutionaries caught in the increasing political tensions of the 1790s were either friends or former friends of one another.[48] Roland's ability to develop a close bond with Bancal contributed towards support for and the triumphs of her husband.

By 4 August 1790, she felt comfortable enough with Bancal to share her views on the counterrevolutionary activities in Lyon. She argued that counterrevolution was at the heart

[45] Ibid., p.99.
[46] Michel Biard and Marisa Linton, *Terror: The French Revolution and its Demons* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), p.100.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Whaley, *Radicals,* p.43.

of the troubles in Lyon and that rumours of 10,000 troops being established in the city to contain any foreign invasions were being spread to excite the people into revolt.[49] Houses, she went on, were marked out for pillaging.[50] The only way for order to be restored, according to Roland, was for national and voluntary forces to quash enemies of the Revolution and work towards executing decrees and re-establishing barriers.[51] 'My friend, the counterrevolution has begun here, it is a lost country […] There are so few patriots here and their enemies are so strong', she asserted.[52] Roland was aware of the significant role that Bancal, as one of the electors of Paris in 1789, had played during and after the fall of the Bastille and during the civic festival celebrating this momentous event. She recognised this in a previous letter to him, dated 18 July, in which she declared,

> You have celebrated the famous day […] You occupied at the festival a glorious place to find yourself […] I no longer envy ancient republics: an even purer day enlightens us, philosophy has extended to us knowledge of the rights and duties of man, we will be citizens without being the enemies of the unfortunate who do not share the benefits of our country.[53]

When combined with her letter from 4 August, it is surmisable that Roland sought to convince Bancal to embrace the achievements of 14 July and continue to promote the egalitarianism of the Revolution as a means of rallying against the opposition posed by counterrevolutionaries. The troubles in question were the disturbances that were also present in areas such as Toulouse and the Midi, and which were labelled 'royalist plots' against the Revolution. By mentioning her concerns to one third of the 'triumvirat', the collective name she applied to Bancal, Bosc and Lanthenas, it can be argued that Roland sought to impress upon Bancal the severity of the situation in Lyon and its possible repercussions on the progress of the Revolution. By appealing to and acting through men who possessed the power to influence a greater audience, Roland satisfied her desire to participate in the political landscape of revolutionary society by unofficially contributing to it via her correspondence.[54] In a manner comparable to that employed in her letters to Bosc, Roland frequently drew upon the inferiority of her sex in her letters to Bancal to consolidate her

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[49] Roland to Bancal, 4 August 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.132-138 (p.134).
[50] Ibid., p.135.
[51] Ibid., p.136.
[52] Ibid., p.137.
[53] Roland to Bancal, 18 July 1790, in Ibid., pp.106-109 (pp.107-108).
[54] Dalton, *Engendering the republic of letters,* p.63, p.68.

arguments. For instance, she disputed Bancal's claims that there were few female patriots, arguing that it was the lack of education that women received which prevented them from openly displaying their patriotic sentiments.[55] She also pointed out that the timing for the participation of women in the political sphere was not yet ripe.

> Our customs do not yet allow women to publicly show themselves. They must inspire and nourish goodness, arouse all sentiments useful to the country, but not appear to contribute to political works.[56]

At the crux of this observation was the notion that politics was a masculine arena, and that the political freedom of women could not precede the enfranchisement of all French men because it would ridicule and destroy the accomplishments of the Revolution.[57] That said, as her letter to Bancal highlights, Roland did think that women played a significant role in inflaming revolutionary thoughts and opinions and she chose to do so through her networking. Her communication with male revolutionaries not only created a support network for Monsieur Roland, but also permitted her some freedom with regards to expressing her own opinions. She was a charming character and successfully gained the trust of several revolutionaries, as her relationships with Bosc and Bancal, amongst others, attest. One person she failed to win over as an ally, however, was Robespierre.

The letters addressed to Robespierre are of a formal nature. She refrains from using the informal *tutoyer,* reserved for loved ones, addressing him with the formal *vouvoyer*. This use of language is significant. As Reynolds asserts, it demonstrates that Roland possessed a strong awareness of the importance of discourse and used it effectively to address different persons within society.[58] She respected societal conventions and acted accordingly. This is transparent in the early letters addressed to Robespierre when they were merely acquaintances. On 27 September 1791, Roland reached out to Robespierre for the first time since the outbreak of the Revolution. The aim of this letter was to establish a connection between the two parties. Written in the aftermath of the newly established constitution, which was drafted on 3 September and accepted by the king on 13 September, Roland was excluded from active citizenship. Despite being as politically engaged as her fellow

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[55] Roland to Bancal, 20 June 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.298-302 (p.301).
[56] Roland to Bancal, 6 April 1791, in Ibid., pp.253-259 (p.258).
[57] Ibid.
[58] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.141.

revolutionaries and a full French citizen through birth and marriage, she was denied citizenship rights based upon her sex. Most likely frustrated by her legal and political inferiority, Roland focused her efforts on networking on behalf of her spouse, forming relationships with those she deemed 'courageous and loyal to the principles of the Revolution'.[59] She approved of his appointment as public prosecutor in the criminal tribunal, alongside Pétion and Buzot, who served as president and substitute president, arguing that the criminal tribunal was highly organised.[60] Recognising the value of having someone in this position as an ally, Roland sought to appeal to him and she was somewhat successful in this venture initially.

On 27 March 1792, she stated that she was residing at the Hôtel Britannique and wished him to attend one of her dinners.[61] In an effort to pique his interest, she not only addressed him with *vous,* but attempted to flatter his ego by labelling him the leader of the wise and enlightened.[62] This is compelling because, at this point in the Revolution, the Rolands and Robespierre were on opposing sides of the issue of war; whereas the Rolands were pro-war, Robespierre opposed it. That Roland reached out to Robespierre suggests that she viewed him as someone of relative importance, worthy of being an ally. Though her views of Robespierre changed later, this is evidence of Roland working as a political mediator, consolidating her husband's professional networks. It evidently worked because the following month, Robespierre turned up at her home and asked her for a meeting.[63] This is confirmed in her letter to Robespierre dated 25 April of the same year. Disappointed by his failure to attend her dinners, she politely reminded him that during their previous meeting he had promised her his attendance, and attempted to gain his trust by referring to him as an ardent lover of liberty and denying association with his political enemies.[64] Moreover, her emphasis upon his absence from her dinners was a subtle reminder of the etiquette of revolutionary society: where salons were central to the art of conversation during the Enlightenment, dinner parties and small intimate gatherings were their revolutionary equivalent.[65] Regardless of what one's personal views of Robespierre are, it cannot be denied that a love of his country and a determination to eradicate France's political enemies, defined his personal and collective identities – or, at least this was the case in his own self-image.

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[59] Roland to Robespierre, 27 September 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.384-388 (pp.384-385).
[60] Roland to Bancal, 20 June 1791, p.301.
[61] Roland to Robespierre, 27 March 1792, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.413-414 (p.413).
[62] Roland to Robespierre, 25 April 1792, in Ibid, pp.418-420 (pp.418-419).
[63] Roland to Bosc, April 1792, in Ibid, pp.417.
[64] Roland to Robespierre, 25 April 1792, pp.418-419.
[65] Linton, *Choosing Terror*, p.89.

Roland knew this and sought to exploit this aspect of Robespierre's nature to gain him as an ally.

The context is crucial because this letter was dated five days after war was declared on Austria. Knowing where the Rolands and Robespierre positioned themselves on this issue, it is arguable that this letter was an attempt at healing the rifts caused by the Legislative Assembly's decision to go to war. She was trying to prevent attacks upon her husband, who was Minister of the Interior, and his colleagues by halting further divisions between members of the Jacobin club. Additionally, Brissot, a regular attendee of her political dinners and close friend, was at the heart of the pro-war debate and there was growing ill-feeling between Robespierre and him.[66] For Roland, it was important to smooth over this conflict because it interfered with the objective of establishing a republic. Co-operation was required to achieve liberty and equality, and Roland willingly acted as a mediator between the disagreeing parties to promote working together for the common good. Therefore, it can be summarised from these letters that she was an intelligent woman and skilled writer, knowledgeable about the conventions of society. She applied this knowledge when serving as a political convenor, and her letters to Robespierre support this assessment.

On the other hand, her letters to Robespierre in 1793 imply that the amicable relationship between the two parties had dissolved. In this year, both France and the Revolution were in peril. France was at war with Britain and had been since February 1793; Louis XVI was executed the month before, removing the nation's figurehead; there were severe food shortages; and there were strong divisions in the Convention between competing factions. The Jacobins assumed control of the Convention following the expulsion of the Girondins between 31 May and 2 June at the hands of the Montagnards and Enragés, supported by the SRRW and the sans-culottes, who represented the Parisian sections. Once they gained power, the Jacobins unintentionally contributed to the unfolding of the Terror when they encouraged political transparency by labelling personal friendships as suspect, with gatherings like Roland's being defined as conspiratorial. She was amongst the leading Girondins arrested. Whilst imprisoned, Roland wrote a series of letters, including one to Robespierre which she never sent. Though this may appear unusual given their frosty relations, one can gain insight into the possible motivations behind this letter upon closer examination. Roland, due to her visits from loved ones, remained connected to the outside

[66] Olivier Blanc, 'Cercles Politiques et 'Salons' du Début de la Révolution (1789-1793)', *AHRF 344* (2006), 63-92 (p.90).

world. She was aware of the treatment of Marie-Antoinette, who was interrogated before the revolutionary tribunal on 12 October and received her order of indictment the following day, before being executed on 16 October.[67] Alongside the execution of Charlotte Corday in July 1793, the execution of the queen set an example of how some politically deviant women, who were considered suspect or guilty of a conspiracy, were treated as the Terror progressed. As Reynolds argues, when Roland was initially incarcerated it is unlikely that she felt concerned for her safety because, as a woman, she did not think that there was a solid case against her.[68] Further confirmation of this can be found in her insistence during her interrogation that she, being a woman, was not involved in public affairs.[69]

However, as her imprisonment dragged on and she was moved from the Abbaye to the prison of Saint-Pélagie, and with the executions of Corday and Marie-Antoinette present in her mind, she became convinced and resigned to the fact that she was going to die.[70] One explanation for the drafting of this letter to Robespierre, therefore, is that it was a last-ditch attempt to save her husband. Aware of the importance of her own death in relation to the care of her daughter, this letter can be interpreted as an endeavour to ensure that Eudora was raised by at least one of her biological parents. She implored Robespierre to admit that her husband was 'an honest man', emphasising that 'his book is always open and can be read by anyone'.[71] In other words, Monsieur Roland's transparency coincided with the values of the Revolution, and he did not deserve to be punished for 'corrupting public spirit' or his time in office as Minister of the Interior.[72] He was an ardent revolutionary, dedicated to the principles of liberty and equality, and was solely guilty of being disgusted with the developments of the Revolution and tired of the years of work he had undertaken.[73] Furthermore, by emphasising her role as a dutiful wife who was 'nourished by serious studies, had simple tastes, was enthusiastic about the Revolution, and was foreign to official business by principle of her sex', Roland played upon societal expectations of women.[74] She

[67] Roland to Robespierre, 14 October 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.522-526 (pp.523-524).
[68] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.270.
[69] Ibid; Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, pp.127-132.
[70] Helen Maria Williams (1759-1827), *Letters containing a sketch of the politics of France, from the thirty-first of May 1793, till the twenty-eighth of July 1794, and of the scenes which have passed in the prisons of Paris,* Vol.I (London: 1795), pp.196-198.
[71] Roland to Robespierre, 14 October 1793, p.524.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., pp.524-525.

asked Robespierre for his opinion on her fate: Exile? Long-term imprisonment? Martyrdom?[75]

This may reflect an attempt by Roland to escape the guillotine. Though aware that death was possible, by pushing Robespierre to recognise her maternal role and providing him with alternative punishments, she tried to downplay her political agency and reduce the extent to which she was considered a threat by male revolutionaries. In many respects, Roland redefined her roles of wife and mother, often justifying tasks outside of this remit with her patriotic devotion and dedication to her family. Her awareness of this deviation and its consequences manifested itself in her efforts to appeal to Robespierre's humanity. Like many revolutionaries influenced by the Revolution, the Robespierre of the Terror, Linton argues, was not the same man who previously opposed war and held strong humanitarian beliefs.[76] Roland understood how the Revolution changed people, she too had experienced this. However, it is likely that she hoped to appeal to some of those older principles of Robespierre, especially his opposition to capital punishment. She presented herself as a loving mother and wife trying to navigate a rapidly evolving world, in the hope that Robespierre, despite not being a dictator, would have control over her fate. Unfortunately for Roland, she pushed the boundaries too far and, when added to her association with the Girondins and Robespierre's lack of influence over the criminal tribunals, paid the ultimate price for it.

Nevertheless, the letter was also an attempt by Roland to accept her situation. Aware that the guillotine was a likely fate, after all 1793 to 1794 was the bloodiest period of the Revolution, though the guillotine accounted for few of these deaths; she utilised this letter to Robespierre and her memoirs to state her loyalty to the Revolution, shoring up her position on her revolutionary efforts and political participation. This allowed her to contextualise her situation within the broader events of the Revolution and envisage the future in which her daughter would grow up; one without a mother. The letter is unrepentant, exemplifying pride in both her husband and her own political beliefs. She boldly declared this when she wrote, 'I do not write to pray to you; I do not pray to anyone'.[77] 'Praying', she continued, 'is for the guilty or the enslaved'.[78] This is intriguing because it countered what fellow Girondin,

[75] Ibid., p.526.
[76] Linton, 'Virtue and Terror: Maximilien Robespierre on the Principles of the French Revolution', in *Revolutionary Moments: Reading Revolutionary Texts,* ed.by Rachel Hammersley (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), pp.93-100 (p.94).
[77] Roland to Robespierre, 14 October 1793, p.523.
[78] Ibid.

Condorcet, argued about Robespierre. According to Condorcet, so many women devoted themselves to Robespierre because he acted as a priest and treated his supporters as his flock; he took the Revolution and turned it into a cult.[79] Roland was an exception because she considered him an unreasonable, uncompromising and illogical tyrant, and cited this reason for her decision not to send the letter.[80]

She was perceived as a threat by Robespierre and fellow Jacobins because she knew too much. This highlights what Sean Quinlan terms the 'psychological anxieties' of male revolutionaries, which manifested as backlash against political women and attempts to limit their agency.[81] Something else worth noting, which may have contributed towards these masculine anxieties, is that women such as Roland were judging the actions of male revolutionaries. In Roland's memoirs there is a section containing observations of leading revolutionaries. It is evident from these, amongst whom one can count Pétion, Buzot, Danton and Paine, whom she favoured and whom she distrusted based upon their virtue and patriotism. Arguably, one of the most intriguing observations from Roland's memoirs are those of Louise de Kéralio Robert and François Robert.

According to Roland's assessment of the couple, with whom she became acquainted in 1791, Robert was a fat man with a wide face that exuded self-contentment. Kéralio, in stark contrast, was a small, lively, skilful, and fine woman with a pleasant nature.[82] Much can be taken from her focus on the physical description of Robert, contra to her detailed and complimentary character reference of Kéralio. In one way, this was inversion on Roland's part. Being female, Roland was accustomed to judgement under the male gaze. The female portrait, whether written or painted, was generally portrayed from the male perspective.[83] From a young age, as exemplified by the young apprentice in her father's workshop, she was objectified. This explains her attraction to Monsieur Roland, who, as Condorcet did with Sophie, valued her intellectual prowess and encouraged her educational pursuits. The Revolution created space for women to adapt, recreate, and establish themselves in ways that overturned the natural order of society. Whilst the women of the October Days adopted the carnivalesque practices of the perceived inferior members of society dominating the superior; Roland turned her efforts to the male gaze. Concentrating on the physical

[79] P.-J.-B Buchez and P.-C Roux, eds., *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française,* Tome 21 (Paris: 1835), p.2.
[80] Roland to Robespierre, 14 October 1793, p.526.
[81] Quinlan, 'Men Without Women?', p.46.
[82] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.170.
[83] Ozouf, *Women's Words,* p.ix.

appearance of Robert, she overlooked his intellectual merits and personality: something that regularly happened to women. Meanwhile, her positive assessment of Kéralio's personal qualities and sociability was empowering because it shifted away from the objectification of women based upon their physical appearance. It was an appreciation of the talents that women could foster in an agreeable environment. This is important when considering the Revolution because it highlights two things. First, the Revolution had a striking influence upon French culture. Much of this culture was shaped by male and female perceptions of one another and their distinct roles within society. That Roland inverted the natural order of the social hierarchy by limiting her impressions of Robert to his appearance, supports Smith's claim that women imagined their own concerns in unfamiliar contexts with countless possibilities.[84] Revolution is fundamentally about progress. For women like Roland, visualizing the ways in which their lives could be altered was a sign of progress. The lot of women may have experienced little change, with the continuation of inequalities across the long nineteenth century; but, their mindset was transformed in the eighteenth century thanks to the Enlightenment and the Revolution.

Second, and connected to this, women's political agency helped shape the Revolution. Whether through militant action, like the market women and the Revolutionary Republican *citoyennes*, or through writing in its various formats, as demonstrated by Kéralio, Condorcet, Jullien and Roland, their actions and words provoked reactions from contemporaries. They forced officials to take notice of their revolutionary efforts, sparking debates on the social and political duties of the sexes. Female virtue in the revolutionary period was redefined to encompass patriotism and republican motherhood. Loyalty to the revolutionary cause showed that women could understand and form opinions on local and national politics. As Linton concludes, a significant aspect of revolutionary politics was emotion: ideology motivated political choices, but emotions influenced decisions.[85] Unsurprisingly, due to their association with femininity, emotions rendered women suitable political candidates; something their male counterparts increasingly acknowledged in the early 1790s. The willingness of many women to participate in the Revolution unlocked a female political consciousness that raised questions over education, political rights and citizenship, increasing female agency.[86] The revolution that women experienced was different to that of

[84] Smith, *Changing Lives,* p.99.
[85] Marisa Linton, 'The stuff of nightmares: plots, assassinations, and duplicity in the mental world of Jacobin leaders, 1793-1794', in *Experiencing the French Revolution*, ed.by David Andress (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013), pp.201-217 (pp.201-202).
[86] Offen, *The Woman Question in France*, p.127.

men because they encountered a balancing act between tradition and modernity.[87] Unlike many men, who could embrace new political and social opportunities, the lives of women remained constrained by their familial duties and obligations. A common theme in the female experience was motherhood and marital responsibilities. This did not change during the Revolution. In fact, the Revolution intensified the importance of women within the family unit. Hence, the revolutionary experience of many women, though far from universal, was a constant compromise between the ancien régime and revolutionary notions of liberty and equality.

Few of Roland's portraits were as positive as this one of Kéralio. She was particularly scathing towards Danton and Paine. Her issue with Paine was not so much his character, as his ability in the French language. Despite highlighting the importance of his works in relation to the American Revolution, she did not feel he deserved his honorary French citizenship. Paine could not speak French and relied upon translators. This failed to impress Roland, who admitted that he had great principles, but found him less impressive than Williams. For Roland, Williams deserved his citizenship more than Paine because she considered him of greater use to the French cause.[88] Her issue with Paine concerned his ignorance. Roland, due to her sex, lacked legal citizenship, even though she was as intelligent and politically engaged as Paine. More importantly, she was able to pose as a full French citizen because of her abilities within the language. She had worked hard to educate herself yet was legally deprived of the rights associated with active citizenship because of her sex. Thus, an interpretation of Roland's resentment towards Paine is that she did not appreciate his obvious lazy manner with regards to French culture, especially given his privileged position as an honorary French citizen with full access to the political rights associated with this status.

In stark contrast to the portrait of Paine, Danton was described as duplicitous, with 'a heart as ferocious as his face', which was marred from smallpox.[89] Her distrust of Danton emerged from her suspicions of his motives: he often attempted to spend time with her before her dinners, possibly because he felt she held sway over her husband. Furthermore, and with hindsight, she found him rude and uncouth.[90] Roland's observations of political figures

[87] Lindsay A.H. Parker, 'Women's Rights and the Limits of Revolutions', in *Understanding and Teaching: The Age of Revolutions,* ed.by Ben Marsh and Mike Rapport (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2017), pp.163-184 (p.165); Desan, *The Family on Trial,* p.174.
[88] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.270.
[89] Ibid., p.212.
[90] Ibid.

signify that she was a strong presence during her husband's career, refusing to remain in the background and forming her own judgments. This shows that women could develop an understanding of revolutionary politics. It also indicates that women formed networks with influential characters, gaining an informal, unofficial place in the political sphere. Roland's observations are fundamental to explaining her imprisonment during the Terror. Her memoirs, coupled with her letter to Robespierre, illustrate that she comprehended the reason for her arrest. She emphasised that during her husband's second time in office, she moved his bed into her apartment and slept with a pistol under her pillow: this confirms that she was aware of their unpopularity.[91] Roland, in some ways, acted in a way considered appropriate to her sex. She was a dutiful wife and mother. She wanted to protect her family from the increasing and, by 1793, imminent danger to their lives. However, motherhood did not satisfy her. Although she stated in her memoirs that she nurtured her daughter, she was also irritated by her.[92] She lacked intelligence and Roland struggled to find common ground with her. Moreover, her marriage was unusual in that it was a mutual agreement based upon affection. Many women did not have this luxury and married for convenience. Though this changed somewhat during the Revolution, with companionship being recognised as an important element in marriage, the Rolands' marriage remained an anomaly. Roland, thus, had greater options available to her than most women. This fuelled resentment towards her. Her strong character, exemplary writing skills and astuteness made her appear more masculine than feminine to her contemporaries. She defied eighteenth century expectations by inserting herself willingly into the political sphere. Her execution in 1793 suggests that she was too much of an enigma to be permitted to live. Her memoirs and letters from the Terror were recorded in a brutally honest way to highlight that she was not afraid to die; she had accepted her fate and did not wish to hide anything. She had little else to lose and willingly shared her vulnerability to capture the attention of those reading her works.

Of all Roland's letters, the ones that show her most vulnerable side are those she sent to Buzot during her imprisonment in 1793. In contrast to those she sent to other friends and acquaintances with the aim of inciting action, it is arguable that her letters to Buzot were sent with the intention of encouraging him to keep fighting to see the Revolution through to its end. Roland's relationship with Buzot was of a more intimate nature than those she shared with her other correspondents. This is because it was one of passion. Despite never acting upon her feelings, due to her marital commitments, she explicitly acknowledged in her

[91] Ibid., p.296.
[92] Ibid., Tome Second, p.385.

memoirs and letters to Buzot her love for him. The most poignant letters depicting this adoration are from her imprisonment. In many senses, the letters to him from this time were expressions of her love for him. She had nothing to lose by sending these letters because she knew that death was possible, so felt able to declare her feelings. She was not further jeopardizing the masculinity of her husband, which was already under scrutiny due to her dominant nature, because she refused to physically act upon her feelings, stating that she loved him as a dutiful daughter loves a father.[93] Her marriage was one of intellectual partnership and companionship. Though they shared a daughter, there was a lack of intimacy between the two. Nonetheless, Roland remained relentlessly devoted to her husband: a fact that she openly shared with Buzot. On 3 July 1793, she described to Buzot her joy at receiving one of his letters.

> I still hear your courageous voice; I am witness to
> your resolutions, I feel the sentiments that drive you,
> I am honoured to love you and be dear to you.[94]

Alongside her admission, 'I cover your letters in kisses and press them to my heart', it is obvious that she longed for more intimacy in her life.[95] The love she felt for him was more passionate than that she felt for her spouse. Further proof of this can be found in her desire to shield him from harm. Her unwillingness to name him in their correspondence symbolised a woman trying to protect a loved one. Roland did not want to compromise Buzot and risk him sharing her fate. The love she displayed for him through this act confirmed her desire to care for him. Another instance of this comes from her letter from 7 July. She admitted that she could love him unconditionally from her cell without dividing her love between her husband and him: it was thoughts of Buzot that kept her spirits high during her incarceration.[96] This is an interesting contrast between her role as a wife and as a young woman. The main thing that Roland's letters to Buzot emphasises is that she was human. As a wife and mother, she loved her family deeply. However, she was also a woman who felt little intimate satisfaction from her marriage and wanted more than an intellectual partnership. Torn between her marital duties and her love for another man, she sacrificed her own happiness for that of her family. By the time she willingly admitted the true nature of

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[93] Ibid., p.251.
[94] Roland to Buzot, 3 July 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.492-495 (p.492).
[95] Roland to Buzot, 22 June 1793, in *Mémoires,* Tome Second, pp.335-343 (p.335).
[96] Roland to Buzot, 7 July 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.500-507 (p.500).

her feelings it was too late. She was imprisoned and Buzot was a fugitive, so neither could act upon their desires. Therefore, Roland's letters portray her inferior status within society.

As a woman, she was expected to prioritise her family over her individual needs. Had she given in to her temptations, she would have risked slandering her own reputation and that of loved ones. As a result, even though she loved Buzot, she remained loyal to her family. These letters depict some of the most intimate aspects of her life; contradicting Danton, Marat and Chaumette's claims that she was 'haughty' and 'led her husband by the nose'.[97] This reveals as much about the position of many male revolutionaries as it does about Roland. In relation to Danton, Marat and Chaumette, these assessments suggest that they were anxious about such an assertive woman, whose intelligence and political consciousness made her almost masculine because these traits were not generally perceived as being synonymous with women. In contrast, with regards to Roland, their descriptions implied that her political participation in revolutionary society went beyond what was expected of a wife and mother in her position, and that her interference was more of a hindrance than a help to the revolutionary efforts. Undeterred by this, she utilised the space in her letters to Buzot to construct a version of herself that satisfied her own self-image. She wanted to be remembered as a loyal wife and devoted mother.[98] Confirmation of this can be found in her assertion that she 'nourished and raised her daughter according to the principles of motherhood' and 'received colleagues of Roland's at her table but did not interrupt or participate in their debates'.[99] She also wanted to be recognised as someone who was passionate about the Revolution, who had championed it since its earliest days and was willing to live by the motto 'to be free or to die'.[100] This is particularly noticeable in her letters to the section of Beaurepaire which, similarly to the letters she addressed to Buzot, offered Roland the space to reinvent herself. The difference with these letters is that they were written with public opinion in mind and lacked the intimacy present within her letters to Buzot. The overall goal of the letters to the section of Beaurepaire was to incite individuals living in this area to demand her release from prison.

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[97] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 52 (Paris: 1897), p.229; Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), *L'Ami du Peuple,* No.683, 19 September 1792, p.7; *Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur depuis la réunion des état-généraux jusqu'au consulat (mai 1789-novembre 1799),* Tome 18 (Paris: 1841), pp.450-451.
[98] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.21.
[99] Ibid., p.21, p.64, p.129,
[100] Ibid., p.206; Roland to Bosc, 22 June 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.302-306 (p.304).

On 4 June 1793 - two days after the expulsion of the Girondins from the Convention and an order for the arrest of twenty-nine members of the faction, amongst whom was her husband – Roland wrote to the section of Beaurepaire.

> The moment I was imprisoned in the Abbaye, I wrote to the Convention and the Minister of the Interior. […] Here I am on the fourth day of my detention, and I have not yet been interrogated. I note that the arrest order did not contain any reasons for my detainment, but stated that I was to be questioned the following day.[101]

Roland's appeal to the section of Beaurepaire was tactical. Roland's home was in this section, which was at the heart of the Latin Quarter. This area, located near the Sorbonne and the Luxembourg Palace and gardens, was in the Saint-Germain district, renowned for its willingness to revolt.[102] Monsieur Roland was popular with the inhabitants of this section, who pledged to put Roland and his wife under their protection, and held significant influence within the district.[103] From this extract, it is evident that the letter was constructed to portray Roland as a victim who was being treated unjustly and as a means of illustrating that she had pleaded her case to higher authorities, but that these pleas were ignored. She was not, she argued, receiving the expected treatment according to the 1791 Constitution, which stated that a first interrogation would be carried out within twenty-four hours of an arrest.[104] By underlining the unfair conditions on which she was being held, she sought to appeal to the sympathies of a public audience, perhaps with the hope of being released. She was aware of the unfavourable situation facing herself, her husband and fellow Girondins, and could not do much to change this from inside prison. Despite the section failing to send a deputation to the Convention to plead on her behalf, due to pressure from the representatives of neighbouring sections, Roland made a further plea to the inhabitants of Beaurepaire on 4 July.

Aware of their loyalty to her husband, Roland took the time in this letter to highlight his political transparency and how 'he spoke out against all acts of violence that threatened the laws and humanity because he believed that it was important to harness support for the establishment of a republic'.[105] The republic he envisaged was a fair regime with a liberty that was cherished by all and was the antithesis of the tyrannical regime which preceded

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[101] Roland to the section of Beaurepaire, 4 June 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, p.473.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] 'Constitution de 1791', Chapitre V, Article 11, (Paris: 3 September 1791) <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/les-constitutions-dans-l-histoire/constitution-de-1791> [accessed: 6 December 2023].
[105] Roland to the section of Beaurepaire, 4 July 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.495-497 (pp.496-497).

it.[106] He did not, Roland argued, corrupt the public spirit; he was a respected and admired minister.[107] Roland then proceeded to make it known that she was arrested in place of her husband and was accused of being complicit in a project to pervert public opinion.[108] This, she asserted, was an injustice because Roland had rigorously submitted all his papers to the Assembly and all she was guilty of was honouring his principles and displaying a courage that was equal to his.[109] She ended her letter by calling upon all those who knew her to avenge her person and memory from slanderous attacks.[110] This skilfully crafted letter is a prime example of Roland trying to incite revolutionaries into action. By portraying both herself and her husband as victims of injustice, she simultaneously depicted 'her enemies as the vilest of hypocrites'.[111] According to Lesley Walker, Roland hoped to use her memoirs to share her truths – her belief in her own innocence and the powerlessness of her friends against their political opponents – 'in front of a revolutionary court'.[112] She failed to gain sympathy from either the National Convention, the Minister of the Interior or the Minister of Justice, all of whom she addressed prior to her final letter to the section of Beaurepaire.

On 1 June, she wrote to the National Convention stating that she did not know the reasons for her arrest.[113] Claiming that she was 'taken from the arms' of her daughter, Roland acknowledged that she was presumed culpable in the eyes of the public and asked the Convention for the reasons for her arrest.[114] Due to her connections with the world outside of her prison cell, Roland was aware that the Convention was primarily made up of individuals who opposed Brissot and the Girondins. Consequently, she most likely realised that it was improbable that her letter would be read aloud to the deputies of the Convention. On 2 June, she wrote to Garat, the Minister of the Interior and a Girondin sympathiser. It is possible that she wrote to Garat because she thought she would have more success of convincing him of her innocence. She asked him to forward her letter from 1 June to the Convention and make it known to the deputies that she felt the need to speak out against the oppression of which she was a victim.[115] Roland was somewhat successful in her appeal to Garat because in a later letter, dated 8 June, she admitted that she had heard from one of her

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., p.496.
[109] Ibid., pp.496-497.
[110] Ibid., p.497.
[111] Lesley H. Walker, 'Sweet and Consoling Virtue: The Memoirs of Madame Roland', *Eighteenth-Century Studies 34(3)* (2001), 403-419 (p.412).
[112] Ibid.
[113] Roland to the National Convention, 1 June 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.470-472 (pp.470-471).
[114] Ibid., pp.471-472.
[115] Roland to the Minister of the Interior, 2 June 1793, in Ibid., pp.472.

visitors that he had passed her complaints on to the legislature.[116] However, as she also pointed out, she had been imprisoned for eight days without any deduction of motif or an interrogation.[117] In her letter to Gohier, the Minister of Justice, she went one step further and criticised his inadequacy in carrying out his job.

> The laws are known to you; one states that you are to visit the prisons and remove those who are being detained without cause; another law requires you to present arrest warrants, to examine the motivations behind them, and to have detainees interrogated.[118]

It is arguable that this was an attempt to goad Gohier into answering her demands for an interrogation and the reason for her arrest. She crossed gender boundaries by highlighting her awareness of the mechanics of the revolutionary government and its decrees, which she learned during her time as the wife of the Minister of the Interior. This was a departure from her usual insistence that she played 'no part in the administration', demonstrating that 'she wielded unusual power and influence during her husband's time in office'.[119] This admission implies that Roland felt a sense of despair and frustration at her situation, and perhaps felt as though she had little else to lose by admitting to the significant role she played during her spouse's time in office. To an extent, her decision to try and provoke a reaction succeeded because she did eventually receive a response from the CGS in relation to the reason for her arrest. Yet, she did not secure her release from prison and there is little evidence to suggest that her letter to the Convention was read aloud to the deputies. Her letter to the section of Beaurepaire from 4 July can thus be interpreted as a final attempt to share her story. She treated her intended audience as the jury of what Walker termed Roland's image of 'a revolutionary court', portraying herself and her spouse as victims of their political opponents and pleading their innocence.[120] Her call for vengeance on her behalf is comparable to a jury being asked by the judge to consider all the evidence presented throughout the duration of the trial when reaching their verdict on the innocence or guilt of the defendant. As with her letters to the Convention, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice, this one fell short of Roland's aim of securing her release from prison. There was no significant uprising in protest of her imprisonment.

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[116] Roland to the Minister of the Interior, 8 June 1793, in Ibid., pp.476-477 (p.476).
[117] Ibid.
[118] Roland to the Minister of Justice, 8 June 1793, in Ibid., pp.475-476.
[119] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.242; Walker, 'Sweet and Consoling Virtue', p.404.
[120] Walker, 'Sweet and Consoling Virtue', p.412.

Nevertheless, these letters are valuable to those interested in the gendered dimensions of the Revolution. They depict the political opinions of one of the most exceptional characters of this time. From Roland's letters insight into the daily events of revolutionary society and the ways in which she incited revolutionaries into action can be gauged. Each of the letters Roland crafted had a specific agenda in mind, and the letters in this section demonstrate that she often used her correspondence to encourage action from male revolutionaries. The way in which she approached this depended upon her relationship with the correspondent and the context in which the letter was written. It also depended upon what she was trying to achieve. Inciting action did not necessarily mean inspiring an insurrection. In some instances, such as in her letters to Buzot, it was about encouraging her friends to continue to fight through their darkest moments to see the Revolution through to its natural end. At other moments, as her letters to the Convention, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice exemplify, it was about pushing male revolutionaries to acknowledge and engage with her. Often, it concerned establishing networks on behalf of her husband, which simultaneously had the advantage of offering her a political education and an outlet for her opinions. Nowhere is this clearer than in Roland's relationship with Brissot, the focus of the next section.

3.2 Spreading Information

Of all the relationships Roland established, her relationship with Brissot was the one that provided her with a regular platform from which she could publicly share her political views. Brissot valued Roland's opinions and often included them in *Le Patriote Français*.[121] Although her contributions to this journal were anonymous, there are ways to identify some of the articles and letters attributable to Roland. For instance, issue fourteen of *Le Patriote Français,* published on 12 August 1789, features two letters discussing the Great Fear spreading across the countryside. These pieces bear no signature; however, it can be deduced that they were written by Roland. Firstly, in the letter entitled 'Villefranche-en-Beaujolais, 3 août 1789', Brissot described the author of the letter as 'a very bright woman with a really energetic character', whose sentiments would no doubt please 'true patriots and friends of the Constitution'.[122] Roland frequently made her republican sympathies and patriotism known through her references to Sparta and Rome, her preference for living modestly, and

[121] Roland, *Lettres de Madame Roland,* Tome Premier, p.xxi; Roland, *Mémoires*, Tome Premier, p.192.
[122] Anonymous, 'De Villefranche en Beaujolais, le 3 août', *Le Patriote Français,* No.14, 12 August 1789, p.3.

her approval of works by known republicans such as Catherine Macaulay.[123] Moreover, she wrote a letter to Brissot on 3 August, and it was a replica of this that was published on 12 August in Brissot's journal. It was directly followed, in the same issue of *Le Patriote Français,* by another of Roland's letters to Brissot, dated 7 August and published as 'de Beaujolais, 7 août 1789'.[124]

In these letters, as well as discussing her reluctance to leave the countryside despite the Great Fear, Roland also expressed her views on the National Assembly and the need for French citizens to ratify the proposed constitution, rather than the deputies who were merely appointed as representatives of the nation.[125] That Brissot took the time to publish the letters exactly as Roland worded them, suggests that he felt Roland's observations were of significance to the revolutionary cause, worthy of being shared with a broader audience, and that she would make a useful informant on events from the countryside. Her task, which she dutifully carried out until the end of 1790, was to observe Lyon and the Revolution's impact on this city and its inhabitants, reporting her findings to Brissot so that he could publish them.[126] Brissot valued his relationship with Roland and the feeling was mutual, but this does not mean that they were always in agreement.[127] Revolutionary politics were divisive and there were times when Roland disagreed with what was written in Brissot's journal and used their epistolary relationship to correct what she deemed factual inaccuracies. In *Liberty in their Names: The Women Philosophers of the French Revolution* (2023)*,* Sandrine Bergès argues that, on 13 July 1790, Roland responded to an article in *Le Patriote Français,* which detailed events in Lyon.[128] However, upon closer examination of Roland's letters and Brissot's journal, the timeline does not appear to correspond with Bergès' assessment. There are two articles in *Le Patriote Français* entitled 'Troubles of Lyon', which were published on 15 and 19 July respectively. In the first of these articles, it was noted that much of the unrest occurring in the city was the result of the taxes placed on cattle, wine and other goods entering Lyon.[129] The people, this author continued, were justified in their complaints because it was disgusting and inhumane to tax everyday commodities so heavily.[130]

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[123] When Bancal was in London in 1791, Roland wrote to encourage him to reach out to Macaulay. Roland to Bancal, 15 March 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, p.246.
[124] Brissot, *Le Patriote Français,* No.14, 12 August 1789, p.2.
[125] Roland to Brissot, 3 August 1789, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.54-55; Roland to Brissot, 7 August 1789, in Ibid., pp.55-56.
[126] Bergès, *Liberty in their Names,* p.90.
[127] Roland to Brissot, 23 July 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.114-120 (pp.114-115).
[128] Bergès, *Liberty in their Names,* pp.91-92.
[129] Anonymous, 'Troubles de Lyon', *Le Patriote Français,* No.341, 15 July 1790, p.2.
[130] Ibid.

Nevertheless, it was not just for the people to use its force to burn the barriers and close the offices of the clerks.[131] The author concluded that the people of Lyon lacked education and that it was necessary for the journalists and newspapers from other districts to educate them.[132] The article from 19 July furthered the ideas discussed in the previous account and it was this one that Roland disagreed with.[133]

According to this article, 'the enemies of the constitution are excited, the people of Lyon are devoted to the Revolution but are miserable because several causes stop their manufacturing'.[134] The people, aggrieved at the taxes placed on the commodities essential to daily living, thought the most natural way to reform these taxes was to address the National Assembly via a petition.[135] They were, however, in the opinion of the author, susceptible to 'anti-revolutionaries', who favoured direct action and 'brought the people to suppress the barriers, close the offices, and ask the municipality to convene the thirty-two districts to deliberate on these issues'.[136] Furthermore, the National Guard of Lyon, composed of a combination of workers and officials of the municipality, were described as being 'indifferent to the troubles' because they 'knew the dangers of resisting the crowd and had to yield to prevent bloodshed'.[137] What the good people of Lyon needed, the author argued, was instruction to address their ignorance rather than punishment for their actions.[138] In Roland's letter to Brissot, dated 23 July, she praised his principles and character before stating, 'I see it as my duty to set you on the path of the truth, when it appears to have escaped you'.[139] She mentioned that she had moved five leagues away from Lyon before the troubles broke out, was still receiving letters, and was able to see arrivals in Lyon from her new location.[140] Thus, she had first-hand insight into the unrest in Lyon. Moreover, Roland expanded upon 'the troubles' mentioned in the article. The troubles in question were the counterrevolutionary disturbances that were also present in areas such as Toulouse and the Midi, and which were labelled 'royalist plots' against the Revolution. In her letter, Roland emphasised that many of the Lyonnais municipal corps were enemies to the Revolution,

[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Roland to Brissot, 23 July 1790, pp.114-115.
[134] Anonymous, 'Troubles de Lyon', *Le Patriote Français,* No.345, pp.2-3 (p.2).
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., pp.2-3.
[138] Ibid., p.3.
[139] Roland to Brissot, 23 July 1790, p.114.
[140] Ibid., pp.114-120.

more ignorant and less pure than the people of Lyon themselves.[141] She blamed their ignorance upon the inaccessibility to impartial and patriotic newspapers due to censorship.[142]

Roland disagreed with the article's portrayal of the people of Lyon.

> You have painted the people of Lyon as being swept away by violent insurrection, setting fire to barrels, forcing the hand of the municipality, committing excess that deserves to be repressed by force; you blame the assembly of commissioners of the sections; you accuse them of abolishing the *octroi* by acting as legislators in small measure […].[143]

As someone who had lived for periods of time in the city and whose spouse was a notable in the municipality, Roland felt a sense of loyalty towards the inhabitants of Lyon and wished to see their grievances and actions accurately portrayed. She also, as Bergès argues, thought of herself a defender of republican ideals and worried that the rights and freedoms associated with republicanism would not be accepted or applied to areas outside of Paris.[144] Confirmation of this can be found in Roland's emphasis upon the need for the people of Paris, who were at the very epicentre of revolutionary activity, to take time to spread these principles of the Revolution to provincial areas and educate the inhabitants of these rural towns of their rights, duties and liberties.[145] That said, another possible, more likely explanation for Roland's desire to portray the people of Lyon in a positive light is that any negative accounts of Lyon's inhabitants and municipal council reflected poorly on her husband. Monsieur Roland already occupied a precarious position in Lyon due to his open support for the Revolution. On 7 February 1790, there were challenges to the high property qualifications – three *livres* for voters and ten *livres* for candidates – placed upon the eligibility to vote and stand for office in Lyon.[146] This resulted in a popular uprising which replaced the *corps de volontaires* with the National Guard, and witnessed the forced flight of Imbert, the mayor, and the widening of the suffrage due to a reduction in the property qualifications on 17 February.[147] Any *patriotes*, regardless of whether they voiced their support for the events of 7 February or not, were deemed the 'main beneficiaries' of these

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[141] Ibid., p.117.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., pp.114.
[144] Bergès, *Liberty in their Names,* p.92.
[145] Roland to Brissot, 23 July 1790, pp.114-120.
[146] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.116.
[147] Ibid; W.D. Edmonds, *Jacobinism and the revolt of Lyon, 1789-1793* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.52.

events and 'guilty by association with the objectives of the insurgents'.[148] Monsieur Roland was a known *patriote* and was unpopular with the wealthier members of Lyon, largely due to a pamphlet he published, entitled *Municipalité de Lyon apperçu des travaux à entreprendre, & des moyens de les suivre.* In this work, Roland spoke out against the inequalities between the rich and poor, the need to publicise accounts to educate taxpayers on the taxes they were paying and to abolish the *octroi,* and he made a call for council sessions to be open to the public as a means of promoting political transparency.[149] As Reynolds notes, this resulted in the publication of a series of anti-Roland pamphlets, some of which were milder than others.[150]

One such example is that entitled, *Lettre à M. Roland de la Platière, sur sa brochure intitulée: Municipalité de Lyon* (1790). Although the author of this pamphlet boldly declared their admiration for Roland's judgement and need to be useful to the people of Lyon, they simultaneously accused him of being out of touch with the sentiments of the city's inhabitants.

> You make a lot of noise in our town. You only speak of yourself, of your principles, of your works. […] You have become, I do not know how, a citizen of this town that you only ever stay in for a few weeks at a time […].[151]

For Roland to make a respectable career in politics for himself, he had to harness support from the inhabitants of Lyon, the most influential of whom were the elite. This provides an explanation for Madame Roland's fiery response to the article published in *Le Patriote Français*. Unable to hold an official political position, despite her protests that neither she nor her spouse desired to be elected to the local council, Madame Roland was a politically ambitious woman and lived these ambitions through her husband.[152] Aware of the potential backlash Monsieur Roland faced in Lyon in the aftermath of the July riots, Roland travelled to Lyon to gauge reactions to Monsieur Roland's controversial opinions on the *octroi* and taxing the rich instead of the poor.[153] Prior to travelling to the city, she utilised her letter to

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[148] Edmonds, *Jacobinism and the revolt of Lyon,* p.52.
[149] Jean-Marie Roland de la Platière (1743-1793), *Municipalité de Lyon apperçu des travaux à entreprendre, & des moyens de les suivre* (Lyon: 1790), p.3, pp.7-8, p.10, p.19.
[150] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.118.
[151] Anonymous, *Lettre à M. Roland de la Platière, sur sa brochure intitulée: Municipalité de Lyon* (Lyon: 1790), pp.1-2, p.9.
[152] Roland to Bosc, 18 February 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.82-83.
[153] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* pp.121-123; Roland to Lanthenas and Bosc, 28 July 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.124-127.

Brissot to set the record straight on the situation in Lyon from her perspective and to diffuse any anger or resentment towards her husband. Had Roland cared little about whether Monsieur Roland was elected in the local elections as she claimed, it is unlikely that she would have unnecessarily risked her identity being discovered during her visit to Lyon. It can be surmised that it was her desire to see her husband hold a prominent position in a governing institution that convinced her to take these steps, despite her adamant assertion that women should play no prominent political role within society before all men were enfranchised.[154]

Something else worth noting about the reason for Roland's opposition to the article from 19 July is the authorship. Although the article from *Le Patriote Français* was published anonymously, it was thought to have been written by Blot.[155] A former friend of the couple, the relationship between Blot and the Rolands broke down due to Blot perceiving the Rolands as 'extremists'.[156] Furthermore, it is arguable that Madame Roland resented the fact that Blot was sent as the representative of Lyon to Paris on 22 June, to request 'a bail-out' from the debts the town had accrued.[157] Though true that Blot was one of the individuals who wrote on this subject, Monsieur Roland was the primary advocate of reforming Lyon's financial system. According to Madame Roland, he 'stated some harsh truths' to the Commune, who only decided to act once Roland had delivered his speech, and Blot was 'jealous' of him for this.[158] She was not impressed with Blot and her feelings were justified to an extent.[159] Blot was unsuccessful on his mission, and Roland and François Bret were sent to Paris as 'extraordinary deputies' in 1791, in a further attempt to resolve Lyon's financial crisis.[160] Roland did not trust Blot, especially because she believed that he held considerable influence over Brissot, his childhood friend.[161] Out of her admiration and respect for Brissot and his journalism, Madame Roland's letter was written with the aim of correcting the 'alarmist' account of events in Lyon that Blot had provided him with, which resulted in considerable backlash in the form of letters to the journal in support of the actions

[154] Roland to Fenille, 21 March 1789, pp.43-44.
[155] Roland to Brissot, 23 July 1790, p.115.
[156] Roland to Lanthenas, 23 June 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.100-102.
[157] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.121.
[158] Roland to Lanthenas, 22 June 1790, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.94-97 (p.94).
[159] Ibid., pp.94-97.
[160] Roland and Bret were more successful in this mission. They managed to obtain an advance of 300,000 *livres* and 50,000 *livres* for children abandoned by their parents (*enfants trouvés*), Roland, 'copie de la lettre écrite à M. Le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale, de Paris, le 7 juin 1791', in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.286-288 (p.288); Reynolds*, Marriage and Revolution,* p.126, p.143.
[161] Roland to Brissot, 23 July 1790, p.114.

of the people of Lyon.[162] This was one of the few times in her correspondence that she disagreed with Brissot. Most often, the two were of similar minds and Roland embraced the freedom her relationship with Brissot granted her to share her political observations.

On 28 April 1791, Roland acknowledged the progress of the Revolution:

> the Assembly is no longer an instrument of corruption and tyranny; a civil war is no longer a misfortune, it would regenerate us or annihilate us, and, as liberty is lost without it, we must no longer fear or avoid it.[163]

Written several months before the Flight to Varennes, this letter was created during the crisis of the clerical oath. As an atheist, Roland distrusted the clergy and their influence within society. Therefore, she viewed the clerical oath as a positive thing because all constitutional priests were committed, via their oath to the nation, to the Revolution. This reduced the corrupting influences of the Catholic Church over political matters. Moreover, Louis appeared to be embracing his role as constitutional monarch. This naturally changed after the Varennes episode, but at this stage he was still held in considerable esteem. The most crucial aspect of this letter, however, was its honest, unfiltered political opinions, given Brissot's career as a journalist. She evidently felt comfortable enough with him to share views that would, if publicly exposed, render her a threat in the eyes of male revolutionaries. Despite not saying anything radically different to others on the left, women, as Roland highlighted in her memoirs, were not expected to publicly voice their political sentiments; as confirmation of this, she stated that she completed needlework or wrote letters during her gatherings.[164] Even so, and contrary to these claims, this letter to Brissot emphasises that Roland was not politically silent. She gathered thoughts on the workings of local institutions, critically and openly passing judgement on issues that were situated outside of her sphere. This illustrates two major aspects of Roland's personality. Firstly, she was a courageous woman, who, despite being conscious of the potential consequences facing women who meddled in the political sphere, opted to do so. In a fashion like that of Condorcet and Kéralio, she defied patriarchal expectations by stepping outside the preconceived limits of her sex, whilst retaining some gender boundaries through her letters and influence on Brissot. This signifies her strategical planning and astute awareness of societal expectations.

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[162] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.122.
[163] Roland to Brissot, 28 April 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.268-271 (p.269).
[164] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.64.

Secondly, it implies that she resented the second-rate status of women. As an intelligent woman, she demonstrated on several occasions that she was equally as competent as male revolutionaries in sharing her political beliefs. Moreover, as a French woman, living in France and married to a French man, she belonged to the nation and was committed to the revolutionary efforts; so, as Jennifer Heuer asserts, could claim French citizenship.[165] This, however, was separate from active citizenship which was defined in the 1791 Constitution as one's ability to vote or hold office, meaning that legally she remained an inactive citizen.[166] Thus, it is arguable that bitterness of her own position, based upon her sex, contributed towards her need to be politically active during the Revolution. She exemplified how women understood and interpreted events for themselves through their political consciousness and established meaningful relationships that benefited both parties. Alongside Kéralio, Condorcet and Jullien, amongst others, Roland illustrated how women could challenge boundaries without radically stepping outside of their social constraints. Their actions pressed up against the boundaries, therefore widening the scope of what was deemed acceptable for women to do. Roland's relationship with Brissot is a solid example for considering how she worked within the confines of her sex to challenge its limitations. Another such example of a relationship that allowed Roland to exert noteworthy political agency whilst simultaneously adhering to the limitations of her sex was her marriage to Monsieur Roland, which will be examined in the next section.

3.3 Formulating Policy

> For twelve years, I worked alongside my husband as I ate because one was as natural to me as the other. If part of his work was cited because it was more gracefully written […] I was happy for him and did not take notice of whether the piece was one of my own. Often, he persuaded himself that he had enjoyed a good streak whilst writing these passages that came from my pen.[167]

Being Minister of the Interior was a demanding job, with the ministry receiving around 200 letters per day on a variety of issues including food supplies, building works, pensions and

[165] Heuer, *The Family and the Nation,* p.23, pp.25-27.
[166] Ibid., p.29.
[167] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, pp.241-242.

occupations.[168] As a result, Madame Roland frequently saw these letters and helped Monsieur Roland answer them.[169] Amongst the collection of Roland's letters written during the revolutionary period and published by Perroud, there are at least nine letters which depict Roland's contributions to formulating policy. Three of these letters are from 1791, one is from 1792, and the other five are dated 1793. Those from 1791 were primarily focused on the political and economic situation in Lyon. At this time, as Reynolds underscores, the Rolands concerned themselves with local rather than national politics.[170] The first letter from this period, dated 7 June 1791, was addressed to the president of the National Assembly. Signed by Roland but drafted by Madame Roland, this letter was written with the intention of highlighting the dire economic situation in Lyon and seeking a resolution to the debts the city had accrued.

The Rolands, who moved to Paris in February 1791, quickly set to work on their mission of improving the situation in the city they had left behind. On 11 March, Monsieur Roland and Bret addressed the National Assembly on the conditions of Lyon and the need to attach the debts of all French towns to the national debt. They argued that Lyon was on the verge of financial ruin, despite it being an asset due to its 'great population, its industry, its location, its commerce and its bank', not to mention that it was 'a centre of correspondence for all the other cities in the kingdom and was the warehouse of northern Europe'.[171] The solution to this problem, according to Roland and Bret, was to abolish the *octroi* and to recognise Lyon's debt as a national debt.[172] Their efforts were not wholly unsuccessful as they did obtain an immediate advance of 300,000 *livres* for the Hôtel-Dieu and 50,000 *livres* for the abandoned children's institution.[173] However, their successes were limited and Bret returned to Lyon in April, leaving Roland to continue lobbying the deputies on his own.[174] The letter from 7 June to the president of the National Assembly reflected the growing frustrations of the Rolands at the lack of progress in Monsieur Roland's mission.

> For four months, I have continued with the same assiduousness which made me undertake the project in the first place, a mission whose object will come to an end very soon by force of

[168] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.170.
[169] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.227.
[170] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.116.
[171] J.M. Roland and François Bret, *Adresse Préliminaire de la Commune de Lyon, sur la Dette de cette Ville, sur les Dettes des Villes, en général, et sur la nécessité de les joindre toutes à la Dette nationale* (1791), p.1, p.3.
[172] Ibid., p.3.
[173] Roland, *Lettres,* Tome Second, p.288.
[174] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.136.

> circumstances, if it cannot be completed for reasons of justice and convenience.[175]

Madame Roland's influence in drafting the letter can be gleaned when compared to an extract from an earlier letter she sent to Bancal on 7 March. This letter, which featured an opening section from Lanthenas, stated that Roland, despite being ill, had attended the National Assembly and was 'convinced that liberty and the constitution were not being taken seriously by the men who were at the forefront of leading the Revolution'.[176] She considered these men to be unimpressive and offered Bancal a scornful report of her observations.

> I heard the subtle yet captivating Maury, who is only a sophist with great talents. The terrible Cazalès, often a speaker, but also often an actor and barker. The ridiculous d'Éprémesnil, a real entertainer, whose insolence and smallness cause laughter. The clever Mirabeau, who is more in love with applause than public interests. The seductive Lameth, made to be the idol of the people and to mislead them, if they are not carefully surveilled. The small Barnave, a little voice and small motives, cold as a pumpkin rubbed in snow, to use the pleasant expression of a woman from the previous century. The meticulous Chapelier, clear and methodical, but who often has an ulterior motive.[177]

Whilst Monsieur Roland's letter to the president of the National Assembly did not name individual deputies when outlining the lack of support he received, it is surmisable, given that this letter was drafted by his wife, that the men he failed to win over were some of those named in Madame Roland's letter to Bancal. This is a prime example of the couple working together towards a common goal. Madame Roland could not, as has been established, play a public role in revolutionary politics without running the risk of jeopardizing her husband's credibility and political career. She could, however, spectate in the galleries at meetings and record her thoughts in her writings, without attracting too much unwanted attention. This permitted her to support Monsieur Roland in his official mission to highlight the dire financial conditions of Lyon, removing some of the pressures of the job from him and rendering her invaluable to his political career. It also offered her insight into the workings of the revolutionary government and the opportunity to engage with officials whom she would not have had the chance to mingle with under ordinary, everyday circumstances. Helping draft her husband's letters granted her with an outlet for her ideas and opinions and

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[175] Roland, 'Copie de la lettre écrite à M. Le Président de l'Assemblée nationale', p.286.
[176] Roland to Bancal, 7 March 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.240-242 (p.240).
[177] Ibid., p.241.

served to further her political consciousness by granting her access to leading revolutionary figures, institutions and official legislation.

This is evident in Monsieur Roland's letter to the deputies of Lyon at the National Assembly, dated 9 June and drafted, once again, by Madame Roland. The anger and disappointment of both husband and wife is apparent from the way in which this letter is written. The tone is fiery and almost accusatory, a style, as confirmed by Madame Roland herself, attributable to her rather than her husband.[178] Whereas the letter to the president of the National Assembly is respectful, noting that the institution had 'done great things' and would 'continue to do great things', the letter to the Lyon deputies is less complimentary.[179] The goal of each of these letters was, to a considerable extent, different. When addressing the president of the National Assembly, the Rolands sought to obtain a solution to the debts of Lyon to prevent its inhabitants from becoming further crippled by the high levels of taxation on everyday goods. Consequently, it was important for them to strike the correct balance and tone when constructing the letter as this would determine the extent to which they were successful in their venture. In contrast, when the Rolands addressed the deputies of Lyon, they not only sought to impress upon them the seriousness of the situation in the city, but they also aimed to get the deputies onside and support their appeal for a provisional advance. Though true that both letters were created with a degree of tactfulness, the letter from 9 June is more direct. Nowhere is this clearer than in the letter's opening.

> You know better than anyone the nature of the
> task that has occupied me for the four months
> that I have been in this capital. I conferred with
> you on the steps to take and have not neglected those
> steps that seem necessary to you […].[180]

This statement is intriguing because it implies that it was structured with the intention of coercing these deputies into championing Roland's demands for financial support for Lyon through whatever means necessary. By emphasising his commitment to Lyon's cause, Roland underscored Monsieur Roland's loyalty to the city in such a way that his devotion to the official task bestowed upon him could not be called into question. She then proceeded to

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[178] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, pp.241-242.
[179] Roland, *Lettres,* Tome Second, p.287.
[180] Roland, 'Copie de la lettre écrite à MM. les députés de Lyon à l'Assemblée Nationale, en leur envoyant la copie ci-jointe de celle adressée au président de ladite Assemblée, de Paris, le 9 juin 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.289-291 (p.289).

highlight that he had negotiated and consulted with those who were responsible for representing Lyon in the National Assembly, to no avail.

By drafting this letter on behalf of Monsieur Roland, Madame Roland complied with the notion that women were more perceptive and intuitive than their male counterparts. She had witnessed the actions of her husband and his colleagues over the course of the four months the couple had been in Paris, and used the space within the letter to say things that she may not have dared say otherwise. As Dalton remarks, letters allow writers to say what they want because they require more thought and effort than a conversation.[181] Moreover, they can be written under one's own name, under a pseudonym, or on behalf of another individual, so one's identity can be concealed when necessary. Madame Roland, as she noted in her memoirs, refused to partake in political conversations that took place in her home and merely spectated at meetings held in the Assembly and the Jacobin Club respectively.[182] She observed events and revolutionary figures with a keen eye from a distance, but refrained from publicly participating in the political sphere. Yet, as her letters to fellow revolutionaries and those written on behalf of Monsieur Roland demonstrate, she did not shield many of her political opinions or observations in her correspondence. Serving as Monsieur Roland's unofficial secretary granted Madame Roland noteworthy agency in the political sphere. She could not vote on issues, hold an official position, or participate in debates taking place in the Assembly, but by drafting Monsieur Roland's official correspondence, she could pursue any political goals she had whilst simultaneously maintaining the sexual difference that defined eighteenth century society.[183] According to Roland, she often took up the pen on behalf of Monsieur Roland because she 'had more time than he did' to respond to letters.[184] However, given her particular interest in the political sphere and desire to help propel her spouse's revolutionary career, it is unlikely that her reasons for writing on his behalf were completely selfless. As an unofficial political advisor, she could actively contribute towards the direction that the Revolution took, rather than watch with despair from the sidelines. For many women during the revolutionary era, their political agency was not defined by the degree of influence they had upon shaping the course of the Revolution, but by the sites of their revolutionary action. The same cannot be said for the agency of Madame Roland because her unique position as the wife of the future Minister of the Interior and her spouse's

[181] Dalton, *Engendering the republic of letters,* p.6.
[182] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, pp.267-268.
[183] Dalton, 'Gender and the Shifting Ground of Revolutionary Politics', p.261.
[184] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.242.

intellectual equal rendered her invaluable to the shaping of the revolutionary process in the early 1790s.

Perhaps, the most significant letter penned by Madame Roland on behalf of her spouse, which exemplifies the importance of her influence upon revolutionary society, was the letter addressed to the king on 10 June 1792, which resulted in the sacking of Servan, Roland and Clavière. This letter does not appear in Perroud's collection, but it is in *Lettres et pièces intéressantes, pour servir à l'histoire du ministère de Roland, Servan et Clavière* (1792). In her memoirs, Roland alluded to there being two versions of the document, both of which are present in *Lettres et pièces*.[185] On 19 May 1792, Roland helped her husband draft a letter to Louis XVI. Before examining the contents of this letter, it is important to consider the context in which it was written. In the latter half of 1791, the newly drafted constitution was presented to the king for ratification. Although Louis agreed to the constitution without further revisions on 13 September, he was initially reluctant to lend his support to the constitution because it significantly reduced his authority by removing his right to propose laws and appoint his own ministers. Furthermore, he could only temporarily suspend legislation he did not agree with for a maximum of three years, and the civil list that provided his income was decided upon by a legislative vote.[186] He was to be 'king of the French' and not an absolute monarch.[187] The need to reduce Louis' authority in France stemmed from the attempted flight of the royal family to Varennes on 20 to 21 June. This flight contradicted the king's claim that he would accept the new constitution, a message that he publicly shared with the other European courts.[188] He left behind a letter in which he claimed that since his imprisonment in Paris in October 1789, all his decisions were made under duress.[189] The National Assembly, Louis continued, exercised 'the most barbaric of all despotism' by implementing powers outside of its jurisdiction.[190] By fleeing Paris, Louis' flight stirred up fears of a counterrevolution with the aid of foreign powers. He was restored to the throne upon his return to Paris, but much of the damage was done because there was a loss of trust in the king. The efforts to minimise his political power in the drafting of the 1791 Constitution serve as evidence for this.

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[185] Ibid., pp.240-241.
[186] 'Constitution de 1791', Chapitre II, Section Première and Section IV.
[187] 'Constitution de 1791', Chapitre II, Section Première, Article 2.
[188] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.238.
[189] 'Proclamation du roi à tous les Français à sa sortie de Paris', *Gazette nationale, ou Le Moniteur universel,* 22 June 1791, No.173, p.718.
[190] Ibid.

Secondly, there was significant schism amongst those members of the clergy who willingly accepted the Civil Constitution and pledged their loyalty to the nation via a civic oath, and the refractory priests who refused to follow suit. Typically, most constitutional priests were amongst the majority in the areas around Paris, in the southeast between the Rhône River and the Alpine frontier, and in some areas of the southwest.[191] Refractory priests, in contrast, generally commanded western France, in the south-central region, and in some parts of the north, east and southwest.[192] For those inhabitants far removed from events in Paris, especially in western departments, religion remained a noteworthy aspect of their lives and many men and women alike opposed reforms to Catholicism. Madame Roland commented on this in a letter to Bancal from 22 March 1791, noting that there were terrible cries against the requirement to take the civic oath, which 'destroyed the unity of the church, the pre-eminence of Rome, beliefs cherished by Catholics'.[193] Roland was an atheist, had been since young adulthood, so this extract must be treated with caution. As an enlightened woman, she was taken in by the ideas of Rousseau, Voltaire and Williams, amongst others, which discussed issues such as the rights of man and the general will. She deemed the overall institution oppressive and outdated.[194] Yet, there is merit in her concerns over religion. Whilst religious conflict continued to plague France and religion maintained a strong influence over the identity of French citizens, the national unity required for establishing a republic could not be achieved. Desan supports this argument, asserting that this limited the progress of the Revolution because the building of a national republic was both a cultural and a political task.[195] In other words, the beliefs and superstitions associated with the ancien régime had to be discarded and French citizens re-educated according to the principles of the Enlightenment.[196] The religious conflict also, when coupled with the emigration of many members of the nobility and refractory priests, posed a threat to the stability of the Revolution because it increased the prospect of counterrevolutionary action. Louis' reluctance to support the Civil Constitution and his flight to Varennes sparked concerns over his possible desire to quash the Revolution. In response to these disturbances caused by the

[191] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.225.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Roland to Bancal, 22 March 1791, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.247-251 (pp.248-249).
[194] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Second, p.24.
[195] Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp.7-8.
[196] Ibid.

refractory priests and fears over the possibility of émigrés launching a counterrevolution, Brissot led a campaign for war against foreign nations harbouring émigrés.[197]

The French Revolutionary Wars commenced on 20 April 1792, when France declared war on Austria, immersing the nation in a series of conflicts with all the major European powers that lasted for more than twenty years. From this context, it can be surmised that the political situation in France was fraught and there was considerable unrest amongst the population. The content of Roland's letter drafted on 19 May 1792 was influenced by this turbulence. Roland questioned Louis' commitment to executing the constitution:

> Your Majesty, you tell us every day that you want to execute the reasons and sentiments of the constitution, we equally attest to this sincere desire; but the people are convinced that unconstitutional proposals are often made around them; that these proposals are whispered to the royal prince, in the tone of interest and complaint […] thus sowing error, fear and unjust hatred in this young soul.[198]

When added to Roland's opening assertion that, 'the first thing that you owe your ministers is the truth', it is evident that there was significant suspicion around the loyalties of the king to the Revolution. For a constitutional monarchy to work, the king had to place his trust in his ministers and be willing to compromise with them. Transparency was key to the perceived success of the constitutional monarchy. For the people to willingly accept the constitution, the king had to show unwavering support for it. The allusion to the potential influence of counterrevolutionary sentiment on Louis' son, highlights the heightened tensions and anxieties the deputies experienced during this period. As the future king, it was imperative to ensure that Louis' son supported the constitution and would strive to maintain it once he was king. Any opposition posed a potential threat to the gains of the Revolution. Arguably, Madame Roland's influence in the drafting of the letter can be glimpsed from this excerpt.

As a mother, Roland was aware of the significant role that parents played in educating their children and instilling certain principles and morals in them from a young age. She frequently made her views known on this subject. For instance, in the years preceding the

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[197] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.268.

[198] *Lettres et pièces intéressantes, pour servir à l'histoire du ministère de Roland, Servan et Clavière* (Paris : Chez les Directeurs du Cercle Social, 1792), pp.44-45.

Revolution, she frequently wrote to Roland about their daughter's progress. Inspired by Rousseau, Roland wrote the following to Monsieur Roland in December 1787:

> I have re-read Julie's plan and have found that we are too far away from it. Driven by circumstances and dominated by need, we take either too much or too little care of our child. Extremely busy and in want of tranquillity, we expect her to carry out work and lessons without giving her the time to develop a taste or interest in them. […] we do all that we can to obtain silence because we cannot complete our work without it. […] We impose restrictions and she reacts to them.[199]

Realising the potentially negative impact that their parenting style was having upon the development of their child, Roland came up with a three-step solution to ensure that Eudora was well-nourished and intellectually stimulated. Firstly, Roland argued, it was pertinent that she, as the child's mother, keep her temper in check and remain 'cool and calm' when correcting Eudora.[200] Secondly, both parents should refrain from using violence against their child because this resulted in distrust and was an obstruction to the natural bond formed between parents and their children.[201] Finally, according to Roland, it was crucial that things were organised so that Eudora was at her happiest when she was with her parents.[202] This would prevent her from becoming bored and encourage her to engage with her studies. Despite Roland's admission to Lavateur that she wished Eudora was more like his daughter who was of the same age because Eudora was a 'disobedient and careless character', that she spent considerable time planning the upbringing of her daughter confirms Roland's understanding of the importance of parents in shaping their children in the first years of childhood.[203] As future citizens, children required a firm hand to guide them and teach them the ways of the world. This was no different for the prince royal who, Roland argued, would be prepared for his future role as king via his education.[204] For the future king to be loved and supported by French citizens, his formal education had to be shaped in such a way that it did not oppose the constitution.[205] A constitutional monarchy could not be successfully established and maintained if the king continued to refuse to negotiate with the representatives of the people. Thus, it is arguable that when Roland helped her husband draft

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[199] Roland to Monsieur Roland, 1 December 1787, in *Lettres,* Tome Premier, pp.716-719 (p.716).
[200] Ibid., p.717.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Roland to Lavateur, 7 July 1788, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.20-23 (p.22).
[204] *Lettres et pièces intéressantes,* p.45.
[205] Ibid.

his initial letter to the king, she was thinking both as a mother and as a republican who wished to see the Revolution succeed.

She was also, however, influenced by her own mistrust and disapproval of the king. Roland knew that things could not go back to the way they were under the ancien régime because ideas of justice, liberty and equality were instilled in French citizens during the Revolution.[206] This explains, to a considerable degree, the public letter penned to Louis on 10 June, which took a firmer, less tentative line of argument.[207] This version of the letter is markedly different to its initial draft. Whereas the letter dated 19 May focuses on the need for the king to instil in his son a love for the constitution, the importance of political transparency, and the need for the king to publicly accept the constitution; the letter from 10 June was written amidst the king's refusal to back the decrees of 27 May and 8 June. The decree of 27 May proposed that non-juring priests be expelled if twenty citizens of good standing petitioned in favour of their expulsion.[208] This was previously discussed by Monsieur Roland on 5 April, through an address to the presidents, judges and commissioners of the king near the criminal courts of the departments and districts. According to Roland, factious and hypocritical priests were willingly exciting fanaticism and intolerance amongst misguided citizens.[209] The only way to prevent 'the seditious priests or public preachers plotting secret rebellions' from compromising the interests of French citizens, was to prosecute their criminal acts.[210] Roland went further in the letter from 10 June, arguing that Louis' unwillingness to support the two decrees raised questions over how far he would accommodate the revolutionaries:

> […] two important decrees concerning public tranquillity and the safety of the state have been passed. The delay in sanctioning these decrees inspires distrust and if prolonged will cause discontent, which could lead anywhere. […] The Revolution has already happened in the minds of citizens and will end in bloodshed and be cemented by it, if wisdom does not prevent misfortunes which are avoidable.[211]

[206] Ibid., p.48.
[207] Further evidence for this is provided by Perroud, who notes that the letter was written in Madame Roland's handwriting. Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.241.
[208] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.181.
[209] *Lettres et pièces intéressantes,* pp.8-9.
[210] Ibid., p.11.
[211] Ibid., pp.73-74.

When combined with Louis' earlier flight to Varennes, this resulted in suspicions over his commitment to the Revolution and possible desire for counterrevolutionary action. It appeared to Roland, as this extract attests, that the king aimed to encourage bloodshed and unrest by refusing to authorise the decrees, in the hope that this would quash the Revolution. Another plausible explanation, as offered by Reynolds, for Louis' reluctance to support the decrees was that they challenged his 'religious scruples'.[212] Between 1789 and 1791, there existed the possibility that religion and the new state could co-exist peacefully and that the church could complement the Revolution and the changes this phenomenon ushered in.[213] For confirmation of this, one need only look, for example, at the speech of M. l'abbé Gouttes in the National Assembly on 13 October 1789. Gouttes argued that the Church could be very useful to society and that all citizens had a duty to both the state and God.[214] Moreover, as Creuzé-Latouche emphasised in 1791, nuns could educate the children of neighbours and friends, teaching them to read and teaching them about the *Declaration of the Rights of Man,* as a means of alerting them to their rights from an early age.[215] As Corinne Gressang notes, this illustrates that the Church and the Revolution were not enemies from the outset.[216] Nevertheless, as the Revolution progressed the oppressive structure of the Catholic Church contradicted notions of liberty and equality, and individuals were often forced to decide between showing loyalty to the church or to the state. By refusing to support the punishment of refractory priests, Louis put himself at odds with the revolutionaries. Robespierre also wrote about this in issue two of *Le Défenseur de la Constitution,* taking a similar stance to Roland on the matter. He accused Louis of 'defending enemies of liberty, making an alliance with them, to persecute their greatest critics'.[217] These suspicions were further heightened with Louis' opposition to Servan's proposal to situate members of the National Guard at the frontiers, disband the king's guard, and place 20,000 troops from across France outside Paris to replace the troops sent to the frontiers.[218]

The king's unwillingness to sanction the decrees of May and June resulted in Roland's decision to write the 10 June letter. Although Sophie Grandchamp, Madame Roland's

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[212] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.181.
[213] Corinne Gressang, 'A Second Path: Nuns in the Early French Revolution, 1789-1791', in *Religion in Rebellions, Revolutions, and Social Movements,* ed.by Warren S. Goldstein and Jean-Pierre Reed (London: Routledge, 2022), pp.91-109 (pp.91-92).
[214] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 9 (Paris: 1877), p.433.
[215] Jacques-Antoine Creuzé-Latouche (1749-1800), *Lettre de M. Creuzé de Latouche, membre de l'Assemblée nationale, à Madame ***. Ci devant religieuse, sortie de la communauté de ***, en vertu des décrets de l'Assemblée nationale* (Paris: 1791), pp.47-48.
[216] Gressang, 'A Second Path', p.91.
[217] Robespierre, *Le Défenseur de la Constitution,* no. 3 (Paris: 1792), p.144.
[218] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* pp.180-181.

childhood friend, was adamant that the letter was dictated by Monsieur Roland and written down by his wife, Madame Roland contradicted this in her memoirs by confessing, 'I wrote the famous letter'.[219] This is one of the rare instances in Roland's personal writings where she explicitly acknowledges the significant role that she played in constructing official documents during her husband's time as Minister of the Interior. Perhaps most interesting about this letter is that Madame Roland was aware of the impact this letter would have and the likelihood that this would lead to the dismissal of Monsieur Roland. It was no longer, Roland argued, a question of simply resigning but of deserving dismissal, 'do it or we withdraw'.[220] The use of the word 'we' signifies that Roland was a notable presence within her husband's ministry and not the mere political spectator that she made herself out to be. She proceeded to write the letter to the king despite Monsieur Roland initially agreeing with Clavière's assessment that such a letter would be 'pointless or dangerous', and run the risk of turning Louis against the deputies, further isolating himself from them.[221] That is not to say that Monsieur Roland had no say in the matter and simply did what his wife implored him to do; they both agreed that addressing the king was the right thing to do given the conflict between members of the ministerial council, most notably between Dumouriez, Lacoste and Duranthon, on the one hand, and Roland, Servan and Clavière, on the other hand.[222] However, as her letters to fellow revolutionaries signify, she was a strong-willed and opinionated individual who put forward convincing arguments when trying to get others to agree with her way of thinking.

Roland, as she admitted in her memoirs, was unhappy with the way her husband entered his ministry but was proud of how he left it.[223] Perhaps, drafting the letter to Louis was her way of offering Monsieur Roland a way out of his unenviable position as Minister of the Interior, permitting him to preserve his dignity – stepping away may have made him appear cowardly. Or, it may have been what she termed 'the moral fever', the result of the obstacles placed before the constitution and the distress these obstacles caused, which convinced her that writing to the king was the right thing to do.[224] Alternatively, it may have been out of a sense of duty to Monsieur Roland and his public image: she did not wish to see her husband and

[219] Sophie Grandchamp (1750-1820), *Souvenirs de Sophie Grandchamp,* reproduced in Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Second, pp.461-497 (pp.481-482); Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.241.
[220] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.241.
[221] *Lettres et pièces intéressantes,* pp.49-53.
[222] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.69, p.240; Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.182.
[223] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.245.
[224] Roland to Robespierre, 25 April 1792, pp.419-420.

his colleagues as puppets of a weak-willed king.[225] Whatever the true motive behind Roland's role in helping Monsieur Roland with his official correspondence and serving as his unofficial advisor, it is evident that she benefitted from being married to the Minister of the Interior. By acting as a document drafter or editor, Madame Roland gained a unique insight into the intimate workings of the revolutionary government and its leading members. She may not have played a noteworthy role in the day-to-day running of her husband's office, but her important influence upon Monsieur Roland was acknowledged by many. For instance, in a letter written to Edme 'Jany' Mentelle during her imprisonment, Madame Roland admitted that, during Monsieur Roland's time as Minister of the Interior, many petitioners brought their grievances to her because they thought that she could ask favours of her husband.[226] This practice of approaching wives to ask favours of their husbands was synonymous with the ancien régime and became outdated during the Revolution. Consequently, according to Roland, she advised those who approached her to address their grievances to the relevant minister or official, as she 'had nothing to do' with government affairs.[227] Furthermore, in her memoirs Roland notes that Danton often tried to speak with her alone before the dinners she held for colleagues of Monsieur Roland.[228] She also declared that Kéralio approached her several times in the hope of securing her own husband a political career.[229] As Reynolds highlights, these examples demonstrate that several revolutionaries recognised the extent of Madame Roland's grasp of public affairs and deemed her a key political character in revolutionary society.[230] Therefore, the political agency of Madame Roland was, one could argue, unmatched by any other woman of the revolutionary period.

3.4 Marrying the Letters and Memoirs with Roland's Political Agency

> It is very difficult to make a revolution without becoming passionate about it; no one has ever made a revolution without that emotion.[231]

[225] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.229, pp.232-233; Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.183.
[226] Edme 'Jany' Mantelle was a geographer who taught at the École militaire and who benefitted from the patronage of Monsieur Roland. Roland to Jany, 27 October 1793, in *Lettres,* Tome Second, pp.535-537; Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.275.
[227] Roland to Jany, 27 October 1793, p.536.
[228] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, pp.213-214.
[229] Ibid., p.175.
[230] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.220.
[231] Roland, *Mémoires,* Tome Premier, p.206.

The Revolution was a social and political phenomenon with significant cultural consequences.[232] It was also one of the most conspicuous turning points for excluded groups in relation to citizenship and human rights. Written documents, like those left by Roland, ingrained into national memory the events and ideas of this initial revolutionary phase, creating a script for future revolutionaries. Between the letters and memoirs of Roland lies a unique relationship that resembles a revolutionary dialogue occurring between the following: men and women, the governed and the governing, inactive and active citizens, and tradition and modernity. Nothing about the Revolution was predestined. As Roland's memoirs and letters depict, things occurred via a series of trials and errors. That several women, Roland included, were guillotined in 1793 would have possibly been unthinkable in 1789. Her writings are a poignant reminder of the difficult position that women occupied. Not quite citizens, but not foreigners to the nation, women battled prejudices and discrimination that defined their lives. Heuer succinctly summarises this, arguing that naturalization was possible for immigrants and citizenship could be granted after a sufficient period of residency in France, and a willingness to swear loyalty to the nation or based upon one's paternity.[233] That said, there were distinctions between being a French citizen and a political one. Women could be French citizens because they were born in France, belonged to the nation, and had obligations towards the state. They could not, however, claim political citizenship because they were excluded from the required conditions for this privilege. For Roland, letter-writing and her memoirs served as a platform to carry out this fight.

The relationship between the letters and memoirs is intimate, allowing these sources to work together to form a wider picture of this remarkable woman. They presented her with a tribune from which she constructed an image of herself that she approved of. She wanted to be remembered for her patriotism and devotion to the nation. She believed in the Revolution from the outset and willingly threw herself into revolutionary activities when the couple moved to Paris. From its conception, she embraced everything that the Revolution represented, especially the break with the ancien régime and the gradual move towards a democratic society. Her memoirs, as Mona Ozouf emphasises, depict this admiration by portraying her life in reverse; she teleologically documented her life so that it appears that she was destined to be a martyr of the Revolution.[234] This dramatization of her life contributed to her historical legacy. Her letters and memoirs are a recording of experiences,

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[232] Gustave Le Bon, *The French Revolution and the Psychology of Revolution* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1980), p.23.
[233] Heuer, *The Family and the Nation,* p.79.
[234] Ozouf, *Women's Words,* p.51.

positive and negative, masculine and feminine, and individual and collective. Though the work of one individual, they consistently address the broader context. They are used as tools to develop a narrative which satisfies Roland. As Reynolds draws attention to, they are a performance centred around self-presentation.[235] To ensure that she was remembered for her revolutionary efforts, Roland had to strike a balance between how she wanted to be viewed and the ways in which this could be achieved. She knew her actions caused discord with male revolutionaries and utilised her letters and memoirs to exaggerate her feminine qualities when explaining her public prominence in matters that were considered irrelevant to her sex.

Yet, her story is not solely about one individual. It is one of friendship, allegiance, opposition, collective interests and negotiations in late eighteenth century society. She was a wife and mother, upon whom the family unit was dependent; but she was also a passionate and politically conscious woman. A real threat to patriarchal authorities and revolutionaries who were not willing to extend political rights to women. This is something her writings exquisitely portray. Every detail, the intended audience, the structuring of each sentence, the ordering of her documents, and the appropriate use of conventions like *vous or tu,* gives insight into the political skills of Roland. She successfully drew people towards her and showered those she revered with high praise, loyalty and maternal nurturing. Despite gaining many enemies, her importance is undeniable as the revolutionary narrative would have been very different had Roland been absent from the political landscape of Paris. Her unique position as wife of the Minister of the Interior presented some rare, irresistible opportunities to entangle herself in revolutionary politics. That she so successfully established networks via her letters further emphasises how central she was to the narrative of some male revolutionaries, whom she gelled together through her gatherings.

Had Roland been a less colourful character, Monsieur Roland may not have accepted the Minister of the Interior position. She steered his political career. Moreover, it can be assumed that the official legislation drafted during his time in office would have looked decidedly different had she not taken an interest in redrafting it. In the absence of Roland from the political scene, the associates of Monsieur Roland may not have had somewhere so convenient to meet. She gave these officials a space to gather, to refine their arguments and practice speeches. She also acted as a confidante, making herself available outside her 'salon' hours to discuss matters that required a more intimate setting. She was sympathetic and a good listener, which charmed many of those who became allies of the couple.

[235] Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution,* p.9.

Furthermore, had she not used her writing skills to reach out to these political allies, it is plausible that the Girondins faction may not have formed at all. Finally, if Roland had decided to remain in the domestic sphere, she would undoubtedly have escaped the guillotine. But she would not have made as big an impact and would perhaps have been overlooked in accounts of the Revolution. Through the choices that determined her revolutionary path, Roland significantly influenced the revolutionary process. She demonstrated what women were capable of in times of uncertainty; she got under the skin of revolutionary officials, forcing them to notice her, resulting in her martyrdom; she helped shape the career of her husband; and she brought together a political faction. In other words, she was at the heart of the Revolution. That she riled so many signifies that she determined much of what occurred in the Legislative Assembly and National Convention respectively, whilst her husband was in office. Through her letters and memoirs, she created images of herself that satisfied the ways in which she wanted society to perceive her: a dutiful wife and mother, an intelligent woman, well-organised, loyal and politically competent, yet traditional in her approach to conducting herself. That she was imprisoned and continued to document her story suggests that she was ensuring that her sacrifices were remembered. She knew at the time of writing that her days were numbered, and these letters and memoirs were an attempt to make peace with her situation. They were never intended as an apology, public or private. One thing for certain can be concluded from these sources: Madame Roland had few regrets. Rather, she was proud of what she had accomplished in such a short time. Her letters and memoirs cast her as a brave young woman who fully embraced the Revolution and willingly died for it.

Chapter Four. The Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, Militancy, and the Turning Point for Women

4.1 A Club is Born

From the early 1790s, the creation of political clubs flourished across urban and rural settings. Inspired by similar institutions, the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women was founded in 1793, as reported by *Le Moniteur* on 13 May:

> Several women presented themselves to the secretary of the municipality and, conforming to the law of the municipal police, declared their intention of forming a society exclusively for women. The aim of this society was to discuss ways to thwart the plans of the enemies of the Republic. Named the Society of Revolutionary Republicans, it was to meet in the library of the Jacobins on rue St-Honoré.[1]

It was the first of its kind in Paris, even though others of its type existed in Bordeaux, Dijon, Lyon and Besançon.[2] Founded by chocolate maker, Pauline Léon, and actress, Claire Lacombe, it was established to educate its members on the Convention and its laws.[3] The summer of 1793, as Munck and Godineau stress, witnessed the highest degree of women's political participation.[4] It was especially significant for the market women and Roland. For Roland, this period marked the beginning of her incarceration and ended with her trial and execution. The market women, on the other hand, faced threats to their livelihood with calls for a general maximum on basic goods from the Enragés, supported by the *citoyennes* of the women's club, and the Hébertistes. Though the SRRW represent only one aspect of this involvement, it is paramount to comprehending the political, social and economic contexts of 1793, and why so many women participated in revolutionary society in this year compared to any other year. Arguably, 1793 was the most politically unstable year within this revolutionary phase. The execution of Louis XVI on 21 January; food shortages and rioting, resulting from poor harvests; war with Europe and civil war in the Vendée; and

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[1] *Gazette nationale, ou le moniteur universel,* 13 May 1793, p.583. *Le Moniteur* was the official newspaper of the government. That the women's society was reported on suggests that male revolutionaries felt that these *citoyennes* threatened the pre-existing power relations between the sexes.

[2] Freeman-Orr, ''Et nous aussi nous sommes citoyennes'', p.109.

[3] 'Règlement de la Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires de Paris' (Paris: 1793) <Réglement de la Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires de Paris ([Reprod.]) | Gallica (bnf.fr)> [accessed: 26 April 2022].

[4] Munck, *Conflict and Enlightenment*, p.293; Godineau, *The Women of Paris*, pp.130-131.

disagreements within and between political factions, leading to a full-blown armed coup with the purging of the Girondins from the Convention, plagued French society. From the February, women were more politically prominent within their communities. Unsurprisingly, this resulted from their role in inciting riots against the grain shortages in Paris.[5]

This chapter will analyse the political agency that the members of the women's society had in Paris. To do so, it will open with a discussion of the presence of women in political societies before 1793. The Cordeliers, the Cercle Social and the Fraternal Society welcomed female members to varying degrees and played an important role in developing the female political consciousness that permitted the creation of the SRRW. Some women, such as Etta Palm d'Aelders and Théroigne de Méricourt, used their affiliations with these clubs as a platform for political campaigning and for cutting their teeth in public debate. Aelders and Méricourt are examined because they offer unique examples of how some women manipulated their privileged position to promote their individual and collective political agendas. Though this section argues that these societies were limited in female membership and their treatment of the issues most affecting the lives of women, it also emphasises that they played a central role in offering women the opportunity to engage with fellow revolutionaries and develop their own understandings of the political situations facing France.

Following on from this, the chapter will turn towards the regulations of the women's club. The underlying conclusion of this section is that the regulations contributed towards the efforts of the *citoyennes* to legitimise their society via political transparency. This concept is best defined by Linton, who notes that politics changed during the Revolution with honesty around one's intentions becoming the principal characteristic of political virtue.[6] As a result, those interested in succeeding in this new context were required to gain public favour by making their ambitions known to public opinion because the very act of drawing up a constitution was political.[7] From here, the public decided upon the extent to which one's intentions were for the greater good and how transparent one had truly been.[8] All legitimate clubs had set times, fixed locations and a set of regulations, so by complying with this the *citoyennes* raised awareness of their efforts to legally run the society by revolutionary

[5] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* p.26.
[6] Linton, *Choosing Terror,* p.48.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

standards. Had they organised this society in secret, it would have been tainted with perceptions of it being a series of clandestine gatherings and been treated with suspicion. Arguably, the motive behind the publicization of their society mirrored the decision by Kéralio and Jullien to distance themselves from their privileged backgrounds because it represented a shift from the secrecy of the intimate gatherings that were a prominent feature of the ancien régime. Their decision to declare their intentions of establishing their society and to publish their regulations was an attempt to muster toleration towards the club in its initial months by demonstrating that women could partake in political debate in a dignified manner.

The Revolution transformed physical spaces, such as buildings, rooms and streets, by redefining their purpose and whom they were associated with. The *citoyennes* contributed to this by moving their meetings from the library of the Jacobin Club to the crypt of the Church of Saint-Eustache. This once religious building, the place of worship of the market women, was politicised by the presence of the women's society. This increased the ill-feelings the market women harboured against the *citoyennes* and was one of the motivating factors behind the violent scenes that erupted between the women in September 1793. The aim of this section is to explore how space heightened tensions amongst the women and how this conflict presents the opportunity to explore the ways that women defined citizenship. Rather than conform to the pre-existing tendency to blame this conflict for the closure of the women's society, as Olwen Hufton, Darline Levy, Harriet Applewhite and Mary Johnson do; this section argues that there is an alternative way of interpreting the relationship between the market women and the *citoyennes*.[9] That is, the violent scuffles and hostility of these groups of women prove that the Revolution was not a universal experience by identifying the differing priorities of these women, which were influenced by a multitude of social, political and economic factors. In viewing the relations between these women from this position, this section stresses that women had considerable political agency by 1793 but that this agency was varied and complex.

To finish, the chapter will study perceptions of the SRRW from the male perspective, drawing upon police reports and the speeches of Fabre d'Églantine and André Amar, amongst others, as the source base for this section. Not only will this bring attitudes towards the *citoyennes* to the fore, but it will create a space for contemplating the legacy of the

[9] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, p.36; Levy, Applewhite and Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, p.147.

women's club. How were the SRRW described by contemporaries? To what extent were the *citoyennes* tolerated and at what point did this change? What do the reactions to the women's society reveal about the political agency of its members? These are the questions that will be addressed.

Building upon Marie Cerati's somewhat dated, but ever relevant, *Le Club des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires* (1966), this chapter will ponder women's political agency through the lens of the SRRW. Cerati's study is not the only one to discuss the women's club. Both Scott Lytle and Margaret George dedicate articles to the SRRW. Lytle marginalises the women's club by discussing it within the context of the struggle between the Enragés and Hébertistes for control over the militant sans-culottes, whom they believed could serve as an instrument of pressure against the Convention in the fight for the introduction of economic measures. Lytle fleshes out the context of 1793, paying attention to the similarities and differences between the economic programmes and long-term goals of the Enragés and Hébertistes. These will be discussed later, but it must be noted that when the *citoyennes* are mentioned, they are cast in a secondary role, portrayed as an accompaniment to their male counterparts.[10] Given that this article appeared in 1955, this is unsurprising because history was the masculine retelling of the past.[11] George, contrary to Lytle, wrote in the 1970s, at a time when women's history was in vogue, so offers a more focused narrative of the women's society. The purpose of this work was to bring to the attention of English readers the story of the SRRW, which was 'a male/female sub-conflict' that led to the demise of women's political clubs in revolutionary France.[12] Devoting a significant proportion of the article to late 1792 and early 1793, George successfully places the women's society in the broader political context of the Revolution. She demonstrates that the *citoyennes* were politically pro-active in society prior to the establishment of their club and, perhaps more crucially, in promoting the emergence of the Enragés as a force. Most valuable about George's work is her description of the *citoyennes* as 'unknowing agents who forced consideration and disposal of the 'Woman Question''.[13] Much is wrong with this assertion, especially her assumption that the *citoyennes* had little knowledge of the

[10] Scott H. Lytle, 'The Second Sex (September 1793)', *JMH 27(1)* (1955), 14-26.
[11] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment,* p.86.
[12] Margaret George, 'The 'World Historical Defeat' of the Républicaines-Révolutionnaires', *Science & Society 40(4)* (1977), 410-437 (p.410, p.437).
[13] Ibid., p.437.

agency they possessed within society, which allows for further debate on the role and significance of the SRRW.

As R.B. Rose argues, the absence of a male presence resulted in members prioritising the issues they considered most pressing.[14] He furthers this assertion by claiming that it was an attempt to 'act independently as an organized force'.[15] That the *citoyennes* maintained close relations with the Enragés, implies that their independence was more limited than Rose suggests. However, there is merit in Rose's assertion because the society was composed of a group of women gathering on a frequent basis to discuss politics. They set their own agenda in the absence of male revolutionaries. Furthermore, in contrast to aristocratic salons, it was a more formal space, outside of the privacy of the home, where all *citoyennes* were on an equal footing in terms of deliberations. No one individual could claim dominance based upon ownership of the venue in which meetings were held. This connects to the idea of legitimacy and their choice of venues for meeting- the Jacobin library and the Church of Saint-Eustache- suggests that they sought to establish their club in the most public of senses. In comparison to the intimate gatherings of Mesdames Condorcet and Roland, they met in public, multi-purpose spaces and scheduled meetings at regular intervals to ensure that those interested in attending knew where and when to do so. By publicly promoting themselves in this way, the *citoyennes* of the women's society offered a contrast to the private political gatherings in the homes of the likes of Condorcet and Roland, which were deemed conspiratorial by 1793. This emphasises that the *citoyennes* of the women's club had a strong understanding of etiquette within revolutionary society and were not the politically ignorant beings that George labelled them.

Cerati's account, though written in the 1960s, remains the most incisive and deserves to be revisited for this reason. Written in the early stages of the second wave feminist movement, when women's history remained a relatively peripheral issue, Cerati's study of the only women's society in revolutionary Paris renders the work invaluable. Incorporating a wealth of primary source material, including newspaper articles from Leclerc's *L'Ami du Peuple* and speeches to the Legislative Assembly and National Convention from Claire Lacombe, Cerati successfully balances depicting the *citoyennes* as autonomous agents and exploring their affiliations with the Enragés and Jacobins, which guaranteed their survival in the short-term. This chapter seeks to further Cerati's study, incorporating it into broader discussions

[14] R.B. Rose, *The Enragés: Socialists of the French Revolution?* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), p.61.
[15] Ibid., p.60

of women's political agency during the French Revolution. By analysing the Cordeliers, the Cercle Social and the Fraternal Society; considering Théroigne de Mércioure and Etta Palm d'Aelders' efforts to form groups of female citizens for a range of military and philanthropic activities; and examining male perceptions of the *citoyennes*, the politically prominent space that the SRRW occupied within the Parisian club movement will be explored.

It will be concluded that, though the society only lasted five months, the *citoyennes* helped to shape the ever-changing political landscape of Paris. In addition to ending the struggle for control of the Convention, they combined tradition with modernity, adopting revolutionary discourse and symbolism, as confirmed through their adoption of *citoyennes,* the tricolour cockade and the Phrygian cap, to participate in the political sphere. This chapter will expand Cerati's analysis of the relationship between the market women and the women's society, re-examining this by suggesting that this conflict exemplified the different priorities of groups of women and the way women responded to the challenges posed to their priorities across various scenarios. The overall conclusion to be made is that the women's club is crucial to understanding the context of 1793, male perceptions of female political participation in revolutionary Paris, and the anxieties that these militant women caused.

4.2 Women and Political Societies Before 1793

The SRRW did not emerge from a vacuum. The rise of a female political consciousness in the early 1790s was inspired by local clubs. Compared to the Jacobin Club, which permitted women to spectate in the galleries, other societies granted female membership. Both the Cercle Social and the Cordeliers Club, founded in 1790, shared similar views regarding a republic, with full political autonomy for all members of society, being the most desirable form of government.[16] Where they differed was in their approach to women. The Cordeliers allowed women to attend meetings and participate in discussions, but they were prohibited from voting on issues and had to be invited to address the society.[17] Located in the Cordeliers district, between the Sorbonne and the Jardin du Luxembourg on the Left Bank, and led by well-off men like Danton and Marat, the Cordeliers encouraged the intermingling of people from various backgrounds, whilst restricting the time devoted to considering women's

[16] Gary Kates, *The Cercle Social, the Girondins and the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p.50.
[17] Roessler, *Out of the Shadows*, p.50.

grievances.[18] For this society, male membership was of greater importance than questions of female citizenship because it was men, albeit those who qualified, who helped further the political careers of leaders of this club by electing them officials in governing institutions.

With membership fees of one *livre* and four *sols,* the Cordeliers society was accessible to the poorest in Paris.[19] That said, and as Rose correctly emphasises, following the 1791 Constitution's distinctions between active and inactive citizenship, female membership was restricted to sixty cards.[20] This confirmed that women were not a priority for the group. The Cordeliers felt that educating women was more important than altering their politically inferior status and treated female membership as an apprenticeship. The members of this society believed they were teaching women revolutionary ideologies. Though some of the men involved in this society, notably Condorcet, championed better education for women, little effort was made to reform women's education.[21] This is because the emphasis of the Cordeliers upon teaching women revolutionary principles stemmed from their understanding of women as educators, responsible for teaching sons and daughters in the earliest years of childhood. To fulfil this duty satisfactorily, they had to have some basic level of political knowledge. The women admitted were granted a political platform. They interacted with progressive thinkers influenced by the Enlightenment, some of whom advocated women's rights. One of the most influential women involved with the Cordeliers was Kéralio, who promoted the club in *Le Mercure National*.[22] She was instrumental in creating the petition that sparked the infamous Champ de Mars massacre, which was organised by the Cordeliers following a brief discussion with the Cercle Social on the issue of the voting qualifications introduced on 10 May 1791.[23] Several women were present that day, including Mesdames Condorcet and Roland and Pauline Léon. This reveals the influence of the Cordeliers and their ideas on some women, even though female membership was minimal.

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[18] Whaley, *Radicals,* p.32.
[19] McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, p.110.
[20] Rose, *The Making of the Sans-Culottes*, p.111.
[21] In 1791, Condorcet was elected to the committee for public education and tasked with creating a report on national education. He argued that the goal of the education system was to offer everyone 'the means to provide for their needs, to ensure their well-being, to know their rights […] to establish between all citizens an equality of fact and to realise the political equality recognised by the law'. Charles Duge, 'Condorcet on Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies 19(3)* (1971), 272-282 (p.277).
[22] Whaley, *Radicals,* p.32.
[23] These qualifications included a ban on collective petitioning and introduced the 'silver mark' qualification. McPhee, *Liberty or Death,* pp.136-137; Whaley, *Radicals*, p.37.

The Cercle Social, by contrast, located in the Palais Royal gardens on the Right Bank, was the first in Paris to champion feminism.[24] Gary Kates fleshes this argument out, asserting that the Cercle Social called upon the government to pass a divorce law and reforms to the inheritance law that would grant women greater freedom and economic independence.[25] Leading member Bonneville, for instance, viewed marriage as a way of holding fathers accountable for their children, and proposed reforms to improve the situation of divorcées.[26] Combined with the ideas of other members, including Condorcet's opposition to the exclusion of women from their natural rights, the Cercle Social inspired the beginnings of a feminist framework by encouraging women to claim citizenship. Amongst these women were Aelders and Méricourt. Aelders, a regular attendee of the Cercle Social and the Fraternal Society, utilised the society to disseminate her ideas on welfare programs.

In *Lettre d'une amie de la vérité,* published on 23 March 1791 and read to the Confederation of the Friends of Truth, Aelders addressed all patriotic citizens on the welfare services that women could offer to enhance the revolutionary actions of men.

> Would it not be useful to form in each section of Paris a society of *citoyennes* […] to supervise the enemies hidden in the capital. These women could oversee the establishment of wet nurses and provide support to young, single women moving to Paris from the countryside. […] They could supervise public education. […] They could investigate the conduct of individuals and arrange aid for those in need of support from the state.[27]

Most intriguing about Aelders' demands is that they stayed within the constraints of the female sex whilst offering a minority of women the possibility to improve their circumstances. She framed each issue around the maternal significance of women. The overarching point of her speech was that men were skilled in fighting and creating legislation but were biologically and culturally poorly equipped to nurture society. In a way her arguments anticipated Olympe de Gouges' arguments in the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* (1791) because they augmented republican motherhood, developing a structure for the future *citoyennes* to put forth arguments for female citizenship. They did, to an extent, come to fruition as Aelders established Amies de la Vérité, the female section of the

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[24]Jane Abray, 'Feminism in the French Revolution', *The American Historical Review 80(1)* (1975), 43-62 (p.49); Whaley, *Radicals,* p.32.
[25] Kates, *The Cercle Social,* p.50.
[26] Ibid., p.120
[27] Etta Palm d'Aelders, *Appel aux Françoises sur la régénération des moeurs, et nécessité de l'influence des femmes dans un gouvernement libre* (Paris: 1791), pp.26-27.

Confederation of the Friends of Truth. Furthermore, she created schools and workshops for girls from impoverished backgrounds in 1792. Nevertheless, her society failed to attract much support from the female population. The main reason for this, as Kates underlines, was that membership fees were three *livres* per month; an unjustifiable expense for working women.[28] Further, and as explained by Toril Moi, women belonged to their families and were expected to prioritise collective needs over individual interests.[29] Consequently, education was an afterthought for many women, who concentrated on contributing to the family economy, raising their children, and managing their households. The charity work proposed by Aelders appealed to bourgeois women because they had the leisure time to devote to such philanthropy. Therefore, although Aelders sought to improve the lot of women, her failure to account for differences in social status, marital status and geographical loyalties, rendered her efforts fruitless. Nonetheless, her links to the Cercle Social offered her significant agency in her mission to organise schools for indigent girls, improve the conditions of women's health, and address male revolutionaries on the issues that most interested her. This permitted her to create a public presence for herself and contribute towards discussions around women's rights raised during the Revolution. She serves as a solid case for the participation of bourgeois women in society.

Another such example is Méricourt, who also benefited from her association with the Cordeliers and Cercle Social. Most renowned for her unique style, often sporting a 'flamboyant red riding jacket', alongside Aelders, Léon and Lacombe, she was, as described by Candice Proctor, a revolutionary first and a woman second.[30] This is discussed further by Karen Offen, who emphasises that these women created a legacy of 'women worthies', known for their diverse experiences and extraordinary actions.[31] Méricourt, like Aelders, was an immigrant who was willing to support the Revolution. Born in the Luxembourg province Marcourt, Suzanne Desan highlights that the narrative of her life was marked by a series of complex interactions between her individual experiences, the gendered discourse of the eighteenth century, and the broader framework of international politics.[32] Moving to Antwerp as a teenager, she became a companion to an English woman, with whom she

[28] Kates, *The Cercle Social,* p.125.
[29] Toril Moi, *French Feminist Thought: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p.18.
[30] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.179; Candice E. Proctor, *Women, Equality, and the French Revolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), p.46.
[31] Karen Offen, 'Women's Memory, Women's History, Women's Political Action: The French Revolution in Retrospect, 1789-1889-1989', *JWH 1(3)* (1990), 211-230 (p.212).
[32] Suzanne Desan, 'Théroigne de Méricourt, Gender, and International Politics in Revolutionary Europe', *JMH 92* (2020), 274-310 (p.277).

travelled to London. Méricourt entered a relationship with an army officer who failed to fulfil his promise of marriage and was an infamous gambler.[33] Rather than conform to societal norms by pushing for marriage, she moved to Paris in October 1789 and became the Marquis de Persan's kept mistress.[34] Despite being associated with some of the big events of the Revolution, particularly the October Days, only three accounts from the Châtelet testimonies explicitly named her as a participant.[35] This insubstantial evidence around her physical presence at these momentous revolutionary events reflects societal attitudes towards her. Her unconventional way of living and vibrant attire captured the attention of many. Not only did she control her own finances and enjoy relative freedom due to the prolonged absences of her lover, but she also challenged masculinity by cross-dressing. Her willingness to go against the grain is arguably what piqued the public's interest. However, it was not the sole factor. She was an ardent revolutionary with a strong presence in the clubs. In January 1790, alongside Charles-Gilbert Romme, she established the Friends of the Law, with the aim of teaching individuals how to exert their natural rights.[36] The society lasted until the end of March, holding around twenty meetings during its existence.[37] This ability to hold frequent meetings marked a degree of success and helped spur Méricourt's political campaigning.

In the February, she addressed the Cordeliers on the issue of erecting a legislative meeting hall on the site of the Bastille. She claimed that this 'temple of Liberty' would provide employment for men, increase patriotic sentiment amongst citizens, and become the official home of the National Assembly.[38] As someone who had suffered hardship, she sought to improve the working and living conditions of the indigent. She was interested in the working people and was aware of the need for government intervention in altering the plight of the poorest percentages of the population. This was her way of introducing some of the methods that could ease the economic burdens of many, at least in the short-term. According to Camille Desmoulins, the animated speech of the 'celebrated mademoiselle Théroigne'

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[33] Ibid.
[34] Paule-Marie Duhet, *Les Femmes et la Révolution 1789-1794* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p.79.
[35] The testimonies that mention her belonged to Charles Turpin, criminal lieutenant for the executive committee at Blois; François-Xavier Veytard, the priest of Saint-Gervais; and Tournacheau de Montveran, the priest of Lyon. Léopold Lacour, *Trois Femmes de la Révolution: Olympe de Gouges, Théroigne de Méricourt, and Rose Lacombe* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1900), pp.163-164.
[36] Marie Cerati, *Le Club des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1966), pp.17-18.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Camille Desmoulins (1760-1794), 'District des Cordeliers', *Révolutions de France et de Brabant,* no.14, early March 1790, pp.21-25.

received 'furious applause'.[39] She was thanked for her 'excellent motion' and it was declared that Méricourt and others of her sex were welcome to address the society on the issues that they believed to be most advantageous to the country; but her request to have a deliberative voice in the district was declined on the grounds that if she had the right to deliberate on affairs of the state, the Assembly would be rendered incompetent to take a side in debates and that there would be no place for deliberations.[40] At the heart of this argument, was the notion that women were not entitled to a formal place within the political sphere because this would grant them active citizenship, something which Méricourt ardently campaigned for.

For Méricourt, female citizenship did not mean enfranchisement. On the contrary, her vision of female citizenship encompassed the right of women to bear arms. On 25 March 1792, she addressed the Fraternal Society of Minimes on this subject. Within her speech, she amplified popular fears that the country was in danger, proposing that a reasonable solution to this was arming women.[41]

> Arm us; we have the right by nature and by law. Let us show men that we are not their inferiors neither in virtue nor in courage. Let us show Europe that the French know their rights and are leading the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century […].[42]

In addition to presenting a well-structured argument surrounding the impression France presented to the outside world, playing upon the desire to maintain a secure reputation as a leading power; Méricout provided a rational justification for the arming of women. This is noteworthy because, as Peter McPhee emphasises, the republic of 1793 was one in which the language around citizenship was entwined with that of sacrifice and conscription.[43] David Andress expands upon this, highlighting that with so many men conscripted into the revolutionary army and serving abroad, Paris experienced an overwhelmingly feminine presence.[44] The problem with this is that women assumed increased responsibilities that were deemed incompatible with their sex and, as Méricourt's argument shows, questioned how far the exclusion of women from political citizenship could be justified because executing military duties was a prerequisite of active citizenship. Inspired by the

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[39] Ibid., p.21, p.24.
[40] Ibid., pp.24-5.
[41] Théroigne de Méricourt (1762-1817), *Discourses prononcés à la Société Fraternelle des Minimes, les 25 mars 1792, l'an quatrième de la liberté* (Paris: 1792), p.1, p.3.
[42] Ibid., p.3.
[43] McPhee, *Liberty or Death,* p.226.
[44] David Andress, *The Terror: Civil War in the French Revolution* (London: Abacus, 2006), p.232.

Enlightenment and the Rights of Man, she alluded to the nature-nurture debate which pitted biological differences against cultural scripts. She also underlined that women were entitled to manifest their patriotism in defending the nation from its enemies because they were as affected by the Revolution as men.

> The same blood runs through our veins; what we did at Beauvais, Versailles, on the 5 and 6 October, and in several other decisive and important moments, prove that we are not foreigners with generous sentiments.[45]

This remark insinuates that Méricourt believed that contrary to foreigners, who had commended the Revolution but were not citizens, French women as French citizens could claim citizenship. Her choice of words, most notably the distinction drawn between women and foreigners, struck at the core of the citizenship debate which had raged since 1789. By drawing attention to a series of revolutionary events that women had involved themselves in, Méricourt challenged the argument that women could not be citizens due to the differences between the sexes that rendered them intellectually and physically incapable of understanding politics. Her emphasis upon the October Days, especially, contradicted this because without the intervention of the women at this stage of the Revolution, the political struggle between deputies, the court and the king would not have been resolved so swiftly.

As one half of the nation, women could not experience the Revolution without being influenced by it to some extent or having some influence upon it. As wives, mothers, daughters or sisters, they had a stake in protecting their loved ones and fighting alongside them against enemies of liberty.[46] The most effective way in which women could fulfil this duty was by forming battalions of *citoyennes*.[47] Much like the proposals of Aelders, Méricourt's vision failed to attract much support. This is not surprising when one considers Leon's unsuccessful petition on the arming of women, containing the signatures of over three-hundred women, presented to the National Assembly on 6 March 1791.[48] Again, these projects demanded a substantial amount of leisure time, which was not a reality for most women. Be that as it may, on 31 July 1792, Méricourt's proposal inspired a group of women

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[45] Mericourt, *Discourses,* p.6.
[46] Ibid., pp.5-6.
[47] Ibid., p.7.
[48] Pauline Léon (1768-1838), *Adresse individuelle à l'Assemblée nationale par des citoyennes de la Capitale, le 6 mars 1791* (Paris: 1791) <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k42514b/f3.item#> [accessed: 15 October 2023].

from the Hôtel de Ville section to ask the Legislative Assembly for arms.[49] Thus, the participation of Aelders and Méricourt in the Cordeliers and Cercle Social illustrate that there were some opportunities before the emergence of the women's society for women to engage with fellow revolutionaries and experience political life. Their ability to actively participate may have been limited, but this was not the case in all clubs.

Of the societies created before 1793, the Fraternal Society was the most accepting of women, encouraging female members to assume active roles. Madame Roland is just one example of someone who admired the work of the Fraternal Society. In her letter to Bosc, dated 6 February 1791, she noted that the activity and surveillance of the society were 'absolutely necessary to the completion and maintenance of the Constitution', and to 'conserving and perfecting' a free government.[50] This view was similar to that of Kéralio, who, as noted in chapter two, described the Fraternal Society as necessary to the supervision of the elected officials of the nation, and a space for deliberating on laws, decrees and the conduct of those enforcing the law.[51] It was, as the descriptions of Roland and Kéralio suggest, somewhere for the politically disenfranchised to gather and increase their political consciousness by participating in debates and examining key pieces of legislation passed by those tasked with governing the nation. This society was more radical than the Cordeliers and the Cercle Social. Though Dansard visualised the Fraternal Society as an institute of political education for the working people, it became more ambitious when the Roberts gained leadership. Unlike the Cordeliers and Cercle Social, who limited female membership, the Fraternal Society ensured that its 'sisters' were included in the organisation of the club. In addition to the equal admittance of male and female members, women could hold administrative roles and take part in all discussions and elections.[52] As Rose suggests, this inclusiveness 'acknowledged [women] as autonomous individuals, rather than being identified by their relationship to husband, brother, father'.[53] When added to their presence in local sections, it can be summarised that the context in which the SRRW evolved was far from one in which

[49] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 47 (Paris: 1896), p.322.
[50] Roland, *Lettres,* Tome Second, p.232.
[51] Kéralio, 'Sociétés fraternelles', pp.114-115.
[52] *Règlements de la Société fraternelle de patriotes des deux sexes* (Paris: 1792), p.5.
[53] R.B. Rose, 'Symbols, Citizens or Sisterhood: Women and the Popular Movement in the French Revolution: The Beginning of a Tradition', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History 40(3)* (1994), 303-317 (p.307).

women were completely absent from politics. The society built upon the political consciousness of its members that developed between 1789 and 1792.

4.3 The Regulations of the SRRW

Aware of the precarious situation of public women within society, the *citoyennes* quickly set about legitimising their club. Through their attendance at other clubs, these women had enough political consciousness to realise that regulations produced a sense of legitimacy. Any established club, whether urban or rural, had its own rules. Affiliated clubs typically followed those of the mother society but altered these regulations to fit the environment in which they existed. Micah Alpaugh's work on the influence of British political clubs on the French Jacobins supports this argument, concluding that the Jacobins 'remained interested in precedents, examples, and potential alliances'.[54] Although this relates to the transnational impact of political clubs, it is applicable to the women's society because many of its members experienced the proceedings of other societies and adapted their structures to complement their circumstances. This need for affiliated clubs to incorporate aspects of the mother society can be explained via the differences in geography, population and dialect between town and countryside. For urban clubs, especially those in or around Paris, news travelled fast. For those within the provinces, who were far removed from the mother society, news arrived late because it was often reprinted from Parisian journals and had to be translated into the local dialect.[55] This different context may have led to an alternative understanding of news and rumour. Thus, their regulations had to accommodate a more intimate and less-informed environment. For the SRRW, being in Paris had its ups-and-downs.

In addition to existing at the core of revolutionary activity, they were also in proximity to the leading clubs and figures in France. Consequently, they learned the most efficient techniques for running the society in a way that supported the environment that it inhabited. Yet, to be the sole women's society in the capital undoubtedly presented its challenges. Though the Revolution permitted the re-evaluation of the roles and responsibilities of the

[54] Micah Alpaugh, 'The British Origins of the French Jacobin: Radical Sociability and the Development of Political Club Networks, 1787-1793', *European History Quarterly 44(4)* (2014), 593-619 (p.606).
[55] Hugh Gough, *The Newspaper Press in the French Revolution* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988), p.26.

sexes, it by no means completely transformed the idea that women were the inferior sex. For the *citoyennes,* regulations and the overall composition of the club were central to their political identities, highlighting their capabilities in organising an efficient society. The published regulations contained twenty-seven articles and covered a range of issues, which included the roles and responsibilities of the president, vice-president, secretaries, treasurers, archivists and monitors; the duties of the correspondence, charity and administrative committees; and the protocol for membership. They created a sense of legitimacy within the club and gave the women something to rally around, establishing some unity amongst members. The regulations also demonstrated that women could organise and draft constitutions as well as men could. To have specific roles of power for certain individuals was more than most political societies offered women. It was not about enfranchising women, this was never a serious question until 1848, but about allowing them to make decisions on matters that affected their daily lives.

The society offered women of a wealthier background leadership roles that brought them into revolutionary society on a more prominent basis. As the regulations show, there were clear-cut responsibilities delegated to a few individuals. At the top of the society's hierarchy, the president and vice-president were responsible for maintaining order and ensuring that all members complied with the club's regulations. The president donned the Phrygian cap, only removing it when she could not bring order to meetings by ringing the bell.[56] She signalled that order had been restored by returning the cap to her head.[57] The vice-president was the president's second-in-command, supporting the president in her tasks and presiding over meetings in the president's absence.[58] They were supported by the secretaries and treasurers, who dealt with the recording of membership and financial matters, prepared the documents needing signed, and worked alongside the administration, charity and correspondence committees.[59] No documents were passed to the president until they were signed off by the secretaries. Furthermore, no *citoyenne* was officially a member until her details had been recorded on the membership list.[60] All roles within the society, due to their hierarchical relationship, directly influenced one another. For the women filling the positions, an increased sense of agency emerged. As an excluded group, few women from any social

[56] 'Règlement de la Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires'. This suggests that the political culture in Paris was so fraught, that there was an expectation that the uncertainty experienced by the *citoyennes* would manifest as collective unrest.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

background possessed much experience of leading a political setting. This was one of the most original aspects of the SRRW.

Although it is fair to say that women were at the forefront of some of the most momentous events of the Revolution, most memorably the October Days, these were few and far between. Nonetheless, the presence of women throughout the entirety of the Revolution is irrefutable. That certain members of the women's club assumed roles of responsibility to ensure that the organisation ran as smoothly as possible for a group of women acting outside of their gender boundaries, is testament to the progress made during the Revolution with regards to women perceiving themselves as politically viable. In many ways, it represented an extension of the political apprenticeships offered by the Cordeliers, the Cercle Social and the Fraternal Society. What differed about this apprenticeship is that it was the women who determined what they learned and how they communicated their opinions. Those holding a position of authority were responsible for ensuring that all members gained the confidence to communicate their views and expand their knowledge. They ensured that debates occurred in a nurturing, respectable environment, and in a rational manner. Their established power hierarchy reflected an understanding of the need to emphasise to male revolutionaries that they could conduct themselves appropriately. It was an attempt to persuade men that women were integral to the decisions of revolutionary society and the overall political landscape. They had already proven that their actions had the potential to shift the course of the Revolution. Had they not, after all, ended the political deadlock of 1789 by restoring political power to Paris with the reinstalment of the king? Building upon the actions of other women, the SRRW was arguably the last-ditch attempt during the early years of the Revolution to have their voices heard.

The regulations themselves help determine how politically involved in the Revolution women were by 1793. Before discussing some of the individual articles, the preamble is worth considering.

> The citizens of the Revolutionary Republican Women, convinced that without customs and principles there is no liberty, and that to adequately fulfil one's domestic duties one must recognise their social duties, have formed a society to instruct themselves, learn the Constitution and the laws of the Republic, take part in public affairs, assist those who are suffering and defend all victims of oppression: they want to eliminate selfishness, jealousies, rivalry and envy, and make a good name for themselves.
>
> However, besides the spirit and principle of a society, there

> must be specific rules that establish all the conditions of the society. Consequently, they have agreed upon the following rules […].[61]

Most interesting about this section are the parallels between the goals of the society and those of other popular societies, and the activities of Aelders and Méricourt. The education of female members is the most obvious similarity. In common with other clubs is the belief that women should be instructed on the laws decreed by the revolutionary government because of their prominence in the domestic sphere. This expanded upon the image of republican motherhood, confirming the intimate connection between public and private. It was impossible to separate the public from the private because women, regardless of their status, were frequently required to leave the home. Whether for work, to queue for bread, or to visit relatives and friends, all women experienced the animation of the streets. Here, they engaged with rumours, intermingled, and heard the latest news from street hawkers and fellow revolutionaries. For the *citoyennes*, their political astuteness was confirmed via their ability to identify the most valuable aspects of the popular clubs and their efforts to incorporate these into their society.

The overall membership composition is difficult to ascertain because documents relating to the SRRW were either destroyed in a fire during the Paris Commune or removed by the women themselves to prevent incriminating members during the Terror, but Cerati estimated membership at around 170 members.[62] Generally, members were of child-bearing age and fit within the sans-culottes description because they were not from the poorest percentages of society nor were they wealthy.[63] The leadership of Léon offers good insight into the desired characteristics of members. From a skilled background and involved in the Revolution from its earliest days, Léon was an ardent militant who was present on the streets during the taking of the Bastille, where she helped construct barricades and incite those from her neighbourhood into action.[64] In February 1791, she was amongst a group of women who broke into Fréron's home and threw a bust of Marat out of the window.[65] What is more, her presence during the Champ de Mars massacre resulted in her being attacked by neighbours when she returned to her street after narrowly avoiding being fired upon by the National

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Cerati, *Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires,* p.87.
[63] Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France, and the United States 1780-1860* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1985), p.51.
[64] Claude Guillon, 'Pauline Léon, Une Républicaine Révolutionnaire', *AHRF 344* (2006), 147-159 (p.148).
[65] Ibid., p.151.

Guard.[66] Even though this is a remarkable case of membership given Léon's leadership status, it shows that members were typically women who were not new to the political scene and who followed revolutionary events closely. They knew what their priorities were and the ways in which they could contribute towards their goals being achieved. Thus, the *citoyennes* of this society were relatively independent, well-organised women who were committed to revolutionary efforts.

One such way the *citoyennes* illustrated their commitment to the Revolution was through their support for arming women. Article one of their regulations declared that,

> the aim of the society is to arm members to defend the fatherland from attack: nevertheless, citizens are free to choose whether to arm themselves.[67]

From this, it is apparent that the *citoyennes'* demand for the right to bear arms was a sincere gesture because it drew upon the 'amazon', a courageous warrior willing to bear arms to defend the nation. As Dominique Godineau argues, their demands for arming women were about more than protecting France; they encompassed power and political citizenship.[68] Robespierre confirmed this in 1791, when he stated that, 'to be armed for personal defence is the right of every man, to be armed for the defence of the country is the right of every citizen'.[69] Thus, the efforts of the women's society to incorporate the symbol of the 'amazon' was a genuine attempt by the *citoyennes* to illustrate that women could be as loyal to the Revolution as men and deserved to be acknowledged as active citizens. Perhaps more crucially, however, the article was structured as an extension of their domestic role to increase the toleration of revolutionary officials towards their club. When Léon presented her petition on arming women to the National Assembly in 1791, she framed her arguments around the importance of women defending themselves, their children, and the nation against internal enemies, whilst men fought France's enemies abroad.[70] This petition was unsuccessful as women were denied the right to arm themselves. Yet, as this article illustrates, it sowed the seeds for the emergence of the SRRW. The women developed this argument by directly connecting it to their duties of raising their families to the best of their abilities, protecting them in the most precarious of times, imparting their wisdom, and

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[66] Cerati, *Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires,* p.40.
[67] 'Reglement de la Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires'.
[68] Godineau, *The Women of Paris,* p.108.
[69] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 21 (Paris: 1885), pp.238-250 (p.241).
[70] Léon, *Adresse individuelle à l'Assemblée nationale,* pp.1-2, p.4.

instilling in children revolutionary ideals. Defending France was, according to their argument, an extension of the obligations they were required to carry out on behalf of the state because it encompassed preserving the nation's future leaders. Arming the *citoyennes* was portrayed as a necessary step in this fight to strengthen the position of France from a national perspective; whilst leaving the men fighting the war against Europe to do this on a global scale.

The question of arming *citoyennes* was open-ended and interpretation was left to the discretion of individuals. Members of the society were given a choice rather than an order. This was progressive for the *citoyennes* because they were presented with the opportunity to make an important decision for themselves, which impacted their loved ones. This is evidence of the way in which discourse and cultural norms changed under the Revolution. In the absence of men, women were required to make decisions on behalf of their families. Perhaps, one of the most significant features of this article is that it proved to women that they could make decisions that impacted upon their daily routines. Regardless of whether they armed themselves or not, that these women felt a duty to protect France was remarkable. This is because, as exemplified by the law of 300,000 introduced in February 1793, the men armed by the state to carry out their military duties assumed citizenship. The women's demands to bear arms was a way of arguing that they could be citizens in the same way as men. It is fair to conclude from this that many women viewed the Revolution as an opportunity to redefine what it meant to be a woman, including rights and duties. There is a tendency to view the Revolution as a failure because, as something that was supposedly founded on democratic ideas, it failed to transform the rights of all within society. The problem with this interpretation is that it ignores what the Revolution was. It was not some momentous event that would change all of society's shortcomings in a matter of months. Rather, it was about encouraging the French to imagine that their lives could be different; that they would one day govern and exercise their own rights. It represented hope for a better future, one built upon equality and liberty. The *citoyennes* were inspired by revolutionary ideals and this article in their regulations encompasses their dreams of progress. Therefore, the emergence of the SRRW should be viewed as a small victory within the context of the Revolution because it symbolised the *citoyennes* envisaging themselves as defenders of women's political aspirations.

Finally, and connected to this, is the significance of the article's placement. As the first article, it opened the regulations. This implies that the women perceived it as the cornerstone

of their society. It is intriguing that they selected such a bold statement as their opening rule given that they aimed to work alongside male revolutionaries, many of whom, besides the Enragés who were comfortable with militancy, did not support the idea of a women's club. Toleration was key to the women's society surviving as a coherent unit. To have such a punchy statement opening the regulations was brave because the women were still operating in an environment that aimed to restrict their political involvement. That said, this argument about the placement of the clause can be turned on its head to indicate that it was a strategic move that worked in the favour of the *citoyennes*. The pre-existing political tensions at this time contributed to transparency being high on the agenda of male revolutionaries. Naturally, transparency was difficult to achieve because it was open to interpretation. Lynn Hunt and Marisa Linton offer insight into the complexity of this concept. For Hunt, transparency was a 'heart-to-heart' style of politics carried out in public, so as not to hide anything from other citizens.[71] Linton agrees with this assessment, describing it as a refusal to keep politics 'behind closed doors'.[72] Taking these definitions into account, the use of this article as the basis of the society's rules can be interpreted as the *citoyennes'* attempt at transparency. It is possible that they considered this a way of making their aspirations clear from the outset and can be surmised that they perceived it as the most appropriate way of forming affiliations with other societies. How much of this is accurate is difficult to confirm because of the destruction of most of the society's documents. What is evident is that some women had a great extent of agency by 1793 and felt more confident in asserting their own position on a range of issues. Hence, the placement of this article was not by chance; it was of the utmost importance to the cause of the *citoyennes*.

Another example from the regulations that deserves examination is article fifteen, which is arguably the most important in examining the political agency of the *citoyennes*. Article fifteen focuses on the oath that the *citoyennes* were required to take before they could be registered as fully-fledged members of the society: 'I swear to live or die in the name of the Republic; I promise to obey the rules of the society for as long as it exists'.[73] Oaths were at the heart of revolutionary life. As Francesco Buscemi stresses, oaths were pivotal to the creation of identities during the Revolution: they performed many purposes, including creating communities; introducing exclusivity to those who willingly swore oaths and widening divisions between social groups; and encouraging loyalty to the nation in whatever

[71] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class,* pp.45-46.
[72] Linton, *Choosing Terror,* pp.5-6.
[73] 'Reglement de la Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires'.

manner patriots deemed fit, even if it involved violence.[74] The wording of oaths varied, but there was a standard formula that they followed. Generally, revolutionary oaths contained religious elements, allusions to the bonds of brotherhood, a willingness to live and die for the Revolution, and a readiness to arm themselves to protect France from her enemies.[75] Take this oath sworn by a deputation of Bretons and Angevins at the Jacobin Club in Paris on 29 March 1790:

> Let us swear on our honour and the altar of the nation, in the presence of the God of armies, to remain forever united by the bonds of brotherhood, to fight the enemies of the Revolution, to uphold the rights of man and to support the new Constitution of the kingdom; and at the first signal of war, the rallying cry of our armed phalanx will be: To live free or to die![76]

Whereas this oath was longer than that of the SRRW, much of the principles were the same. The emotion behind the loyalty to the Revolution and the nation was present in both documents. Although the women's language was less dramatic than the oath from 1790, both groups demonstrated a pride in the achievements of the Revolution and wished to see it succeed. They were willing to risk their lives to witness the great changes that the revolutionaries had the potential to invoke. Additionally, the act of oath taking evokes civic action and, subsequently, was a claim to citizenship. This is surprising given that the Revolution offered women fewer chances to progress within society. However, it is crucial because it represents a militant stance, and militancy is something that the *citoyennes* represented. These women were willing to use whatever tactics were required to achieve their goals. Their willingness to use violence is further proof of how some women had radicalised by 1793. Coupled with the clause around bearing arms to defend the nation, the *citoyennes* epitomized a new, more modern woman. They were still mothers and wives, but they had a strong desire to contribute to the shaping of society and push the boundaries of their sex to increase their citizenship rights. They were equally as affected by the Revolution as men and were slowly realising that only they could bring about changes to their lives.

Moreover, both oaths emphasised the importance of community. One of the main reasons for the oath was to bond the members together verbally, and when added to article nineteen of the SRRW's regulations, it achieves this by uniting the women via a common purpose

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[74] Francesco Buscemi, 'The Importance of Being Revolutionary: Oath-Taking and the 'Feeling Rules' of Violence (1789-1794)', *FH 33(2)* (2019), 218-235 (p.219).
[75] Ibid.
[76] F.-A. Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins,* Tome. I (Paris: Jouaust, 1889), p.58.

and sense of solidarity. It guided them and presented a reference point in times of difficulty. It was also a show of respect for revolutionary frameworks, and a way of highlighting to male revolutionaries that the *citoyennes* were willing to operate legally within the boundaries of these frameworks. This further supported their desire to co-exist peacefully alongside other societies. Linton argues that the Revolution encouraged the intermingling of social groups, noting the centrality of friendship in revolutionary politics.[77] Although the oath may not have won the *citoyennes* friendship, it did foster temporary toleration towards them. A good example of this, Hufton asserts, was the relationship between the Jacobins and the *citoyennes*.[78] Cerati identifies this as striking because the Jacobins originally mocked the women's efforts to form a club in February 1793.[79] Between 31 May and 2 June, the Jacobins appear to have changed their minds as the women played a vital role in expelling the Girondins from the Convention: it was the intervention of the *citoyennes*, heckling the Girondins and blockading the entrances to the tribune to prevent access to Girondins supporters, that ultimately ended the struggle for control of the Convention between the competing factions. Furthermore, the women's prioritisation of popular sovereignty and diminishing hoarding mirrored the values of many factions, including the Jacobins and Enragés.[80] This indicates that the Jacobins tolerated the *citoyennes* for tactical reasons before discarding them later. Thus, the oath of the women's club ensured their temporary survival by permitting them to secure relationships based upon toleration with more influential societies.

The final article warranting some investigation is article twenty-six, which stated that 'members must be aged eighteen years and over. Mothers may bring children, but they will be excluded from deliberations'.[81] Most striking about this clause is that it allowed mothers to feel as though they were not sacrificing their home lives to attend meetings. When read in conjunction with articles thirteen and fourteen, concentrating on membership applications having to be supported by existing members and the recording of membership, the club appears more limited than initially realised.[82] This provides some explanation for the antagonism that existed between the *citoyennes* and the market women, which will be discussed later. Though true that the society was limited in terms of membership, that

[77] Marisa Linton, 'Friends, Enemies, and the Role of the Individual', in *Companion to the French Revolution*, ed.by Peter McPhee (West Sussex: Blackwell, 2013), pp.263-277 (p.265).
[78] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, p.26.
[79] Cerati, *Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires*, p.24.
[80] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* pp.29-31.
[81] 'Reglement de la Société Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires'.
[82] Ibid.

members of the society could take their children with them is noteworthy. Young girls received an unofficial political apprenticeship from an early age and could enjoy the essence of debates without the added pressures of sharing their opinions. To be excluded from deliberations was to witness the debates without the right to take part in them. Targeting women at such a young age, albeit an unintended consequence of trying to convince mothers to join the society, allowed ideas to mature over time. This feeds into Janet Polasky's argument about ideas having roots because it suggests that by allowing mothers to bring their children, the women's society exposed future generations of both men and women to their views on the role of women within society.[83] They understood the importance of motherhood and wanted to appeal to mothers by guaranteeing women with children entry. In the earliest years of a child's life, education and emotional attachment are critical to his or her development. As mothers, the *citoyennes* were responsible for politically educating their daughters, as well as their sons, at a young age. Godineau confirms this, arguing that it was the task of the revolutionary mother, who managed children in the most decisive phases of their lives, to raise them according to republican values.[84] Thus, article twenty-six is crucial for showing how the women's society was an educational institution for women of all ages.

Nevertheless, despite being located within the hub of revolutionary activity, this society was not as significant as is often thought, when the differing priorities of women is accounted for. Paris was a walking city. With its narrow streets, central marketplace, shops within proximity to one another and lack of affordable transport, walking was the only way of travelling for people with little means. This consumed a considerable proportion of time, especially for women from a working background who had few hours in the day to complete their chores. Many women of low social status could not physically afford to commit to regular attendance at political meetings. There was simply too much for them to do. Even with the clause allowing the presence of children, these women were, compared to their bourgeois and aristocratic counterparts, expected to efficiently organise the domestic sphere whilst leaving the home to earn money. Besides this, some women may have been dissuaded from joining the society for reasons surrounding identity. Whereas women such as Kéralio, Roland and Condorcet could adopt a pseudonym to conceal their identities from public knowledge, members of the SRRW did not have this luxury. This is because transparency was essential to the political culture of the Revolution. All members were recorded for

[83] Janet Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p.15.
[84] Godineau, *The Women of Paris*, p.30.

official purposes and their applications were supported by existing members; hence, it was not possible to conceal their identities. This, in conjunction with gossip spreading rapidly throughout Paris, meant that the *citoyennes* were easily identifiable. Therefore, the inability to keep one's membership in the society hidden from the public may have determined the willingness of many to commit to the *citoyennes* and their ideologies.

Finally, the decision of the *citoyennes* to move their meeting place from the library of the Jacobins to the Church of Saint-Eustache heightened tensions between the market women and the *citoyennes* because the church was the place of worship of the market women. Ideally located near the markets of Les Halles, this brought the *citoyennes* into the domain of the market women who resented their presence. This conflict between the *citoyennes* and the market women is worth exploring further because it exemplifies the complexity of women's political agency and the varied experiences of women in revolutionary society and is central to the story of the SRRW and its defeat in October 1793.

4.4 The Relationship between the Market Women and the *Citoyennes*

Even though the SRRW went to great lengths to set out their regulations and to be transparent about their aims as a society, few were tolerant of these *citoyennes,* who represented a minor subsection of women and their experiences. Perceptions and their everchanging nature help unlock the revolutionary experience and determine the agency that any individual or group of individuals possessed at various stages throughout the Revolution. This is especially true of the female experience in 1793. The conflict with the market women of Les Halles was arguably the most important in relation to the lifespan of the women's society. As Joan Landes notes, the grievances towards the *citoyennes* arose from the market women viewing the streets as their territory and they did not appreciate the women's club encroaching on this space to carry out their 'performance'.[85] David Garrioch adds to this, suggesting that the market women, who had a privileged status within the community, felt threatened by these interlopers.[86] The markets, as Katie Jarvis highlights, were typically an intimate affair, run through kinship ties.[87] Outsiders were generally viewed with suspicion and the *citoyennes* were no exception. Perhaps the biggest factors in driving the conflict between these groups

[85] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.160.
[86] Garrioch, 'The everyday lives of Parisian women', p.238.
[87] Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace*, p.26.

were social tensions and the political and economic programme of the *citoyennes*. As previously highlighted, members of the SRRW were typically militant sans-culottes women of child-bearing age. There are several reasons for this. Above all, time determined the extent to which many women could commit to societies. For working women, like the market women, time was divided between working to provide for their families and managing the household, so leisure time was rare. Bread and prices were the most significant political rights for working women and devoting any time to a cause that seemed impossible to obtain was incomprehensible. To have bourgeois women enter their sphere and attempt to gain control over the commodities which they traded was a personal affront to the market women. They were used to having political privileges and did not appreciate these militant women interfering in their daily operations.[88]

On the agenda of the women's society was combatting hoarding and setting a general maximum on commodities. This aligned them with the Enragés, a controversial affiliation given Léon's marriage to Enragés leader Théophile Leclerc, and the sans-culottes. The evident partnership between these groups was not clear-cut, but the personal relations of Léon and Leclerc, if one considers the ways that married couples used their individual strengths to benefit one another, as in the relationships discussed in chapters two and three, does imply that there was scope for Leclerc to push the economic agenda of the Enragés through the *citoyennes*. As Desan suggests, marriage was one of the main political tools of the Revolution.[89] One cannot help but wonder whether the Enragés' circumstantial support of the women's society significantly determined the prioritisation of the *citoyennes* of this economic programme. It is likely that it was a meeting of programmes, reinforced by the personal connections of leading members. That said, this does bring initial perceptions of the women's society being autonomous and exclusively female under scrutiny. Jane Abray argues, with some merit, that it was the willingness of the *citoyennes* to prioritise the issues of other factions that was their biggest downfall.[90] Proof of this can be traced to the growing competition between the Hébertistes and Enragés, which contributed towards the closure of the women's society in October 1793 when the Hébertistes successfully assumed control.

Much of Hébert's success was achieved via the conflicts between the women. Used to their respected status as vendors, the market women viewed the *citoyennes'* economic programme as an attack upon their livelihood. Already aggrieved by the decision of the women's club

[88] Ibid., p.3.
[89] Desan, 'The Politics of Intimacy', p.643.
[90] Abray, 'Feminism in the French Revolution', p.56.

to move to Saint-Eustache, the market women joined forces against the *citoyennes*. As Jarvis emphasises, the market women of Les Halles and the *citoyennes* of the women's society drew upon dress as a means of battling out their ideological differences and commenced this battle with the wearing of the tricolour cockade.[91] These tensions first appeared in police reports from 14 September. According to Le Harival, there was a small crisis in the Faubourg Saint-Germain caused by women from the neighbourhood preventing women who refused to wear the cockade from passing.[92] Seemingly, they threatened to gut those they stopped if they continued to refuse to wear it.[93] This discord continued in Le Harival's observations from 15 September, which stated that part of the Faubourg Saint-Germain witnessed an increase in small disputes over the cockade, with some women removing it from those who wore it.[94] This assault invaded the personal space of others and contradicted article ten of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which guaranteed the freedom of expression so long as it did not encourage public unrest.[95] The forceable removal of the cockade from the *citoyennes* did exactly this. The *citoyennes* responded to this attack by sending a deputation to present a petition to the Convention on 16 September. Although the wearing of the cockade was not explicitly mentioned by the deputation, it is surmisable that this was at the back of the *citoyennes'* minds when they presented their petition. To shore up their position, the *citoyennes* acknowledged the work of the deputies in 'taking great measures to annihilate the hydra of the aristocracy', who were 'vile and cruel enemies of humankind'.[96] To help with these efforts, they asked for two things. Firstly, that prostitutes be incarcerated. Secondly, that the wives of emigrés be arrested.[97] Both of these groups of women were a threat to the Republic because they morally corrupted society and, in the case of the wives of emigrés, could be used as spies by counterrevolutionaries hoping to quash the Revolution.[98]

Underpinning the arguments of the *citoyennes* was the notion that anyone loyal to the Republic would be willing to publicly display their loyalty via the wearing of revolutionary symbols. In a sense, then, the delegation from the women's society likened the market

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[91] Katie Jarvis, 'The Cost of Female Citizenship: How Price Controls Gendered Democracy in Revolutionary France', *FHS 41(4)* (2018), 647-680 (p.658).
[92] Caron, *Paris pendant la terreur*, Tome Premier, p.94.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., p.111.
[95] 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 26 August 1789', <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/le-bloc-de-constitutionnalite/declaration-des-droits-de-l-homme-et-du-citoyen-de-1789> [accessed: 6 October 2023].
[96] *Archive parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 74 (Paris: 1909), p.284.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

women to prostitutes and enemies of the Republic. To compare the market women to disreputable women was to paint them as deceptive seductresses with an evil influence equivalent to that exercised by elite women in court politics during the ancien régime.[99] This was at odds with the idealised political transparency that was promoted by the Jacobins. For a woman to be transparent, she would have to openly share her political opinions and cast aside her ''natural' tendency towards mystery, seduction and deception'.[100] Moreover, for a woman to be patriotic, she had to live simply, modestly and honestly, with sexual innocence and chastity.[101] The portrayal of the market women as sexually deviant individuals who were easily influenced by counterrevolutionary forces was tactical on the part of the *citoyennes* because it tapped into the increasing obsession with conspiracy and plots – conspiracy in popular culture and counterrevolution were two of the biggest fears in France.[102] This bought the *citoyennes* some favour with the Convention, who responded by decreeing, at the behest of the women's society, that all women had to wear the cockade.[103] For those unwilling to comply, punishment included eight days imprisonment and, if caught refusing on subsequent occasions, being labelled as 'suspect'; a very dangerous label during the Terror.[104] There is little evidence detailing whether women were arrested for this offence, but the Convention, despite passing the decree, was reluctant to invoke this law and the police reports fail to mention women being arrested for refusing to wear the cockade.[105] It is possible that this is because, according to several of the police reports recorded in the days following the 21 September, the market women accepted the Convention's decree. On 22 September, Le Harivel reported that, 'the decree ordering that all women wear the cockade has put an end to several small insurrections that would have become dangerous'.[106] Rousseville and Dugas added to Le Harivel's positive assessment of the decree. Rousseville stated that, 'the cockade is worn almost uniformly by all women without any opposition', whilst Dugas argued that there were 'no more fights on the subject of the wearing of the cockade by women'. [107]

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[99] Suzanne Desan, ''Constitutional Amazons': Jacobin Women's Clubs in the French Revolution', in *Recreating Authority in Revolutionary France,* ed.by Bryant T. Ragan and Elizabeth A. Williams (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pp.11-35 (p.27).
[100] Ibid., p.24.
[101] Proctor, *Women, Equality and the French Revolution,* p.57; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.69.
[102] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class,* pp.39-40.
[103] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.142; 'Décret de la Convention Nationale, du 21 septembre 1793, l'an deuxième de la République Français, une et indivisible, qui enjoint aux femmes de porter la Cocarde tricolore', <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k65308749.texteImage> [accessed: 6 October 2023].
[104] Ibid.
[105] See *Paris pendant la terreur,* ed.by Caron.
[106] Ibid., p.167.
[107] Ibid., p.178, p.181.

Be that as it may, not all women willingly accepted the decree. Some of the market women responded with vehemence. On 22 September, Latour-Lamontagne reported that, 'the cockade continues to divide women, and it does not seem as though the Convention's decree has produced the desired effect'.[108] He continued, 'the decree on the cockade excites great rumours in the markets of Paris. Women […] complain with a temper which reveals the disorganising spirit that animates them'.[109] Grivel, in contrast, declared that he had heard about several fights and quarrels over the cockade that had broken out at the Palais-Égalité.[110] Hufton explains this violence by emphasising that the market women perceived the tricolour cockade as a sans-culottes emblem, representing full citizenship rights and the obligation to bear arms to protect the nation; all of which contradicted the market women's beliefs that women could not be full citizens.[111] Survival over citizenship determined the agenda of the market women. They did not devote time to individual political rights because they were preoccupied with supplying provisions to Paris. To have this law imposed upon them was an attack upon their own interests. Subscribing to ideologies in the revolutionary context required a belief in those ideologies. The market women did not share the same beliefs as the *citoyennes*. The extent to which the market women acted solely of their own accord has been questioned by the likes of Jarvis, Godineau and Abray, who assert that they were manipulated by male revolutionaries who opposed this small group of militants because of their interference in the struggle over leadership of the sans-culottes.[112] To an extent, they are right because unlike the *citoyennes,* the market women did not rely on support from male revolutionaries to operate their day-to-day business, and the hatred towards the *citoyennes* based upon their interference in the economic responsibilities of the market traders was exploited by those wishing to disband the women's society. That said, the market women did have agency in the matter because, as discussed in earlier chapters, to carry out certain actions requires having an awareness of these actions and a belief, will, intention or choice to act.[113] The market women were defending their economic interests and conception of citizenship. Therefore, the influence of male revolutionaries over the market women was not as tangible as Jarvis, Godineau and Abray suggest.

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[108] Ibid., p.164.
[109] Ibid., p.167.
[110] Ibid., p.191.
[111] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* p.36.
[112] Jarvis, 'The Cost of Female Citizenship', p.648, pp.671-672; Godineau, *The Women of Paris,* p.155; and Abray, 'Feminism in the French Revolution', p.56.
[113] McCann, *The Works of Agency,* pp.113-114.

Whilst this conflict is usually examined in a negative light, it was simultaneously something positive. It inadvertently emphasised the various paths of activism that women took during the Revolution. Whereas the market women favoured their privileged ancien régime status, the *citoyennes* combined tradition with modernity. They acknowledged the importance of the republican mother, with emphasis upon the educational role of mothers for children at the most critical phases of childhood, but also stressed the political consciousness of women and their unwillingness to be limited to the domestic sphere. That they so openly called for the right to bear arms, followed in the footsteps of many male revolutionaries by swearing oaths, and conducted their meetings in public, suggests that these women regarded militant activism as the most appropriate method of achieving female citizenship. It must be noted that their demands for citizenship did not include suffrage because realistically this could not be achieved whilst some men remained disenfranchised.[114] As Malcolm Crook stresses, when coupled with the strictly gendered language of the 1793 Constitution, which deliberately defined the franchise in terms that left no doubt that it applied solely to men, it is evident that women's suffrage was not a question for this phase of the Revolution.[115] Consequently, women prioritised issues such as improvements to working conditions and education, which would cause less of a stir with fellow revolutionaries because they could be framed within the republican motherhood ideology. The course that these women adopted in their fight for citizenship was determined by how they defined this concept. As Sheila Rowbotham concludes, the two greatest questions facing women were: How should they, as a universal category, react to the ideas of an egalitarian society? And in what ways could they encourage the change in direction that they envisioned?[116] These questions are complex because there was no such thing as universal womanhood. According to Jarvis, the market women continued to define their interests in the corporate terms of the ancien régime.[117] They struggled to imagine a citizenship that favoured politics over subsistence. The *citoyennes,* in comparison, visualised an inclusive society that welcomed the contributions of women. They viewed women as the gatekeepers of the nation, tasked with defending French interests from enemies. To be a citizen was to belong to a nation, which encompasses geographical belonging and emotional and legal connections. The SRRW concluded that their love of and willingness to defend France was justification enough to entitle them to active citizenship. Therefore, the ways that these women understood their individual and

[114] Malcolm Crook, *How the French Learned to Vote: A History of Electoral Practice in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p.17.
[115] Ibid., p.50.
[116] Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution*, p.58.
[117] Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace,* pp.9-10.

collective places within society implies that multiple definitions and understandings of female citizenship existed and that these concepts were context dependent, determined by social standing, community and political alignment, amongst other factors.

Yet, the hostile relations between the market women and the women's club were merely one aspect of the story. Arguably, the relationship between male revolutionaries and the *citoyennes* was equally as important as the relationship between the market women and the women's society.

4.5 The Reactions of Male Revolutionaries to the SRRW

Whereas the market women pitted themselves against the *citoyennes* from the outset, some male revolutionaries tolerated the *citoyennes* in the club's early stages. This is surprising when the reactions of members of the Jacobin Club towards politically active women in February 1793 are considered. On 22 February, a deputation of *citoyennes* from the Quatre-Nations section asked to borrow the Jacobins' meeting room for the following day at 4 p.m. to discuss hoarding.[118] This was met with resistance from several members. Desfieux pointed out that the room was reserved every afternoon for citizens of the eighty-four departments, so the women could only have it in the morning. Though he did suggest that they use the hall of the Fraternal Society, which seated eight hundred.[119] Augustin Robespierre objected to this, declaring that continuous discussions around subsistence would result in alarm spreading throughout the Republic.[120] The motion was set aside by president Billaud-Varenne, who moved swiftly to the order of the day, causing considerable outrage in the galleries.[121] The spectators cried out that the society was composed of 'merchants and hoarders', who 'enriched themselves from public misery'.[122] Dubois-Crancé further fuelled the anger of the spectators by stating that, 'as president of the Convention, I would reject with horror any petition with the aim of fixing the prices of foodstuffs'.[123] Another member, named only as 'C[…]', said that, 'if women were permitted to meet in this room, thirty

[118] F.-A. Aulard, ed., *La Société des Jacobins: recueil de documents pour l'histoire du club des Jacobins de Paris,* Tome. V (Paris: Jouaust, 1895), pp.37-38 (p.37).
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., pp.37-38.

thousand women would incite disorder in Paris'.[124] The final remark on the matter came from Jeanbon Saint-André, who agreed with his fellow Jacobins and summarised the situation in the following terms:

> Now is not the time to disturb the people over the question of subsistence. It is not the order of the day; it compromises the peace and tranquillity that we need. The society must focus on examining the Constitution, and no other matter should be added to the agenda before that one is exhausted.[125]

This exchange is telling of male attitudes towards politically active women in early 1793. In addition to portraying the *citoyennes* and their demands as irrational and a distraction from more pressing matters, the debate amongst the Jacobins highlights that the political presence of women was intolerable because it threatened to incite insurrection across Paris. So, what had changed by the spring of 1793 to encourage toleration towards the women's society? The first thing to note is the shift in context. For the deputies of the Convention, the beginning of 1793 was particularly fraught due to the execution of Louis XVI, which resulted in an urgent need to revise the constitution as a means of legitimising the authority of the representatives of the Convention and restoring public peace, and France's wars with Europe and Britain. In the weeks and days leading up to 22 February, meetings in the Jacobin Club and the National Convention were dominated by discussions of the articles that should be included in the new constitution and the military situation facing France. On 15 and 17 February, debates around the constitution were at their most lively. 'C[…]' outrightly criticised the proposed constitution that was put to the Jacobin Club.[126] Bourdon, in comparison, offered a lengthy, balanced assessment of the constitution and its purpose.

Firstly, he argued that 'the defects which the patriots noted in the Constitution' were not 'dangerous' vices nor were they a cause for alarm amongst 'the friends of freedom and equality'.[127] The reason for this, according to Bourdon, was because the society had 'two months to examine them and discuss them in the face of the universe'.[128] Secondly, a bad constitution, which 'presented the greatest of dangers' because it had the potential to discourage citizens and cool their fervour, was unlikely to be passed by the 'pure and well-intentioned' majority of the Convention.[129] Finally, this was the time for France to present

[124] Ibid., p.38.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., p.27.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

to the world a constitution which defended liberty and 'bore the hallmark of republican pride'.[130] This importance of creating a strong constitution worthy of national and international revere was also emphasised by Couthon. For Couthon, a constitution was 'the catechism of the human race […] accessible to everyone'.[131] The proposed constitution and Declaration of the Rights of Man failed to meet Couthon's expectations:

> the Declaration of Rights appears to me an affected abstraction; the natural rights are not clearly expressed; the principle of resistance to oppression is laid out in an unintelligible and absurd way.[132]

The need to make a clear distinction between natural rights and legal rights and create a constitution which laid out, in no uncertain terms, the way in which the French Republic was to be governed, was connected to the issue of war. Both Couthon and Bourdon recognised that the eyes of the world were on France and that any perceived weaknesses posed a threat to the global reputation of France and her revolution. In some ways, France was vulnerable despite her earlier victories at Valmy and Jemappes. The execution of the king sent shockwaves across Britain and Europe, resulting in Britain going to war with France in early February, shortly followed by the Dutch Republic and Spain. This isolated France by leaving her with few allies and a series of conquered territories in Belgium, Germany and Italy, which had to be integrated into the Republic.[133] Danton, somewhat naively and with a disregard for national sovereignty, assumed that those living in the conquered territories would happily accept French citizenship.[134] Others were not convinced. Camus stated that, '[the provisional representatives of Belgium] slandered the intentions of the National Convention, accusing it of wanting to invade sovereignty'.[135] Consequently, he proposed that the people of Belgium, Brabant and Hainaut, meet in primary assemblies supervised by the generals occupying those areas and that anyone who refused to gather were to be regarded as enemies of liberty and treated as such.[136] Cambon, in agreement with Camus, argued that it was important that the commissioners had the authority to deal with any issues that arose in the primary assemblies, and that the Belgians took advantage of the assemblies

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[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., p.29.
[132] Ibid., p.29.
[133] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.319.
[134] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 58 (Paris: 1900), p.102.
[135] Ibid., p.103.
[136] Ibid.

by voicing their opinions on the establishment of a free government and the formation of its administrations.[137]

Robespierre had foreshadowed potential resistance to French occupation back in 1791, when Brissot led the campaign for war, declaring,

> The most extravagant idea born in the head of a politician is the belief that it is enough for a people to enter foreign territory with military force to get them to adopt our laws and our constitution. No one likes armed missionaries.[138]

From the discussions of Camus and Cambon, it appears that the gravity of Robespierre's stark warning was slowly being realised by members of the Convention in early 1793, who highlighted the need for not only having a concrete and accessible constitution and set of decrees in place for governing all French citizens, but also for increasing the strength of the army. Many of those who had initially signed up with much enthusiasm when war was announced in 1792, claimed that they had only been recruited for one year.[139] As a result, the deputies of the Convention were so preoccupied with solving the military crisis and ironing out the constitution, that they were out of touch with the grievances of the people, especially women. It was not just active citizens who had to make sacrifices for the war effort; women were as affected as men by the Convention's need to increase the size of the army. Typically, when able bodied men were removed from their local communities, women inherited greater responsibility and often their workloads doubled as they acted as the primary wage earners whilst raising their families, managing their households, queueing for provisions, and caring for their local communities.[140] Yet, they remained legally defined inactive citizens, prohibited from bearing arms to defend the nation and unable to actively participate in debates in the Convention and vote in elections. This left them and their local communities vulnerable and frequently resulted in unrest, especially when there was a shortage in basic commodities. It was within this context that the riots of 25 to 27 February occurred.

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[137] Ibid.
[138] Robespierre, *Discours de Maximilien Robespierre sur la guerre: prononcé a la société des amis de la constitution, le 2 janvier 1792, l'an quatrième de la révolution* (Paris: 1792), p.18.
[139] Popkin, *A New World Begins,* p.323.
[140] Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann and Jane Rendall, eds., *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), p.2.

These protests differed to previous examples because they were politically driven. Although economic motivations were a contributing factor, these were of less importance in rallying the women of 1793. Compared to previous food riots incited by women, the October Days being the most obvious comparison due to its political dimensions, the February Riots were of a deliberately violent nature. Where Alpaugh contends that the violence of the October Days was unintentional and something that the market women sought to avoid; Jeremy Popkin highlights that it was the women, frustrated by the indifference of male revolutionaries, who led the assaults on warehouses in February 1793.[141] One such example was recorded by the commissioner of the Section des Gardes Françaises, who detailed the damages to the residency of Citizen Commard, carried out on 26 February, a large crowd composed mostly of women appeared at Commard's home. A licensed wholesaler from the rue des Bourdonnais, Commard reported that the women demanded to know whether he had any soap. Upon realising that the crowd, despite his claims that he did not have soap, were opposing him on a personal basis, he retreated indoors. The women then demanded sugar but were denied entry to his warehouse. In response, two children broke into the warehouse by standing upon barrels and kicking a window above the door. Then, they opened the doors for the women to enter. They seized sugar, brown sugar and coffee. The warehouse and its offices were left in disarray. Commard calculated a total loss of 25,458.11 *livres*.[142]

By this stage of the Revolution, women had actively participated for four years. Therefore, and as this example of the attack on Commard's property indicates, the women of 1793 were not the same physically, psychologically, emotionally or indeed in person, as they were in 1789. Their criticism of the Convention for failing to efficiently respond to their plight and their demand for the application of the death penalty to hoarders is telling of this.[143] These riots were as much about expressing political discontentment as they were about increasing supplies in Paris. That is, riots were no longer centred around mothers and their fight for the survival of their families; though it is true that the role of the mother in protesting material shortages never diminished because motherhood was pertinent to the identity of many women. However, the Revolution made women realise that they were political beings who were entitled to publicly represent their own interests. Their economic and social identities were gaining greater political expression, which engaged with the wider culture and workings of revolutionary society. It also, as the example from 22 February indicates, vexed

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[141] Micah Alpaugh, *Non-Violence and the French Revolution: Political Demonstrations in Paris, 1787-1795* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.49; Popkin, *A New World Begins*, p.322.
[142] Levy, Applewhite and Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris,* pp.133-137.
[143] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* pp.26-27.

government officials because it pushed them to consider issues that were deemed secondary in importance to the military crisis and the constitution. Women, the deputies realised, were at the heart of society. They were aware of the comings and goings within their neighbourhoods. To single out specific citizens and their businesses for investigation in relation to hoarding implies that the women, who managed the local distribution of commodities, were quick to detect anything that impacted their trade. This ability was central to their survival in the economic market; a shortage of provisions resulted in a loss of income. The economic importance of women was not reduced by the Revolution. In fact, the importance of women in distributing goods across France increased. The issue of war heightened this. Soldiers and civilians required provisions. An inability to fulfil these requirements threatened French interests by encouraging desertion, mutiny, or a loss of confidence in the government. Thus, it is plausible that the deputies' derision of the women who wished to borrow the meeting room to discuss the issue of subsistence was a way of masking the anxieties that these politically active women triggered. Evidence of the deputies' unease can be found in discussions held in the Convention on 24 and 25 February.

According to Lesage, there was a growing unrest around Paris which stemmed from the lack of subsistence within the capital.[144] He argued that the bakers of Paris did not have enough bread for all citizens and that the citizens 'were alarmed, their spirits were agitated'.[145] Lesage's comments caused a stir within the Convention and divided the deputies. In addition to several cries that bread was not missing from Paris, Deville declared, 'you are not the administrator of Paris; you want to cause trouble in this town and in the Convention'.[146] Thuriot furthered this by noting that he had followed all the revolutions made in Paris and that subsistence was the primary weapon employed by aristocrats.[147] It was, he argued, a way of using 'the friends of the king to excite movements, to make a commotion and to crush the people'.[148] Paris, he continued, has the necessary flour but 'those who need only two loaves are taking four'.[149] He concluded his speech by stating that, 'it is up to the committees of General Security and Commerce, along with the municipality of Paris and the Minister of the Interior, to consult on subsistence'.[150] Both Deville and Thuriot were influenced by the

[144] P.J.B. Buchez and P.C. Roux, *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution Française,* Tome 24 (Paris: 1836), pp.328-333 (p.328).
[145] Ibid., p.329.
[146] Ibid., p.328.
[147] Ibid., p.329.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.

factionalism present within the Convention and utilised their speeches to take their political opponents to task. They focused primarily upon the emerging power struggle amongst the deputies of the Convention and, as a result, ignored the presence of women and the role they played in the growing unrest around Paris. For Lasource and Tallien, in comparison, gendered discourses influenced their position in the debate. Lasource revealed that, at the door of the meeting room he found around three hundred *citoyennes,* who told him that they had come to present a petition on the right to sell money. They agreed with Lasource's argument that taxing goods would starve Paris.[151] Tallien, on the other hand, argued that 'to excite trouble, women are put to the front; they cry to rally men, who appear and make up the movement'.[152]

Lasource, a supporter of the Girondins, believed in free market legislation and opposed imposing price controls that favoured consumers over merchants and producers.[153] His views, along with those of fellow Girondins, aligned with the interests of the market women. Lasource's depiction of the female petitioners at the doors of the meeting room as pragmatic, feeds into what Jarvis describes as 'economic citizenship'. By this, Jarvis means 'the ways in which an individual's economic activities, such as buying goods, selling food or paying taxes, position him or her within the collective social body'.[154] These women were acting within their capacity as food retailers and were using a method of protest familiar to them as a means of expressing their grievances. They exerted political agency by tying the value of their occupational status to the nation, allowing them to indirectly contribute to the ongoing discussions around citizenship.[155] The petitioners successfully highlighted that revolutionary citizenship came in a variety of forms and did not necessarily encompass bearing arms for the nation, voting, participating in political clubs or lobbying through the press.[156] Consequently, it is arguable that Lasource did not feel alarmed by the presence of the petitioners because they were complying with the preconceived boundaries of their sex.

Tallien, unlike Lasource, belonged to the Montagnard faction, who aimed to appeal to the interests of the militant sans-culottes and popular classes by championing emergency economic regulations such as a general maximum. His depiction of women being manipulated by their male counterparts to incite others into action can be interpreted in two

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[151] Ibid., p.330.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Jarvis, 'The Cost of Female Citizenship', p.645.
[154] Ibid., p.649.
[155] Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace,* p.8.
[156] Ibid., p.9.

ways. On the one hand, Tallien may have been trying to downplay any agency the women had by implying that their actions were orchestrated by men, who rallied to the cries of the women and led the uprisings during periods of unrest. He cast women as secondary characters, who acted without any individual autonomy and posed less of a threat to the social and political orders of society than their male counterparts. By doing so, Tallien engaged with the notion of women as the inferior sex, who were protected and directed by men and were created to complement the male sex. On the other hand, Tallien's efforts to downplay the women's agency was typical of the violent backlash many male revolutionaries directed towards politically active women. This backlash most often arose from anxieties surrounding these 'femmes-hommes – women masquerading as men, forsaking their feminine duty, and defying their natural female role'.[157] They threatened the status quo by simultaneously challenging patriarchal authority and their exclusion from citizenship, and the fears over these subversive women heightened with the emergence of the SRRW.

By the spring and summer, the power struggle between the competing factions was at the forefront of revolutionary politics, amidst the backdrop of the ongoing revolutionary wars, civil war in the Vendée, and the continuing economic crisis. Aware of the need to harness support from outside of the Convention in their bid for control of the Convention, the factions exploited the division between the market women and the *citoyennes* of the women's society. Whilst the Girondins continued to oppose a maximum on basic commodities, the Montagnards solidified an alliance with the Enragés and the *citoyennes* via a maximum passed on 4 May, which put a price cap on grain but not fish, vegetables, fruit, cheese or butter.[158] This alliance paid off and resulted in the purging of Girondins members from the Convention between 31 May and 2 June, allowing the Montagnards to gain control of the Convention. However, this alliance soon soured as the Enragés and *citoyennes* continued to demand further price controls on all staple goods. In response to these demands, the Montagnards tried to appeal to the Dames des Halles, fuelling the growing conflict between the *citoyennes* and the market women. For example, during the national festival of 10 August, which was organised by the Montagnards, the 'heroines' of the October Days were celebrated.[159] A group of twelve women were selected to roll the two cannons to the

[157] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.146.
[158] Jarvis, 'The Cost of Female Citizenship', p.653.
[159] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 72 (Paris: 1907), p.566, p.570.

president of the Convention, Hérault de Séchelles, who bestowed civic crowns upon the women.[160] *Le Créole patriote* reported that,

> the glory of the heroines of the 5 and 6 October was the focus of the first station. Sitting on their cannons with the same pride they displayed when they gave the first example of the superiority of free souls over those who submitted themselves to servitude. In their hands they held tree branches and other trophies which served as symbols of their victory and courage.[161]

As Jarvis notes, this celebration of the market women was an effort to align this group with the Montagnard-led Convention and to distance themselves from the *citoyennes* of the women's club, who were sympathisers of the radical Enragés.[162] The celebration of the market women at the national festival marking the events of 10 August is intriguing, especially when one considers that in the aftermath of the 1792 attack on the Tuileries, three women were amongst those awarded civic crowns for their bravery, and one of those women was Claire Lacombe. The Montagnards' decision to award these symbols of military courage to the market women, whilst omitting the *citoyennes* of the women's society from the festival, reveals the nature of their views of the *citoyennes* and their demands. To bestow this military honour upon the market women who did not demand the right to bear arms, was to acknowledge them as the traditional representatives of the people, whilst simultaneously suggesting that transgressive women were a danger to the nation and should not be celebrated. Further evidence for this can be found in Jacques-Louis David's portrayal of Hercules crushing the throat of counterrevolution, which was depicted as half woman and half serpent.[163] Although this was a celebration of the defeat of federalism and the purging of the Girondins from the Convention, it can be argued that it was also reflective of the changing perceptions of the Montagnards towards politically active women.

Previously, the tranquil figure of Liberty, alongside those of Equality and Fraternity, was used to replace the ancien régime symbols of monarchical rule.[164] Depicted as a roman matron, Liberty did not pose a threat to the social order and was no firebrand because she

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[160] Ibid., p.570.
[161] Claude Milscent (1740-1794), *Le Créole patriote,* 11 August 1793, p.75.
[162] Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace,* p.145.
[163] J.-G. Wille (1715-1808), *Mémoires et journal de J.-G. Wille, graveur du Roi,* Tome Second (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1857), p.387.
[164] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* pp.158-9.

represented sexual virtue and sacrificing personal interests for the good of the nation.[165] She symbolised the abstract and anonymous republic rather than the royal state ruled by the paternal figure of the king.[166] As Linda Colley argues, female allegories like Liberty were supposed to be admired as symbols without challenging the preconceived notions of a woman's place within the nation.[167] Politically active women put themselves at odds with the expectations set by the image of Liberty via 'their extremism and association with the stage, their literary careers and other questionable professions'.[168] The replacement of Liberty with Hercules can thus be interpreted as the backlash from the Montagnards over the increasing political agency of the c*itoyennes* and women more broadly. Hercules was heroic and his masculinity was a rejection of the femininity of the goddess Liberty.[169] He conveyed images of virility and, in contrast to Liberty, was depicted as an active rather than a passive figure, fighting against the 'chains of humanity', whilst upholding the figures of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.[170] Moreover, as Hunt notes, the colossal size of Hercules meant that he overshadowed Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, suggesting that the deputies wished to distance themselves from the increasing political participation of women and return women to their natural state of dependency.[171] This is indicative of the fear that the agency of the *citoyennes* stirred within the Convention and offers an explanation for why the women's club was disbanded: 'their conduct signalled to their adversaries an irreversible process in which women would demand and concentrate power at men's expense'.[172]

Reports from revolutionaries such as d'Églantine, Amar and police agents, further highlight the anxieties that the activities of politically active women created and the subsequent need to ban large gatherings of women. According to some reports by police officials in mid-September, there were growing agitations amongst Parisian women at the shortages of essential goods. On 12 September, Rolin reported that at 6.30 a.m. he stopped a coal cart being driven by a woman near the Pont-Neuf.[173] After searching it, Rolin discovered that the woman sought to sell a bag of coal containing no more than twelve bushels, rather than the

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[165] Philip Hicks, 'The Roman Matron in Britain: Female Political Influence and Republican Response, ca. 1750-1800', *JMH 77(1)* (2005), 35-69 (pp.51-2).
[166] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.159.
[167] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp.246-248.
[168] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.163.
[169] Hunt, 'Hercules and the Radical Image in the French Revolution', *Representations 2* (1983), 95-117 (p.105).
[170] Ibid., p.103; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.164.
[171] Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class,* p.104.
[172] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere,* p.165.
[173] Caron, *Paris pendant la terreur,* Tome Premier, p.71.

required sixteen, for ten *livres*.[174] Rolin arrested the woman and took her to the city hall.[175] There was no follow-up to this report detailing the woman's fate. That, however, pales in comparison to what this scenario uncovers about the situation within Paris when combined with reports from the beginning of September. On 8 September, Latour-Lamontagne described the destitution he witnessed:

> You will see a grieving mother, followed by her young children, who cry from hunger, come in the middle of the night to look for her husband who has been stripped of the fruit of his labour and has nothing but tears to offer.[176]

This is merely one snapshot of the poverty many Parisian families faced due to unemployment, a shortage of supplies, and the government's refusal to impose the economic measures of the sans-culottes, Enragés and *citoyennes*. Another was offered by Grivel, from 11 September. Despite arguing that there was enough bread in almost all the bakeries, he mentioned that a delegation of around two or three hundred women went to the Convention to demand increased subsistence.[177] Finding only members of the CPS, the women secured a promise of increased flour supplies.[178] However that morning, bread appeared to be scarce in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

> At seven o'clock the five-pound loaves are distributed.
> There are eight to ten people at a time in the bakers' shops;
> but there are two-pound loaves of bread to be distributed, and
> more are going to be baked.[179]

This scrabble to obtain bread was also mentioned in an account by Soulet, from 12 September, which simply stated that women fought at the door of a bakery in the rue Saint-Jacques.[180]

Fundamentally, these accounts demonstrate that bread was political by 1793. Although the October Days distinctly marked the beginning of women's food riots having political dimensions, they continued to remain primarily economic and centred around the maternal duties of women. 1793, on the other hand, as McPhee asserts, 'was the year of life and

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[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., p.30.
[177] Ibid., p.64.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., p.65.
[180] Ibid., p.84.

death'.[181] Proctor adds to this, stating that 'tempers were short, tolerance was in scant supply, and suspicion and accusation were rife'.[182] Bread was a politically explosive topic because it was a food staple and a shortage of this meant that soldiers were too undernourished to protect French interests. It also meant that women were less likely to succeed in their duty of raising healthy, well-educated, morally sound citizens. In their desperation for bread, women frequently resorted to undesirable behaviour, as Soulet's account shows. Often their young children were with them because, as Jennifer Popiel argues, it was women who carried children for nine-months and nourished them during the gestation period, nursing, clothing, and raising them in the years after.[183] The tempers of women were frayed due to fears over starvation. Hunt confirms this by explaining that the threat of starvation heightened fears of conspiracy.[184] This was a longstanding tradition. As chapter one demonstrated, the availability of grain was connected to the successes and failures of political authorities. A lack of grain resulted in accusations of political manipulation and counterrevolutionary plots. By 1793, this rhetoric of conspiracy was embedded in revolutionary discourse. However, Hunt also observes that conspiracy was about more than the fear of starvation and a continuation from ancien régime practices of blaming institutional authorities for grain shortages. It was a 'systematic obsession' that was connected to the rise in factional politics, which heightened concerns over self-interest at the expense of the nation.[185] Hence, bread in 1793 was not merely an economic and social issue, it fed into the political fabric of society and placed women at the centre of political debate.

In addition to demonstrating the political significance of bread, the focus of police reports on the violent behaviour of women served two key purposes. It informed the government of what was going on in the streets and who the leaders in inciting the crowds were. This is crucial for evaluating the political agency of women and the uneasiness this agency elicited in male revolutionaries. The streets offered women a less restrictive form of participation because they were not prohibited from joining debates with fellow revolutionaries. Farge supports this argument by emphasising that Paris was an open space where individual identities were relational to someone or something else.[186] As a result, it was important for officials to consolidate knowledge on who was saying what as ignorance jeopardized

[181] McPhee, *Liberty or Death,* p.188.
[182] Proctor, *Women, Equality, and the French Revolution,* p.154.
[183] Jennifer J. Popiel, 'Making Mothers: The Advice Genre and the Domestic Ideal, 1760-1830', *Journal of Family History 29(4)* (2004), 339-350 (pp.341-342).
[184] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class,* p.40.
[185] Ibid., pp.41-42, p.44.
[186] Farge, *Fragile Lives,* p.6, p.11.

political control. With so many competing factions, it was paramount for the Jacobins to maintain connections with the world outside of the Convention. That women were explicitly mentioned in these police reports suggests that they were perceived to be enough of a threat to warrant observation. This implies that women were political beings, minus the required legal status for active citizenship. Male revolutionaries realised the influence that women had in revolutionary society, had witnessed it over the past five years, and sought to diminish the degree of political agency they exerted. The first way to achieve this was by having reports carried out on their everyday activities.

This is connected to the second purpose of the police monitoring women, which was that any recordings that painted them in an unfavourable light could be used by the Convention to suppress women's agency by reducing the platforms available to them. This is what happened in October 1793 when the CGS drew upon the conflict between the market women and the *citoyennes*. As September progressed, the conflict between the women escalated further. On 16 September, Rousseville reported that the Jacobin society denounced Lacombe, who 'was said to be dangerous', to the CGS and she was temporarily detained.[187] This denunciation was a manipulation of the divisions that appeared amongst the SRRW the month before. Some of the more moderate *citoyennes,* such as Lemoce and Hérouart, wished to align with the Jacobins and sever links with the more militant *citoyennes* including Lacombe and Léon.[188] On 8 August, Lemoce and Hérouart accused Lacombe of being a traitor, claiming that she was hiding Leclerc, suspected of inciting counterrevolutionary action and being a member of the Commission of Twelve, who were responsible for weeding out conspirators, at her home.[189] Léon seemingly confirmed this by accusing Lacombe of having slept with Leclerc.[190] This notion of Lacombe being a liar was furthered by Lemoce, who claimed that Lacombe told her she often visited the CGS and declared to them that there were three to four thousand members of the women's club, when there were around 170.[191] This contradicted political transparency which was supposed to be the basis of revolutionary politics, providing opponents of the militant *citoyennes* with the excuse needed to break ranks with these radical members of the society. It is possible that the allegations against Lacombe stemmed from the discontent of some of the members of the women's society with her leadership. As affirmed by this denunciation, she was a skilled orator and the *citoyennes*

[187] Caron, *Paris pendant la terreur,* Tome Premier, p.119.
[188] Levy, Applewhite and Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, p.178.
[189] Ibid., p.179.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid., pp.179-180.

compared her to Marat and his fiery *L'Ami du Peuple*.[192] Known for her frequent outbursts, she attended the Convention several times to address the officials, who were always reluctant to hear what she had to say. A prime example of this can be found in the account from the Jacobin Club meeting of 16 September, when denunciations against Lacombe flooded in:

> N[…]: The woman that you denounce is extremely dangerous in that she is very eloquent; first, she speaks well and then attacks the constituted authorities. She cast aspersions at the Jacobins and the Convention in a speech I heard.[193]
>
> Chabot: You cannot take any citizen to the Committee of General Security; but you can invite the Committee of General Security to summon the Lacombe woman because I have no doubt that she is the instrument of counterrevolution.[194]

Lacombe arrived in time to demand the floor to address the accusations made against her. Her presence caused such an outcry that Léonard Bourdon, who was presiding over the meeting, proclaimed that her behaviour provided proof for the accusations made against her because it was a crime, when one's patriotism was under scrutiny, to incite disorder amongst those tasked with serving the interests of the nation.[195] The following propositions were voted on: firstly, to write to the women's society and ask them to rid themselves of the suspect women who controlled the society. Secondly, to send word to the CGS to have suspect women arrested.[196] It was decided unanimously that Lacombe was to be taken immediately before the CGS and an amendment asking for the arrest of Leclerc was passed.[197] This sparked considerable debate amongst members of the Jacobin Club.

Both Basire and Renaudin argued that the CGS should be tasked with writing to all the revolutionary committees of the local sections, who could easily identify and arrest suspect women within their arrondissements.[198] Desfieux asserted that both Leclerc and Lacombe were counterrevolutionary and should be arrested and have seals placed on their papers, which would undoubtedly contain evidence of their counterrevolutionary activities.[199] He

[192] Cerati, *Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires*, p.113.
[193] Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins,* Tome. V, pp.406-7.
[194] Ibid., p.407.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid., pp.407-408.

then went on to deny having any kind of relation with Lacombe, who had asked for him, stating,

> I have only ever spoken to her in public places. Likewise, I have no relations with Leclerc, Jacques Roux, or any of the others who have just been denounced and discussed.[200]

What is most interesting about this exchange is that no doubts were expressed over Lacombe's culpability in harbouring counterrevolutionary sentiments and coercing other members of the women's society to support the views of Leclerc and Roux. The only thing that was called into question was how best to identify and deal with suspect women. It is likely that this willingness to condemn Lacombe and the women's society for being counterrevolutionary was primarily determined by the perceived influence of the Enragés on the more militant *citoyennes*. Further proof of their close association can be found in an article from issue seventeen of Leclerc's *L'Ami du Peuple,* the title he assumed following Marat's death, dated 30 August.

Disgusted by the double standards of the Convention's treatment of the *citoyennes*, Leclerc declared:

> When you were asked with such energy for the decree of indictment against the thirty-two, with what transports you received the petitioners! At present, to the contrary, the Revolutionary Republican Women, whom you called upon for their services during the insurrection, demanded entry to the bar; the president refused them. Another deputation of women who appeared after them were admitted; revolted by this blatant injustice, they approached the bar despite the opposition of your monitors and read their petition […].[201]

The petition in question was the one Lacombe presented to the Convention on the need to impose the Law of Suspects and introduce price controls, and was founded upon an article of Leclerc's from 4 August, which incited the women to act as a means of 'sounding the tocsin of liberty' in such times of 'extreme peril'.[202] This pushing of the agenda of the Enragés by Lacombe and Léon was the most significant factor in creating divisions in the women's club. For those interested in a more moderate society, breaking connections with

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[200] Ibid., p.408.
[201] Théophile Leclerc (1771-1820), *L'Ami du peuple,* 30 August 1793, in *Deux Enragés de la Révolution: Leclerc de Lyon et Pauline Léon,* ed.by Guillon (Quimperlé: La Digitale, 1993), pp.206-210 (p.207).
[202] Leclerc, *L'Ami du peuple,* 4 August 1793, in Ibid., pp.162-165 (p.164).

the militants was necessary because they were the most dominant members. Denouncing one of the club's leaders was one such way to do so because it sent the message to the radical *citoyennes* that unity within the club was fractured. Thus, Lacombe was scapegoated by some of the *citoyennes*, and this was seized upon by the Jacobins and Hébertistes. This is a prime example of the *citoyennes* being tolerated until they had served a purpose. The conflict between the militant *citoyennes* and the market women peaked on 22 and 23 September. Latour-Lamontagne reported that the *citoyennes* were enemies of public peace, seeking to persuade other women that they possessed the same rights as the men who governed France, and that voting in the sections was a natural right.[203] These accusations spilled into the small, dangerous insurrections that Le Harivel reported on.[204] One such incident occurred on 28 October, when a crowd of market women burst into a meeting of the SRRW. They attacked the *oeil vigilant,* the flags and the pikes, and then attacked the *citoyennes*.[205] The presence of the National Guard and several surgeons pushed the violence into the streets, where a male deputy was stabbed whilst trying to save a *citoyenne* from the beatings she was receiving.[206] This violence, the market women's subsequent complaint to the Convention on 29 October, and the police reports from September, presented the CGS with the excuse needed to justify the closure of the SRRW and the banning of women from popular clubs and sections.

These reports are an invaluable source for those interested in masculine interpretations of female agency because they give rare insight into descriptions of women from the allocated communities of agents. Generally, it can be gleaned from these reports that the agents believed the women to be politically active beings with a sound judgement of the Revolution and its progression. They had knowledge of where power was perceived to be located, whom they had to address to have their grievances recognised, and how to use the streets to voice their opinions. This was contradicted by d'Églantine and Amar, who disputed the intellectual and physical abilities of women to not only understand the political sphere, but to participate rationally in debates and decision-making. According to d'Églantine, the women's demands to wear revolutionary symbols was an encroachment on territory that did not concern them. He stated that demands to wear the tricolour cockade and the Phrygian cap were solely the starting point for these women and that they would soon demand to wear belts containing

[203] Caron, *Paris pendant la terreur,* Tome Premier, p.165.
[204] Ibid., p.167.
[205] Louis-Marie Prudhomme (1752-1830), *Révolutions de Paris, dédiées à la nation,* 13 November 1793, pp.207-210.
[206] Ibid.

pistols, whilst mob behaviour continued in the guise of bread riots.[207] He continued this speech, which seemingly gathered much applause, by noting that no one should be forced to wear these symbols that the 'adventuresses, female knights-errant, emancipated girls and amazons' encouraged because it disturbed public peace.[208] In his closing statement, d'Églantine asked the Convention for two things: firstly, based upon the principle of freedom of clothing, that no one be prosecuted for refusing to wear these symbols. Secondly, that the CGS compile a report on women's clubs.[209] His requests were met, and the following decree was issued:

> No person of either sex may constrain any citizen to dress in a particular manner. Everyone is free to wear whatever clothing or adornment that seems right to their sex, on pain of being treated as suspect and prosecuted as a disturber of public peace.[210]

In the aftermath of this decree, which was essentially a retraction of the decree concerning the wearing of the cockade, the CGS investigated women's clubs and on 30 October, the day after d'Églantine's speech, Amar presented the findings to the Convention. This speech, which questioned the political participation of women, accused those who did so of abandoning their families.[211] He insisted that a group of 'so-called women Jacobins' from a 'supposedly revolutionary' club were walking about in red caps and trousers, trying to coerce other women to adopt this practice; as a result a group of 6000 women formed to complain about this insult.[212] It was concluded from Amar's report that women's societies could no longer be tolerated, and the Convention decreed the prohibition of women's political clubs. This was a defining moment in female agency because the decree was intended to halt women's public involvement in politics.

4.6 Legacies

Whether the SRRW was the most significant club for women during the revolutionary period is debatable. This society was not the first to offer women political apprenticeships. It built

[207] *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860,* Tome 78 (Paris: 1911), p.21
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.

upon those introduced by the fraternal societies and the Cercle Social, who tolerated female membership to varying degrees. The presence of women in galleries was accepted from early in the Revolution. It was understood that women were as affected by revolutionary ideals as men, but the extent to which they were entitled to participate was disputed. In the case of the SRRW, timing determined the degree of toleration they experienced. Whereas the market women were an accepted part of society from an economic perspective; the *citoyennes* were a short-term political convenience used to support the ambitions of competing factions, most notably the Jacobins in their purging of the Girondins from the Convention, and the Enragés in their economic programme. Regardless, the Revolutionary Republican Women were significant in relation to female agency from a collective perspective. They formed coherent rules to guide them. They established ideals and principles, and successfully collaborated with other factions, allowing them to temporarily co-exist peacefully. The members of this group further developed their political consciousness by promoting issues that most affected them. They formed a 'sisterhood' which fostered a sense of belonging; something which the market women and male revolutionaries appreciated the importance of. Ultimately, they created a space for women to try out ideas in debates and intended to educate women of all age groups, even if membership was less inclusive than is often argued. Members gained experience in leadership and enjoyed equal membership. They formed, in a very loose sense, an early feminist network because it featured some of the main elements of modern feminism: a group of women with similar ambitions meeting on a regular basis, in a known location, with the aim of improving the lot of women.

That said, society was not ready for the permanent existence of these militant women and their existence had an expiry date. They threatened the status quo of male revolutionaries and the market women. Their inability to gain the support of these groups predestined their demise. For a group like this to exist in revolutionary Paris, co-operation with and toleration from sectional societies was crucial: something these women could only expect conditionally. Their ideas were, though justified through economic and social concerns, too radical because most women prioritised raising their families over exploiting motherhood to stake a claim on political rights. One of the biggest criticisms against this society is that they failed to acknowledge the individual circumstances of women. Few women were inspired by visions of the future, focusing their efforts on the present, where survival took precedence over citizenship. The mostly lower bourgeois *citoyennes* failed to sympathise with these plights. This cost them support that may have guaranteed them greater success.

Even so, though this society was not the most important within the Parisian club movement, it did permit some women to participate in the political landscape of the capital city and contribute to the broader workings of revolutionary society. 1793 was the turning point in the earliest stages of the Revolution. It was the most politically fluid year, yet the most restrictive. For women, 1793 signified both greater political agency and increased political oppression. The first half of the year was productive for a small group of women, who successfully articulated the concerns of a wider section of the working people of Paris. The presence of war and instability amongst the competing factions made a space for the creation of the women's society. Their support was crucial to the purging of the Girondins from the Convention and for passing decrees that satisfied the economic demands of the Enragés and sans-culottes. Had they not emerged when they did, the struggle for political prominence would undoubtedly have been long-lasting. Furthermore, their ambitions to create an all-female society in Paris must be admired because it brought its members to the forefront of revolutionary activity. These women consolidated their political consciousness and created short-term associations with male revolutionaries. This was, in other words, a lesson in political survival. Their existence certainly helped shape the turn of events. Had the Jacobins, with the *citoyennes'* aid, failed in the struggle for the Convention, it is difficult to assess where the careers of many male revolutionaries, especially Robespierre, would have ended up. Although the Hébertistes pushed the economic programme through in September 1793, had the *citoyennes* not aligned themselves with the Enragés to pressurise the government into intervening in the economy earlier on, it is unlikely that this would have occurred when it did. Had the schism between the market women and *citoyennes* not existed, it may have prevented the banning of women's societies and large gatherings of women in the streets post-Germinal. All things in revolutionary society had consequences, and the *citoyennes* personify this.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the variation and complexity of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793. By examining the methods of participation of aristocratic or bourgeois women and common, everyday women, this thesis has demonstrated that being a woman was not a universal experience, nor was living during a revolution. The individual and collective experiences of women depended upon a multitude of factors which included, but were not limited to, age, marital status, place of residence and social status. The women studied within this project had experiences that were circumstantial. Whilst they all emphasised the importance of motherhood and the republican mother to varying degrees when justifying their presence in the political sphere, their motivations and goals were quite different.

For the market women, survival determined their revolutionary action. The October Days adopted the food riot, a traditional method of female protest, and adapted it to the new context of the Revolution. Although primarily driven by the need to feed their local communities, there were political dimensions which modernised understandings of the food riot. Removing the king from Versailles, the women restored political prominence to Paris and altered the course of the Revolution by turning national and international attentions towards the capital city. That there were official inquiries into the October Days, containing testimonies from male and female witnesses, implies that the women's agency threatened patriarchal authorities. Not only did they end the political deadlock between king, court and National Assembly, but they proved that they could execute a mass protest efficiently, contradicting notions of female subordinacy. The October Days were the turning point for women's participation in society. They were the first event led mostly by women and, in many senses, set the precedent for future food riots, as the example of February 1793 confirms. These riots were more politicised than October 1789, targeting the warehouses of wealthy members of society. As with the October Days, they stemmed from the women's frustrations over the inefficient response from male revolutionaries to the shortages in Paris. Where they differed was in the violence willingly employed by the women of 1793, in contrast to the accidental violence of 6 October 1789 during the storming of the palace. This signifies that many women, by this stage in the Revolution, employed militant tactics in their fight to have their grievances recognised by male revolutionaries. This militancy became a defining feature of the SRRW, who willingly worked with the Enragés and Jacobins to build up toleration towards the only all-female political club within Paris.

The relationship between the market women and the women's club is pivotal to understanding how the increasing political consciousness of oppressed groups altered established power relations within society. The market women, with their emphasis upon the centuries old tradition that valued their role as vendors, unintentionally altered power relations between men and women, the governed and the governing, and the oppressed and the oppressors. Their increasing political consciousness permitted them to identify the relevant power bases within society and address these when airing their grievances. What this suggests is that women's experiences, whether through patronage or local connections and community, are key to understanding how revolutionary networks functioned. The women who initiated and participated in the October Days identified interests in common and organised and mobilised a group of thousands of women, by drawing upon their relationships with family and friends and using the lacklustre response of their menfolk to the shortages in Paris as their opportunity to enter revolutionary society. Arguably, it was the market women's commitment to traditional methods of female protest as an entry to the political sphere, which led to the turbulent relationship between the market women and the *citoyennes* in 1793. Where the market women prioritised their economic importance in society and were willing to work within the constraints of their sex, so long as they maintained the privileges associated with running the market; the *citoyennes* used motherhood to support their claims for citizenship and the right to bear arms which were intricately connected. The market women did not appreciate these interlopers entering their space, taking over their church, and interfering in their business by pushing for a general maximum on commodities. Furthermore, their focus upon citizenship rights seemed like a lost cause to the market women, who concentrated their efforts upon survival. This disjuncture between the groups of women that peaked in September 1793 is illustrative of the importance of taking care when defining the female experience in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793. The *citoyennes* were generally of child-bearing age and from lower bourgeois backgrounds. The market women, on the other hand, were from a working background and had less time to devote to such causes as citizenship. Though the dynamic relationship between these women has been studied in relative detail by the likes of Marie Cerati, Darline Levy, Harriet Applewhite, Mary Johnson and Dominique Godineau, the approach taken within this thesis is distinctive because it examines police reports from 1793 to explore the issue of female agency from both the male and female perspective.

Through these reports it is possible to trace the deterioration in the dealings of the *citoyennes* with the market women and vice versa. At the crux of this was the importance of the streets

as a place where women carved spaces for themselves in revolutionary society. This engages with Danielle Van den Heuvel's assertion that the streets were a 'site for male privilege', where women were excluded or chaperoned to restrict their movement.[1] That these women were somewhat tolerated in the public sphere suggests that the streets were not as strictly gendered as they appeared. In addition to working, gossiping and queuing for provisions, the home was not as private a space as it was often considered to be. The home was not solely a place for sleeping and eating, business and socialising were also carried out in this space.[2] Moreover, homes were typically equipped with windows, doors and, in some instances, balconies, so the streets were rarely far from the intimacy of the domestic setting.[3] Hence, everything that occurred in the streets had some implication upon what happened in the home, rendering the streets an extension of the home. This can be situated within the republican motherhood of the 1790s. At the core of this image of the republican mother is the *patriote,* a devoted wife and mother who raised her children to be dedicated to the nation and willing to sacrifice their lives for it; she was the antithesis of the self-interested aristocratic women of the ancien régime.[4] She incited others into action by sounding the tocsin and tapping into symbols that roused strong feelings of patriotism through their connections with the Revolution. These symbols included the tricolour cockade and the Phrygian cap, which were identified by the police reports of 1793 as being instigating factors in the violence that occurred between the market women and the *citoyennes*. For the *citoyennes,* such symbols represented true patriotism and loyalty to the Revolution. For the market women, they signified claims to citizenship rights that encompassed the obligation to bear arms to defend the nation, whether one wished to or not. The market women did not appreciate having these symbols foisted upon them and their subsequent attacks upon the women's club confirm this.

Naturally, as highlighted throughout this research, the market women and SRRW are only one aspect of the story of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris. Militant action did not suit all women, particularly those of a higher social status. Chapters two and three are situated amongst scholarship by the likes of Siân Reynolds, Lindsay Parker, Annie Duprat and Leigh Whaley, which deal with some of these remarkable women whose experiences were typically determined by their social status and high-profile marriages.

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[1] Danielle Van den Heuvel, 'Gender in the Streets of the Premodern City', *Journal of Urban History 45(4)* (2019), 693-710 (p.693).
[2] Ibid., p.699.
[3] Ibid.
[4] D.H. Barry, 'Community, Tradition and Memory among Rebel Working-Class Women of Paris, 1830, 1848, 1871', *ERH 7(2)* (2000), 261-275 (p.263).

Kéralio, Condorcet, Jullien and Roland joined societies, spectated in the galleries, and posed as political convenors on behalf of their spouses. They hosted dinners or salons, using these events to form networks with fellow revolutionaries. By doing so, they contributed towards the power relations that existed between and within the sexes, vertically and horizontally across the social hierarchy. Due to their comfortable backgrounds, they had greater advantages in terms of educational opportunities that set them apart from other women. Yet, as women they were expected to remain at home and play the role of the dutiful wife and mother. These women contradicted this, manipulating their marriages to men of considerable political and social standing to enter the political sphere. They were the intellectual equals of their spouses and exploited their feminine charms, highly polished writing skills, and social etiquette to create revolutionary identities that benefited both themselves and their husbands. For Kéralio and Condorcet, journalism and translation were outlets for them to share their views on an array of issues with a public audience. They joined forces with their spouses, creating political journals and hosting salons which encouraged the formation of networks that were as important as those established by the market women and SRRW in guaranteeing support in times of hardship. Jullien and Roland, in comparison, preferred a private style of participation via letters, memoirs, and intimate dinners with political allies that worked in a similar manner to salons by building valuable connections. As with Kéralio and Condorcet, Jullien and Roland had greater access to governing institutions and leading revolutionaries because their spouses played noteworthy roles in the political landscape of Paris. They successfully pushed the boundaries of their gender by working within the constraints of their sex, offering the perception that their actions were closely supervised by their spouses, whilst simultaneously enjoying a presence in spaces that were previously masculine. Their writings contributed to the revolutionary discourse and cultural scripts that emerged from the eighteenth century, engaging with controversial debates such as women's citizenship rights, the best form of government for France, and the role of the monarchy. Female suffrage was not a question for the women of the 1790s, but some of the ideas associated with it, such as the political role of women, their social and cultural identities, and improving their education, certainly were.

What is evident is that, whilst there were clear-cut distinctions between the priorities and political agency of the market women, the *citoyennes* of the SRRW, Kéralio, Condorcet, Jullien and Roland, there were some points of similarity between them which cuts across the variation emphasised throughout the chapters of this thesis. Firstly, the political agency that these women exerted emerged primarily from their networks with male friends, family

members or colleagues. Whether through their high-profile marriages, royally endorsed status as nourishers of the nation, or connections to political factions such as the Enragés, these women drew upon their established relationships with their male counterparts to justify their presence in the political sphere. This illustrates that women across the social spectrum were aware of their perceived state of dependency and utilised this to develop their political consciousness through participation in revolutionary society. From this, several interesting questions that were not covered within the constraints of this research emerge. Although the focus of this thesis is the political agency of women in revolutionary Paris between 1789 and 1793, women living outside of the capital city also experienced the Revolution. One such example is counterrevolutionary women, many of whom lived in provincial areas across the country. Their experiences, set primarily within the context of the Terror, the Vendée, and rural France more broadly, can be difficult to uncover because most of these women were peasants and did not leave their own accounts of their revolutionary participation. The political agency that these women exerted differed to that of their pro-revolutionary counterparts because it manifested as hiding refractory priests, continuing the practices of reciting the rosary and baptising their children, and protecting their local communities from attack whilst men were fighting abroad.[5] Yet, there was some similarity with their political agency and that of their pro-revolutionary counterparts. Like the market women and female deponents interviewed during the Châtelet inquiries, loyalty to one's place of residence played a significant role in determining the extent to which counterrevolutionary women involved themselves in the revolutionary process and the methods of participation they utilised to do so. For many of these women, religion remained a defining feature of their individual and collective identities, and they willingly employed the privileged status they held within the church to justify their opposition to revolutionary efforts. In other words, they took what they knew, namely the need for survival and the importance of the church in establishing and maintaining neighbourhood connections, adapting it to fit the context of the Revolution. They were far removed from the goings on in Paris and had to rely upon what was familiar to them to make sense of the uncertainty and disruption to their daily lives ushered in by the Revolution.

This ties into discussions around the various definitions of women's political agency and raises the following questions: How can women's political agency be defined in relation to counterrevolutionary action? What are the main differences between counterrevolutionary women and pro-revolutionary women, and the spheres of action that were readily accessible

[5] See Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship,* pp.89-130.

or made accessible to them during the Revolution? How were the actions of counterrevolutionary women portrayed by fellow revolutionaries and what does this signify about the extent to which their agency was recognised, feared or tolerated? How far did the priorities of counterrevolutionary and pro-revolutionary women differ? These women are as important to understanding women's political agency in revolutionary France as the women studied within this thesis. Studying counterrevolutionary women alongside pro-revolutionary women would provide greater insight into the variety and complexity of women's political agency during the French Revolution and how their participation in revolutionary society blurred distinctions between the public and the private. By allowing the relationship between the experiences of women in Paris and those of women in the provinces to be considered in tandem, it would also offer a more balanced assessment of the similarities and variations in women's political agency during this period. From this, it would be possible to analyse a broader sample of the responses of male revolutionaries to politically active women and how far women's political agency was tolerated, feared or celebrated.

The degree of toleration towards their political agency is something else that the women present within this thesis have in common. Overall, the political agency of women was tolerated to an extent, so long as they did not push boundaries too far. For example, the positive responses of male revolutionaries such as Desmoulins, Carra and Tournon towards the October Days, and the celebration of the market women during the national festival commemorating the 10 August 1792, highlight that the intervention of women in revolutionary society was acceptable when women acted within the constraints of their sex. The market women, Jullien, Condorcet and Kéralio embraced old and new sites of action and created arguments that future revolutionaries could adapt to their own contexts. The issues of divorce, suicide, social inequalities, citizenship and female liberation, which were the focus of the feminists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, emerged in the 1790s. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, the abolition of primogeniture, and divorce and civil ceremonies, commenced the liberation of women. They highlighted some of the key areas negatively impacting the lives of women and introduced short-term improvements. The sans-culottes women of the 1790s; the market women; and the remarkable characters of Kéralio, Condorcet and Jullien, were amongst those who established frameworks for their successors to structure their arguments. Constructions of gender were somewhat destabilised and negotiated by these women in a multitude of ways that fed into and informed both their political agency and identities. The use of *'féminisme'* or *'féministe'* did not come into

circulation until the 1890s.[6] Yet, many of the ideas associated with feminism can be traced back to the women considered within this thesis. It would, therefore, be worth exploring questions such as: Did the women of the 1790s recognise their demands as being feminist in nature? Did these women have their own understanding of feminism? How far can women from this period be considered as feminist? In what ways did the women participating in revolutionary society between 1789 and 1793 inspire future feminists?

For women like Roland and the *citoyennes* of the women's club, the backlash of Amar, d'Églantine and Chaumette, amongst others, illustrates that women's political agency caused significant anxiety amongst male revolutionaries. The execution of Roland and the disbanding of the women's club, followed by the prohibition of the presence of women in political societies more broadly, insinuates that these women posed too much of a threat to patriarchal authorities to be allowed to participate in the political sphere. These case studies indicate that the actions of some women had the potential to influence the overall revolutionary process, much to the alarm of fellow revolutionaries, suggesting that the connection between women's political agency and the process of revolution is worth teasing out further. Advocated by Jack Goldstone, the fourth generation of revolution theory has remained stagnant since the 1990s. The foundation of this generation rests upon its emphasis on revolution as a continuous process, composed of a sequence of events determined by the relationship between structural institutions and human agency.[7] Goldstone stresses the importance of agency, by highlighting the role of networks based upon social status, personal relationships, residence and community, and occupation in encouraging revolutionary participation.[8] His overall point regarding these revolutionary networks is that people often act collectively, developing strong bonds based upon mutual affection and shared interests.[9]

Other fourth generation theorists, including Eric Selbin and John Foran share Goldstone's views. They argue that the revolutionary process is the result of multiple causes combining and causing friction within society, and human agency. Selbin asserted that structural conditions shape people's actions, but do not 'unconditionally dictate what people do'.[10] He concluded that future theorists must pay greater attention to the conscious efforts of people

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[6] Offen, *The Woman Question in France*, p.16.
[7] Jack A. Goldstone, 'Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory', *Annual Review of Political Science 4(1)* (2001), 139-187 (p.152).
[8] Goldstone, 'Toward a Fourth Generation', p.153.
[9] Ibid., pp.153-154.
[10] Eric Selbin, 'Agency and Culture in Revolutions', in *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies,* ed.by Jack Goldstone, 3rd edt (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2003), pp.76-84 (p.78).

to make revolutions.[11] Foran notes the merit of Selbin's argument, highlighting that scholars have turned their attention to actors in the revolutionary process, and the motivations behind revolutionary ideologies and culture.[12] However, they ignore the significance of gender as a factor in the revolutionary process. In 1997, Valentine Moghadam declared that women experience revolutions to varying degrees, based mostly upon class, but also by race and ethnicity in certain societies.[13] The current research feeds into Moghadam's work by emphasising the variegated nature of women's political agency in revolutionary Paris. No revolution is complete without women and no revolution theory can eliminate female agency from the narrative of the revolutionary process across time, place and space. They were not decision makers in the formal sense, due to their political exclusion, but their actions certainly contributed to the decisions made throughout the Revolution. Examining the link between women's political agency and the revolutionary process would allow researchers to uncover the extent to which women's participation in the French Revolution helped shape its course.

There remains much work to be carried out on women's agency in revolutionary France. To study the French Revolution without considering women's agency is to give a very skewed picture of life in revolutionary France, and this thesis has sought to address this partiality by exploring the variegated and complex nature of women's political agency between 1789 and 1793.

[11] Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance,* p.191.
[12] John Foran, 'Theories of Revolution Revisited: Toward a Fourth Generation?', *Social Theory 11(1)* (1993), 1-20 (p.7).
[13] Valentine M. Moghadam, 'Gender and Revolutions', in *Theorizing Revolutions,* ed.by John Foran (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.137-167 (p.139).

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