

The Cost of Female Citizenship

How Price Controls Gendered Democracy in Revolutionary France

KATIE L. JARVIS

ABSTRACT In 1793, the National Convention passed two hallmarks of Jacobin legislation: sweeping price controls called the General Maximum and a ban on women's political clubs. At the center of both issues were factional clashes among the Montagnards, Girondins, and Enragés, on the one hand, and Parisian market women called the Dames des Halles and the leading women's club called the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires, on the other. Montagnard deputies pointed to marketplace brawls between the Dames and the club women to argue that women were irrational and had no place in formal politics. Consequently, the dominant historiographical narrative frames their ban as codifying Rousseauian gender norms and ideologically stunting women's citizenship at the outset of French democracy. However, this article analyzes the mechanics of the Maximum to argue that the ban on women's clubs emerged from contests over price controls, market regulation, and the economic dimensions of citizenship itself.

KEYWORDS citizenship, markets, gender, Paris, French Revolution

During the fall of 1793 the French revolutionaries found themselves squeezed by war, economic crisis, and factional rivalries. In this tightening vise, the National Convention passed two hallmarks of Montagnard legislation that set decisive precedents for state market regulation and gendered citizenship. The Montagnards' first program, sweeping price controls called the General Maximum, boldly capped wages and the price of staple goods. The controls included foodstuffs such as the grain, vegetables, eggs, and fish that sustained French stomachs. Seven weeks later, the Montagnards passed a second momentous decree that closed women's political clubs. This law effectively excluded women from institutional citizenship. Most historians have argued that the deputies voted to bar women's political assemblies to enforce Rousseauian gender norms. This article demonstrates that, on the contrary, the deputies shuttered women's clubs due to economic contests associated with the Maximum. In the streets and in the assembly halls, the revolutionaries' debates over economic rights and duties shaped modern notions of gender and citizenship.

The General Maximum figured prominently in the struggles between the Convention's major factions, the Girondins and the Montagnards. Seeking allies beyond the Convention, the Girondins and the Montagnards had championed different economic policies since the spring. On the right, the Girondins had supported free market legislation and believed that the Revolution was radicalizing too quickly. They opposed price controls that favored consumers at the expense of merchants and countryside producers. However, the leading Girondins had been purged from the Convention in June and were awaiting trial in prison during the fall of 1793.¹ On the left, the Montagnards had advocated for emergency economic regulation like the Maximum to protect the popular classes and to win the *sans-culottes*' support. The Montagnards dominated the Convention, and many partisans, like Robespierre, were leading members of the Jacobin club.² Although they embraced social equality, the Montagnards presented themselves as a parliamentary middle path between popular radicals and the more centrist Girondins.³ Nonetheless, as the Convention debated how to implement price controls, the Montagnards were pushed further left by the *Enragés*. This militant popular group called on the Montagnards to decisively favor consumers over merchants.⁴

Shortly after the Montagnards passed the General Maximum in September 1793, physical fights repeatedly broke out between two major groups of women. On the one side of the clashes were one thousand market women called *Dames des Halles*. These small retailers sold modest quantities of fish, vegetables, cheese, fruit, and butter in the public marketplace. Collectively, the *Dames*' trade fed 650,000 Parisians. The Maximum's price caps threatened to cripple their commerce.⁵ On the other side of the flying fists were members of the leading women's political club, the *Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires*. These club women aligned with the *Enragés* and agitated for pro-consumer legislation like price controls. In late October 1793 the Montagnard deputies pointed to the street brawls between the *Dames des Halles* and the *Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires* to argue that women were irrational and emotional and had no place in formal politics. Using this discourse of gendered deficiencies, the Convention closed women's political clubs.

Historians often portray the revolutionaries' ban as codifying Rousseauian notions of gender, launching the separate spheres of the nineteenth century, and

1. Braesch, *La Commune du dix août 1792*, 392; Hanson, *Historical Dictionary*, 141–44; Higonnet, "Social and Cultural Antecedents," 516, 526; Slavin, *Making of an Insurrection*, 4, 7. See also Hanson, *Jacobin Republic under Fire*, 8.

2. Before 1793 some Girondins had also been members of the Jacobin club.

3. Hanson, *Historical Dictionary*, 221–22.

4. Rudé, *French Revolution*, 84, 91.

5. Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, 1:viii.

obstructing women's suffrage into the twentieth. Joan Scott, Joan Landes, Carole Pateman, and Geneviève Fraisse have argued that Enlightenment discourses, the threat of sexual dedifferentiation, and the contradictions of democratic universalism drove a firm wedge between normative views of men and women in the eighteenth century. The revolutionaries, they contend, translated these cultural binaries to citizenship to deny women the same political rights as men.⁶ In their eyes, the deputies' 1793 ban ideologically stunted women's citizenship at the outset of French democracy. From the perspective of political practice, the ban appeared to affirm that individuals perform modern citizenship through institutions. Thus historians like Dominique Godineau and Patrice Higonnet have analyzed the *Citoyennes Républicaines* as the zenith of the women's institutional citizenship.⁷ The women's militant society functioned like male societies by debating legislative issues, collaborating with other assemblies, and petitioning the government on issues like the right to bear arms. Scholars who study the *Citoyennes Républicaines* conclude that the ban excluded women from modern citizenship because it forbade women from mobilizing their own political societies. This approach, while illuminating, primarily focuses on the mode by which women engaged in politics rather than asking how they articulated their citizenship through political, social, and economic arenas. Consequently, these analyses tend to interpret the *Citoyennes Républicaines*' focus on the Maximum and economic programming in the fall of 1793 as a "retreat" from "politics."⁸ In sum, major narratives of gender and modern politics assume that in 1793 the revolutionaries drew on cultural norms to forge the relationship between gender and citizenship and then accordingly divided institutional access.

In contrast, this article uses a social history approach to argue that the revolutionaries' ban on women's clubs was the product of much more than gendered anxieties or competing economic agendas. Both the brawls among women and the conflicts over price controls tapped into the fundamentally political nature of daily trade. They were, in fact, interlocking efforts to articulate economic citizenship.

By *economic citizenship* I mean 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. A society's regulatory laws implicitly assign political value and social duties to economic roles. For example, what economic activities distinguish a retailer as a responsible citizen as opposed to a leech on

6. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*; Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*; Fraisse, *Muse de la raison*; Pateman, *Sexual Contract*. Lynn Hunt initially argued that male revolutionaries feared sexual dedifferentiation and thus sought to exclude women from citizenship (*Family Romance*).

7. Godineau, *Women of Paris*; Higonnet, *Goodness beyond Virtue*, 16.

8. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 163–72.

society? Economic activities effectively include or exclude an individual from the cooperative body politic. If an individual's economic roles integrate him or her into this lived social contract, they also enable him or her to make specific claims on the state in return. For example, police would likely listen to a compliant merchant's request to stop black market goods. And if retailers provided a useful service by provisioning citizens, the state might consider their demands to modify price caps.

To probe eighteenth-century theories of political economy, recent studies have explored how government financial strategies, officials' economic philosophies, and global commerce shaped free market theory and state regulatory strategies.⁹ Since contests over price controls combined national debates with local practices, the Maximum offers a rare insight into how individuals merged their understanding of the political economy and citizenship in everyday trade. Several historians have acknowledged that differences in economic theory drew factional lines during the Maximum debates and the closing of the women's clubs.¹⁰ However, historians have not paid enough attention to the mechanics of economic policy in the marketplace and how the Maximum rules created a new map of economic citizenship. While retailers demanded legal profit margins for their trade, club women denounced merchants as conspiring hoarders, and the Convention attempted to balance prices and wages, they each assessed how the economic duties of merchants and consumers doubled as political duties and asked how the state should regulate this relationship.

By focusing on the confluence of the Maximum in the assembly hall and the confrontations between the Dames des Halles and the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires in the marketplace, this article reveals how the revolutionaries entangled the economic and gendered dimensions of citizenship

9. Livesey, *Making Democracy*; Kwass, *Contraband*; Spang, *Stuff and Money*; Crowston, *Credit, Fashion, Sex*; Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge*; Walton, "Les Graines de la Discorde"; Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce*; Kwass, "Global Underground"; Hunt, "Global Financial Origins of 1789"; Walton, "Fall from Eden"; Hunt, "French Revolution in Global Context"; Kwass, *Privilege and the Politics of Taxation*; Bossenga, "Financial Origins of the French Revolution"; Delalande, *Les batailles de l'impôt*; Pincus, "Rethinking Mercantilism."

10. Higonnet argues that, since the Société was linked with the Enragés whom the Jacobins attempted to purge in the fall of 1793, the closure was a "straightforward political strategy" and that "the Jacobins also decided that the involvement of women in politics ran against nature's dictates" (*Goodness beyond Virtue*, 56). Scott Lytle acknowledges that the Société had greatly concerned itself with socioeconomic issues since its founding in May 1793. However, Lytle fails to acknowledge the socioeconomic issues at play in the Citoyennes Républicaines' brawls with the "fishwives" ("Second Sex"). Olwen Hufton argues that closing the women's clubs proved that "antifeminism was there; but the timing of the closure within the context of a concerted attack upon the Enragés and the use of market women who had been the targets of Roux's [a head Enragé] inflammatory exhortations to pillage suggest that more practical considerations were at issue" (*Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, 37–38). Albert Soboul notes the Société's political and socioeconomic surveillance of the Dames in "Un épisode des luttes populaires."

by October 1793. While battling each other over price controls, the Dames des Halles and the Citoyennes Républicaines clamored at the Convention's door to smear each other as transgressive women. At the same time, Montagnard deputies harnessed the conflict among the women to blame the disturbances on the free-market-supporting Girondins to their right and to silence the proconsumer women's club that supported the increasingly radical Enragés to the Montagnards' left. The gendered debates on women's political clubs in 1793 thus became a convenient screen for factional clashes over inscribing the social contract in everyday trade.

Subsistence Problems and the First Maximum

The French had combated subsistence problems since time immemorial, but the Revolution introduced a new set of challenges.¹¹ Beginning in 1792, a sugar crisis, foreign war, civil war, and the devaluation of the new revolutionary currency threatened to send food prices skyrocketing.¹² When France declared war on Austria on April 20, 1792, the nation lost some access to external supplies.¹³ Moreover, the government faced the critical problem of funneling food to French armies while continuing to feed large urban centers like Paris. During 1792 the price of eggs that the Dames des Halles sold increased by more than 28 percent.¹⁴

As the assignat declined to 50 percent of its face value and supply problems from the civil war in the Vendée continued to drive up prices in late winter 1793, the radical Enragés pressured the Montagnard and Girondin deputies from the streets to secure affordable food for wage laborers.¹⁵ They were supported in this endeavor by sans-culottes, or militant members of the Parisian popular classes who participated in neighborhood sectional assemblies and often expressed political interests through "discourses of subsistence" and consumption.¹⁶ The sans-culottes believed that the food trade should ultimately serve "the people," whom they firmly interpreted as consumers, not merchants. For example, the Gardes-Françaises neighborhood section demanded that farmers and retailers consider their foodstuffs as "goods being placed in their trust for

11. On the grain trade, see Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris*; and Miller, *Mastering the Market*.

12. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 26; Jarvis, "Exacting Change."

13. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 116.

14. Rudé, "Wages and Popular Movements in Paris," 253.

15. Rudé, *French Revolution*, 83.

16. Soboul, *Sans-Culottes*, 43. William Sewell nuances Soboul's portrayal of the sans-culottes as a cohesive social group and as a group of popular militants by examining how multiple groups used "sans-culotte discourse" ("Sans-Culotte Rhetoric of Subsistence").

which [they are] to render an account to the Republic.”¹⁷ In the winter the Montagnards fostered an alliance with the sans-culottes by gradually distancing themselves from the liberal grain trade. Food riots in the provinces had prompted Robespierre to insist that “the most fundamental law of society is . . . that which guarantees the means of existence to every person; every other law is subordinate to this one.”¹⁸ On February 12, 1793, the Parisian sections formally objected to the Convention’s free market approach to the grain trade as backed by the Girondins. They lamented, “Do they [the pro-free-market deputies], these self-styled economic theorists, these friends of absolute freedom of commerce in grains, not therefore see that while ripping away the bread of the poor, they only enrich greedy speculators?” The deputation demanded that the Convention standardize the measures and maximum price of grain.¹⁹ One police reporter cautioned his superiors about the sans-culottes’ discontent: “It is impossible that the unhappy people can wait much longer, in spite of their patriotism, they also judge the Convention very severely, reproaching it bitterly for consuming precious time disputing and maligning one another, and [they] demand that the hoarders be repressed and that it [the Convention] lower the price of foodstuffs of primary necessity.”²⁰ In March, Enragé leaders attempted to force through price limits on all goods and capital punishment for hoarders. However, their uprising failed.²¹

In April, the Parisian sections, other communes, and the Convention continued to debate who caused the high price of grain and how to resolve the problem. Like many others, the Commune of Bercy partially blamed sellers and asked the deputies “to fix the *maximum* price of essential food, [and] constrain the cultivators and farmers to supply the markets.”²² However, the Girondin deputies in the Convention worried about restraining the free market. Economic liberalism had greatly informed the National Assembly’s projects since 1789. The Girondins objected that a cap on grain prices would not work because it did not fully respect property, would not correct the cause of high prices, and disadvantaged producers of grain. Girondin Charles Barbaroux, a deputy from Marseille, insisted that the reason for forming society was to protect property as

17. Quoted in Soboul, *Sans-Culottes*, 53. For more on the Enragés’ concerns, see Shepard, *Price Control*, 4.

18. Quoted in McPhee, *French Revolution*, 110.

19. *Archives parlementaires* (hereafter *AP*), Feb. 18, 1793, ser. 1, 58:475. For context, see Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 114.

20. Archives Nationales (hereafter *AN*), AF^{IV} 1470, Feb. 26 and 28, 1793, “Extrait des rapports et déclarations reçus au Bureau de surveillance de la Police, où se trouvent consignés les faits suivants.”

21. Rudé, *French Revolution*, 84.

22. *AP*, “Une députation des citoyens de la commune de Bercy,” Apr. 21, 1793, ser. 1, 63:89.

the source of subsistence.²³ He also asserted that the war and the revolutionary currency, not greedy farmers or commercial agents, inflated bread prices. Barbaroux invited the sans-culottes in the galleries, “O you [*tu*] who cry at the expense of bread! Honest artisan, come into the countryside, come I want you to talk to the laborer who nourishes you; I want you to embrace one another.”²⁴ In a determined speech three days later, Barbaroux’s Girondin colleague Jean-François Ducos added that “if the price of grain were not fixed in proportion to the cost of other goods, to the progress of the crop, to the salary of field hands, the cultivator would not profit from exploiting his field, [he] would cease to cultivate it and the majority of the earth would be abandoned next year, and the people consequently would die of hunger.”²⁵ In short, one would need to limit the price of all goods *and* labor to balance the system. Controlling the weather might also be necessary. The popular tribunes broke out into an uproar and “violent grumbling arose” among the Montagnard deputies.²⁶

Despite their desire to gain popular support over their Girondin rivals, the Montagnard deputies struggled to reconcile heavy regulation with revolutionary principles of liberty. Nonetheless, on May 4, 1793, the Montagnard majority bowed to mounting pressure from the Enragés and Parisian sections and pushed through the first national law establishing price caps on grain.²⁷ The deputies ordered departments to calculate the local price limits “according to the maximum day’s labor [wages].” The deputies aimed for “each consumer” to spend half their day’s wages on bread.²⁸

Since this first Maximum applied only to grain, the Dames des Halles experienced the law solely as consumers. This first Maximum did not affect the price of fish, vegetables, fruit, cheese, or butter that the Parisian market women sold. Therefore the Enragés’ and the Montagnards’ proconsumer grain Maximum benefited the market women along with the wage laborers who bought other foodstuffs from them.

On May 10, 1793, one week after capping the price of grain, the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires convened its first women’s club meeting in the capital. Since the start of the Revolution, women had formed at least thirty clubs across France, had contributed as members in mixed-sex clubs, and had influenced men’s club meetings through the lively galleries that

23. On Barbaroux, see Robert, Bourlouton, and Cougny, *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français*, 1:157.

24. *AP*, Apr. 27, 1793, ser. 1, 63:427.

25. On Ducos, see Robert, Bourlouton, and Cougny, *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français*, 2:445–46.

26. *AP*, Apr. 30, 1793, ser. 1, 63:644.

27. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 178–87.

28. *AP*, May 4, 1793, ser. 1, 64:114–15.

overlooked the debates.²⁹ The Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires, however, became the capital's only political club exclusively for women.³⁰ It boasted some 170 official members and initially convened in the Jacobins' library.³¹ Pauline Léon, a daughter of a chocolatier, and the actress Claire Lacombe, both political activists since 1789, led the club along with women from the lower middle class.³² The Citoyennes Républicaines vowed "to deliberate on ways to disrupt the projects of the Republic's enemies."³³ To defend the fatherland, the club agitated for women's right to bear arms, which the French often associated with voting rights and full citizenship.³⁴

Although the Citoyennes Républicaines initially aligned more with the Montagnards than with the inflammatory Enragés, the club's defensive mission led them to lambaste merchants as tools in counterrevolutionary schemes or as parasites who preyed on the popular classes.³⁵ One week after the club's founding, Lacombe condemned wealthy traders along with the Girondins who seemed to defend sellers over buyers. In a passionate speech she exhorted the Jacobin club to "strike down the agitators, the hoarders and the selfish merchants." "There exists," she proclaimed, "an awful plot to make the people die of hunger by raising essential foodstuffs to colossal price levels."³⁶ In les Halles some Citoyennes Républicaines infiltrated the marketplace as citizen watchdogs and surveyed transactions, including the Dames' sales. Outside the Convention the club members rallied other women to shout, "Long live the Montagnards! To the guillotine with the Brissotins [Girondins]!"³⁷

By the end of May 1793 the Montagnards, the Enragés, and the Citoyennes Républicaines had solidified an alliance on the back of the Maximum. On May 31 the Parisian sections created a central Revolutionary Committee to organize an insurrection backed by a militia of twenty thousand sans-culottes and assisted by the National Guard.³⁸ The same day Lacombe spoke at a club to rally

29. The earliest women's societies focused on patriotic philanthropy, but by 1792 most, like the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires, had acquired a radical political edge (Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 102, 103). For clubs outside Paris, see Desan, "Constitutional Amazons"; and Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 105.

30. On earlier attempts to form a Parisian women's club, see Cerati, *Le Club des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*, 20–21.

31. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 119, 121.

32. On Pauline Léon, see Guillon, "Pauline Léon, révolutionnaire."

33. Quoted in Cerati, *Le Club des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*, 23.

34. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 173.

35. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 121. Although little information has survived about the club's individual members, at least two haberdashers, two cake merchants, and one press owner contributed to the club's ranks (Cerati, *Le Club des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*, 30–31).

36. Quoted in Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 202.

37. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 127.

38. Rudé, *French Revolution*, 85.

section leaders and encourage “the sacred insurrection that would deliver the Mountain [the Montagnards] from its shackles.”³⁹ The initial revolt failed, but on June 2 the coalition surrounded the National Convention and petitioned the Montagnard deputies to purge the leading Girondins.⁴⁰ The strongest opponents of further economic controls left the assembly under arrest.

Despite the Montagnards’ Maximum on grain products and their arrest of the uncooperative Girondin deputies, Enragé leader and municipal official Jacques Roux called that June for a maximum on *all* basic necessities, including key foodstuffs. He flipped the basis of economic liberalism on its head by arguing that “the liberty of commerce is the right to use and to put to use and not the right to tyrannize and to prevent use.”⁴¹ Before the Convention he asserted that trade must serve the basic needs of the popular classes rather than enrich “the merchant aristocracy, more terrible than the noble and priestly aristocracy.”⁴²

The Enragés’ and sans-culottes’ crescendoing calls for price controls on *all* essential foods upset the Dames des Halles. Price caps on eggs, fish, vegetables, cheese, and other foodstuffs would destroy their profits. In July 1793 the police observer Dutrand wrote to the minister of the interior that, apart from the ones married to Jacobin sympathizers, the Dames des Halles cursed and grumbled.⁴³ The police prudently tracked the Dames’ discontent, as the Convention could not ensure the capital’s food supply without the thousand retailers’ cooperation.

A national festival on August 10, 1793, offered the Montagnard-led Convention the opportunity to co-opt the influential market women. Across France citizens celebrated the new constitution’s successful referendum on the first anniversary of the fall of the king.⁴⁴ In Paris citizens marched between parade stops narrating the Revolution.⁴⁵ The second station featured the “heroines of 5 and 6 October” 1789, that is, the Dames des Halles who had infamously marched to Versailles to bring bread and the king to Paris.⁴⁶ According to *Le créole*

39. Quoted in Slavin, *Making of an Insurrection*, 138.

40. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 130.

41. Quoted in Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 217.

42. Roux, “Le manifeste des Enragés,” 141, 142.

43. “Rapport de l’observateur Dutrand à Garat ministre de l’intérieur,” July 23, 1793, in Tuetey, *Répertoire général*, 9: no. 712.

44. The Convention had issued a national referendum on the completed Constitution of 1793 in late June (Tackett, *Coming of the Terror*, 296–98).

45. Biver, *Fêtes révolutionnaires à Paris*, 185. See also Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 155.

46. Historians have debated whether the women seated atop the cannons were actual Dames des Halles or performers. However, multiple sources indicate that they were the actual women who participated in the October Days march. The official planning report, the subsequent follow-up report, a personal letter, and accounts from newspapers like the *Feuille de correspondance et nouvelles patriotiques* and *Le créole patriote* suggest that the women at the station were Dames des Halles. In the Department of Cher, officials even instructed the local substitutes to “receive, in the name of the heroines of Paris, this prize honoring their civic audaciousness during the journées of 5 and 6 October 1789, enjoy *in their name* the honor of seizing

patriote, the women projected the same “proud attitude that they had when they had given the earliest examples of the superiority of free souls over those submitted to servitude.”⁴⁷ The festival’s Montagnard planning committee unambiguously posed the Dames as martial figures: perched atop the artillery they had pointed at the king’s palace, the Dames held tree branches and other “trophies” that served as “unequivocal signs of the illuminating victory that these courageous female citizens had won.”⁴⁸ Even departmental administrators acknowledged the “male courage” of “the women of Paris.”⁴⁹ At the station the Jacobin president of the National Convention, Hérault de Séchelles, praised the Dames’ bravery and bestowed “civic crowns” on the retailers.⁵⁰

The August 10 festival appeared to wed the market women to the Montagnard-led Convention, while the Enragé-backed Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires was left noticeably out of the spotlight.⁵¹ The omission of the women’s club was all the more striking since, after the original attack on the king’s palace in August 1792, the *fédérés* (soldiers from the provinces) had bestowed civic crowns on Citoyennes Républicaines leader Lacombe and two other women for their participation.⁵² Yet, in a festival recalling that August 10 victory, the deputies offered civic crowns to the Dames rather than the Citoyennes Républicaines.

In late August acute price increases multiplied the sans-culottes’ calls for price controls on foodstuffs the Dames sold. Whereas it had taken three years for the price of butter to increase by 90 percent from June 1790 to June 1793, the

these cannons and firing them” (my italics). For four years the revolutionaries had given the market women the title of “heroines” in connection with their political activism, and the populace easily made such associations. Jean-Paul Marat called the Dames “the heroines of the Halles who delivered us from the conspirators of 5 and 6 October,” the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* referred to the market women as “our heroines of the Halle” during the departure of the king’s aunts, and the popular pamphlet *Liste des culs aristocrates et anti-constitutionnels, qui ont été fouettés hier au soir à Tour de Bras, par les Dames de la Halle, et du Faubourg Saint-Antoine* named the Dames “heroines of the Revolution” as they spanked counterrevolutionary nuns. See Levy and Applewhite, “Women and Militant Citizenship,” 94; *Feuille de correspondance et nouvelles patriotiques*, vol. 2, no. 4, July 15, 1793, 15; *Feuille de correspondance et nouvelles patriotiques*, vol. 2, no. 8, Aug. 12, 1793, 31; AP, Report of Pierre-Anastase Torné on the August 10 festival in the Department of Cher, Aug. 21, 1793, 72:566, 570. For Pinet’s description, see Tackett, *Coming of the Terror*, 297; Marat, *L’ami du peuple*, no. 269, Feb. 11, 1790; *Correspondance littéraire secrète*, no. 8, Feb. 20, 1791, 71; Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Lb39 5505, *Liste des culs aristocrates et anti-constitutionnels, qui ont été fouettés hier au soir à Tour de Bras, par les Dames de la Halle, et du Faubourg Saint-Antoine* (Paris, 1791), 4–5. I am indebted to Suzanne Desan and Jillian Slaughter for bringing some of these articles to my attention.

47. BnF, RES M-Z-813, *Le Créole patriote: Bulletin de Milscent-Créole; Journal du soir*, no. 8, Aug. 11, 1793 (Paris), 75.

48. BnF, 8-Z LE SENNE-9438, *Recueil complet de tout ce qui s’est passé à la Fête de l’Unité et de l’Indivisibilité de la République française* (Paris, 179?), 3.

49. AP, Report of Pierre-Anastase Torné, 72:570.

50. Loup de Vireau-Beavoir and de Lama, *La Révolution française*, 466.

51. Levy and Applewhite, “Women and Militant Citizenship,” 94.

52. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 111.

price soared an additional 33 percent in three months alone between June 1793 and September 1793. Over the same period the price of eggs spiked 84 percent.⁵³

On August 31 the Paris Commune officially asked the Convention for “a price control on the things necessary to life.” Citizen Raffron, the municipal delegate, argued that such regulation was “strictly just and conforms to the social economy.” He insisted that merchants “are or should be citizens who, protected by the national authority, earn their living by furnishing to their fellow citizens the things that they need.” He asked for checks “to oppose the greed” of those merchants who did not fit this cooperative model.⁵⁴

With no acceptable response by September 4, the Parisian sans-culottes organized to confront the Convention for the second time in four months.⁵⁵ As it received news of the unrest, the nervous Convention instructed the Committee of Subsistence to formulate a plan for wide-reaching maximums.⁵⁶ Parisian sans-culottes marched on the Convention the following day. The municipal official Pierre Gaspard Chaumette told the deputies that the large crowds demanded “foodstuffs [subsistence], and, in order to have them, the force of the law.”⁵⁷ Citizens flooded the assembly hall with signs proclaiming, “War on the tyrants, war on the aristocrats, war on the hoarders.”⁵⁸

The Montagnard deputies promised the sans-culottes that new, extensive price controls called the General Maximum would limit the “price on all foodstuffs of the highest necessity.”⁵⁹ The Convention appeared to yield to sans-culotte demands by creating the Revolutionary Army of Citizens. Although the Convention sent the Revolutionary Army to smoke out hoarders, enforce the Maximum in the recalcitrant countryside, and ensure supply lines for urban centers and troops, the deputies also dispatched the citizen soldiers to round up counterrevolutionaries in the provinces.⁶⁰ Born of seven months of popular pressure, these measures cemented Parisian subsistence politics as the cornerstone of national economic policy and wedded them to the policing arms of the Terror.⁶¹

53. See charts in Rudé, “Wages and Popular Movements,” 254, 257.

54. *AP*, Aug. 31, 1793, ser. 1, 73:258.

55. Caron, *Le Maximum général*, 8.

56. *AP*, Sept. 4, 1793, ser. 1, 73:391.

57. *AP*, Sept. 5, 1793, ser. 1, 73:410.

58. Plon Frères, *Réimpression de l'ancien Moniteur*, Sept. 7, 1793, no. 520, 411. This covers the Convention session of September 5, 1793.

59. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 369; *AP*, Sept. 6, 1793, ser. 1, 73:461.

60. For more on the revolutionary armies, see Cobb, *People's Armies*; and Hanson, *Historical Dictionary*, 19–20.

61. On the relationship between the Terror and the repression of the Federalist revolts, see Hanson, *Jacobin Republic under Fire*, 185–96, 221–32.

Two Sides of the Tricolor: Merchants and Consumers in the Marketplace

In the markets the anticipated price controls escalated the tension between the Dames des Halles, on the one hand, and the Citoyennes Républicaines and their Enragé allies, on the other. Since August the Citoyennes Républicaines had increased their presence in les Halles by holding their meetings at Saint-Eustache, the Dames' beloved marketplace parish.⁶² After the Convention promised the General Maximum, the Citoyennes Républicaines made guaranteeing subsistence and necessities permanent club objectives.⁶³ In contrast, the Dames recognized that the Maximum would cripple retail trade. Thus, within a stone's throw of the Dames, the club women championed consumers and workers as the sovereign people while denigrating merchants and their interests.

As Parisians waited three weeks for the new General Maximum to be published, the Dames and the Citoyennes Républicaines acted out their ideological differences through battles over dress, beginning with the revolutionary tricolor. The Citoyennes Républicaines advocated that all women, like men, be legally obliged to wear the blue, white, and red cockade as a sign of citizenship. But the Dames refused to wear an emblem that they associated more with the anti-merchant Enragés than with the French republic. On September 13 brawls broke out across the city between women who donned the tricolor and the Dames who rejected it.⁶⁴ In the central markets, women with the rosette, some of whom were Citoyennes Républicaines, lashed out against other women who rejected it. In response, the Dames "tore to pieces" the women with the tricolored bull's eye. The Dames threatened to thrash proponents of the cockade again if they repeated their maneuvers.⁶⁵

The Citoyennes Républicaines dusted off their tricolors and attempted to shore up their legitimacy at the Convention three days later. They presented themselves as the authority on patriotic women and asked the deputies to imprison prostitutes who were "dangerous" to society and crack down on the wives of émigrés. "Legislators," they asserted, "it was up to the Citoyennes Républicaines to frankly present some truths about our sex to you; it's up to us to demonstrate the proper way to prevent these women from harming the Republic while harming themselves."⁶⁶

62. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, 36; Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 120. The Convention's fall dechristianization campaign, which included suppressing the Mass in Paris and instituting the revolutionary republican calendar, likely contributed to the tension at Saint-Eustache (Tackett, *Coming of the Terror*, 315–16).

63. Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 154.

64. Prévost, Sept. 13, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:231–32.

65. AN, F⁷ 36883, Harivel, Sept. 14, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 1:94.

66. AP, Sept. 16, 1793, ser. 1, 74: 284.

Far from supporting the Société's authority, the Montagnards distanced themselves from the Société because of economic issues. On the same day the Montagnard-dominated Jacobin club confronted Lacombe. The Jacobins accused the Société's leader of being "in collusion" with two famously radical Enragé leaders, Jean Théophile Victor Leclerc and Roux, whom the Montagnards had imprisoned in late August.⁶⁷ The Jacobins also accused the entire Société of having propagated soap and sugar disturbances in February and June.⁶⁸ Lacombe was arrested for one day.

The Convention also raised the stakes in the marketplace confrontations by passing the Law of Suspects and expanding the definition of counterrevolutionary activity.⁶⁹ Radical deputy (and soon to be member of the Committee of Public Safety) Collot d'Herbois insisted that price-gouging merchants be considered suspect. He demanded that the Convention "deliver a last blow against the aristocracy of merchants" who had "checked the progress of the Revolution."⁷⁰

Although the Dames held fast against the tricolor's proconsumer connotations and refused to accept it as a marker of citizenship, the sans-culotte-backed municipal government ordered all women to wear the tricolor cockade on September 18.⁷¹ The Dames swiftly dispatched forty retailers to organize collective opposition across all city markets.⁷² Among their stalls, they shouted that "if someone insulted [even] one woman citizen who did not have a cockade, they would all seek revenge for her." Police observer Prévost reported that the Dames suggested that the state issue "citoyenne cards" (female citizen cards), which they would gladly carry instead. Recalcitrant Dames protested that it was only prostitutes "and those [women] who go to the Jacobins [club] who wear it [the tricolor]."⁷³ By portraying their opponents as sexually deviant women, the Dames also sharpened their moral advantage on a gendered playing field. In the days that followed, the Dames even spanked some tricolored Citoyennes Républicaines.⁷⁴ With each strike, the retailers portrayed themselves as disciplinary mothers and framed the club women as errant children. Police observer Béraud

67. Hanson, *Historical Dictionary*, 286, 323, 190.

68. Guillon, *Deux Enragés de la Révolution*, 77–79.

69. *AP*, Sept. 18, 1793, ser. 1, 74:368.

70. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, 68.

71. Jennifer Heuer has examined debates throughout the Revolution over who should or should not wear the tricolor cockade to mark their citizenship ("Hats On for the Nation!").

72. AN, F7 3688³, "Rapport du Cn (l'observateur) Bigeot, du 18 7bre, 2^e an de la république, une et indivisible," Sept. 18, 1793.

73. Prévost, Sept. 18, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 4:233.

74. AN, F7 3688³, "Rapport de l'observateur Rousseville," Sept. 20, 1793. See also AN, F7 3688³, "Rapport de Dugar," Sept. 20, 1793.

warned his superiors, “The people, especially the women, slander the Convention constantly; they denounce it, [and] the price of food increases every day.”⁷⁵

What had begun as a municipal dispute over the tricolor and its factional overtones quickly escalated into a national issue. Two days before the Commune’s decree, female members of the mixed-sex *Société Fraternelle de la Section de l’Unité* addressed the Convention on behalf of thirty-five clubs and Parisian sections. Portraying the tricolor as a “revolutionary sign,” they asked that “the citizenesses who share our works should equally share this advantage [of wearing it].”⁷⁶ After the Commune’s decree, the overtaxed Paris police requested that the Convention outlaw those who “will rip off or profane the national colors.” The Dames likewise attempted to co-opt the Convention’s authority to support their side. One police observer reported that the Dames “refuse to wear the cockade because the law that the Convention pronounced does not order it, they say, and let it be [the Convention’s] decree [they say] and we will execute it.”⁷⁷

The National Convention responded to the unrest on September 21 by decreeing that “all women be required to wear the national cockade.” It is critical to note that the Montagnard-led Convention described the rosette as the “national” cockade instead of the “tricolor.” Although the Montagnards appeased the Enragés by seconding the Commune’s tricolor decree, they robbed the Enragés of an ideological victory by characterizing the tricolor as an explicitly national, rather than factional, symbol. The deputies gave teeth to their decision by deeming it counterrevolutionary to attack citizens over the tricolor or to refuse to wear it.⁷⁸

Emboldened by the tricolor decrees, the triumphant *Société des Citoyennes Républicaines* and the Parisian sections redoubled their efforts to aid buyers and constrain sellers. The *Société des Citoyennes Républicaines* officially made “price controls on all commodities used by the people” a club goal.⁷⁹ They sent a deputation to the Croix-Rouge neighborhood assembly to demand a “fixed price on all the staples used by the people”—their rhetoric implicitly excluded merchants from “the people.”⁸⁰ At the Convention the same day, the Parisian sections objected to the delay in enacting the proposed General Maximum.⁸¹

75. AN, F⁷ 3688³, “Rapport de l’observateur Béraud,” Sept. 20, 1793.

76. *AP*, Sept. 16, 1793, ser. 1, 74:284–85.

77. AN, F⁷ 3688³, “Rapport de l’observateur la Tour la Montagne,” Sept. 21, 1793.

78. *AP*, Sept. 21, 1793, ser. 1, 74:571–72.

79. Quoted in Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 163.

80. AN, F⁷ 3688³, Rossenville, Sept. 22, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 1:171. See also Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 356.

81. Caron, *Le Maximum général*, 9.

In contrast, the Dames des Halles boiled with resentment after the Convention's tricolor ruling. The Dames of the Place Maubert marketplace defiantly ripped bonnets with tricolors from women's heads the day the law went into effect. The retailers threw the symbols in the mud amid a barrage of insults.⁸² Disgruntled retailers in the central marketplace nearly beat to death a fabric merchant who was making tricolor bonnets. The police reported that the Dames des Halles protested that someone "wanted to force them [the Dames] to wear one of these sorts of bonnets to humiliate them, and that they were not duped by the request."⁸³

Because the Dames vehemently rebuffed the Citoyennes Républicaines' attempts to make all women wear the cockade, some historians have concluded that the Dames were too conservative to support radical republicanism and too traditional to support democratic female citizenship by the fall of 1793.⁸⁴ However, a closer look at the market women's actions reveals that they were protesting not the Revolution but the economic subordination that Citoyennes Républicaines demanded of them. Between blows the Dames even seized the language of citizenship to counter their rivals' demands. With the General Maximum incubating behind committee doors and extensive price controls looming, the marketplace remained a hotbed for disputes over the civic responsibilities of merchants and consumers.

The General Maximum: Symbiotic Trade for the Cooperative Body Politic

Despite promising price limits, the Montagnard deputies felt uneasy about blatantly contradicting laissez-faire ideology to the advantage of buyers alone.⁸⁵ The Montagnards realized that, if they controlled the prices of many goods, they would also have to regulate buyers to keep the economy in balance. The marketplace police also urged the deputies to pass dual controls on merchants and consumers to avoid a "continual and dangerous brawl between the buyer and the seller."⁸⁶ Therefore, on September 28 and 29 the National Convention presented a symbiotic plan to limit both prices *and* wages.⁸⁷

82. AN, F7 3688³, "Observations du citoyen Rolin," Sept. 21, 1793. Although fewer Parisians came to blows over the tricolor after the Convention's ruling, the Dames did not relent in the days that followed (AN, F7 3688³, "Rapport de Leharivel," Sept. 22, 1793; AN, F7 3688³, "Rapport de l'observateur Rousseville," Sept. 24, 1793).

83. Prévost, Sept. 25, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 240.

84. For example, Shirley Roessler argues that although the Dames des Halles "recognized the need for change, they despised the Revolution" (*Out of the Shadows*, 133).

85. Soboul, *Sans-Culottes*, 253; Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, 70.

86. AN, F7 3688³, Roubaud, Sept. 28, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 1:233.

87. AP, Sept. 29, 1793, ser. 1, 75:321–23; Caron, *Le Maximum général*, 9; Slavin, *Making of an Insurrection*, 140.

Despite the proconsumer movements that prompted the reform, the National Convention insisted that it did not implement this General Maximum to correct antagonistic economic relationships between merchants and consumers. On the contrary, the Montagnard deputies asserted that the Maximum was simply an extraordinary and transitional measure to restore the symbiotic balance that counterrevolutionaries had intentionally upset. The Committee of Subsistence reported, "In normal times prices are formed naturally by the reciprocal interests of buyers and sellers. This balance is infallible."⁸⁸ Buyers and sellers "naturally" worked like alternating pistons whose seemingly opposite movements propelled the nation forward in cooperative action. When each citizen fulfilled his or her commercial role in the subsistence trade as a civic duty, the nation collectively benefited.⁸⁹ Since the economic duties of buyers and sellers were as resolutely symbiotic as the general will was indivisible, the deputies blamed France's commercial crises on enemies. The Maximum, the Convention argued, would be the emergency balm for wounds inflicted by counterrevolutionaries.

Acknowledging the local economies within the national economy, the deputies tied Maximum prices to departmental averages. Department administrators would fix local prices by calculating each product's 1790 price, subtracting the customs duties and taxes of 1790, dividing that number by three, and then adding the third to the original price from 1790. To take an example from the Dames' sales: fresh butter from Chartres cost 1 livre per pound in 1790, of which 3 sous 6 deniers was the duties and taxes from 1790. Minus the duties and taxes, the butter cost 16 sous 6 deniers. The third to add would then be 5 sous 6 deniers, making the 1793 Maximum on fresh butter from Chartres 1 livre 2 sous per pound.⁹⁰

Workers would uphold their fraternal responsibilities in this economic partnership by adhering to the caps set on their wages. The deputies ordered each commune to fix maximum wages at 150 percent of their local 1790 rates.⁹¹ This gave workers a slight advantage over merchants, since their wages rose by one-half of the 1790 rates, whereas food prices rose by only one-third.⁹²

The Convention also transformed citizens' trade and work into legal obligations. From a commercial standpoint, anyone who sold or bought above

88. Speech by the Committee of Subsistence in the National Convention, Sept. 29, 1793, quoted in Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, 70.

89. Soboul, *Sans-Culottes*, 253; Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, 70.

90. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, DB 387, "Tableau du Maximum des denrées et marchandises, stipulées dans l'article premier de la loi du 29 septembre 1793, l'an II de la République française."

91. "Décret qui fixe le maximum du prix des denrées et marchandises de première nécessité. Du 29 septembre 1793," in Caron, *Le Maximum général*, 33.

92. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 374.

the Maximum would be considered suspect. Since the Maximum included the cheese, fish, butter, eggs, and vegetables that the Dames sold, the legislation explicitly cast their sales as political acts.⁹³ From a labor standpoint, the Convention gave municipalities the power to imprison “the workers, the producers, and different kinds of laborers who refuse, without legitimate causes, to do their work.”⁹⁴ Under the Maximum, individual economic behavior carried fundamental political duties and judicial consequences.

To monitor citizens’ joint political and economic responsibilities, revolutionary officials insisted that trade take place publicly. The Convention ordered that no new markets could be created in Paris so that police could regulate open markets and food would change hands under the eyes of all citizens.⁹⁵ To remedy commercial violations, the police sold confiscated goods on the public market square. For example, police caught Citoyenne Michel (*sic*) Roger, a Dame des Halles, with a basket of 820 eggs that she was selling above the Maximum, along with 10 cheese bricks, 40 cheese wedges, and a small duck. After detaining Citoyenne Roger, the police sold her supplies in les Halles at the legal price and symbolically deposited the proceeds into the Commune’s public treasury.⁹⁶

Since the deputies disregarded all levels of sale except those between buyers and sellers in open markets, the General Maximum fatally ignored transport costs and intermediary agents who subdivided goods.⁹⁷ Goods often passed through many hands in the long route from point of origin to market stalls. For example, fishermen who caught cod, salmon, and herring from the sea could sell their fish to wholesalers who transported the fish to the central markets. Once the wholesalers carted their supplies into Paris, marketplace brokers bought and subdivided their cod. Brokers then sold these smaller shares to the Dames des Halles. Finally, the Dames des Halles sold the fish in retail to consumers seeking modest quantities. Commissaire Dufourny (a Dantonist) recognized that the Convention’s ideal of a single-step transaction between seller and buyer was a mirage. Disgusted by this blurring of producers, transporters, wholesalers, and retailers, Dufourny objected that the *sans-culottes* unfairly believed that “the man who speculates in foodstuffs for profit is a useless

93. The original list of goods included “fresh and salted meat, lard, butter, oil, cattle, salted fish, wine, eau de vie, vinegar, cider, beer, firewood, charcoal, coal, candles, fuel oil, salt, soda, soap potash, sugar, honey, white paper, hides, iron, brass, lead, steel, copper, hemp, flax, wool, cloth, linen, raw materials for manufacturing, boots, shoes, rope and tobacco.” The deputies added nearly all foodstuffs, including eggs and vegetables, to the list in October (Shepard, *Price Control*, 13–14).

94. “Décret qui fixe le maximum du prix des denrées et marchandises de première nécessité. Du 29 septembre 1793.”

95. Decree of Sept. 4, 1793; Tulard, *L’Almanach de Paris*.

96. Archives de la Préfecture de Police current code: VD* 40; old system: D.389, #6800.

97. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 377.

middleman, dangerous and guilty, a genuine monopolist, an enemy of society.”⁹⁸ Rather than stabilizing commerce, the deputies’ gross miscalculations further polarized merchants and consumers. Their oversight superheated factional rivalries in the marketplace.

Discerning Economic Citizenship: The Politics of Food, Factions, and Gender

Without separate limits for wholesale and retail prices, the General Maximum spelled disaster for the Dames’ retail trade. To take a specific example, Dames who bought brie from wholesalers at the Maximum price of 57 livres 13 sous 4 deniers per dozen could only subdivide and resell the brie at the same total price. The Dames could no longer profit and faced losing their livelihoods. This commercial stranglehold sparked physical ones as another month of confrontations began between the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires and the Dames des Halles.

While both sides dug in at the marketplace, the Parisian food trade remained in disarray. On October 9 the Citoyennes Républicaines complained that the municipal government had not yet implemented the price limits. They warned the Commune, “The insolent merchant knows how to take advantage of your slowness in executing this beneficial law.”⁹⁹ The Dames countered that they would not follow the price caps until they had been properly “promulgated” and published by local authorities.¹⁰⁰ Much to the Dames’ chagrin, the Parisian police posted and began to enforce the General Maximum on October 13.¹⁰¹

With no loophole left to grasp, the frustrated Dames took aim at the “Phrygian caps” or red liberty caps that the antimerchant Citoyennes Républicaines had begun to promote. The red cap was a more unmistakably militant symbol than the tricolor. Wearing it visually endorsed the sans-culottes’ politics.¹⁰² The headgear so strongly evoked popular politics that the Section de la Croix-Rouge had changed its name to “Bonnet Rouge” (Red Cap) shortly after the price controls passed.¹⁰³ The same day that the police instituted the Maximum, the Dames des Halles hurled invectives against a woman selling Phrygian caps in the marketplace. Fearful that they would have to wear the red cap, the

98. Quoted on Sept. 1, 1793, in Soboul, *Sans-Culottes*, 60.

99. *Moniteur*, le 20 du 1er mois, l’an 2 (Friday, Oct. 11, 1793), no. 20, 81, reporting on the General Council session of Oct. 9, 1793. See also Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 392.

100. AN, D XLII 11, Prévost, Oct. 12, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:250.

101. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 392.

102. Soboul, *Sans-Culottes*, 223–26; Harris, “Red Cap of Liberty,” 283–85. See also Jones, *Longman Companion*, 404; and Fairchild, “Fashion and Freedom,” 426.

103. Jones, *Longman Companion*, 223.

Dames protested that they “wore the [tricolor] cockade, and that was enough.”¹⁰⁴ Within a week the flawed Maximum compounded with shrinking supplies to send the Dames into what one spy called “the greatest consternation.”¹⁰⁵

The Terror gave the government new latitude for compelling the Dames and other merchants to obey the Maximum. Battered by the unrelenting demands of the Parisian sections and seeking to eschew elections, the National Convention had cited the wars to declare a “revolutionary” (i.e., emergency) government three days before enacting the General Maximum.¹⁰⁶ Within four days of posting the price limits, the Paris Commune declared that merchants who gave up their trade would be suspect.¹⁰⁷ The Convention then followed the Commune’s initiative by decreeing, “The merchants and the wholesalers who, since the law of the Maximum, had ceased or would cease their production and their commerce will be treated like suspect persons.”¹⁰⁸

The new penalties greatly angered the Dames and imbued the food trade with life-and-death consequences. Since wholesalers already sold supplies to the Dames at Maximum levels, the retailers could not legally resell at a profit. Nor could the retailers legally abandon their failing businesses. Police spy Prévost wrote to his superiors that the Dames “say that the Maximum had been made by some evildoers to provoke civil war; others [say] that those whom one calls republicans are the dregs of the people.”¹⁰⁹ The Citoyennes Républicaines, who advocated for the detrimental price controls, counted foremost among these troublesome “republicans.”

The Dames quickly aired their irritation against their rivals who championed the Maximum. During the morning market of October 28, women whom the populace took to be Citoyennes Républicaines attempted to force the red cap on other women, mainly the “female citizens of the Halle.”¹¹⁰ The capless women lashed out with violent insults and threats. Soon an estimated six thousand women spectacularly came to blows and hurled insults among the market stalls. Anti-red cap women, including the Dames, again cried that they would only follow the orders of the state and not arbitrary rules forced on them by others.¹¹¹

104. Prévost, Oct. 13, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:252.

105. Prévost, Oct. 22, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:262; Prévost, Oct. 17, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:256.

106. Crook, *Elections in the French Revolution*, 115; Tackett, *Coming of the Terror*, 305.

107. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 394.

108. “Décret relatif au compte à rendre de l’exécution de la loi du maximum pour les denrées de première nécessité. Du 7 brumaire an II,” in Caron, *Le Maximum général*, 40.

109. AN, W 174, Prévost, Oct. 28, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:267.

110. *Moniteur*, Oct. 30, 1793, or nonodi, no. 39, 285.

111. *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:49.

To dodge the Citoyennes Républicaines' red caps, the Dames armed themselves with proofs of patriotism directly from the government. In October 1789 the Commune had awarded a group of 240 Dames "good citizenship" medals for bringing the king back to Paris from Versailles.¹¹² Now, four years later, the Dames asked the Commune to exchange their 1789 medals for the more recent August 10 medals that had been struck to commemorate the festival.¹¹³ The Commune representatives agreed to bestow updated tokens on the "citizenesses whose patriotic zeal made them fly to Versailles in the journées of 5 and 6 October 1789" and praised them as "mothers of families which made them distinguished."¹¹⁴ The Dames left the municipal assembly with government endorsements of their patriotism.

The conflict, nonetheless, quickly resumed when the Citoyennes Républicaines held their meeting in the marketplace church of Saint-Eustache. Following the Société's normal procedures, the club president donned the red cap to bring the assembly to order. But, given the morning clash in the marketplace, the nonmembers in the church interpreted the president's red cap as a defiant gesture.¹¹⁵ A nonclub woman cried from the gallery, "Down with the red cap, down with the [female] Jacobins, down with the [female] Jacobins, down with the [female] Jacobins & the cockade." The room disintegrated into disorder. The neighborhood justice of the peace entered and shouted to the angry women, "Citizenesses, the red cap is not in question, you will not wear it at all, and you will be free to style your hair (and decorations) any way you deem fit." He asked the president of the Société to doff her red cap, adjourned the Société's meeting, and declared that anyone was free to enter Saint-Eustache.¹¹⁶

Crowds soon flooded the church. They insulted the Citoyennes Républicaines and attacked their regalia. Some Citoyennes Républicaines took a stand in front of their symbols and flags. Seeing that they were outnumbered, one club woman exclaimed, "Massacre us if you want, but at least respect the rallying point of the French." The Dames and other citizens descended on the Citoyennes Républicaines to beat and drag them. The more fortunate

112. BnF, Lc2 218, Condorcet, *La chronique de Paris*, Oct. 10, 1789, no. 47; *Actes de la Commune*, ser. 1, 2:214–15, 223.

113. On the bronze medals struck for the festival of August 10, 1793, see Biver, *Fêtes révolutionnaires à Paris*, 74.

114. BnF, 4-LC2-249, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Annales patriotiques et littéraires de la France et affaires politiques de l'Europe*, le 9 brumaire an II, no. 301, 1404, reporting on the Commune of Paris session of 7 brumaire.

115. Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires de Paris, *Règlement de la Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires de Paris* (Paris, 179?). See also Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 167.

116. Although the club women were politically closer to the Enragés than to the Jacobins, the nonclub women probably called the Citoyennes Républicaines "Jacobines" because they supported the Jacobin Convention's recent subsistence decrees (Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, du 23 au 30 brumaire an II, no. 215).

Citoyennes Républicaines fled to seek sanctuary at the marketplace neighborhood's section committee.¹¹⁷

Aware of the gravitas that legal procedure carried, the Citoyennes Républicaines insisted that the section committee immediately hear their testimony and document their plight. However, a police officer interrupted the committee's procedure to warn the group, "The crowd is immense, they are crying right now: *long live the republic*, down with the revolutionaries [meaning the radical Citoyennes Républicaines]." The cries backed the Dames' sentiment that one could support the Republic without supporting radical policies. The club members fled.¹¹⁸

For their part, the Dames des Halles sought to co-opt the legitimacy of official institutions by filing a complaint at the Commune. The Dames protested that the Citoyennes Républicaines wanted to legally oblige women to wear the red cap just as they had done with the tricolor. Convention representative Léonard Bourdon, a Jacobin who was at the Commune, demanded that the club "not trouble public order" by "wear[ing] markers [caps] by which they seem to want to distinguish themselves." It is crucial to note that Bourdon classified the red cap as a distinctive emblem. Unlike the tricolor or patriotic medals, the red cap could not pass as a national symbol because it was deeply affiliated with the Enragés and sans-culottes. A delegation from the local section committee, the justice of the peace from the church, and the municipal police also arrived to suggest that the government take "some measures to prevent this society from assembling for some time."¹¹⁹

The next day, on October 29, a deputation of capless women sought to convince the Convention to dissolve the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires. The petitioners broadly presented themselves as "several united sections of female citizens," which likely included the Dames des Halles.¹²⁰ First, they urged the Convention not to pass a law requiring the red cap for women, which would "destroy the ways of commerce altogether."¹²¹ Then the petitioning women took aim squarely at the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires. "Citizen legislators," they lamented, "You will not ignore that the unhappiness of France was only introduced by a woman's voice [that of Marie

117. Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, du 23 au 30 brumaire an II, no. 215.

118. Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, du 23 au 30 brumaire an II, no. 215.

119. As described by the *Moniteur*, Oct. 30, 1793, no. 39, 285, reporting on the council of 7 brumaire an II (Oct. 28). See also Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 357.

120. *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:20. The petition was signed by twelve women. Various records label them "femmes" or "citoyennes." Given the market brawl, I agree with Dominique Godineau, Darline Gay Levy, and Harriet Applewhite that these women were likely Dames des Halles. See Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 139–41; and Levy and Applewhite, "Women and Militant Citizenship," 95.

121. *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:20. See also Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 357.

Antoinette]; we therefore demand the abolition of *their club*.”¹²² It should be noted that although the petitioners attacked the Citoyennes Républicaines (“their club”), they did not condemn all women’s clubs at first. In fact, the Dames themselves had previously addressed the state on behalf of some mixed-sex clubs such as the Société Fraternelle.¹²³

After reading the formal petition, the women recounted the previous day’s events at Saint-Eustache. Their narrative seemed to associate the Jacobins, a Montagnard stronghold, with the chaos of October 28. They blamed women who “called themselves Jacobines and wore the red bonnet” for trying to force the headgear on others and instigating the fight. Montagnard deputy Maribon-Montant rose to tell his colleagues that the Jacobin club never discussed a red cap requirement because they had far more serious things to debate in their meetings. He asserted, “It’s therefore wrong to call these women Jacobines.”¹²⁴

To paper over the Maximum’s shortcomings and factional rivalries at the root of the marketplace fights, the Convention reframed the disturbances as a question of gender and women in politics. Montagnard deputy Philippe-François-Nazaire Fabre d’Eglantine argued that the leaders of shady “coalitions under the name of clubs . . . were not at all women occupied with the care of their households, [or] mothers inseparable from their children. . . . Instead they are a kind of knights-errant . . . who spread out everywhere and cause trouble in the city.” He maintained that “our enemies” strove to arm women because plotters could seize the weapons of women who did not know how to use them. After discussion, the Convention decreed that both men and women could wear whatever they wanted without intimidation from others.¹²⁵

It was not until after Fabre d’Eglantine had lambasted female club members and raised the possibility of investigating all “revolutionary clubs” that one of the women petitioners rose again to ask “for the abolition of all special women’s clubs.”¹²⁶ Her impromptu request has become a turning point in the

122. *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:20; my emphasis. The *Archives parlementaires*’ singular wording of *club* reflects the official procès-verbal recorded in AN, C 280, dossier no. 761. However, some newspapers misprinted the quote so it appeared that the women had asked the Convention to close all female political clubs. The confusion may have arisen from the plural description of the Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires and the single entity in which they were members. Or, the newspapers may have conflated the disconnect between the women’s targeted appeal regarding one female club and the Convention’s debate of all female clubs in response.

123. BnF, Lb40 1245, *Discours adressé au roi par les Dames de la Halle, membres de la Société fraternelle, dont, le 14 février 1791, elles sont venues donner lecture au Conseil-Général de la Commune, qui en a ordonné l’impression à la distribution* (Paris, 1791). Until 1793 other mixed-sex clubs in Paris included the Fraternal Society of Nomophiles and the Fraternal Society of Minimes.

124. *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:21.

125. *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:21, 20, 33.

126. *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:20–21.

narrative of women's citizenship. Taken out of the political and economic context, this demand to close women's clubs appears to align with the Rousseauian undertones of Fabre d'Eglantine's attacks. However, we must recall that the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires was the *only* women's club in the capital and that the petitioner deflected attention from women in mixed-sex clubs. In this light, the request appears to be a targeted way to bolster the capless women's original call to strike down "their club," that is, the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires. The deputies vowed to revisit the issue after the Convention's Committee of General Security (a Montagnard policing stronghold) finished investigating the fights that had rocked the markets and church.¹²⁷

That same day the department's Committee of Revolutionary Surveillance, which was already investigating the turmoil, arrived at conclusions that strayed far from its evidence. The department's committee acknowledged, but then brushed aside, the Dames' visit to the Commune during which they had explained their motives for attacking the Citoyennes Républicaines. The committee embellished the Dames' testimony and asserted that the Dames had attacked the club because the Citoyennes Républicaines "wanted to ask the Convention to decree that women be required to wear a red cap, and pants with pistols on each side."¹²⁸ Despite the Dames' pointed testimony about the fights, the department's committee insisted that larger, more nefarious forces manipulated the female combatants. Officials plastered a thousand posters around Paris to "enlighten the public on the motive of the brawl," which they described as "a maneuver of the partisans of Brissot and of his [Girondin] accomplices,"¹²⁹ whose trial had just begun.¹³⁰ Thus the department's committee publicly blamed the Girondins for the brawls before the national Committee of General Security completed its inquiry and the Convention debated the results.

The day after the Convention's committee began its investigation and the department's committee posted its conclusions, local officials began expressing anxiety over the confrontations in similar gendered and conspiratorial language. Marketplace observer Prévost feared that women were more easily susceptible to counterrevolutionaries' schemes. Like the department's committee,

127. Jones, *Longman Companion*, 93.

128. AN, BB³ 81^A, fol. 394, le 8 brumaire an II, séance du matin, "Extrait du registre des procès-verbaux et délibérations du Comité de surveillance du Département de Paris, délibération du Comité de salut public du Département de Paris." The committee's added mention of weapons referenced the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires' ill-received campaign to arm women to defend the fatherland the previous May. On the club's initial arms goal, see Godineau, *Women of Paris*, 122–23.

129. AN, BB³ 81^A, fol. 394, le 8 brumaire an II, séance du matin, "Extrait du registre des procès-verbaux et délibérations du Comité de surveillance du Département de Paris."

130. Tackett, *Coming of the Terror*, 308–9.

he concluded that troublemakers had spurred the violence among impressionable women at the Saint-Eustache meeting. "It was humiliating," he added, "for the masculine sex to see women wear the cockade and sow horror everywhere."¹³¹ The sectional assembly of the marketplace neighborhood voiced its concern that counterrevolutionaries manipulated some women's patriotism at the very moment of the Girondins' trial. It requested that the Convention forbid anyone from interfering in another's dress and that "popular societies of women be strictly forbidden, at least during the revolution [i.e., the temporary emergency period of the Terror]."¹³²

When the Convention's Committee of General Security gave its report on October 30, it offered conclusions not only on the cause of the brawl and women's clubs but also on the issue of women in politics. The committee explained that, to frame its investigation, it had asked itself, "Can women exercise political rights and take an active part in the affairs of the government?" Committee member and Montagnard deputy Jean-Pierre-André Amar proposed that women could attend club sessions as observers to keep abreast of politics necessary to educate their children. But he asserted that women must not participate in clubs lest political tempers corrupt their morals. Amar argued that excessive club attendance required women to "abandon" higher female duties and virtues like familial care and encouraging husbands' morals. He contended that women had "greater concerns to which nature calls them" than "these useful and laborious duties" of political institutions. According to Amar, women's lack of education and their natural weakness allowed nefarious nobles and plotting priests to manipulate them. The aristocracy, he asserted, had thus supported women's clubs "to excite troubles."¹³³ Women in formal politics, Amar insisted, could become the vulnerable Achilles' heel of the Republic.

Amar's focus on club membership as the popular gateway to politics inadvertently highlighted another factional dispute at play in the fall of 1793: Did political power come from above or below? The Montagnard deputies cast popular organizations in supporting roles to the Convention and happily received clubs like the Société Populaire de la Rochelle, which praised them as "[the people's] representatives, the protectors of its rights, its fathers [who] have shared the sentiment of its indignation."¹³⁴ In contrast, the Enragés' vision of direct democracy championed neighborhood and popular societies as the sovereign organs to which national deputies were accountable. Given this cleavage, it is

131. AN, F7 3688³, Prévost, Oct. 29, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:270.

132. Paraphrased in the *Journal des débats et des décrets* and reprinted in *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:50.

133. *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:49–51.

134. *AP*, Address by the Société de la Rochelle, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:12–13.

not surprising that Montagnard deputy Amar claimed that the capless women lashed out against the club women because the capless women sought to obey “the laws made by the legislators and the acts of the people’s magistrates. . . . They would not accede to the will and caprices of certain idle and suspect women.”¹³⁵ Thus Amar harnessed gendered arguments to covertly advance the Montagnard hierarchy between legislators (whose “laws” are to be obeyed) and popular clubs (in this case “suspect women” whose “caprices” are not to be obeyed).¹³⁶

A few deputies challenged Amar’s conclusions, but the most vocal members of the Convention countered their objections through the proclaimed state of emergency. Montagnard deputy Joseph Louis Charlier protested that women had the right to assemble and that the Convention could not outlaw all women’s clubs to silence a disorderly few. In response, Montagnard deputy Claude Basire insisted that the debate was not over “principles” but was “uniquely a question of knowing if women’s societies are dangerous.” With Basire’s lead, the deputies next cited “public safety” and recent “dangers” to extend the state of emergency. Finally, the Convention passed the sweeping wording that “these associations [women’s clubs] be forbidden, at least during the revolution [i.e., emergency government].” The deputies thus couched their decision as a temporary maneuver meant to serve public order rather than permanently decide women’s intrinsic political rights. Nonetheless, the Convention disregarded the women petitioners’ original request to disband only the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires. The deputies closed all female political clubs across France instead.¹³⁷

During these debates the deputies chose a gendered lens to explain disturbances rooted in competing economic interests. The marketplace became a

135. *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:49.

136. The cockade resurfaced as a point of contention later in the Revolution. The ambiguity between the cockade as a factional or a national symbol continued to play a role in the confusion. In late November and early December 1794 some women refused to wear the cockade because the Montagnards had passed the law and they had been defeated. During the subsistence crises and popular uprisings of prairial and germinal an III, Parisian women once again ripped cockades off one another, cried that “they [*elles*] would not wear the cockades anymore until they had enough bread,” and insisted that “one must not be Republican when one does not have bread.” As late as the spring of 1795 the cockade was a contested symbol. See Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne*, Nov. 30, 1794, 1:288; Dec. 3, 1794, 1:293. See also a report of March 21, 1795, that “troublemakers” were telling women that “if you do not want to be taken for Jacobines and be insulted, remove your cockades.” Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne*, Mar. 21, 1795, 1:591; AN, AF/IV/1472, Dossier frimaire an II, 8 germinal an III; Archives de Paris, D.1U³ 35, Laws sent by the Ministre de la Justice to the Tribunal du Commerce, “Enregistrement des lois déposées au greffe,” 16 prairial an III; AdP, D.4Z 5, Paris au jour le jour de la police municipale (suite), Dossier: Germinal à Prairial an III, 26 germinal, 370, 372.

137. *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:51. Timothy Tackett also acknowledges that the market women asked only for the abolition of the one club. He concludes that the National Convention took advantage of the club’s Enragés ties to abolish all women’s societies through “misogynistic rhetoric” (*Coming of the Terror*, 314).

wrestling ring for female violence instead of a site of commerce. In its ultimate report to the Convention, the Committee of General Security attributed the conflict to “a plot by the enemies of public interest.” It did not acknowledge the *Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires*’ strident proconsumer campaigns, nor did the deputies refer to the Dames as merchants or commercial actors.¹³⁸ For a legislative body that was so accustomed to receiving reports on market provisions, there are curiously few specifics on the price disputes that caused twelve thousand fists to fly on October 28. They ignored how marketplace violence reflected commercial problems between struggling retailers and consumer champions under the Maximum.

Despite their gendered arguments, the Committee of General Security, the Committee of Public Safety, and the Montagnards used the red-cap incident to foster support for their leadership and scapegoat factional rivals for disturbances linked to the Maximum’s shortcomings.¹³⁹ The Revolutionary Tribunal was finally trying Brissot and other Girondin leaders on charges of counterrevolutionary plotting. Their fates had been all but sealed since the June purge shortly after the original bread Maximum. After the September General Maximum, pro-Montagnard popular societies continued to back the Convention’s investigation into the Girondins’ “treasons, hoardings, and speculations.”¹⁴⁰ In his final analysis of the clash between the Dames and the women’s club, Deputy Amar blamed the Montagnard rivals once more: “At this moment when we judge Brissot and his accomplices, someone is trying to incite unrest in Paris.”¹⁴¹ Brissot and twenty-three fellow Girondins mounted the scaffold the day after Amar’s report. With less need for embodied popular legitimacy or physical force against parliamentary rivals, the Montagnard deputies also pivoted against Parisian militants. The Montagnard majority resented the increasing pressure that the radical sections had placed on the Convention on issues including the Maximum. Thus, when the deputies closed women’s clubs, they simultaneously weakened militant Parisian *sans-culottes* by decreeing that all assemblies would be public.¹⁴²

Excavated from within this situational setting, Amar’s famous discourse on gender emerges as a reactive strategy to advance the Montagnards’ factional interests. Amar’s speech was not a foundational inquiry into women’s political capacities. The Convention’s goal was not to discern fundamental distinctions

138. *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:49.

139. Levy and Applewhite sense this convergence as well (“Women and Militant Citizenship,” 95).

140. Address by the *Société Populaire de Saint-Quentin*, *AP*, le 8 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:11.

141. *AP*, le 9 brumaire an II, ser. 1, 78:49.

142. Although women were unable to form women-only clubs, they could sit in the galleries of local and national political assemblies.

between male and female citizenship. Rather, the committee formulated its analytic framework in the context of factional rivalries, contentious economic legislation, and the Terror. Amar posed the crucial question, “Can women exercise political rights and take an active part in the affairs of the government?,” to legitimize abolishing the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires, allies of the Enragés, in a seemingly apolitical fashion. The Montagnard deputies seized gendered discourses to cover more salient factional goals, to strike out against uncompromising consumer demands in the marketplace, and to blame the General Maximum’s failures on the Girondins. Thus the Montagnards’ gendered discourses were more tactical than ideological. As the tide turned for women’s political clubs, gendered discourses danced on the surface. But conflicting views of consumers’ and merchants’ economic duties drove the deadly undertow deep below.

Outside the assembly halls the market women themselves had skillfully hurled Rousseauian gender tropes to disarm their political rivals. In the marketplace they had lumped together prostitutes and women who wore the tricolor.¹⁴³ And the police had reported that the Dames des Halles attacked tricolor wearers by arguing that “the cockade should be worn by men; that [the women] should only occupy themselves with their household, and not with current affairs.”¹⁴⁴ Although the Dames had likely never read Rousseau’s *Emile* or *Lettre à d’Alembert*, they knew enough about others’ objections to women in politics to strategically appropriate them.¹⁴⁵ Of course, the Dames themselves ignored the latter two-thirds of their own “imperative” by trading in the public market and by frequently intervening in politics. In fact, the Dames des Halles had led over six thousand men and women to Versailles in the largest political demonstration of 1789. The Dames had also policed the travels of the royal family in 1791, and in 1792 they had cut deals to change national monetary policy. Now, in 1793, the Dames intervened yet again by pressuring the Convention to both outlaw the Citoyennes Républicaines and revise the General Maximum to include profits for retailers. However, the Dames understood how to maneuver within normative gender discourses to challenge their adversaries’ proconsumer agenda. Thus the Dames applauded when the Convention outlawed female clubs because the decree undercut their economic opponents, not because the decree excluded women from institutional citizenship.

143. Prévost, Sept. 18, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 4:233.

144. Prévost, Sept. 25, 1793, in Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, 6:241.

145. On the relationship among the monarchy’s patriarchal form, marital roles, and family law, see Hardwick, *Family Business*, 6–10, 224–25.

Conclusion

With the Girondins' blood on the scaffold and the Enragés checked by the ban on women's clubs, the Montagnard deputies turned to reforming the crumbling General Maximum on prices. The short two days it took the deputies to initiate Maximum reform suggests that, despite their gendered explanations, they understood the economic foundation for the Saint-Eustache violence. They moved to consider separate price limits for wholesale and retail trade. Because wholesalers already sold their supplies at the Maximum prices, the capital's retailers hovered on the verge of collapse.¹⁴⁶ In an attempt to survive, the Dames had traded illegally, complained to police, or deserted the markets as their businesses folded. The Dames' actions were paralyzing the food markets.

On November 1, 1793, Deputy Bertrand Barère, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, presented a report to the National Convention in which he "denounced" the General Maximum's lack of separate wholesaler and retailer prices.¹⁴⁷ The Montagnard deputy argued that cultivators and wholesalers benefited at retailers' expense.¹⁴⁸ Barère urged the deputies to more fully conceptualize the Maximum as a society-wide project. He argued that "the law of the Maximum should cover each useful chain of producers, of technicians, of manufacturers, of producers, of wholesalers, of merchants, and of retailers."¹⁴⁹ In response, the Convention proposed a reform allowing the wholesaler to add 5 percent to the price of his original purchasing and transport costs. Then retailers would double the percentage to 10 and sell.¹⁵⁰ As retailers, the Dames des Halles would be able to legally profit again.

According to this tiered Maximum, workers, retailers, and wholesalers provided distinct services to society and merited reimbursement for their labor. To defend a distinct Maximum for intermediary commercial agents, Barère highlighted the utility and patriotism of retail merchants like the Dames. He depicted them as "this class of good republicans who buy and live from day to day."¹⁵¹ The deputies agreed and maintained the corresponding cap on wages as the counterbalance to price limits in a cooperative economic system.¹⁵² In creating price points for each type of work and commerce, the deputies

146. Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, du 7 au 14 brumaire an II, no. 213, 158–59.

147. For Barère's trajectory in politics, see Hanson, *Historical Dictionary*, 26.

148. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 433.

149. Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, du 7 au 14 brumaire an II, no. 213, 164.

150. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 433.

151. Mathiez, *La vie chère*, 433.

152. The reformed Maximum was passed on February 24, 1794, but did not take effect in Paris until the police posted the new prices on March 25, 1794. The month-long delay caused confusion, which inflamed marketplace tensions (Caron, *Le Maximum général*, 3).

acknowledged the public utility of diverse occupations and further codified economic roles as political duties to the nation.¹⁵³

The fall 1793 battles between the Dames des Halles and the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires were not merely clashes between rival parties, nor were they reductive showdowns between opposing groups of merchants and consumers. Instead, the conflicts expressed fundamental disagreements over how to define citizenship via economic responsibilities and how to enact these ideals via subsistence regulation. The 1793 ban on female institutional citizenship was not the simple fulfillment of Rousseauian gender norms. Rather, the primary obstacle for women in French democracy emerged from factional contests over modern state economic regulation. Nonetheless, both the Dames and the deputies wittingly expressed political rivalries and socioeconomic concerns through gendered accusations. The primary stakes in the fall 1793 disputes among women were economic, whereas the primary discourses defending these stakes were gendered.

Dissecting how the Maximum worked in daily trade while probing the ban on women's clubs throws light on the relationship among economics, gender, and politics. Economic roles and gender roles both delineate duties for individuals within the body politic, but economics and gender delineate different kinds of responsibilities between citizens and the nation. The club women, the Dames des Halles, and the deputies exploited this disjuncture to articulate the fall 1793 problems in different veins. Examining the mechanics of the Maximum also helps us break out of the overly simplistic buyers versus sellers analytic model. In reality, commercial relations were much more layered and intersected with gendered imaginings. Thus probing gendered and economic citizenship in dialogue allows us to complicate essentializing dichotomies of consumer versus merchant or female versus male citizenship.

In searing irony, the Dames des Halles, the vanguard of revolutionary activism, supported the closure of one women's club in 1793 but inadvertently abetted the termination of all women's clubs across France.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the Dames did not view the monumental ban on female assemblies as detrimental to their citizenship. The 1793 clashes between the Dames and the club women reveal two conflicting interpretations of citizenship while the concept was still

153. In reality, the balance between buyers and sellers remained skewed in the capital. Since municipal officials administered the Maximum and the Parisian government was a sans-culotte stronghold, Parisian officials tended to enforce price limits on consumer goods more than limits on wages until the spring of 1794 (Palmer, "Popular Democracy," 460; Mathiez, "Le maximum des salaires," 149–51; Bourstin, "Problèmes du travail," 669–70).

154. For the growing ambivalence toward women's clubs in the provinces, where citizens felt the effects of the club ban but did not directly experience the confrontation between the Dames and the Citoyennes Républicaines, see Desan, "Constitutional Amazons," 30–35.

being forged. The *Citoyennes Républicaines* tied citizenship to innate rights and embraced new democratic institutions such as voting, serving in the militia, and acting in political clubs. In contrast, the market women portrayed citizenship as contingent and earned through public utility. The Dames demanded that the state address their grievances, like the *Maximum's* lack of retail prices, in exchange for the services they provided society. They legitimized their civic membership through their useful work.

Lest we trace the 1793 ban to latent, long-held attitudes toward women's (in)capacities, we should remember that the revolutionaries' attitudes toward the relationship among gender, violence, and citizenship were inconsistent at best. Contrary to the deputies' 1793 assertion that women's political activism caused troublesome violence, the revolutionaries had largely condoned the Dames' violent patriotic interventions since 1789. Two and a half years earlier the Dames had spanked dozens of counterrevolutionary nuns who had misled their children. Only the municipality and a few citizens scolded the Dames for the disorder they caused. Most Parisians celebrated the market women's violence as a moral and spiritual defense.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, three months before the October 1793 ban the Montagnard deputies had upheld the Dames as models of martial courage atop cannons in the August 10 festival. Then, mere hours before the October showdown at Saint-Eustache, Commune officials honored the Dames' maternal qualities and physical courage in tandem while updating their good citizenesses medals. In contrast to these moments extolling female violence, the deputies framed the brawls between the *Citoyennes Républicaines* and the Dames des Halles as the result of immutable female deficiencies and gendered disorder. This jarring discrepancy is illuminating. It points to how gender could be a dynamic, fluid, and contingent component of citizenship instead of its immobile Rousseauian cornerstone.

Consequently, what we often depict as the disastrous ideological turn for gender and female citizenship over the *longue durée* stemmed in large part from commercial contests in the Parisian markets. In a new national moral economy predicated on citizens' symbiotic relationships, the duties of laborers and merchants became a point of economic and political contention.¹⁵⁶ Crisis in the subsistence trade and the *Maximum's* failures shaped the deputies' October 1793 ban on women's clubs. Historical analyses that, at the sweep of the deputies'

155. See, e.g., BnF, Lb³⁹ 5505, *Liste des culs aristocrates et anti-constitutionnels*; BnF, Ld⁴ 7148, *Liste de toutes les sœurs & dévotes qui ont été fouettées par les dames de marchés des différents quartiers de Paris* (Paris, 1791).

156. For the moral economy in prerevolutionary France see Bouton, "Les mouvements de subsistance"; and Bouton, *Flour War*. For an analysis of how the moral economy could apply to revolutionary reform, see Margairaz and Minard, "Marché des subsistances et économie morale."

gavel, divide individuals into rigid, gendered categories undercut the revolutionaries' complex sociopolitical imaginings. The deputies' infamous ban on women's clubs was far from a comprehensive gendered manifesto on citizenship. Rather, it hinged on diverging ideas of market controls, state regulatory duties, and the economic dimensions of citizenship itself.

KATIE L. JARVIS is assistant professor of history at the University of Notre Dame.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Suzanne Desan, Paul Hanson, Carol Harrison, Laura Mason, Timothy Tackett, and the anonymous reviewers of *French Historical Studies* for their comments on earlier versions of this article. Clare Crowston and the Premodern Reading Group at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign offered crucial feedback in its early stages. Funding for research and writing was provided by a Fulbright fellowship and the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study.

References

- Aulard, Françoise-Alphonse, ed. 1898. *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne et sous le Directoire*. 5 vols. Paris.
- Biver, Maie-Louise. 1979. *Fêtes révolutionnaires à Paris*. Paris.
- Bossenga, Gail. 2011. "Financial Origins of the French Revolution." In *From Deficit to Deluge: The Origins of the French Revolution*, edited by Thomas Kaiser and Dale Van Kley, 37–66. Stanford, CA.
- Bourstin, Haim. 1997. "Problèmes du travail à Paris sous la Révolution." *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 44, no. 4: 650–82.
- Bouton, Cynthia A. 1993. *The Flour War: Gender, Class, and Community in Late Ancien Régime France*. University Park, PA.
- Bouton, Cynthia A. 2000. "Les mouvements de subsistance et le problème de l'économie morale sous l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution française." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 319: 71–100.
- Braesch, F. 1911. *La Commune du dix août 1792*. Paris.
- Caron, Pierre, ed. 1910–78. *Paris pendant la Terreur: Rapports des agents secrets du ministre de l'intérieur*. 7 vols. Paris.
- Caron, Pierre, ed. 1930. *Le Maximum général: Instruction, recueil de textes et notes*. Paris.
- Cerati, Marie. 1966. *Le Club des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*. Paris.
- Cheney, Paul. 2010. *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy*. Cambridge, MA.
- Cobb, Richard. 1987. *The People's Armies*, translated by Marianne Elliott. New Haven, CT.
- Crook, Malcolm. 1996. *Elections in the French Revolution: An Apprenticeship in Democracy, 1789–1799*. Cambridge.
- Crowston, Clare. 2013. *Credit, Fashion, Sex: Economies of Regard in Old Regime France*. Durham, NC.
- Delalande, Nicolas. 2011. *Les batailles de l'impôt: Consentement et résistances de 1789 à nos jours*. Paris.
- Desan, Suzanne. 1992. "'Constitutional Amazons': Jacobin Women's Clubs in the French Revolution." In *Re-creating Authority in Revolutionary France*, edited by Bryant T. Ragan Jr. and Elizabeth A. Williams, 11–35. New Brunswick, NJ.

- Fairchild, Cissie. 2000. "Fashion and Freedom in the French Revolution." *Continuity and Change* 15, no. 3: 419–33.
- Fraisse, Geneviève. 1989. *Muse de la raison: La démocratie exclusive et la différence des sexes*. Aix-en-Provence.
- Godineau, Dominique. 1998. *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution*, translated by Katherine Streip. Berkeley, CA.
- Guillon, Claude. 1993. *Deux Enragés de la Révolution: Leclerc de Lyon et Pauline Léon*. Quimperlé.
- Guillon, Claude. 2006. "Pauline Léon, révolutionnaire." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 344: 147–59.
- Hanson, Paul. 2003. *The Jacobin Republic under Fire: The Federalist Revolt in the French Revolution*. University Park, PA.
- Hanson, Paul. 2004. *Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution*. Lanham, MD.
- Hardwick, Julie. 2009. *Family Business: Litigation and the Political Economies of Daily Life in Early Modern France*. Oxford.
- Harris, Jennifer. 1981. "The Red Cap of Liberty: A Study of Dress Worn by French Revolutionary Partisans, 1789–1794." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 14, no. 3: 282–312.
- Heuer, Jennifer. 2002. "Hats On for the Nation! Women, Servants, Soldiers, and the 'Sign of the French.'" *French History* 16, no. 1: 28–52.
- Higonnet, Patrice. 1985. "The Social and Cultural Antecedents of Revolutionary Discontinuity: Montagnards and Girondins." *English Historical Review*, no. 396: 513–44.
- Higonnet, Patrice. 1998. *Goodness beyond Virtue: Jacobins during the French Revolution*. Cambridge, MA.
- Hufton, Olwen. 1992. *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*. Toronto.
- Hunt, Lynn. 1992. *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*. Berkeley, CA.
- Hunt, Lynn. 2009. "The French Revolution in Global Context." In *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, edited by David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 20–36. New York.
- Hunt, Lynn. 2013. "The Global Financial Origins of 1789." In *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, edited by Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, 32–43. Ithaca, NY.
- Jarvis, Katie. 2018. "Exacting Change: Money, Market Women, and the Crumbling Corporate World in the French Revolution." *Journal of Social History* 51, no. 4: 837–68.
- Jones, Colin. 1990. *Longman Companion to the French Revolution*. New York.
- Kaplan, Steven. 1984. *Provisioning Paris: Merchants and Millers in the Grain and Flour Trade during the Eighteenth Century*. Ithaca, NY.
- Kwass, Michael. 2000. *Privilege and the Politics of Taxation in Eighteenth-Century France: Liberté, Egalité, Fiscalité*. Cambridge, MA.
- Kwass, Michael. 2013. "The Global Underground: Smuggling, Rebellion, and the Origins of the French Revolution." In *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, edited by Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, 15–31. Ithaca, NY.
- Kwass, Michael. 2014. *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground*. Cambridge, MA.
- Lacroix, Sigismond, ed. 1974. *Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution*. 7 vols. New York.
- Landes, Joan. 1988. *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*. Ithaca, NY.
- Levy, Darline Gay, and Harriet B. Applewhite. 1992. "Women and Militant Citizenship in Revolutionary Paris." In *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*, edited by Sara Melzer and Leslie Rabine, 79–101. New York.

- Livesey, James. 2001. *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*. Cambridge, MA.
- Loup de Vireau-Beavoir, Jean, and Giuseppe de Lama. 1903. *La Révolution française racontée par un diplomate étranger*, edited by Emmanuel Henri Vicomte de Grouchy and Antoine Guillois. Paris.
- Lytle, Scott. 1955. "The Second Sex (September, 1793)." *Journal of Modern History* 27, no. 1: 14–26.
- Margairaz, Dominique, and Philippe Minard. 2008. "Marché des subsistances et économie morale: Ce que 'taxer' veut dire." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 352: 53–99.
- Mathiez, Albert. 1927. "Le Maximum des salaires et le 9 thermidor." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 20: 149–51.
- Mathiez, Albert. 1927. *La vie chère et le mouvement social sous la Terreur*. Paris.
- McPhee, Peter. 2002. *The French Revolution, 1789–1799*. Oxford.
- Miller, Judith. 1998. *Mastering the Market: The State and the Grain Trade in Northern France, 1700–1860*. Cambridge.
- Ozouf, Mona. 1988. *Festivals and the French Revolution*, translated by Alan Sheridan. Cambridge, MA.
- Palmer, R. R. 1960. "Popular Democracy in the French Revolution: Review Article." *French Historical Studies* 1, no. 4: 445–69.
- Palmer, R. R. 2005. *The Twelve Who Ruled*. Princeton, NJ.
- Pateman, Carole. 1988. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford, CA.
- Pincus, Steven. 2012. "Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 1: 3–34.
- Plon Frères, ed. 1858–63. *Réimpression de l'ancien Moniteur*. 32 vols. Paris.
- Robert, Adolphe, Edgar Bourlouton, and Gaston Cougny, eds. 1889–91. *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français, comprenant tous les membres des Assemblées françaises et tous les Ministres français*. 5 vols. Paris.
- Roessler, Shirley. 1996. *Out of the Shadows: Women and Politics in the Age of the French Revolution, 1789–1795*. New York.
- Roux, Jacques. 1969. "Le manifeste des Enragés." In *Scripta et acta*, edited by Walter Markoc, 140–50. Berlin.
- Rudé, George. 1954. "Wages and Popular Movements in Paris during the French Revolution." *Economic History Review* 6, no. 3: 246–67.
- Rudé, George. 1988. *The French Revolution*. London.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. 1996. *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*. Cambridge, MA.
- Sewell, William, Jr. 1987. "The Sans-Culotte Rhetoric of Subsistence." In *The Terror*. Vol. 4 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, edited by Keith Michael Baker, 249–69. Oxford.
- Shepard, William. 1953. *Price Control and the Reign of Terror: France, 1793–1795*. Berkeley, CA.
- Slavin, Morris. 1986. *The Making of an Insurrection: Parisian Sections and the Gironde*. Cambridge, MA.
- Soboul, Albert. 1961. "Un épisode des luttes populaires en septembre 1793: La guerre des cocardes." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 163: 52–55.
- Soboul, Albert. 1980. *The Sans-Culottes: The Popular Movement and Revolutionary Government, 1793–1794*, translated by Remy Inglis Hall. Princeton, NJ.

- Sonenscher, Michael. 2007. *Before the Deluge: Public Debt, Inequality, and the Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution*. Princeton, NJ.
- Spang, Rebecca. 2015. *Stuff and Money in the Time of the French Revolution*. Cambridge, MA.
- Tackett, Timothy. 2015. *The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution*. Cambridge, MA.
- Tuetey, Alexandre, ed. 1910. *Répertoire général des sources manuscrites de l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution française*. Vol. 9. Paris.
- Tulard, Jean, ed. 1990. *L'Almanach de Paris: De 1789 à nos jours*. Vol. 2. Paris.
- Walton, Charles. 2011. "Les Graines de la Discorde: Print, Public Spirit, and Free Market Politics in the French Revolution." In *Into Print: Limits and Legacies of the Enlightenment; Essays in Honor of Robert Darnton*, edited by Charles Walton, 158–74. University Park, PA.
- Walton, Charles. 2013. "The Fall from Eden: The Free-Trade Origins of the French Revolution." In *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, edited by Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, 44–56. Ithaca, NY.