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# TRADING SPACES:

# AN ANALYSIS OF GENDERED SPACES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1789 AND THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION OF 1910

By

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY**

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# INTRODUCTION

In a 1789 letter, a woman by the name of Madame Rigal writes to implore her fellow female artisans to raise funds to combat the national debt that ravages the French government. What Mme Rigal did not realize at the time was that her letter would touch on the complexities of female participation in revolution. Hoping to ignite a romanticized sense of patriotic duty, Mme Rigal protests, "our sex is excluded from arduous labors, but it's allowed to engage in two very worthwhile occupations – the exercise of delicate virtues, and heroic sacrifices."[1] While these "heroic sacrifices" no doubt were in reference to the topic of fundraising at the heart of Rigal's letter, its meaning can be reinterpreted to represent the very issues investigated in the following chapters: the experiences and legacies of women during the French Revolution of 1789 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910. By the end of both Revolutions, these "worthwhile occupations" represented the two paths available to women. Women could either abide by the parameters of the private sphere in order to maintain their "delicate virtue," or commit "noble sacrifices" by venturing into the public sphere.

In this thesis I will investigate the affects of the French Revolution of 1789 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910 on gender roles in their respective societies. First, I will analyze the parameters of gender relations before each Revolution in order to provide the necessary context needed to understand how each Revolution altered gender codes. Next, I will detail the instances of female political participation through the various stages of both Revolutions before, finally, discussing the reasons and methods adopted by revolutionary leaders during the late and postrevolutionary periods in order to alienate women. Through this process, the resulting

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[1] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, (Urbana: University of Chicago, 1979), 31.

information will provide insight into the challenges endured by women during otherwise progressive periods of global history.

It is important to analyze the prerevolutionary societies of France and Mexico separately, given their individualities: while French society of the Old Regime was heavily influenced by the system of absolutism, Mexican society before the Revolution drew on influences from its colonial history as well as its indigenous traditions, such as those belonging to the ancient Mexica civilization. The structures of absolutism, which placed the monarch above all subjects, allowed women the opportunity to exert influence within a social structure that predated the construction of the public and private spheres. In this system, women openly contributed within spaces, which modern readers would consider part of the public sphere, as *salonnieres*, journalists, and market women. These pre-existing institutions then allowed women to use their voices on the political stage during the Revolution, specifically before the rise of the National Convention. After the formation of the Republic by the National Convention, women's participation, no longer limited to those protected by corporations, spread across classes and ideologies.

In contrast, the distinctive dimensions and moral implications of the public and private spheres, already heavily influenced Mexican society before the Revolution. According to persistent gender codes, Mexican women were designated to domestic spaces, which denoted morality and chasteness, away from public spaces, which carried connotations of immorality. By the early nineteenth century, these restrictions had somewhat eased as women pursued higher education and professional careers. With the eruption of the Revolution, women built on these preexisting spaces in order to provide support to the revolutionary movement.

The main concern in this thesis is the notion of public and private spheres. It is through selective enforcement of these spaces that the same women who participated in the French Revolution of 1789 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910 are excluded from equal citizenship. Women of both postrevolutionary periods were pushed further into their domestic roles. In France, revolutionary leaders introduced the concept of gendered spaces in order to actualize equality among their male citizens. These conceptions of public and private spheres stemmed from Enlightenment figures like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who viewed women's sexual difference as the only path to a civilized, republican nation. While the implementation of public and private spheres brought order to the new Republic, the process left French women with far less power and influence than they enjoyed during the Old Regime.

While all French citizens navigated the new social order, women played a vital role in the first years of the French Revolution with regards to political discourse. The Revolution began in the summer of 1789 after the Estates General, a representative body of the three Estates – nobility, clergy, and the Third Estate – claimed authority as the National Assembly, and ruled until 1791. The National Assembly and the National Convention, which governed the nation from 1792 until 1795, made sweeping changes to the very foundations of French society, from the abolishment of nobility to the creation of the Republic. Without the status-based hierarchy of the Old Regime, women's place in society became open to interpretation by the leaders of the Revolution. Women's societal roles were made clear by the Napoleonic period, when the Civil Code designated women and their political identities as subordinate to those of their fathers and husbands.

The Mexican Revolution, comprised of distinct three phases, benefited immensely from the support of women, who made contributions as political advisors, *soldaderas* (camp

followers), and female soldiers. The first stage of the Revolution began as an elitist response to the policies of Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico from 1876-1911. Díaz was replaced by Francisco Madero, but his tenure as President was short-lived. The second phase ousted Madero through a coup orchestrated by the U.S. Ambassador and General Victoriano Huerta. After the fall of the Huerta administration, the third revolutionary phase involved an ever increasing conflict between Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa's Conventionalists, who sought radical social and agrarian reform, and Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregon's Constitutionalists, whose main concerns rested in the nation's return to a stable democracy. After the Constitutionalist defeat over the Conventionalists, the Constitution of 1917 marked the beginning of Mexico's postrevolutionary period under the new regime. Each phase of the Revolution saw a progression of women within public spaces, from the political organizing of upper class women during the first revolutionary phase, to the achievements of female soldiers and colonels in the third phase; however, after the close of the third revolutionary phase, women were increasingly shut out from the public spaces they occupied over the course of the Revolution.

In Mexico, prevailing conceptions of femininity and masculinity affected the perception, and eventually legislative recognition, of public women. The concept of "public women" in this work denotes women who ventured away from the private sphere to make contributions on the political stage. In the case of the Mexican Revolution, public women risked their reputation for various reasons, including financial security and genuine support for leaders like Zapata and Carranza. Unfortunately, once fighting ceased at the end of the third phase, postrevolutioanry leaders sought a return to order, and women became an easy point of focus. Through a series of legislative processes, women's roles in the Revolution were actively erased as Mexico returned to the traditional gender balance of its past.

Unless written explicitly through the lens of female experiences, most historical texts pertaining to both the French and Mexican Revolutions often portray these periods as unparalleled opportunities for women's political participation. However, when looking at the dynamics of gender norms not only during the revolutionary periods, but also before and after, the reality becomes quite clear: women's status within society suffers in the years following both Revolutions. By investigation precisely how and why gender norms become more isolating for women in postrevolutionary years, modern readers can better understand the historical connections between citizenship, order, and masculinity.

## CHPATER ONE

*Gender Norms and the Old Regime*

The French Revolution of 1789 marked the end of a system that had long determined social order and expectation within French society for centuries: the Ancien Regime, also referred to as the Old Regime. This hierarchical system combined social and political protocol, predetermining the fates of everyone within the French kingdom, from the lowly serf to the mighty king. The Old Regime maintained a hierarchical system within the realm that placed the king, believed to be chosen by God, at its pinnacle. In this period, society was not divided along gendered boundaries, but instead divided by "estates." The French people were divided into three main groups, "the clergy, the nobility, and everyone else. Each group had a distinct role within the realm. As contemporary legal scholar, Charles Loyseau explained in his most famous work, *A Treatise on Orders*, "some are dedicated particularly to the service of God, others to protecting the state by their arms, others to nourishing and maintaining the it through peaceful occupation."[2] Division and superiority based on gender makes no appearance in the most important sections of Loyseau's treatise. Instead, Loyseau emphasizes the need for order among the people of France and what the people must due to fulfill their roles expected of them within the context of their respective estates. In this system, women were not explicitly forced to remain within the home, for that would not serve the purposes as outlined by Loyseau. With the fall of the Old Regime, the ambiguities of men and women's place in society were soon reassessed and enforced as France moved towards the future. In order to comprehend how the French Revolution altered

[2] "Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders*." In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Volume 7, 1987), 14.

gender roles, it is first necessary to understand the complexities of societal norms within the context of the Old Regime and the consequences for both men and women.

The relationship between gender and power in modern times contrasts with the realities of Old Regime France. This work aims to extrapolate examples of gender relations within the context of the Old Regime in order to challenge common misconceptions regarding French society before the rise of the French Revolution. While women of status and wealth flourished under the glamor of the Old Regime, their male counterparts during this time received increasing pressure as physical representations of authority within the system. In perfecting absolutist rule during his reign, Louis XIV forever joined the kingdom with the physical and spiritual body of the king, a connected that would contribute to the destruction of the monarchy as Louis XVI faced an onslaught of attacks centered on his masculinity. In the context of the general nobility, the development of absolutism placed all nobles equally under the control of the monarch, regardless of gender, which challenges modern perceptions of gender relations within the context of social status. Despite the restrictions of the Old Regime, the system provided noble and wealthy women with the opportunity to influence French society by running salons, publishing professional journals, or even through their positions within the royal court. By taking the following examples into consideration, this work aims to capture the complexities of Old Regime life in order to lay a foundation for further comparison with the state of gender restrictions during and after the French Revolution.

The House of Bourbon benefitted greatly from the introduction of absolutism during the reign of Louis XIV, which further distinguished between the estates of the Old Regime by heightening the authority of the monarch and diminishing the power of the nobles. The development of absolutist rule built on previous beliefs of the authority of noble princes, thus

placing the sovereign above his nobles in all aspects of early modern life: physical, political, and spiritual. Just as Loyseau published a respected explanation of the social order of the Old Regime in his work, *A Treatise on Orders*, Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, a religious scholar and tutor of Le Grand Dauphin, wrote on the divine source of the monarch's absolute authority in his work, *Politics Derived from the Words of the Holy Scripture*.[3] Along with other characteristics of royal authority, Bossuet argues, "…the power to compel the execution of legitimate orders… belongs only to the prince."[4] In very clear terms, Bossuet outlines the limitless power of sovereign authority over the kingdom that can only be practiced by the monarch. Bossuet implies that no earthy individual could force the king to act, which goes to the central ideas and motives of absolutism. While other contemporary monarchies had relied on the advice and approval on advisors and privy counselors, absolute monarchs could rule as they saw fit. Furthermore, Bossuet provides the highest level of authority for his conclusions by citing the bible. This method provides not only ample citations to support these claims, but also cements the monarch's position as God's representative on earth.

Above all else, absolute power meant placing ultimate authority into the hands of the king. While delivering a speech known as "Sessions of the Scourging" in March 1766, Louis XV explains that, "the sovereign power resides in my person only… the spirit of consultation, justice, and reason."[5] In a bitter dispute with the Parlement of Paris, Louis XV cites his supreme authority in order to correct the growing rift between the monarch and the judicial body. This

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[3] "Bossuet, *Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture*." In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Volume 7, 1987), 31.
[4] "Bossuet, *Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture*." In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker, 37.
[5] "A Royal Tongue-Lashing." In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Volume 7, 1987), 49.

body was not separate from the monarch, but rather under the authority of the monarch, who, as absolute ruler, can grant or rescind his consent as he pleases.[6] In the mind of this monarch, any disobedience would wrongfully challenge his authority as absolute monarch. Such actions would go against not only the word of the king, but also against God, as seen through the ideas put forth by Bossuet in the reign of Louis XIV. The implementation of absolutism forever linked the legitimacy of the government with the body of the king. As a representative of both his people and God, a single man, a mere mortal, claimed the ultimate authority above all others within the kingdom of France. While absolute monarchy placed political influence solely into the hands of the king, the connections made between authority and the monarch's body would have grave consequences for Louis XVI, a monarch whose physical abilities called into question the legitimacy of his rule.

The consequences of placing absolute authority within the body of the king became prevalent during the early years of Louis XVI's relatively short reign. The significance of the king's body as the vessel of legitimate rule furthered the connection between masculinity and power. Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the body of the monarch became not only a representation of God on earth, but also a representation of the nation itself and all her citizens. As Louis XVI expressed before the Parlement of Paris in 1766, "… public order in its entirety emanates from me, and that the rights and interests of the nations… are necessarily united with my rights and interests…"[7] One of those interests, by nature of the monarchical system, focused on the continuation of the dynasty. With these expectations, the

[6] "A Royal Tongue-Lashing." In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker, 49.
[7] "A Royal Tongue-Lashing." In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Volume 7, 1987), 49.

king was subjected to scrutiny from the public, thus pointing to the heightened significance of masculinity during the Old Regime leading up to the French Revolution. Louis XVI's reign saw a dramatic increase in the production of pornographic cartoons aimed at the royal family. While a significant number targeted Marie Antoinette for her mischievous lifestyle, many also targeted Louis XVI's inability to produce an heir. In one such cartoon, Louis XVI is shown in bed with his wife, unable to show arousal:[8]

This engraving, published in 1793, depicts the king and queen, the two individuals of the highest status in the kingdom, in a vulnerable position as they attempt to fulfill their duties as a royal couple. Countless political cartoons targeted the royal couple, fueled by rumored reasons for the king's inability to lay with his queen. While his predecessors had kept their fair share of mistresses, Louis XVI had trouble consummating his own marriage.  This failure to produce an

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[8] Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of Califronia Press, 1993), 50.

heir in turn pointed to a failure to rule, calling into question the stability of the dynasty. As absolute monarch, continuation from one generation of government to the next depended on the monarch's ability to produce an heir. The significance of an absolute monarch's ability to have children centers on the idea that, as Joan Landes explains, "… the figuration of power was tied ineluctably to the masculine subject of the monarch."[9] As long as imagery such as the one above persisted, Louis XVI's power and political influence, as suggested by Landes, would come into question. The very fact that the engraving was published in 1793, almost certainly after the execution of Louis XVI, suggests an effort to expose the public to propaganda aiming to denounce the legitimacy of the former monarch, thus supporting the Assembly's decision to both abolish the monarchy and execute the mortal Louis Capet. While absolutism ensured the total influence of the king, the system left the legitimacy of the monarchy vulnerable to the physical well being of the king, a man exposed to weakness like any mere mortal. In failing his physical duties as king, Louis XVI provided an opportunity for revolutionaries to capitalize on the vulnerable stature of the monarchy.

By the time Louis XIV rose to power, history had proven time and time again that the richest and most distinguished nobles posed the greatest domestic threat to any monarch. With this fresh in his mind, Louis XIV acknowledged that his reign would be more secure if he consolidated the power held by the ruling nobles in his singular position as king. To succeed in this endeavor, Louis devised a plan to draw the landed nobility away from their vast estates in the countryside and keep them occupied at his court. Louis, in turn, moved his court away from Paris to Versailles, where he could keep a watchful eye on his nobles under the premise of entertainment and a chance to be granted favors from the sovereign. To be a courtier at

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[9] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 20.

Versailles quickly became a great honor; however, only the wealthiest nobles could afford the lavish lifestyle required by Louis XIV's specifications. Through this reinvented court, Louis aimed to keep the wealthiest and most powerful nobles, those who had in previous reigns posed the greatest threat to the monarch, "… around his person, where he could see and control them."[10] Over the years, Louis XIV created a system of protocol that would control the minutest detail of each member of his court, including himself. Louis placed himself at the center of this delicate universe, even going as far as to portray himself as the sun in order to underscore his authoritarian role within the kingdom. The court of Versailles proved to be a theatrical representation of absolute monarchy and a constant reminder to the nobility as to which person the highest authority in the land rests. Through the intricate system in place at Versailles, Louis XIV set a precedence that distinguished him among the other nobles and princes found in Loyseau's descriptions of the Old Regime. Even more daring, Louis XIV sought to place himself not simply as the first among men, but as the first among the entire kingdom. In fact, within the context of the Old Regime, "all subjects, male and female, shared a subordinate posture."[11] In this sense, no man could ever claim to be less of a subordinate in relation to the king than a woman. While women of the noble class in no way had the same legal rights as men during this period, their general place within French society relied on their relationship to the king rather than on their gender. That condition would have negative connotations for noble men. Lacking political power over the king due to his role as absolute monarch, noble men were forced to compete alongside women of the court for influence.

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[10] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 41.
[11] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 21.

The social structure of the French court, with each subject subordinate to the king, the absolute monarch, challenges the modern expectations of masculinity and power. While this dynamic aided the king in controlling his wealthier and more powerful nobles, the subordination of male courtiers would have fatal consequences as the revolution approached. By design of absolutism, men of the nobility accepted a lower status in relation to the king in order to gain favor. The aim of the rigid protocol at the court of Versailles, "was to domesticate, even un-man, those who ought to have been his peers…"[12] In the context of Bourbon absolutism, noble men, just as their female counterparts, held no secure position of influence within the French court, at least not without favor from the king. To be close to the king meant serving the king like a servant: helping him dress, serving his food, all in the hopes to gain some influence over policy. This never-ending search for favor resulted in the creation of a noble class unrecognizable with the men at the heart of the Revolution, who defied the restrictions of the Estate system. Without a proper role, the male courtiers became domesticated, occupied with traditionally feminine interests like fashion. This relationship between the king and his nobles may explain why key members of the aristocracy chose to support the revolution in its early stages. The king's own kin, the Duc d'Orleans, proved to be an avid supporter of the revolution, even changing his name to Philippe-Egalité, believing he would be made king after the fall of Louis XVI.[13] While the betrayal of the Duc d'Orleans may seem cruel due to his close relationship with the ill-fated king, his motives are by no means a mystery. With Louis XVI off the throne, the House of Orleans could rule, and the former duke could finally exert the power and influence that went with his position as a Prince of the Blood. By creating a system of favor that required the nobility

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[12] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 21.
[13] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 221.

to remain in close proximity to his person, Louis XIV ensured his own security as sovereign. However, this system contributed to growing resentment among the nobility, contributing to the rapid decline of the French monarchy in the early years of the revolution.

Similarly to the discussion of Louis XVI and the connection between the monarchy and the physical body, public interest concerning Marie Antoinette's journey to conceive plays a significant role in this journey to paint a holistic image of gender during the Old Regime. Contemporary criticism of Marie Antoinette focused not on her gender explicitly, but rather on her abilities to fulfill the duties expected of her as queen. In her essay, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," Joan Scott explains that, "…gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."[14] In the case of Marie Antoinette, her power resided in her relationship with the king and her ability to bear his children, most significantly a male heir. As Carla Hesse explains, "biological reproduction was at the center of the transmission of social and political power in aristocratic society."[15] As *Dauphine*, the Crown Princess of France, Marie Antoinette's greatest influence rested in her ability to have a child, an heir to the throne. Without a successful pregnancy, Marie Antoinette's sole purpose as queen would go unfulfilled, and her strongest connection to power and influence would become void. While the king and queen eventually had several children together, throughout her tenure as *Dauphine*, and even in the early years of her reign, Marie Antoinette at the time was seen as a failure for her inability to conceive a child and produce a Bourbon heir to the French throne.[16]

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[14] Joan W Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, 91, no. 5, (1986), 1067.

[15] Carla Alison Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 32.

[16] Antonia Fraser, *Marie Antoinette: The Journey,* (New York: Talese/Doubleday, 2001), 137.

Without children, the future of the monarchy, and the fate of the Bourbon line, remained uncertain. In a system designed for real power to be passed between father and son, Marie Antoinette's ability to conceive held higher stakes than for other women of the kingdom. Born an Austrian Archduchess, daughter of Empress Maria Theresa and sister of Emperor Joseph II, Marie Antoinette faced ridicule from the public and courtiers alike but by virtue of being caught, by marriage, between two countries with a long history of tension. Her reputation as a spoiled queen, known for her parties, clothes, and gambling, only exacerbated the animosity held against her by the public. This consistent level of suspicious of the young queen then fueled the intrigue surrounding the next generation of the House of Bourbon.

Despite not holding the same level of power as her husband, Marie Antoinette was subjected to similar scrutiny as Louis XVI during her tenure as queen, specifically when regards to her ability to produce an heir. In the same engraving discussed above that portrays the two monarchs in bed, the artist partially blames Marie Antoinette's "lascivious" behavior for the king's impotence.[17] While such graphic depictions of a queen, who hold relatively little power, may seem outrageous in a modern sense, their validity rests in the queen's role as a public figure of monarchy. No matter the true extent of her influence over her husband, Marie Antoinette's very status as queen makes her susceptible to reticule by the masses, despite the intimacy of the subject. In reality, the goings on of the royal bedchamber was perhaps one of the most public matters in the Old Regime. Without an heir, the reigns of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette remained vulnerable to criticism on the basis of their inabilities to fulfill their physical duties. Such images of Marie Antoinette point to her vital role in the continuation of the monarchy, and by extension of the stability of the Old Regime. Whereas other women of the nobility remained

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[17] Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 50.

lower in status to the queen, their public roles and influence did not rest so heavily on their physical abilities as it was with Marie Antoinette. Even in her vulnerability, Marie Antoinette's place as queen, and the duties expected of her, helps in the creation of a foundational understanding of gender relations within the Old Regime.

While Marie Antoinette infamously suffered from attacks aimed at her fulfillment of duties as queen, other women of status thrived during the glamor of the Old Regime. Due to the fact that influence at the highest tiers of the Old Regime relied on status rather than gender, women were afforded the opportunity to leave their unique mark on French society, particularly thought the curated experiences of salon culture. Referred to as "le monde," the world, the salon became such a central part of French society during the eighteenth century that one's acceptance into salon culture inherently meant finding success in the Old Regime.[18] The importance of the women in charge of these salons, also known as *salonnieres*, lies directly in their description in historical memory as, "literate, informed women who functioned not just as consumers but as purveyors of culture."[19] This description, especially the idea of salonnieres as "purveyors of culture" emphasizes the impact these women had not only on contemporary trends, but also on history itself. Decisions made by these women on who to invite and who to feature had a tangible impact on life in the Old Regime, as well as the course of the Enlightenment. Women in these roles possessed the power and influence to make decisions that would shape the interests of Parisian society, as well as influence the fate of intellectual thought. While men still maintained considerable influence over political matters, with the exception of certain women of the king's

[18] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 55.
[19] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 22.

inner circle, women dominated domestic and international trends, influencing every aspect of identity.

As the rise of absolutism lead to the expansion of the noble class at the will of the king, salon culture became a vital resource for these new nobles as the navigated the upper echelon of French society. Through invitations to the exclusive salons of Paris, social climbers of the time could learn essential lessons in "the appropriate style, dress, manners, language, art, and literature," in order to ensure their success upon their arrive at court of Versailles.[20] By gaining entrance into "le monde," newly made nobles found a resourceful tool in learning the ways of the French court. Salonnieres, by extension, became a representation in Paris society of the excess and frivolity of Versailles. Soon enough, the established nobility began to speak against salon culture and the women at the helm due to their support of the nobility's perceived usurpers within the order of the Old Regime.[21] The place of the nobility among the adversaries of salon culture points to the consistent importance of status within the function of the Old Regime. Without loyalty to born position, these nobles could count on little to ensure their secured place of influence in society. It is importance to make the distinction that salon culture did not suffer from critiques due to the gender of its curators, but rather because the nobility feared the threat to their influence in society. The mistake of the salonnieres was not that they were women, but that they went against societal norms as designed by the structure of the Old Regime.

Overwhelmingly, these women of influence created a platform of unparalleled exposure for intellectuals and artists of the Enlightenment age, leaving a lasting imprint on France and the world over the course of the eighteenth century. Two such women that left a lasting mark on this period were Mme de Tencin and Mme de Lambert, both playing a vital role in the development

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[20] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 24.
[21] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 26.

of French culture as well as the spread of enlightenment ideas. As Joan Landes argues, "it was [Mme de Tencin's] influence that gave its first impulse to the success of Montesquieu's *Espirit des Lois*, of which she personally bought and distributed many copies."[22] In her duties as a "purveyor of culture," Mme Tencin invited intellectuals of the time into her home to share their discoveries, creations, and thoughts with the highest tiers of French society. It is no wonder then that Mme Tencin's salon attracted some of the most significant authors of the period.[23] Montesquieu's work no doubt succeeded, in part, due to the patronage of women like Mme de Tencin. Mme de Tencin's status and wealth provided her with the opportunity to support the work of intellectuals like Montesquieu, and the opportunity to be linked to one of the most consequential literary productions of the Enlightenment period. The circulation of Montesquieu's *Espirit des Lois* reached beyond the exclusive setting of the French salon to inspire a generation of revolution and reinvention.

Yet another example of influential women of the Old Regime can be found in Mme de Lambert, a salonnieres who demonstrates the vast influence available to women in shaping French culture. Contemporary French historian Charles-Jean-Francois Henault recalled, "... of Mme de Lambert and her salon: 'one had to pass through her in order to get into the Academie Francaise.'"[24] Influence of this extent, over a body made up by lifetime appointments that make decisions on the French language, shows an unimaginable privilege afforded to a woman like Mme de Lambert. If the description given by Henault holds true, Mme de Lambert would have held significant influence over the very center of French culture: its language. The fact that a male, contemporary historian such as Henault could conjure such an image of Mme de Lambert

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[22] Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 54.
[23] Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 77.
[24] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 54.

underscores the vast influence over what would soon be considered, and restricted from women, the public sphere. Both Lambert and Tencin proved not only to hold influence within the realm of the Parisian salon, but also proved time and time again to use that influence and take up the space afforded to them by virtue of their positions within society. While history may overlook the names of Tencin and Lambert, their influence lives on with the work of Enlightenment thinkers they chose to support with the stage provided for them in the salon. The stories of Mme de Tencin and Mme de Lambert are in no way exceptions, but rather key examples to help provide context for the nature of the roles played by women during the Old Regime. As exemplified through these two salonnieres, women of the Old Regime had a place outside the home, in what we now refer to as the public sphere, shaping the world around them just as was done by their male counterparts.

Influential women could be found beyond the exclusive circles of "le monde," and held even more influential roles in the realm of public opinion. Contrary to what one might consider plausible in eighteenth century France, women were authors, publishers, and thinkers alongside men. A clear example of the presence of women in what we now consider the "public sphere" can be found in the publication and editorship of the *Journal des Dames*. Published during the second half of the eighteenth century, this particular journal paints an image of female involvement in the shaping of public opinion long before the days of Murat's *L'Ami du Peuple*. The *Journal des Dames*, acquired by royal privilege, was "a serious oppositional publication addressing social issues, preaching reform, and attempting to make the audience think."[25] With the aims of shaping the opinion of their readers, the editors of the *Journal des Dames* surely

[25] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 58.

intended to use their intellect to better French society, which demonstrates an example of female influence beyond that of the court of Versailles and the salons of Paris.

During the Old Regime, the *Journal des Dames* maintained its publication over several decades and through the supervision of several female editors. Mme de Beaumer, the first editor of *Journal des Dames*, "dressed in masculine garb, dedicating herself to supporting her sex's 'honor and its rights.'"[26] Such an image, a woman dressing as a man and working as an editor of a relatively radical publication, challenges a modern reader's preconceived notions of how a woman should behave in early modern Europe. While Mme de Beaumer may be an extreme example, her influence as the journal's first editor demonstrates the lack of restrictions placed on women within what we would observe as the "public sphere." Women like Mme de Beaumer challenged the establishment, but have been generally forgotten by history. Their existence shows that opportunity for women to express themselves openly in French society, giving their opinions and aiming to influence the opinions of others, not only existed, but was also ratified by government approval. While this particular publication may not have been as politically radical as Murat's *L'Ami du Peuple*, its existence points to a significant role of influence afforded to women during the Old Regime. The understanding of such influence helps to establish a foundation for the parameters of gender norms within the Old Regime, thus providing context for the extent the French Revolution altered the perceived roles of gender within French society.

Beyond the walls of Parisian salons and publishing houses, working class women, particularly the *poissardes* (fishwives), used their own privileges within in the Old Regime to influence popular and political opinions. Among working class women, fishwives held perhaps the most significant role in Parisian culture. Their influence rested not only in the protection of

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[26] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution*, 59.

their profession as a corporation, an institution protected by the monarch that receives privileges like monopolies on certain industries, but also their ceremonial roles in the Church and the court of Versailles. Their cultural and political significance rested in the belief that fish were saved from original sin, "and therefore especially holy."[27] Due to their monopoly on such a significant biblical ideology, the fishwives held ceremonial roles within the Church, and by extension, the court of Versailles. The fishwives' role at Versailles required their presence at, and verification of, royal births.[28] In addition to their public soles as merchants on the streets of Paris, fishwives took part in another public arena: the birth of heirs to the Bourbon throne. In the context of verifying royal births, fishwives carried a heavy responsibility. With this power, however superficial, the fishwives became inherently linked with the legitimacy and continuity of the monarchy. This connection to the monarchy's legitimacy provides context for the vast influence held by the fishwives on the streets of Paris, where they shared news of the country and shared opinions on political and cultural happenings.

The fishwives used their privileged position in French culture, which provided them with access to the very center of government, to educate the political understandings of their fellow women of the Third Estate. Due to their close connection with the monarchy and its legitimacy, fishwives were granted, "free speech enjoyed by no other group in French society under the Old Regime."[29] It can certainly be said that the fishwives took advantage of these liberties, rare to both men and women alike. Each day, the fishwives could be found in local bars conducting various political discussions, a forum that was vital in a world where most women were

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[27] Carla Alison Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*, 16.
[28] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 27.
[29] Carla Alison Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*, 17.

illiterate.[30] Through the fishwives, knowledge of political and cultural issues were not restricted to wealthy or noble women, but could also be accessible to the working women of Paris, many of whom could not read or write. These traditions maintained by the fishwives, and protected by their corporate status, allowed important news of the nation to reach as many subjects as possible, a concept that would become increasingly significant as the Revolution approved. Once the French Revolution begins, the fishwives used their privileges and history as messengers of political issues to contribute to early discourses.

In order to better comprehend the effects of the French Revolution on gender roles, it is first necessary to understand that during the Old Regime social norms were determined not by gender, but by Estate. This distinction, by design, succumbed the influence of men to their masculine image, and that of women women to their position within the structure of the Old Regime. While absolutism placed significant power into the hands of the monarch, the system's success relied heavily on tying the physical body of the king to the legitimacy of his rule. This connection created an opportunity evaluate the physical capabilities of the monarch as prerequisites to rule, a vulnerability that later cost Louis XVI his throne as well as his life. Simultaneously, the implementation of absolutism at the court of Versailles placed men and women of the nobility as equally subordinate to the monarch, which challenges modern perceptions of gender and power. As a result, male nobles compromised their power, and by extension their masculinity, in order to gain favor with the king.

In contrast, this relative equality found under a shared subordination provided an unparalleled opportunity for noble women of the Old Regime to exert their influence at court and within broader French society. Over the course of a century, women of wealth and status

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[30] Ibid.

exhibited influence as salonnieres, intellectuals, and authors, a reality that would soon be challenged during the French Revolution. The following chapter assesses how Enlightenment ideas influenced not only the ideals of the revolution, but also a new vision of society that would divide according to gender. With the subordination of absolutism replaced with the equality, for men, of republicanism, women would be left behind. These new ideas, through the platforms created by salon culture, aimed to address the lascivious nature of women by creating explicit private and public spheres, thus confining women to the home while their men exercised their new rights in the open.

## CHAPTER TWO

*Female Revolutionaries and the Creation of Public and Private Spheres*

This chapter begins with examples of female participation during the early stages of the revolution in order to highlight the brief period in which French women contributed their voices to the Revolution. Such participation was made possible through preexisting female-centered institutions, such as all-female guilds, fishwives, and salon culture. The chapter will then address how and why these female voices were eventually overshadowed by the masculine revolutionary leadership and citizenship. These concepts subsequently became legitimized through legislation starting in 1793 and continuing through the Napoleonic Era, thus cementing the place of French women within the private sphere, far away from opportunities available to them before the sweeping changes of the French Revolution.

During the early stages of the Revolution, the French people lent their voices to the political stage on an unprecedented level: men and women, bourgeois and working class, used their voices and actions in support of, or rejection to, rising revolutionary ideals such as equality among citizens. Some of these voices appeared in response to the General Assembly's appeal for public input. Women's involvement in the submission of *cahiers*, or grievances, highlights the political advantages of women belonging to institutions that pre-existed the Revolution, such as guilds, which provided them with a platform to offer suggestions to the government's highest ranking officials. In 1789, members of the Third Estate, representing villages, organizations, and guilds, prepared lists of grievances, also known as cahiers, to be sent to the newly elected Estates

General for consideration.[31] Surviving *cahiers* provide an opportunity for modern readers to comprehend the priorities of ordinary French women at the onset of the Revolution. As members of the Third Estate, the individuals represented in the petitions stood to gain the most from the changes that the General Assembly could make.

While not all requests were fulfilled by the Assembly, they can nonetheless be seen as a testament to the political involvement of a populace traditionally confined to the practices of public displays of celebration or outrage. At times, petitioners appealed directly to the King, fearing that the General Assembly would fail to listen to their demands.[32] In such cases, petitioners extended the reach of their political and social aspirations to the pinnacle of government. It is important to note that the writing and submission of *cahiers* was not limited to men of the Third Estate, as women stepped forward to represent their own communities and industries as well. The following examples serve to highlight the political involvement of Third Estate women, made possible only through the preexisting practice of the *cahier* system and their inclusion as members of female-only guilds.

The language found in surviving *cahiers* written by women showcase the significance of female-centered institutions in late eighteenth century France. Excerpts of such *cahiers* show women taking up space in the public sphere by delivering their priorities to the Assembly. One petition submitted by Merchant Flower Sellers requests that the Assembly recognize their corporation, "since they paid the king considerable sums for enjoying the advantages of their

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[31] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 97.
[32] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, (Urbana: University of Chicago, 1979), 18.

trade…"[33] Worried for the state of their organization in the aftermath of the revolutionary movement, representatives of the Merchant Flower Sellers of Paris write to the Assembly to establish their pre-existing status as an officially recognized body. Through the grievances process, these women took ownership of their legitimate, officially recognized organization. By virtue of belonging to a guild, the women represented in this petition could express their own agenda for the Estates General to pursue. Documents such as the petition of the Merchant Flower Sellers of Paris highlight a period when women played a role on the political stage before the Revolution turned to gender-based social reform.

While these cahiers proved invaluable in providing certain women with opportunities to voice their concerns with the General Assembly, certain aspects of these documents, such as their appeals to male authority, foreshadow the increasing separation between women and the public sphere over the course of the Revolution. Some examples reveal a repetitive feeling of anxiety regarding the continuation of female guilds and industries. One author, writing on behalf of the women of the Third Estate, asks the National Assembly to block access of men to traditionally female industries, explaining, "if we are left at least with the needle and the spindle, we promise never to handle the compass or the square."[34] In the wake of the social upheaval of the early days of the Revolution, the women represented in this particular petition ask for the Assembly to protect female-dominated industries. By promising to not infringe on traditionally male industries, represented in the cahier by "the compass or the square," the women hope to convince the Assembly to protect female-dominated industries, represented by the "needle and the spindle." However, the need to make such a distinction points to a possible concern among

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[33] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, 25.
[34] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, 19.

women in French society. While the Revolution had forced social structures to be reevaluated, the author found it necessary to clarify that the women of the Third Estate did not plan to take on traditionally male roles. The petitioner goes on to claim that women's request, "to be enlightened, to have work, not in order to usurp men's authority, but in order to be better esteemed by them."[35] Here, one sees the author's attempt to balance the discrepancies between revolutionary thinking and gender dynamics. The women of the Third Estate present themselves as students of the Revolution – seeking enlightenment and economic security – in order to appeal to the superiority of the male leaders of the Assembly. However, their hesitation reveals itself through an appeal to "men's authority," assuring the Assembly that their aims do not go as far as to threaten male dominated industries. Such ideas of conflict between male authority and public women, including the working class women of the Third Estate, turns to a more explicit struggle as the Revolution continues into the early 1790s.

Other women went beyond the system of *cahiers* to share their dissatisfaction, instead relying on oral traditions as a means to maximize their political influence and provide fuel for the Revolution. In this sense, Parisian women, particularly fishwives, used their voices to share news of political developments, as well as to share revolutionary ideas with the wider, largely illiterate public. Included in the production of a play about Henry IV as political tensions rose in 1789 Paris, the Fishwives gave a toast to the famous monarch in what Carla Hesse describes as, "an explicit political message to [Louis XVI] that he should… act in the interests of the common people rather than the aristocracy and the clergy."[36] Considering the fishwives' institutional connection to the legitimacy of the monarchy – as explained in the previous chapter – this

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[35] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, 20.
[36] Carla Alison Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 18.

particular event points to a conscious decision by some fishwives to show their support for the Revolution on a large scale. By breaking their alliance to Louis XVI, the fishwives signal serious concerns regarding political events to the general public. Additionally, not only did the Fishwives insert themselves in political matters, but they also did so on the stage, a location that Enlightenment thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau saw as the house of corrupt public women – a concept that will be discussed in upcoming sections in this chapter. As seen in their act of political participation in one of society's most public forums, the fishwives used their cultural significance to signal their dissatisfaction with the policies of Louis XVI, thus empowering the revolutionary movement from its infancy.

In addition to the fishwives direct impact on the early progress of the Revolution through their physical presence on the streets of Paris, their reputation provided opportunities for authors publishing political pamphlets. The *genre poissarde,* as it became known, reveals the very real benefits of the Fishwives on revolutionary print culture, thus extending the public impact of the Old Regime's most prestigious female institution. During the first years of the Revolution, numerous pamphlets written by men and women claimed to contain the political and religious opinions of Parisian fishwives, and rapidly gained popularity among literate Parisians.[37] Attaching the name of a fishwife affected to public response to such pamphlets, which varied in political and social allegiances. While Hesse clarifies that most of these pamphlets had male authors, their popularity, among readers and authors alike, proves the vast influence of these working class women. The practice of claiming status as a fishwife, especially among male authors, reveals the weight of a Fishwife's opinions over the wider public, no longer restricted to the illiterate populace. Furthermore, the rise of the *genre poissarde* builds from the cultural

[37] Carla Alison Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*, 21.

significance of the fishwives' role as vessels of local and national news. With this development, the realm of influence of these women spilled over from their presence on the open streets of Paris, and into the stands of print culture.

By 1791, it became clear that the social and political movements of the Revolution did not stand to benefit women as it did men, but at the time female political activists remained confident in their abilities to voice their opinions in the open for the public to consume. Women such as Olympe de Gouges made pointed out early examples of the Revolution's troubling attitudes towards women. In *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman*, regarding the progression of the revolutionary movement, de Gouges writes:

> "Bizarre, blind, bloated with science and degenerated – in a century of enlightenment and wisdom – into the crassest ignorance, he wants to command as a despot a sex which is in full possession of its intellectual faculties; he pretends to enjoy the Revolution and to claim his rights to equality in order to say nothing more about it."[38]

With *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman*, De Gouges symbolizes a shift in the early Revolutionary period, when women would begin to participate in the arena of public opinion outside the protection of the Old Regime's corporations. De Gouges certainly does not look upon the leaders of the Revolution with approval, but rather with disgust in response to the hypocrisy of its leaders and the men who benefit from the restructuring of social hierarchy.[39] In a supposed age of Enlightenment, de Gouges sees a threat to women's autonomy. Describing such men as "blind, bloated with science," denotes an ironic gluttony of knowledge that overshadows reason. The same men reaping the benefits of social revolution remain silent in the face of increasing hostility towards women. De Gouges points out the hypocrisy of the men that fought the

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[38] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, 89.
[39] Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 31.

despotism of monarchy: despite challenging the Old Regime's control over all French citizens, they now sought to exhibit the same control over women.

But in challenging the political agenda of the Revolution's leaders, de Gouges placed herself in the midst of active debates regarding the place of women's participation in political discourse. As the direction of French society moved towards the creation of public and private spheres, politically active women such as de Gouges challenged the limitations of active citizenship as being distinctively male.[40] Building from her experience as an author from before the Revolution, de Gouges ventures further into the public sphere by discussing political topics. Her courage to use her platform not only in defense of the King, but also in defense of the case for women's citizenship status, highlights the paradoxes of female existence at the time of the Revolution. As de Gouges points out in her Declaration, women had always possessed the intellect to partake in political and social discourse, but only during the Revolution had women been denied participation as public and private spheres came into existence in their gendered contexts.

As the Revolution continued, women followed the growing popularity of political societies, through which they developed their ideological aspirations. The most vocal and radical of these groups was the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women. On May 10, 1793 members of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women appeared before government officials in Paris to express their intentions to form an all-female society focused on "frustrating the projects of the republic's enemies."[41] The society acted as revolutionary watchdogs, "identifying suspects of possible revolution infractions to be brought before the revolutionary

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[40] Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*, 33.
[41] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, 149.

tribunals."[42] Through their determination to patrol the streets of Paris for enemies of the nation, the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women placed themselves squarely in the public sphere. In order to police their neighbors, the women of the Society walked the streets of Paris, which required spending time away from their homes and their domestic duties. In exerting their power as self-proclaimed protectors of the Revolution the Society gave itself a more paternalistic that challenged the increasing popularity of Enlightenment ideas of femininity and Republican motherhood taking place strictly within the home.

In addition to their political aims, the attire of members further challenged gender expectations. Choosing to align themselves with images of patriotism at the expense of traditional confinements of gender expression, the women of this society were known to wear "the red bonnet, with tricolor ribbon, and trousers."[43] The red bonnet and trousers gave the women a kind of uniform so that those around them would understand they belonged to the revolutionary cause as true patriots. Their physical presence, combined with their goals to defend the Revolution, gave the members of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women an appearance to that of the *sans-culottes* or even members of the revolutionary army. Wearing such articles of clothing challenged existing gender expectations, but provided the women with the appearance of radical revolutionaries. For the women of this society, belonging to a group to discuss the ideas of the Revolution fell short of what they saw as their patriotic responsibility, instead choosing to use their organization to actively defend the nation from within. However, these actions, while righteous in the eyes of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women,

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[42] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 141.
[43] Ibid., 141.

soon suffered from increasing backlash from men regarding the political activities of all French women.

The participation amongst women in political societies, such as the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, particularly between 1793 and 1794, conflicted with the rising voices of revolutionaries that believed a republican woman's place belonged in the domestic sphere. Despite the obvious commitment of such women to the Revolution, tension soon began to rise between the male and female revolutionaries. Only weeks after the founding of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, the Assembly "ordered *citoyennes* [female citizens] could not be present at the meetings due to lack of space in the hall."[44] According to this order, women must be kept away from the galleries in order to guarantee men access. The prioritization of male political participation can be closely linked to their status of citizenship over women. The exclusion of female citizens, therefore, emphasizes the superiority of male citizens in the eyes of government officials. Resentment towards women participating in political life continued throughout the same year. When pressed by a group of women in May 1793, one member of the *corps de garde* responded that the women "would do better to mind their households than to gather information on who was and who wasn't a patriot."[45] Rather than respond to the questions regarding his patriotism, the officer attack's the legitimacy of the women's questions. In the officer's mind, the event itself is proof enough that the women have shirked their domestic duties. The officer's remarks point to a rising reactionary response to women in the revolutionary public sphere. Such attitudes increased in popularity as the

[44] Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*, 152.
[45] Ibid,, 153.

Revolution grew more and more radical, targeting women that refused to conform to revolutionary society's conceptions of gender boundaries.

The source of the animosity towards public women, no matter their political alignment, can be found in a shift in Enlightenment thought regarding the relationship between gender and political aptitude. Freed from the yoke of absolutism, revolutionary leaders sought a new social order as a method to prevent the country from descending into chaos. Their search led to the implementation of gendered approach of a public and private sphere, supported by the works of Enlightenment thinkers, led by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In his lifetime, Rousseau promoted his belief that "that goal of politics is… to produce virtuous, healthy human beings."[46] In this sense, at the time of the Revolution, the new government had to create new societal norms in order to reflect the virtue of the republic. In Rousseau's mind, two groups posed the greatest threat to a virtuous republic: monarchists and women, but with this knowledge Rousseau believed that society could fight against those two influences. As Rousseau states in his *Letter to d'Alembert on the Theatre*, "a home whose mistress is absent is a body without a soul which soon falls into corruption."[47] Rousseau links the existence of women in the public sphere with the "corruption" and degradation of the health of a republic or democracy. To this extent, contemporary readers would understand that a home in which a wife and mother can be found within would be a virtuous home following the example of the republic. Separating women within the domestic sphere becomes necessary for the success of democratic and republican nations. In the context of the French Revolution, the ideas of sexual difference, as investigated by Rousseau, make the new social order possible. If women step out of the private sphere, that order could then revert back to

[46] Arthur M. Melzer, "Rousseau's Moral Realism: Replacing Natural Law with the General Will," *The American Political Science Review* 77, no.3 (1983), 633.
[47] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 85.

chaos. As the chapter shifts to the actions taken during the Revolution to silence public women, these sentiments will reappear, as we have already seen in the statements of the corps *de garde* official.

In texts such as *The Social Contract*, *Emile* and *Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre*, Rousseau outlines his conceptions of family structures and gender roles on the health of the State. Rousseau looked to domestic life as the epicenter of republican virtue, as well as a way to correct the direction of society as it was under the Old Regime. In his widely popular philosophical novel, Emile, Rousseau writes that, "the attraction of domestic life is the best counterpoison to bad morals."[48] While Rousseau connects to the frivolity of women as the cause of societal corruption, he also sees them as part of the solution. By keeping women in domestic settings, away from the chaos and power of the public sphere, society could be freed from the immorality of public women. As Nicole Fermon explains, "having identified the 'disorder' in politics with a 'disorder of women' Rousseau is then explicit about the uses to which women might be employed in engendering sociality in earliest childhood."[49] While governments and their officials can push the agenda of social restructuring, Rousseau recognizes that only so much can be done without the support, or at least cooperation, of the women within these households. By controlling the "disorder" of the female gender, Rousseau's republican visions of early moral education can proceed with women squarely placed in their maternal roles, prepared to educate the next generation of patriots. Rousseau convinces women to take part in the institutionalization of the private sphere through its connection to the creation of a viable republic. Throughout Rousseau's work the emphasis on motherhood, within the confines of the private sphere, as a

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[48] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: Or, on Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 46.
[49] Nicole Fermon, "Domesticating Women, Civilizing Men: Rousseau's Political Program," In *The Sociological Quarterly* 35 no. 3 (1994), 435.

viable solution to the loose morals of the Old Regime provide a glimpse into what would become of women after the outbreak of revolution in France. While Rousseau's thoughts on the necessary social structures of republican nations predated the onset of the Revolution by decades, its eventual adoption allowed leaders of the Revolution an intellectual reasoning for the exclusion of women from public spaces.

The connections Rousseau makes between domesticity and republicanism found an enthusiastic home in the radical revolutionaries of Paris. Providing his thoughts on a woman's place in the Revolution in 1793, one Jacobin journalist named Prudhome writes:

> True patriotism consists of fulfilling one's duties and valuing only rights appropriate to each according to sex and age, and not wearing the liberty cap and pantaloons and not carrying pike and pistol. Leave those to men who are born to protect you and make you happy.[50]

According to Prudhome, patriotism required qualities based on gender, and therefore challenging those gendered qualities inherently risked one's status as a patriot. As the Revolution turned in favor of the radical Jacobins, Prudhome's views on true patriotism reflect mainstream thinking in regards to a woman's role in the Revolution. As the chapter has already addressed, women's political associations, such as the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, ushered in an era of common women acting according to their own political interests. Unfortunately, Prudhome's statements show a response to the scale of public women during this period. Revolutionaries with similar beliefs as Prudhome would have seen the Society of Revolutionary Women, despite their common ideologies with the Jacobins, as betraying their duties as patriots by wearing "the liberty cap and pantaloons," which was part of their unofficial uniform.

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[50] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 420-1.

Furthermore, Prudhome's statements shed light on the reasons for the period's official acts against public women. According to Prudhome, men were, by design, "born to protect [women]." This again emphasizes the placement of women in the private sphere, where they could be protected, and further distancing them from the public sphere, where they could not be protected – or more accurately, controlled.

The growing adoption of Rousseau's ideas of gender and republicanism proved deadly for many public women brought to trial by the revolutionary tribunal. Months after her husband's trial and execution, the Austrian Archduchess, former French queen, and mythical Madame Deficit, Marie Antoinette faced a similar fate before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Marie Antoinette was formally charged with, among other accusations, teaching her impressionable husband "to dissimulate – that is, how to promise one thing in public and plan another in the shadows of the court."[51] Interestingly enough, the charges imply that dissimulation was not a trait that Louis XVI knew inherently, but rather something that needed to be taught, specifically by a woman. In the eyes of the revolutionary tribunal, the woman responsible for this corruption was none other than the queen herself. Dissimulation became the charge with the greatest threat to Marie Antoinette's fate due to its close association with ideas of feminine corruption. Such corruption posed to weaken republican ideals, such as transparency, which Lynne Hunt describes as "the unmediated expression of the heart, " the most valued quality in a man of the republic.[52] The charges raised against the queen reveal an outright revolutionary republican response to her former place in the public sphere. As the highest-ranking woman at Versailles, Marie Antoinette embodied the very corruption that republicanism sought to rid from French culture. Additionally, if allowed to live, Marie Antoinette would remain a public figure as the deposed, dowager queen

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[51] Lynn Hunt, *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1991), 109.
[52] Lynn Hunt, *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, 112.

of France. The close ties between dissimulation and femininity, as demonstrated in the trial of Marie Antoinette, highlight the Revolution's shift to the persecution of women unable to conform to the separation of public and private sphere.

In late 1793, prejudices against women occupying a space in the public sphere rapidly began to spill over into the legislative process, consequently legitimizing the enforcement of the separation between public and private spheres. On the 30th of October 1793, the National Convention, the first governing body of the French Republic, continued its attack on public women, regardless of their political association, by banning the numerous women's clubs that rose during the first years of the Revolution. Speaking on behalf of the Committee on General Safety, deputy André Amar claimed, "women are ill suited for elevated thoughts."[53] Amar's comments strike at the contributions made by countless women in the first four years of the Revolution. If women truly were biologically unable to produce sophisticated levels of thought, then Amar washes over the cahiers of working class women, the influence of the Parisian Fishwives, and the dedication of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women. Defending the Convention's decision to ban all women's clubs, one city official equated a woman's presence in the political realm with the abandonment of her mother duties.[54]

While Amar targeted a woman's critical thinking skills to validate the Convention's decision, this particular official takes a more biological approach. By suggesting that a woman's presence in the public sphere inherently prevents her from fulfilling her roles are a mother and caretaker, the city official implies the impossible feat of belonging to both public and private spheres. In this sense, a woman could never exercise political autonomy without abandoning her family, a responsibility that has already been established as a key element to the success of the

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[53] Lynn Hunt, *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, 124.
[54] Lynn Hunt, *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, 124-5.

republic. The defenses of the Convention's decision to ban the political associations of all women show great similarities with the work of Rousseau as detailed earlier, targeting their mental as well as emotional capacities. Despite the vital contributions of women to political discourse during the years of the General Assembly, National Assembly, and the National Convention, like those detailed in this chapter, the decision to exclude women from political association altogether reveals the rising popularity of Enlightenment thought among revolutionary leaders regarding the importance of a distinctly separate private sphere in the creation of democratic nations.

Government officials then turned their attention away from cultural representations of women: replacing the image of *Liberté,* also referred to as Marianne, with that of Hercules as a means to emphasize the new masculine direction of the Revolution. Following the trial and execution of countless public women, the National Convention voted to adopt the image of Hercules, as depicted by Jacques-Louis David, as the official symbol of the republic, which appeared on official government documents until June 1797.[55] Hercules' place on government decrees further depicts the decision as one made by officials to change the very image of the Republic. A statue of Hercules used in a 1793 festival, designed by David, depicted the muscular figure protecting unity with one hand, "while he crushed the monster of federalism (half-woman, half-serpent…) with the club in his other hand..[56] The powerful image evokes the victory of political and social Revolution; however, the imagery also points to the victory of masculinity over femininity. The half-female, half-serpent women as a representative of federalism continues the narrative of feminine corruption, which had been so closely tied to the salons and court of the

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[55] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of Califronia Press, 1984), 94.
[56] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, 97.

Old Regime. The statute of Hercules represents another step in the Republic's process of replacing the negative characteristics of femininity – closely associated with the luxury and corruption of the court of Versailles – with the positive, democratic characteristics of masculinity.

Additionally, in the wake of the trials of public women such as Marie Antoinette, Madame Roland, and Olympe de Gouges, David's Hercules further emphasizes the place of men in the public sphere, as representative of the new social order. In *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, Lynn Hunt explains that by replacing the feminine image of Marianne, "the colossal male figure [of Hercules] represented more than just a repudiation of the modern, feminine civic image; it reminded its beholders that the revolution… was 'man's work'."[57] By replacing Marianne with Hercules, the Republic gains a masculine image that reflects the rising ideas regarding who belongs in private and public spaces. While effective in its goals to influence political and cultural images of the Republic, David's Hercules is just one example of systemic changes at the direction of government officials in their quest to restore order to the republic after the chaos of social and political revolution. In order to promote the birth of a new, republican nation, the government needed to present a masculine image that reflected the social order.

The process of legitimizing the new social order continued beyond the chaos of the Terror and into the reign of Napoleon, who finalized the subordination of women in political as well as social matters through his Civil Code. In the finals years before Napoleon's rise to power, government officials made further attempts to limit the French woman's sphere of influence in accordance with the Revolution's perceptions of gender dynamics. In 1796, the Council of the

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[57] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, 116.

Five Hundred officially barred women from occupying senior teaching positions, citing "interests of society and morality" for their decision.[58] This decree officially closed off yet another avenue for women to leave their mark on society. By barring women from these positions, government officials ensured that the only space in which women could "teach" was from within the home through their roles as republican mothers shaping future citizens. Through citing the "interests of society and morality" officials hark back to concerns over the ability of women to corrupt honorable citizens, such as in the case of Marie Antoinette in her corruption of Louis XVI. In the eyes of the Council of Five Hundred, the continued existence of women in the public sphere within senior teaching positions threatened society's general moral wellbeing, thus revealing the persistence of ideology that influenced the trials of public women during the Terror and the banning of women's political associations. By 1796, the time for women's contributions towards society – at least outside the home – had all but ceased. However, with the rise of Napoleon, women's very place within the home was targeted in a way that would finalize the process of women's subordination in a postrevolutionary France.

Cementing the previous decade's advancements in placing women at the mercy of government-imposed social restrictions, Napoleon's Civil Code attacked women's legal status in various forums, including marriage, property, and the court system. Such changes to the law removed all remaining access to the public sphere, and thus formalized women's confinement to that of the private. As part of the ever-important topic of citizenship in Napoleon's post-revolutionary France, the Civil Code connected women's citizenship status to that of their husbands. The severity of this link between, wife, husband, and citizenship can be found in Article 19 of the Civil Code, which states that a French woman that married a foreigner adopted

[58] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the age of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 145.

her husband's non-citizenship status.[59] This distinction proves that women in France had no personal claim to citizenship. Instead, it was only through her husband's status, as a member of the public sphere, that a woman's own status could be interpreted. While some historians may argue that Napoleon's rise ended the progress of the Revolution, the implementation of the Napoleonic Civil Code enforced patriarchal hierarchies that were first legitimized during the years of the National Convention. Therefore, Napoleonic policies such as Article 19 of the Civil Code serve as a continuation of the social restructuring that began during the Revolution. By rejecting women from participation within the legal system, the Civil Code finalizes the process of confining women to the private sphere.

French women certainly made their mark on the political stage during the first years of the Revolution. Protected by their corporations, women of the working class, such as the merchant flower sellers and fishwives, used their protected status as a tool to express their political and social interests as women and as French citizens. After the fall of the monarchy, these corporations, which existed by favor of the King during the Old Regime, lost the social protection they once held. While this allowed a wider audience of women to participate in the Revolution, such as Olympe de Gouges and the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, it also left women increasingly vulnerable as the revolutionary government began to target public women as unpatriotic. The increasingly negative reception of public women, developed from late enlightenment thinking on definitions of citizenship in terms of masculinity, took hold in judicial, legislative, and cultural shifts towards masculine superiority. By the time of Napoleon's Civil Code, the transformation of French society was complete: the time of queens, salonnieres, and fishwives had passed for the sake of a new France.

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[59] Jennifer Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789-1830* (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), 131.

As we continue to the events of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, it is important to keep in mind the experiences of these French women and the ideologies that eventually confined them to the private sphere. Despite the differences between the French Revolution of 1789 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910, both initially grew with the aid of women before sending them back to their domestic duties once the time came to establish a new government. At their cores, both revolutions sought to open political and social rights to the common man, but at the expense of the political and social autonomy of their women. By analyzing the shifts in the cultural and political makeup of French and Mexican societies, one will understand that even in the most radical social and political movements target women as a means of restoring order through separation from each country's new parameters of citizenship.

## CHAPTER THREE

*Navigating Public and Public Spaces in Prerevolutionary Mexico*

One hundred and twenty-one years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, Mexico began its own long journey to political and social revolution. Like the French Revolution, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 emerged as a response from both the peasantry and elites to a corrupt centralized government. History could only benefit from a detailed comparison of the treatment of public women during the French Revolution of 1789 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The reactionary response to public women during the French Revolution and its affects on the social and political wellbeing of French women has already been discussed at great length. Similar discussions can be made regarding the instrumental contributions of women during the Mexican Revolution as political activists and soldiers, before being neglected during the implementation of Revolutionary ideals such as equality in citizenship and agrarian reform, in the postrevolutioanry period. Despite the significant time separating these two revolutions, the Mexican Revolution witnessed similar mistreatment of women, despite their invaluable efforts in supporting the revolutionary cause.

In order to fully understand the impact of revolutionary and post-revolutionary life on gender roles in Mexico, one must first investigate the state of gender relations that existed in the decades, even centuries leading up to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Unlike France's Old Regime, Mexico's pre-revolution society already utilized private and public spaces as division between men and women, the consequences of which this thesis will investigate during an analysis of social codes at work during the country's colonial period. However, this strict division appeared to ease after independence from Spain, particularly during the Porfiriato,

during which time women went beyond their domestic seclusion to pursue careers as doctors, journalists, lawyers, and public servants, thus taking up space in the most public positions. Other examples of Mexican women stepping into the public sphere center on the longstanding *soldadera* tradition, through which women, mostly belonging to the lower class, followed soldiers on campaigns to provide food and carry supplies. The history of these *soldaderas*, along with the achievements of professional women of the Porfiriato, contextualizes the successful contribution made by women during the revolution as political advisors and female soldiers. At the same time, the details of social codes prevalent within Mexican culture, such as the significance of a woman's virtue and a man's masculinity, contextualize the reasons that revolutionary leaders actively silenced heroic revolutionary women after the armed conflict of the revolution.

Unlike France's Old Regime, Mexico's prerevolutionary society maintained separation of public and private spaces in accordance with clear gender codes. An analysis of gender codes throughout the course of Mexico's history, from the pre-colonial period through the late stages of the Porfiriato, provides insight into the parameters of public and private spaces before they became decimated by the revolutionary conflict, only to be reinstated in the years following the Revolution's armed stages. In the introduction of *Judas at the Jockey Club*, William Beezley analyzes an image of a cockfight in 1900 as an example of class division in Mexican society. When looking through a gendered lens, the same image can be used as a metaphor of gender division within Mexican society, in a similar way to how Beezley uses other Mexican traditions as metaphors for the social structures of the era. Beezley describes:

> … The owners of the cocks, one dressed in a tailor-made, western-cut suit with a homburg and the other in a tight-fitting *charro* suit with a felt sombrero; the elderly, powerful landowner

> looking on, supervising and sanctioning the contest; and the spectators, half in store-bought clothes standing in the shade and half in hand-woven cotton blouses in the sun.[60]

In this unique interpretation, this same image acts as a metaphor for the mechanisms of gender codes in place throughout Mexican history, from the late colonial period through the Porfiriato. The owners and landowners described represent the restrictive gender codes that policed men and women, as well as their behavior within their restrictive spheres. The spectators standing in the sun represent women in the context of Mexican society. The women can be found separated from men, in this interpretation are represented by the spectators in the shade, due to the division of public and private spheres. The beating sun also provides an apt metaphor for the pressure of societal expectations of feminine virtue, able to burn the reputation of women who challenge their place within the domestic sphere.

An analysis of prominent social codes during the late colonial period in Mexico emphasizes that a woman's reputation was virtuous and beyond reproach. The inherent link between a woman's reputation and her place within the home establishes a sense of division between public and private spheres. During the colonial era in Mexico, women's virtue was directly tied to the behavioral associations of their environments. Societal norms connected the outside world with immoral behavior and the internal, domestic spaces with morality and, most significantly, chastity.[61] This dichotomy left no room for interpretation: public spaces fostered immorality, leaving vulnerable members of society susceptible to moral corruption should they choose to participate in the public sphere. These distinctions were especially important for women to navigate because, as Sonia Lipsett Rivera explains in *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856*, "their status as chaste and honest women was central to their

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[60] William H Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 5.
[61] Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 70.

identity."[62] Public spaces were more or less off limits to women if they expected their reputation to remain beyond reproach. A woman who participated in life outside the boundaries of the home, thus entering the public sphere, flirted with immorality and risked a stain on her reputation. The traditional undertones of public and private spheres – and a woman's place within them –resurface less than a century later during the Mexican Revolution in response to a growing number of women in public spaces. By investigating these links, as they existed before the revolution, modern readers can better understand the ways in which revolutionary women became subjected to previous gender boundaries even after a revolution that claimed to address social inequities.

Whereas women were confined to private spaces in the name of decency, men could travel through public spaces unscathed. During the late colonial period, gender norms carefully dictated the superiority of men, gifting men control as head of a patriarchal system and forcing women to accept a role of subordination. Lipsett-Rivera specifies that, "the husband was the head and thus was to be obeyed, and the wife represented the limbs that had to submit to and work for the head."[63] Given the visual representation of "the limbs" in the context of the family system, women were therefore seen in servant-type role, fulfilling the whims of their husbands or fathers. When considering the biology behind this metaphor, it is important to note that the limbs never dictate the brain what it should or should not do, whereas the brain has control over every action of the limbs. This control can be pursued both consciously and subconsciously, which parallels the differences between the direct commands from a husband and the underlying social codes of society. The numerous accounts from Lipsett-Rivera's text further emphasize the consequences for women if they went against their husband's wishes or societal norms.

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[62] Lipsett-Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856*, 107.
[63] Lipsett-Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856*, 176.

However, women did not stay inside their homes for the entirety of their lives, unable to contribute to their wider communities. In fact, women in the colonial period occupied positions as factory workers, chefs, laundresses, merchants, and caretakers. Such women entered the public space for the betterment of their families and communities despite the negative connotation of public spaces for women. For example, neighbors called upon caretakers to mediate verbal and physical altercations.[64] The cases of these caretakers show an exception where a matriarchal figure can counter the power and influence of a patriarch. While wives were often at the mercy of their husbands, caretakers and other women were at times given the responsibility of balancing the discrepancies of power. By challenging the patriarchal hierarchy of the age, caretakers were among a number of exceptional women acting in accordance with gender roles, in caring for their communities as domestic figures, while also taking up space that countered the gender imbalance of domestic relationships.

While a woman's honor was intertwined with the moral implications of certain spaces, confining her almost entirely to the seclusion of the home, a man's honor during the late colonial period and into the Porfiriato depended more on his physical appearance, whether that be related to his behavior or choice of clothing. The emphasis of visual and physical masculinity throughout time contextualizes a traditional sense of masculinity in competition with femininity. It was widely believed that a man who ignored expectations of masculinity was, "naked of honor and clothed with shamelessness."[65] According to these social codes, expressions of masculinity ensured the safety of a man's honor. In contrast, if a woman were to encroach on a masculine sphere, her femininity, and by extension her honor, would be questioned. Men were required not only to exist in public spaces, but also needed to prove their right to be there through an

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[64] Lipsett-Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856*, 118.
[65] Lipsett-Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856*, 153.

expression of their masculinity. This belief system reinforces the reasoning behind reports of superiors punishing male soldiers during the mid-nineteenth century for wearing "feminine ornaments," such as earrings, believing such behavior risked tarnishing the Mexican military's professionalism.[66] Simply by adding articles not typically perceived as masculine created an illusion of nakedness in terms of a man's honor, almost as if a man's expression of femininity cancelled out his own masculinity. By adopting typical feminine accessories, soldiers risked not only their own dishonor, but also the dishonor of their wider military community. By appearing feminine in any way, men risked portraying themselves as weak. The idea of femininity being inherently detrimental to the reputation of the army proved persistent within the culture through each regime, and continued into the armed phases of the revolution and into the postrevolutionary period.

The extent to which men valued displays of masculinity during the Porfiriato, a period which encapsulates over thirty years of Mexican history immediately preceding the Revolution, can be found in the many life-threatening activities documented by William Beezley. These exhibitions, such as horse racing and bull fighting, reveal the state of masculinity as a theatrical production. Events like those described by Beezley provided opportunities for men of all classes to tout their masculinity through a willingness to defy reason. Whether spending beyond their means or participating in the physical spectacle, horse races, Beezley explains, "provided the opportunity for men… to demonstrate their willingness to take risk."[67] A select few men portrayed their masculine love of risk-taking "by riding in the gentlemen owners races," while

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[66] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 29-30.
[67] William H Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 31.

others "demonstrated their courage, their stoicism in the face of odds, by betting excessively."[68] Racing and gambling, seemingly unnecessary activities that carried serious consequences marked the essence of masculinity in this period.

While society simply required women to stay in their homes, men made a spectacle of their place within the public sphere. The greatest risks are found in the bull-fighting ring, where matadors "had to demonstrate the attributes most valued in this masculine order."[69] On display for all of society, matadors risked their lives for entertainment, but also the maintenance of their masculine image, which further emphasizes the expectation of male gender norms as a theatrical performance. As long as one acted according to masculine ideals, their reputation and honor as a man remained intact. Above all, these displays of masculinity, important enough to risk one's life, do not relate to gender codes in the same way they did for women in the late colonial period. While women at that time restricted their presence in the public sphere to maintain the virtue, and therefore their inner purity, norms of the Porfiriato called for men to maximize their public presence in order to secure their outward displays of masculinity. This documentation provides a glimpse into Mexican culture in the years leading up to the Revolution, thus providing context for consistency regarding male expectations within gender norms in society, even while others – specifically with regards to women – began to ease.

During the rule of Porfirio Díaz, whose policies sparked the political and social unrest that acted as the catalyst to the revolution, visions of stability and modernity altered the traditional social codes – at least for the middle and upper classes. Consistent with his vision of modernity, Díaz surrounded himself with men of intellect, creating a new interpretation on a

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[68] Ibid.

[69] William H Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 15.

hierarchical system based on Social Darwinist ideas that placed men of intellect at the top and the uneducated lower classes at their mercy. These men, known as positivists, or *científicos*, "viewed themselves as naturally selected elites in a Darwinian evolutionary process."[70] While chosen on a system of merit, Diaz's inner political circle remained out of reach for men of the lower class. In fact, *científicos* "considered themselves to be members of the superior race," and therefore able to choose policies on behalf of those whom they observed as inferior, and therefore unable to rule for themselves.[71]

The roles played by *científicos* in Díaz's government only expanded this new, intelligence-based hierarchical system, allowing policies to benefit the upper class and continue to suppress the low classes, and thus continuing a cyclical system of superiority of the rulers and subordination of those being ruled. Furthermore, this prioritization of intellectual ability alienated even those who would traditionally be considered ruling elites, the advice of whom Díaz abandoned in favor of the *científicos*. While the revolution challenged ideas regarding the political aptitude of the lower classes, especially in the case of revolutionary leader Emilio Zapata, women remained subjected to the rule of others even after the revolution. However, upper and middle class women's access to education during the late Porfiriato allowed them ways to navigate restrictions surrounding the public sphere as the Revolution grew closer.

While restrictive social norms still applied to women of the Porfiriato, their professional accomplishments during this period reveal an easing division between public and private spheres as Mexico approached revolution. The growing number of women entering professional careers

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[70] Shirlene Ann Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*, Women and Modern Revolution Series (Denver: Arden Press, 1990), 7.
[71] Natalia Priego, *Positivism, Science, and 'the Scientists' in Porfirian Mexico: A Reappraisal* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 23.

in traditionally public spaces points to the ever-adapting roles of women in Mexican society. Before revolution broke out in 1910, Mexican women graduated from national universities to become doctors, dentists, lawyers, and scientists.[72] Women were not only stepping out of the domestic sphere during the Porfiriato, but were also taking steps to grasp positions of leadership in their communities. Even more women, mostly belonging to the middle and upper classes, acquired the necessary schooling to become educators, nurses, and even public servants.[73] Not only did these women pursue their right to an education, but did so in public spaces: classrooms, hospitals, and government offices. While these experiences are mostly limited to women of the upper and middle classes, their achievements nevertheless show the gradual rise of Mexican women in the public sphere. In comparison to the stricter social codes in place during the colonial period, the achievements of women during the last ten years of the Porfiriato points to an adapting social landscape beginning to accept the presence of women in more public roles.

The presence of women in public spaces during the Porfiriato, particularly as journalists, points to the immense influence of such women in the early buildup of social and political unrest. Through their existing influence as writers with a relatively large audience, women during the era of the Porfiriato spread ideas of reform and, therefore, provided their voices to the revolution. Mexican women have a long history as journalists and publishers that long predates the feminist movements of the Porfiriato and post-revolutionary Mexico; however, it is important to note the dramatic increase in the number of journals published by and for women during the

[72] Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*, 12.
[73] Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*, 29.

Porfiriato.[74] Do to rising political tension as the revolution neared, women used their platforms as writers to "expand their subject matter to political and socioeconomic topics."[75] By using their existing platforms in the literary field, female journalists spread revolutionary ideology to women with access to such mediums. Therefore, these journalists played a major role not only in expanding their traditional content, but also building the opportunity for women to take part in the exciting discussions relating to the revolution.

By exposing women to revolutionary ideas and stories, other women could become involved in their own ways, armed with reliable information to form their own opinions on relevant topics. Some of the women's magazines published during the time of rising political unrest in early nineteenth century Mexico include *Artes y Letras* (*Arts and Letters*), *El Tiempo* (*The Time*), *Diario del Hogar* (*Diary of the Home*), and *La Mujer Mexicana* (*The Mexican Woman*).[76] Published by feminist organization *Sociedad Protectora de la Mujer* (Women's Protection Society), *La Mujer Mexicana* "was edited by three middle class professional women: Dr. Columbia Rivera, a medical doctor; María Sandoval de Zarco, a lawyer; and Dolores Correa Zapata, a teacher."[77] With three female editors, *La Mujer Mexicana* produced content by and for women navigating the ever-shifting dimensions of public and private spheres, which were being increasingly challenged by the magazine's own audience: middle and upper class women. The involvement of three educated women, at least two with advanced degrees, further emphasizes

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[74] Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*, 27.
[75] Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*, 8.
[76] Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*, 28.
[77] Ibid.

the role of educated, middle class women of the Porfiriato on the front lines of political discourse as the first revolutionary phase approached.

Battlefields constituted arguably the most vital public sphere, with which many Mexican women were not unfamiliar due to their historic role as camp followers, also known as *soldaderas*. The *soldadera* tradition, which history remembers mostly in the context of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 in the images of *Adelita* and *La Valentina*, can be traced back to the ancient native Mexica. Centuries before Mexico fell into years of interpersonal conflict during the revolution, women followed the Mexica armies to provide them with food and carry their supplies.[78] Not until the period of Spanish conquest did female camp followers adopt the term soldadera. The title stemmed from the practice of Spanish soldiers giving their wages, or *saldada*, to the women in exchange for meals and supplies.[79] *Soldaderas* quickly became invaluable due to the services provided during centuries of sporadic armed conflict over the course of the colonial era. The rise in armed conflict dating from the arrival of the Spanish led to a rise in demand for the *soldadera's* services on both sides of the fighting. As Elizabeth Salas explains in *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, working as a *soldadera* "became a way for poor lower class women to eke out a meager living for themselves and for their children."[80] Lower class women's utilization of the soldadera system as a means of survival helps explain how so many Mexican women acted as *soldaderas* for foreign armies, such as those of the French and Spanish, in the years before independence. The relationship between class and the soldadera tradition points to a desperation for work and social mobility that exists for women of the lower class. Beyond a soldaderas role sustaining Mexican soldiers, her position

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[78] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, ii.
[79] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, xii.
[80] Ibid.

also provided her with food, relative shelter, and sometimes marriage. Attaching oneself to a soldier, no matter for which side he fought, eased the trials of lower class women. Despite the moral implications of life in public spaces, especially in the context of stereotypes surrounding soldaderas as mere prostitutes, poor women still chose to live as female camp followers during the colonial era and continuing into each phase of the Revolution of 1910.

By the 1810 Wars of Independence, the cultural and strategic significance of the soldadera tradition was woven into the fabric of the nation. While their necessity among armed forces was certainly felt through public pleas for women to join the fight for independence, soldaderas remained the targets of vicious stereotypes. During this period, both the insurgents and royalist sides benefited from the mass-mobilization of Mexican women participating as soldaderas.[81] Since soldiers relied on their soldaderas to cook for them and carry their supplies, the success and sustainment of military campaigns were directly linked to the support of *soldaderas*. It can be difficult, within this context, to understand how *soldaderas* have long been overlooked as time marches on. The reason for this glaring oversight rests in contemporary views of *soldaderas* simply as wives, mothers, or prostitutes of soldiers. Articles and illustrations targeted women by urging them, "to avenge the deaths of male relatives by going to war…"[82] Women played an active role during the Wars of Independence; however, the men around them nevertheless questioned their place within the context of war.

During the Independence movement, women used their own voices to emphasize the importance of women's participation, entering the public realm of print in order to encourage other women to move beyond the private sphere. Doña Leona Vicario, who acted as a recruiter, messenger, and smuggler for the insurgents, wrote the following defense of the *soldaderas* in *El*

[81] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 26.
[82] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 27.

*Federalista*: "Love is not the only motive of women's actions. They are capable of all human emotions; and the desire for the glory and liberty of their country is not foreign to them."[83] Vicario embodies the sentiment of countless women seeking to support their country by taking up the roles of *soldaderas*. Without these women, "glory and liberty of their country" would be beyond reach. Without aid from the soldaderas for essential resources, the Independence movement would be unsustainable. Furthermore, as Vicario insists, many women chose the life of a *soldadera* as a response to a patriotic call, much like the women of the Society of Revolutionary Republican women in France more than a hundred years prior.

The experiences and personal views of *soldaderas*, found in minimal academic sources, reveal the complexities of the role of a camp follower as a woman infringing on the public spaces of war with the intent of fulfilling their duties of domesticities. The navigation between these two ideas – of breaking and keeping with traditional gender roles – places the soldaderas themselves at risk for ridicule, despite patriotic intentions. An insurgent soldadera named Luisa Martínez "considered fighting in defense of the country one of the traditional roles of Mexican women."[84] Women such as Luisa Martínez believed in their connection to the *soldadera* tradition as Mexican women, despite the encroachment on public spaces of the military. The tradition Luisa mentions perhaps connects with the overwhelming expectations of domesticity, which are inherently linked to the experiences of the *soldadera* through her job cooking and carrying supplies for her soldier. Such beliefs help explain why so many women became soldaderas throughout Mexican history despite the negative connotations of the position.

Many soldaderas honored their domestic duties by following their husbands, brothers, or sons during military campaigns – a common practice that would limit the memory of these

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 28.

women as wives and mothers, and neglect their roles as vital resources for military campaigns. One such woman, Augustina Ramírez, "watched her husband die in battle… worked as a nurse and would go to the battlefield to care for her sons who were wounded."[85] It is important to note that Augustina was remembered not for her bravery on the field as she tended to the sick and wounded, but instead simply as "a marvelous example of Mexican Motherhood."[86] Memorializing Augustina as an "example of Mexican Motherhood" only emphasizes the context through which government officials viewed the role of soldaderas. Despite risking their lives, soldaderas could only be accepted as domestic servants or mothers rather than soldiers. Augustina's story is far from an anomaly: her story resonates with the thousands of soldaderas, as well as the female soldiers, who sustained the armed phases of the revolution.

Without a foundational understanding of the social codes and traditions of pre-revolutionary Mexico, one misses a vital piece required to comprehend the significance of women's roles in the revolution, as well as the reasons for their erasure at the hands of the revolution's own leaders. From the late colonial period through the Porfiriato, women in Mexican society found new strategies to challenge patriarchy and male-centered spaces. Yet, as these women discovered new spaces to occupy, men continued to react to those gains by using their power to deny them such opportunities. By the end of the Porfiriato, women had in fact gained spaces that men had not fully closed off by the start of the Revolution, through access to education and positions and female followers. Women used these spaces as momentum to seek new freedoms from gender codes. Our last chapter will detail the ways Mexican women of the revolutionary period built upon the experiences of their predecessors during a time of political and social upheaval.

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[85] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 33.
[86] Ibid.

## CHAPTER FOUR

*The Legacy of Political Activists, Soldaderas, and Female Soldiers*

While the Mexican revolution accomplished significant improvements in the country's political and social structures, the existing literature, similar to that of the French Revolution, overlooks the same groups the Revolution also neglected: women. This chapter analyzes the complicated relationship between gender and the Mexican Revolution in order to show that even the most radical political and social movements have the tendency to leave women behind, despite their personal contributions as *soldaderas*, political supporters, and female soldiers. The following chapter begins by detailing examples of the participation of Mexican women in the revolution, particularly in their physical presence on the battlefields as *soldaderas* and female soldiers despite the unconventionality of a woman in the public sphere. The chapter then shifts to discuss how, during the postrevolutionary period, men removed women from the narrative of the revolution. Through cultural as well as legislative means, men promoted a wholly masculine narrative and returned women to the shadows of the private sphere where they could be more easily managed. Despite the instrumental work accomplished by Mexican women throughout the various phases of the Revolution, as former revolutionaries-turned government officials sacrificed women's political and social aims in order to secure order throughout the nation.

The role women played as *soldaderas*, as detailed in the previous chapter, was not a foreign concept at the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. While some women were forced into roles as *soldaderas*, others accompanied their male family members into battle as a

combination of cook, nurse, and any other domestic needs that might be required.[87] History largely recognizes *soldaderas* as the unofficial support system of the armed revolution, but, in reality, the revolution would not have sustained without the duties fulfilled by *soldaderas*. As the revolution increased in magnitude, particularly during its third phase, the need for soldaderas to provide soldiers with necessary care, such as cooking and nursing, became evermore vital to the success of the revolution. Without the work of these women one can only imagine how quickly the revolutionary factions would have crumbled. The importance of detailing the contributions of Mexican women during the revolutionary period lies in the unrecognized place women hold in its historiography. Countless women answered the call of the revolution, but as we will see further in the chapter, they are largely looked down upon by contemporaries and in history as mere prostitutes.

Some women went beyond their roles as *soldaderas* and entered the public sphere in as female soldiers, further challenging social norms of the time in terms of domesticity. These women abandoned their cookery for riffles and trousers, challenging the very foundations of Mexican culture. As Tabea Alexa Linhard explains in *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and Spanish Civil War*, "the urgency of battles, together with the daily violence, rendered the divisions between the public and the domestic domains obsolete."[88] Despite being brought up to understand that their place belonged in the home, caring for their families, numerous women took the chaos of the revolution as an opportunity to challenge those norms in order to fight.

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[87] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austen: University of Texas Press, 1990), 39.
[88] Tabea Alexa Linhard, *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and Spanish Civil War* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 34.

While historiography of the revolution often overlooks the contributions made by women on the battlefield, their presence was not lost on contemporary audiences. In June 1913, an article published by the Mexican Herald reported on a small group of female soldiers in a group of four hundred men, dressing in men's clothing and fully armed.[89] The author noticing this small group of women suggests that their very appearance, challenging the norm of the day, made them stand out among a large number of troops. Such reporting points to the existence of female soldiers from relatively early on in the armed conflict between the various revolutionary factions. The women identified in the article represent just a small fraction of women who went beyond the threshold of femininity in order to take part in the revolution, even if their participation would cost their reputation among "civil" society.

Women from the middle and upper classes, aided by their Porfiriato educations and careers, played vital roles in supporting Francisco Madero's overthrow of Porfirio Díaz. While their support pushed the resistance of the Díaz regime, the women behind Madero reveal that the first phase of the revolution was largely made possible by the upper and middle classes in fundraising and administrative roles, though nevertheless effective. In September 1910, feminist organization Hijas de Cuahtémoc held a march protesting the Díaz regime, "declaring it was time for Mexican women to recognize that their 'rights and obligations go much further than just the home.'"[90] The protest's sponsorship by the Hijas de Cuahtémoc indicate the wealth of their members, and therefore serves as evidence of the involvement of middle and upper class women during the Revolution's first phase. By appealing to the "obligations" of Mexican women to join the Revolution, the Hijas de Cuahtémoc pushed similar sentiments as those used during the Independence movement. Furthermore, the women's group addresses the necessity of Mexican

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[89] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 41.
[90] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 34.

women to "go much further than just the home," meaning they should not remain in the domestic sphere if they, too, desired change. The call to action made by the Hijas de Cuahtémoc points to the wealthier and educated women of Mexico seizing the opportunity to act, using their privilege as a means to propel themselves into the public sphere.

In addition to the support of women's groups throughout Mexico, Madero also enlisted the help of well-educated women in his political quest. Many of Madero's female supporters benefited from the late Porfiriato's increase in women's pursuit of higher education, which no doubt benefited Madero's own success. Some of these educated women included Inés Malváez, who worked as a schoolteacher, and Paulina Maraver Cortés, a professor and staunch Madero supporter.[91] Whereas the Hijas de Cuahtémoc highlight the wealth that supported women's political activism in the first phase of the Revolution, the placement of women such as Malváez and Maraver Cortés within Madero's inner circles brings attention to the level of education that early revolutionary women used to their advantage. One of Madero's own spies was a woman: Josefina Ranzeta, the "daughter of a wealthy planter… and educated in a Washington, D.C. boarding school."[92] History remembers Ranzeta for her successful mission to retrieve invaluable information and documents from the tent of Pascual Orozco, one of Madero's political enemies.[93] Afforded an excellent education, Ranzeta proved herself as a key resource for Madero and one of many active women within the first revolutionary phase to have an advanced education. Her ability not only to find her way within Orozco's camp, but also gain access to Orozco's own personal space, highlights her skills in navigating dangerous situations. Ranzeta's

[91] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 37-8.
[92] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 38.
[93] Ibid.

story begins a transition for Mexican women taking on active roles on the battlefield, beyond the domestic services of *soldaderas*.

The second phase of the revolution, which began as a coup engineered by the U.S. Ambassador and General Victoriano Huerta, rose and fell quickly. Regarded as a conservative counterrevolution to Madero's overthrow of Porfirio Díaz, the second phase lacked the radical social shifts found in the first and third phases. Consistent with his military career as a general, the focus of Huerta's regime centered on "consolidating his personal power and increasing the size, firepower, and influence of the army."[94] With such focus on the restoration of the military, little chance stood for women seeking political participation within the Huerta administration in comparison to that of Madero. Furthermore, progress stalled during the second stage due to the fact that Huerta's regime heavily policed political engagement.[95] The protests of revolutionary women's groups such as the Hijas de Cuahtémoc would fall under the discourse actively discouraged by the militaristic regime. For these reasons, significant progress in women's involvement in the revolution concentrated in the first and third revolutions.

The increasing violence in response to the Huerta administration turned to open civil war – that pitted the Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa led Conventionalists against the Constitutionalists commanded by Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregon – which also relied heavily on the support of women. The success and acceptance of soldaderas and female soldiers during this third phase varied from leader to leader. Soldaderas, female soldiers, and intellectual women flocked to Zapata's cause, where the Conventionalist leader welcomed them.

[94] Michael J. Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940* (Alberquerque: university of New Mexico Press, 2002), 93.
[95] Ibid.

Dolores Jiménez, a Zapatista colonel, held such esteem within Zapata's circle that she penned the introduction of the *Plan de Ayala*, Zapata's historic manifesto published in 1911.[96] The *Plan de Ayala*, which detailed agrarian as well as social reforms, embodied Emiliano Zapata's radical platform and even the Revolution itself. Dolores Jiménez's authorship of the manifesto's introduction forever secures her place in history. Additionally, her part in the production of the *Plan de Ayala* marks a moment during which a woman ventures into the public sphere not only as a soldier but also as a political figure. By providing her voice to the political stage via the written word, Jiménez establishes a common scene of women supporters of Zapata's cause.

Another Zapatista colonel, Juana Gutiérrez de Mendoza, took command of her own regiment in 1914 while simultaneously publishing and editing her own newspaper, *Vesper*.[97] Gutiérrez de Mendoza shows modern readers that the stories of women such as Dolores Jiménez were not uncommon. As a colonel in Zapata's army, Gutiérrez de Mendoza played a vital role in the group's reputation as powerful guerilla fighters. In addition to her role on the battlefield, Gutiérrez de Mendoza expanded her political participation through print. Building from Mexico's strong tradition of female journalists, Gutiérrez de Mendoza used her privilege as an editor to spread news of the Revolution, refusing to limit her presence in the public sphere.

During the third phase of the Revolution, women not only fought in Constitutionalist armies, but also served as official representatives of top officials, thus going beyond the battlefield and onto the political stage. Carranza's willingness to grant women such influence only emphasizes the ways in which revolution acted as a catalyst to momentarily freeing women from the private sphere. One of these influential women, Artemisa Sáenz Royo, "a member of

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[96] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 41.
[97] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 48.

the Red Battalions of the Casa del Obrero Mundial," represented Carranza on official business, including a visit to Havana and the Second Feminist Congress in 1916, before earning the rank of colonel in 1920.[98] Sáenz Royo's military experience and eventual rank as colonel suggest Carranza's trust in her on the battlefield. As an official for the Constitutionalist cause, Sáenz Royo establishes her place within the public sphere, far from her traditional duties as a wife and mother. By acting as a representative for Carranza in Havana, Sáenz Royo continued the ever-growing influence of women on the political stage, from the schoolteachers of Madero's inner circle, through the legacy Zapatista Dolores Jiménez, and then Artemisa. Furthermore, Sáenz Royo's presence at the Second Feminist Convention emphasizes Carranza's willingness to entertain the demands of women in order to maintain their support during the final years of the Revolution. As women looked beyond the years of conflict towards a time of permanent freedoms from restrictive gender roles and capitalize from the Revolution, Sáenz Royo's story reveals that some male leaders such as Carranza were listening, if not at least paying close attention.

While Zapata and Carranza recognized the instrumental aid of their female supporters throughout the third phase of the Revolution, Pancho Villa's attitudes towards, and treatment of, *soldaderas* and female soldiers under his command points to a growing negative response to women on the battlefield as the third phase came to a close. Although female camp followers held a place of tradition in the Mexican military[99] centuries before even the first Europeans stepped on shore, negative attitudes towards the use *soldaderas* quickly began to shift as scores of women answered the call of the Revolution. While some may have considered the division

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[98] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 50.

[99] While the term "soldadera" was not adopted until the period Spanish Conquest, female camp followers are known to have played a large role within Mexica armies by cooking for soldiers, carrying supplies, and nursing the wounded.

between the public and private spheres to be "obsolete" during the revolution, many others, including revolutionary leaders, disagreed. Francisco Villa's own beliefs of a woman's need to be protected and her inability to make sound moral decision heavily influenced his harsh attitudes towards soldaderas, female soldiers, and women's suffrage.[100] These beliefs held by Villa, despite his status as a legendary figure of the revolution, highlight a major discrepancy between the ideals of the revolution – regarding political equality among social classes – and the social norms of the day. In Villa's eyes, freeing women from their domestic realm was far from his mind. Furthermore, his understanding of women needing to be protected reveals a direct conflict with the missions of both *soldaderas* and female soldiers fighting at that time. Even after the close of the Revolution's third phase, and the Constitutionalists began looking forward, the topic of *soldaderas* remained a concern for the masculine image of the Mexican military.

Just as Federal officials had once looked to rid themselves of the *soldaderas*, leaders of postrevolutionary Mexico took aim at female camp followers, blaming them for holding back the Mexican troops from reaching their full potential. For example, government officials revisited the need to break from the *soldadera* tradition in 1925, claiming that by utilizing the soldaderas, the Mexican army exposed itself to "lamentable backwardness."[101] Furthermore, General Joaquín Amaro, the Minister of War under President Calles, regarded the soldaderas as, "the chief cause of vice, illness, crime and disorder."[102] *Soldaderas* not only risked their own reputation by venturing out of the domestic sphere, but also threatened to damage that of the public with their very presence. Postrevolutionary leaders enacted policies and made statements showing that they believed Mexico could never reach its true masculine potential and progress toward modernity if

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[100] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 45.
[101] Tabea Alexa Linhard, *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and Spanish Civil War*, p. 34.
[102] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 49.

they remained bound to female military supporters. These statements, made by representatives of the government, highlight a particular similarity in thought to those of French revolutionaries and Enlightenment thinkers, such as Rousseau. In both cases, men associate women, specifically public women, with immorality and chaos.

The anti-feminine sentiments harbored by prominent leaders of the revolution and its subsequent government point to persistent social norms during and after the revolution. Such norms were repeated in contemporary print culture, reaching wide audiences and influencing the public in the face of a social movement that lured women from their homes to accompany soldiers or fight like them. In a 1918 newspaper article from *El Correo* in Yucatán, one author shared a dramatic story to warn young women of the dangers of leaving home, which points to the survival of traditional gender norms, specifically the morality of young women, during the revolutionary period. The tale depicts three young women who leave home to find potential suitors, during which journey a wealthy older woman convinces them to leave Mexico with their new suitors for Europe, never seen or heard from again.[103] The ominous tone of the article emphasizes the fear within many communities that young, vulnerable women would trust the wrong people and risk tarnishing their virtue. While the women most likely did not meet an unfavorable end, as the newspaper article suggests, the tale nevertheless aims to scare young women in the region into following traditional moral guidelines set in place at the time. The urgency of the story reflects the prominence of women the domestic sphere to join revolutionary armies as *soldaderas*, emphasizing the common connections made between the life of a *soldadera* and that of a prostitute. In addition to melodramatic stories spread to scare young women into conforming to generations-old gender norms, the real-life stories of women

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[103] Stephanie Smith, *Gender and the Revolution: Yucatán and the Realities of Patriarchy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 21-22.

struggling to reenter society after experiencing freedom from gender norms show the strength of tradition over revolution.

Gender norms continued to restrain women in Mexican society long after the end of revolutionary conflict, especially those returning from time spent on the battlefield. The return of women who experienced freedom from restrictive guidelines of femininity brought an extreme response from local community, with a show of force that overpowered the temporary hold on feminine appearance and behavior. Once a respected soldier of the revolution, Colonel María de la Luz Espinoza continued to dress like a man, carry a firearm, and drink alcohol well after the fighting ceased, resulting in her alienation from her community.[104] With the revolution over, Mexican society quickly reverted back to traditional notions of femininity and masculinity, as well as public and private space. María's experiences within her own community, even after returning as a war hero, stress the reality for women soldiers at the time: any sense of independence or individuality that reached beyond traditional gender norms must be corrected. Both the newspaper article and the life of Colonel María de la Luz Espinoza serve as sober reminders of the restrictions of the female presence within the public sphere, challenging any blanket statement that might suggest the revolutionary period meant greater freedom for women in Mexican society.

The portrayal of women, both soldaderas and female soldiers, in popular *corridos* such as "La Valentina" and "Adelita" overwhelmingly highlighted their physical beauty and diminished the significance of their roles to the revolutionary cause, contributing to the masculinization of the revolution's legacy. The love of one soldier for his female companion, as portrayed in the *corrido*, "La Valentina," became a classic theme for *corridos* written during the revolution, but

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[104] Professor James Mestaz, Lecture, 27 February 2018.

the *corridor* tradition often misrepresents women's roles during the course of the conflict through a process of romanticization. The passionate love of this particular soldier comes into question later in the song when the narrator reveals that other women, besides Valentina, care for his needs:

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|---|---|
| Una Juana y otra Juana | One Juana and another Juana |
| dos Juanas tengo a la vez, | I have two Juanas at a time, |
| una me tiendo la cama | one makes my bed |
| ya otra me da de comer.[105] | and another feeds me. |

Using the term "Juana," a slang term for the female equivalent to a male soldier,[106] the narrator takes away the women's identities while simultaneously reducing their purpose to making beds – which also denotes the stereotype of prostitution among the *soldaderas* – and preparing meals. While the tale of "La Valentina" is disguised as a dedication of love from one soldier to his *soldadera*, history shows us that the women depicted in these *corridos* suffered for their loyalty to their soldiers and to the revolution. As Elizabeth Salas explains in *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, the real "La Valentina," believed to be a female soldier named Valentina Ramírez, lived her life after the revolution in poor conditions, struggling to afford food.[107] If the true identity of "La Valentina" does belong to Valentina Ramírez, her story reveals that not only do popular *corridos* paint revolutionary women as domestic servant, but also actively erase the life-threatening work these women accomplished, such as traveling in harsh conditions and running into active battles to heal the wounded.

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105 "Valentina: Nuevo corrido." Prints and Photographs Department, Library of Congress. LC-DIG-ppmsc-04482.

106 María Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 111.

107 Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, 51.

Unlike “La Valentina,” the widely popular *corrido*, “Adelita,” briefly addresses the bravery and loyalty of female soldiers and *soldaderas*. However, the narrator simultaneously strips the subject, and the women she came to represent, of her dignity as well as any true independence. In the song, the author disguises a reinforcement of patriarchy with a flattering portrayal of the female soldier:

| | |
|---|---|
| Women and men | Las mujeres y los hombres |
| Give their lives for the country | Por su patria dan la vida |
| with valor | con valor |
| Valentina, Jesusita already fought | Valentina y Jesusita ya pelearon |
| but they never die | pero nunca morirá |
| Adelita never dies | ni la Adelita morirá |
| always fighting by the side of her soldier.[108] | peleando al lado de su Juan. |

The author directly acknowledges the sacrifices made by both men and women during the revolution, but states that these women fight and die, not alone, but “by the side of her soldier.” While the above *corrido* mentions the “valor” of female soldiers, their dependence on men remains present and limits their representation as strong women. The notion that the women “never die” could contribute to a belief that soldaderas live as expendable entities of emotional support. Additionally, the popular omission of surnames prevents such corridos from praising the merit of one particular woman, instead choosing to generalize all *soldaderas* as a whole. Corridos like “La Valentina” and “Adelita” provide a vital resource in the evaluation of the extent to which the revolution improved the lives of women, revealing the ways narratives can be altered to fit a more masculine appearance.

Despite Carranza’s willingness to utilize the help of women during the third phase of the Revolution, such as Artemisa Sáenz Royo, actions taken by his government show a return to

[108] Wasserman, *The Mexican Revolution: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012), 91.

gender norms immediately following the conflict. An order given by Carranza's Minister of War on March 18, 1916 stated, "all military appointments given to married or single women, whatever be the services that they have given, are declared null and void."[109] Rather than recognize women for their contribution to the Constitutionalist cause, Carranza's government instead erased any official trace of female involvement in the armed conflict. This order stripped countless women, including María Tereza Rodriguez, of their pensions and veteran status, despite their level of rank within the revolutionary forces of Zapata and Carranza as well as their impact on the battlefield. One woman, María Tereza Rodriguez, reached the rank of colonel during the revolution under Carranza's command, but was not officially recognized by the commission until 1962, due to a lack of supporting documents.[110] María Tereza's disappearance from the revolution, purely in terms of official recognition, points to the fragile masculinity of the new revolutionary government in its quest to maintain a carefully curated image to the world as a respectable nation with a modern army.

The push to erase women like Rodriguez from the history pages shows consistency with earlier thinking by federal officials regarding the detrimental image *soldaderas* gave the Mexican military. If simple camp followers could risk the reputation of an entire army, the active participation of women on the battlefield served an even greater danger. This insecurity shows a continuation of previous generations of *machismo*, revealing that not all aspects of society had changed after the victory of the Constitutionalists. Of the 60,000 women that applied for official

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[109] Wasserman, *The Mexican Revolution: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012), 91.
[110] Martha Eva Rocha, "The Faces of the Rebellion," *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2007), 30.

recognition as veterans of the revolution, only 450 received approval.[111] With deliberate intent, the Mexican government effectively erased these female soldiers from the initial history of the revolution. This injustice highlights the limitations of promoting the revolution as a turning point for women in Mexican society, and reveals the extent to which the revolutionary government worked to frame the physical conflict as one of strict, unwavering masculinity.

The 1917 Constitution, while groundbreaking in terms of land reform, labor regulation, and promises of social security, left women outside its reach due to the restrictions of traditional gender norms. The very wording of Articles 34 and 27 of the 1917 Constitution, central to the revolutionary agenda regarding rights of political participation as well as land reform, prevented women from voting, running for public office, or benefiting from land reform for decades after the conclusion of the revolution. Despite the active participation of female soldiers and *soldaderas* during the revolution and the increasing vocalization of the women's liberation movement in the years following, article 34 of the Constitution restricted female suffrage until 1953 through a denial of citizenship.[112] The article specifically relates to the status of citizenship, and therefore the ability to vote in elections. The issue lies in the wording of the Article, which mentions "*ciudadanos de la República*," which does not differentiate between male and female, but instead denotes the exclusivity of male citizenship.

Without the rights of citizenship as designed by the 1917 Constitution, women also lacked the obligations associated with citizenship, including voting and running for public office. The hypocrisy behind the decision to exclude women from the vote magnifies with the knowledge that women played such significant roles in support of the revolution. The decades

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[111] Martha Eva Rocha, "The Faces of the Rebellion," *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2007), 17.
[112] S. E. Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2007), 6.

between the ratification of the Constitution and the amendment that granted women's suffrage shows the extent to which the Mexican government protected the institutionalized divisions between public and private spheres. The continuation of women's secondary-class status, furthered by the neglect to specify the citizenship of women as well as men in article 34, shows the failure of the revolution to positively alter gender norms in Mexican society.

In addition to suffrage, the benefits of land reform failed to reach Mexican women until the 1970s, a result of continued subordination of women to their male family members. When looking at the first prints of the 1917 Constitution, the qualifications for receiving a plot of communal land clearly state, "only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to require ownership" of the nation's land and water.[113] The English translation holds no differentiation between female and male citizens; however, the original Spanish translation, simply "los mexicanos," as seen in a copy stored in the Library of Congress, and reinforced the preferential treatment of male landownership. For too long, gender norms prevented an interpretation of the constitution's text that would allow women to own and inherit land without conditions. While the victorious Constitutionalists celebrated their progressive reforms in front of the nation and the world, at least half the population at the time could not enjoy the long-awaited realization of land reform.

Legislation passed by the Mexican government on suffrage and land reform furthered the second-class status of women despite the significant roles they played throughout the period of political turmoil. The shortcomings of the 1917 Constitution emphasize the failure of revolutionary rhetoric to create real, tangible change for women in the eyes of the law, in addition to society. Whereas Constitutionalist leaders such as Carranza championed women in

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[113] Wasserman, *The Mexican Revolution: A Brief History with Documents*, 123.

positions of power within their ranks during the third phase of the revolution, once time came to bring order to the nation those same leaders turned away from Mexican women, and actively campaigned against gender equality through legislative processes that would not be resolved for decades.

Despite a momentary relaxing of gender norms, which resulted in unprecedented involvement of female soldiers in armed conflict, overall public sentiments did not subside enough to bring lasting change to Mexican society that could survive beyond the context of the revolution. Most importantly, we must acknowledge the failure of the government to repay women for their service to the revolution. Not only did Carranza’s Minister of War decommission female soldiers, but the 1917 Constitution also withheld the right to vote as well as access to land reform grants. Revolutionary leaders took advantage of women – motivated to fight for progressive ideals – only to repay their service with actions to belittle or completely erase their contributions, instead choosing to return to traditional gender relations once the conflict subsided.

# CONCLUSION

The French Revolution of 1789 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910 contain infinite accounts of female participation that helped shape the outcomes of history, however, when it came time for revolutionary ideals, such as equal citizenship, to come to fruition, women were left behind. Remembering the French and Mexican Revolutions as empowering moments for women has proved to be a limited perspective, given the state of gender norms in the years following both Revolutions. Hopefully, the revisiting of the accomplishments of these public women will in some part correct the injustices they experienced at the hands of their postrevolutionary governments.

During the years of the National Assembly, women participated in political discourse were protected through their membership in prerevolutionary institutions. As the National Convention broke down the system of the Old Regime, women who traditionally would not have been protected by corporations became politically involved through publications and political associations. Each of these women contributed to the political discourse, despite growing opposition to women in the newly created public sphere. Legislative acts, such as those limiting available professions and qualifications of citizenship, cemented women's new subordinate relationships with the men in their lives. In the eyes of Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau, and radical revolutionary leaders, the separation of women was necessary if the Revolution were to succeed in its mission of equality among men.

Due to the existence of public and private sphere distinctions before the Mexican Revolution, women, whether acting as advisors, *soldaderas*, or female soldiers, risked their reputation for the chance to make their mark on history. Building from the *soldadera* tradition,

women sustained Federal, Conventionalist, and Constitutionalist troops; however, these women were remembered as mere prostitutes through the legacy of popular *corridos*. During the first revolutionary stage, middle and upper class women used their wealth and education to support the Díaz resistance. Other women continued this political involvement on the battlefield as female soldiers and even colonels during the Revolution's third phase. As fighting gave way to governing, legislators worked to return these women to the domestic sphere through a denial of citizenship before also denying women status as veterans of the Revolution. This last measure worked to erase women from the Revolution's narrative, emphasizing the prioritization of the masculine image of the nation.

These stories reveal a complex association in history between citizenship and social order, linked not only with masculinity as full participants, but also with women through their sexual difference. The creation of, in the case of the French Revolution, and return to, in the case of the Mexican Revolution, distinct private and public spheres in the years after revolution was an integral piece of ensuring progress. By enforcing the borders of the public and private spheres, and specifically women's rightful place within that of the private, these postrevolutionary governments sought order after toppling the previous regimes. Such order, in the case of both the French and Mexican Revolutions, was found in the "othering" of women. By defining citizenship, one must also define who cannot be a citizen. In late eighteenth century France and early twentieth century Mexico, only the exclusion of women could legitimize the equality of men. Even the most patriotic women could not escape this process of "othering," in terms of citizenship, thus emphasizing the importance of placing all women below men in France and Mexico's respective social orders after revolution.

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