In examining the years 1789 through 1793 in Caen and Limoges, our emphasis thus far has been on events, personalities, and political chronology. We have seen that the administrators of Caen and Calvados placed themselves firmly in the federalist camp in June, 1793, and that Limoges and the Haute-Vienne, though tentatively at first, supported the Montagnard Convention. Previous chapters have suggested that early events in the Revolution, economic conditions, and personal ties and relationships all played a part in determining the actions of each town during this crucial period. Throughout the Revolution, and particularly during the revolt itself, the Calvados departmental administration played a dominant role in Caen politics, while in Limoges, the Jacobin club and the municipal council restrained the federalist tendencies of the moderate departmental administration.

The crucial question that remains unanswered is Why? Why were the people of Limoges, the *menu peuple*, able to intervene and influence the decisions of their elected officials, while those in Caen were not? This question is not easily answered; but by asking a number of other questions, we may be able to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. First, who were the men that the people of Calvados and the Haute-Vienne elected to represent their political interests and administer their public needs? From what social milieu
did they come, what were their occupations, and—for those elected in 1792—what was their political experience? With these questions in mind, we can trace the political evolution of the departmental, district, and municipal councils from 1790 to 1793 in these two departments and towns.

I suggested earlier that the social background of national deputies was less important than the social fabric of the regions they represented, and this holds true at the local level as well. We should not expect to see wealthy merchants occupying every key position in Caen, defending their class interests, or sans-culottes on the Limoges councils defending theirs. We will see, however, that as a group the administrators of Calvados reflected the agricultural and commercial character of their region, while in the Haute-Vienne (the administrative hinterland in Fox’s schema), lawyers formed the dominant group on both the departmental and the Limoges district councils. Contrasts appear at the municipal level as well. In Caen, the commercial elite increasingly came to dominate the municipal council; in Limoges, the political uproar of 1792 brought to office a municipal council more radical in its political views and more modest in its social background.

The social composition of the administrative councils is instructive, but those councils did not operate in a vacuum. All the councils met in their respective departmental chefs-lieux, Caen and Limoges, and the urban milieu strongly influenced their proceedings. In Caen, in particular, the isolation of poor immigrants in the faubourgs was reflected in the geographical composition of successive municipal councils. The passivity of the lower classes was virtually institutionalized in Caen, where sectional lines appear to have been drawn to enhance the power of the wealthy elite.

All of these factors together—the nature of the local economy, social structures, and urban geography—molded the political arena in these two towns. The correlation between urban geography and political geography in Caen and Limoges is very clear. It is reflected in the composition of the municipal councils, in the interaction between those councils and political clubs, and even in the revolutionary festivals and processions staged in the two towns. The impact of these factors is more generally reflected in the nature of revolutionary politics in Calvados and the Haute-Vienne. We return to the process of revolutionary politics at the end of this chapter, to explore more systematically the interaction between the various councils, between them and the clubs, between the councils and their constituents, and be-
tween the local scene and the national scene, and finally to place that interaction within its social context.

For three years, beginning in late 1790, the departmental councils were the preeminent administrative bodies in provincial France. Created by the Constituent Assembly, the departmental administrations immediately assumed responsibility for the difficult transition from the old généralités to the new départements. This involved the mediation of boundary disputes as well as the exchange of administrative, judicial, and tax records. It was a process that brought the councils into contact not only with their neighbors but with departmental administrators all over France, beginning a tradition of consultation and cooperation that would persist until at least June, 1793. And it stood as a precedent for the exchange of protests and proposals that took place between the departments following the proscription of the Girondin deputies.

The departmental councils were subordinate in every respect to the National Assembly and the king, and their authority was explicitly restricted to administrative matters (the collection of taxes, the assurance of an adequate food supply, the maintenance of a public police force). In practice, however, that legal restriction was often ignored, and many departmental councils issued statements or lodged protests regarding political issues (military recruitment, the fate of the king, the role of Paris in national politics). The National Convention eventually remedied this tendency with the administrative reorganization that followed the collapse of the federalist revolt.¹

In July, 1790, electoral assemblies met in Calvados and the Haute-Vienne to elect their first departmental councils. As in every other department, they chose thirty-six administrators plus a procureur-général-syndic, theoretically the representative of the king with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the law. The council was elected to a two-year term with half the members up for reelection every year. In September, 1791, eighteen administrators in each department, chosen by draw, stood for reelection, but in November, 1792, the Convention ordered a complete renewal of the councils in order to purge them of their royalist elements. One year later, the departmental administrations were reduced to their eight-member directories.

These yearly elections produced few changes in the social character of the

departmental councils. Voters in both Calvados and the Haute-Vienne consistently named respectable, wealthy men to these positions, principally lawyers and rural landowners. No peasants sat on the councils, and of the two artisan/shopkeepers elected in the Haute-Vienne in 1792, one may in fact have been a merchant. Calvados electors named no artisans to their departmental administration. The nobility fared little better—four nobles sat on the 1790 council in Calvados, and three on the Haute-Vienne council of the same year, with only one member of the second estate on the two subsequent councils in each department. The character of the departmental administrations was distinctly haut-bourgeois. This is hardly surprising, since in 1790 and 1791, one had to pay taxes equivalent to ten days' wages to be eligible for election to either a departmental or a district council. After August 10, 1792, that requirement was dropped, as was the distinction between “active” and “passive” citizens.

A closer look at the occupational breakdown of the various councils, however, reveals some definite contrasts between the successive administrations of Calvados and those of the Haute-Vienne. Tables 5 and 6 compare the administrations for the three terms from 1790 through 1793. In both departments, the councils in all three terms included at least as many members from the legal profession as from any other single occupational category. In the Haute-Vienne administration, however, the predominance of the legal profession is particularly striking. Lawyers constituted a majority in every term, and in the 1792–1793 term, their numbers grew to twenty-one—57 percent of the membership. In the Calvados administration, the number of men with legal training declined from its 1790–1791 peak of 43 percent to 35 percent in the two following terms.

In both departments, rural landowners played a significant role in the administration, but in the richly agricultural department of Calvados, their presence on the council was more pronounced. In the Haute-Vienne, landowners never constituted more than 20 percent of the council, and in the

2. Pierre Mourier père, of Limoges, was identified on the official list of departmental administrators as a négociant. A list of Jacobin club members prepared in the year III, however, describes him as a marchand de bois, and I have chosen to classify him as such, speculating that in 1792 he might have been tempted to exaggerate his status in order to bring it into line with his new, prestigious position. I have classified marchands particuliers as shopkeepers, distinguishing them from marchands without designation, whom I have classified as commercial.

3. In addition to local almanacs, I have consulted Louis de la Roque and Edouard de Barthélémy, Catalogue des Gентil hommes en 1789 (Paris, 1866), I, for this information.
### Table 5: Occupations of Calvados Departmental Administrators, 1790–1793 (N=37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1790–1791</th>
<th>1791–1792</th>
<th>1792–1793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal professions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural landowning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Shopkeeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Includes bourgeois, *vivant de son bien, vivant de son revenu.*

*b* Nobility is not treated as an occupation. Those listed as nobles also appear in one of the other categories, most often legal.

*Note:* Appendix II provides a breakdown of occupational categories.

### Table 6: Occupations of Haute-Vienne Departmental Administrators, 1790–1793 (N=37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1790–1791</th>
<th>1791–1792</th>
<th>1792–1793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal professions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural landowning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Shopkeeping</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Includes bourgeois, *vivant de son bien, vivant de son revenu.*

*b* Nobility is not treated as an occupation. Those listed as nobles also appear in one of the other categories, most often legal.

*Note:* Appendix II provides a breakdown of occupational categories.
1792–1793 term, after four consecutive years of bad harvest, they dwindled to 8 percent. Replacing them, to some extent, were men from the liberal professions, who added to their numbers at each election. Professionals and lawyers together accounted for nearly 70 percent of the 1792–1793 administration in the Haute-Vienne.

In Calvados, the apparent decline in landowners from 35 percent in 1791–1792 to 16 percent in 1792–1793 is deceptive. Seven administrators elected in 1792 did not give an occupation, a much higher number than in previous years. Six of these men came from small villages, and it would scarcely be surprising if all six were landowners. Certainly four or five owned land, which would raise the number of landowners on the 1792–1793 council close to its level of previous years.

A final significant trend in the Calvados administrations is the slow, but steady, increase in the number of administrators engaged in commerce. Their numbers are not overwhelming—they never rival the lawyers or landowners—but by 1792, they had reached a level of 14 percent, representing a much stronger force than did merchants on the Haute-Vienne council. In addition, many of the large landowners on the Calvados council were producing grain for the market and would thus have had a shared interest with the merchants of Caen and other towns. In the Haute-Vienne, artisans made at least an entree into departmental politics in the 1792 elections, again a contrast with Calvados, where artisans never achieved departmental office.

In sum, from 1790 through 1793, the legal and liberal professions increasingly dominated the Haute-Vienne administration. Landowners played a modest, and decreasing, role on the Haute-Vienne councils. In Calvados, a rich grain region, rural landowners rivaled lawyers for dominance in the administration, and those two groups could not ignore the increasing strength of the commercial contingent among their colleagues.

This contrasting character of the two administrations is reflected in the procès-verbaux of their meetings. The Haute-Vienne council clearly appreciated the limitations to its authority and consistently refused to interpret or modify the law in the course of its daily business. The Haute-Vienne admin-

4. Officials elected in 1792 in both departments—particularly on the departmental administration, but on municipal and district councils as well—were much more reticent about revealing their occupations than those elected earlier. Whether this was due to a fear that certain professions had now become suspect (farmers cultivating grain might have had reason to be apprehensive) or to a feeling that one's status as “citizen” was now accepted as more important than one's occupational status is hard to say.
Administrators frequently declared themselves incompetent to "rien changer aux dispositions de la loi" in response to petitions regarding parents of émigrés, disputes over rentes, and military recruitment. One rarely finds similar reservations expressed in the minutes of the Calvados council, which, less dominated by lawyers, showed a greater willingness to stray from the strict letter of the law in order to consider what it believed was just or fair. In June, 1793, the Haute-Vienne council remained cautious in its actions, ever conscious of its constitutional limitations. By the end of that month, the Calvados administration stood accused before the Convention for exceeding its authority and violating the law.\(^5\)

The geographical distribution of the departmental council members may also have influenced their political character. In Calvados, the electoral assemblies chose six representatives from each of the six districts, with the district of Caen enjoying an additional voice in the person of the procureur-général-syndic. The Haute-Vienne, represented in Map 4, followed this pattern for the 1790-1791 term, with six delegates from each district and the procureur-général-syndic from Limoges; but in subsequent years, the electoral assembly made no attempt to ensure equal representation. For the 1791-1792 term, four districts, including Limoges, each sent seven representatives to the departmental council, while Saint-Yrieix sent only four and Dorat only five, including the procureur-général-syndic. The disproportion became even greater in the 1792-1793 term. The district of Limoges sent ten men to the departmental council, and the two northern districts of Dorat and Bellac sent seven and eight men, respectively. The three remaining districts (Saint-Junien, Saint-Yrieix, and Saint-Léonard) sent four, five, and three men, respectively, totaling only one-third of the council members. Of those three districts, two protested the departmental council's actions in June, 1793. The Saint-Yrieix district council berated the Haute-Vienne administrators for not carrying further their protest of the June 2 proclamations, while Saint-Junien denounced the department's support of the Côte-d'Or resolution (which called for a united departmental protest of

---

MAP 4. Haute-Vienne Districts and District Chefs-lieux

Reprinted, by permission of éditions rené dessagne, from René Morichon (ed.), Histoire du Limousin et de la Marche (Limoges, 1975), II, 45.
the factionalism in Paris and declared the departments’ readiness to rebel against despotism). What is remarkable here, however, is the predominance of administrators from the district of Limoges, most of them from the town of Limoges itself. They nearly equaled in number the representatives of the three southern districts combined. The town of Limoges, then, exerted a greater influence on its departmental administration than did the town of Caen.

The district councils were in most respects the least consequential of the local administrations during the first four years of the Revolution. The departmental administration could overturn any decision made by the district councils, clearly rendering the latter subordinate to the former. The district councils did enjoy the advantage of closer contact with their constituents—an advantage curtailed, however, by the existence of communal councils, which intervened between the people and the district offices. When representing demands or grievances of the people, districts generally acted as intermediaries between municipalities and the departmental council. Thus, the district councils occupied an ambiguous middle position, restricted in their actions by the superior authority of the departmental administration and removed one step from the voters they represented.

I have not studied in detail the councils of all six districts in these two departments, but only those of the districts of Caen and Limoges. Beyond sending an occasional member on to the departmental administration, the councils of the outlying districts had little impact on departmental affairs. In times of crisis, however, the departmental authorities often met in union with the district and municipal councils of the departmental chef-lieu. The Caen and Limoges district officials did exercise a continuing influence on local affairs, and during the crucial months of June and July, 1793, the Haute-Vienne and Calvados administrations invited the two district councils to deliberate with them.

As we have seen, the Caen district council as a body was not influential until the end of the revolt, when it was the first to retract its support of the insurrection. Several individual administrators, however, played very active roles. For instance, Louis Caille, the procureur-syndic, advocated revolt

6. Godechot, *Les Institutions de la France*, 101–103. Godechot notes that in some departments, the district councils acted with considerable independence, sometimes directly rivaling the departmental administration. This was never the case in Calvados or the Haute-Vienne, despite occasional conflicts between departmental and district authorities.
against the Convention more aggressively than any other official. Robert
Tirel, on the other hand, spoke out in protest of the decision to arrest Romme
and Prieur. In Limoges, the district council joined with the municipal coun-
cil in steering the departmental administration away from the federalist
movement. A closer look at the two district councils may help to explain
their divergent conduct at this crucial time.

The number of districts varied from one department to the next, but both
the Haute-Vienne and Calvados were divided into six. Each district elected a
council composed of twelve men plus a *procureur-syndic*, the counterpart at
the district level of the *procureur-général-syndic*. The schedule of elections
followed that of the departmental administrations, with district electoral as-
semblies naming the first councils in July, 1790. Half the council members
stood for reelection in September, 1791, and in November, 1792, the coun-
cils were renewed in their entirety.

The occupational composition of the Caen and Limoges district councils
mirrors the patterns in the respective departmental administrations, as shown
in Tables 7 and 8. In Caen, rural landowners formed the strongest con-
tingent during all three terms from 1790 through 1793, constituting from
30 to 46 percent of the total. As in the Calvados departmental council, their
apparent decline from the 1791-1792 term to the 1792-1793 term might
be diminished by the one official whose occupation is unknown.7 Lawyers
consistently maintained a strong presence on the district council, declining
only by one in the 1792 elections, when their numbers are equaled by men
from the liberal professions. Professionals exercised a proportionally greater
influence at this level than they did on the departmental administration.
These three groups taken together—rural landowners, lawyers, and profes-
sionals—never constituted less than 77 percent of the council members.
Their predominance came at the expense of the commercial community,
which managed to elect only one merchant to the Caen district council. This
absence of commercial men on the district council is significant, especially
given their increasing strength at the departmental level and their domi-
nance, as we shall soon see, on the Caen municipal council.

In Limoges, the situation was nearly the reverse. Rural landowners on the
district council never numbered more than three, representing approxi-

7. Like the majority of departmental officials whose occupations I could not determine,
Jean Jacques Bernard Lequeru, president of the 1792-93 district council, came from a small
village (Ayran, ten to fifteen miles southeast of Caen).
### Table 7: Occupations of Caen District Administrators, 1790–1793 (N=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1790–1791</th>
<th>1791–1792</th>
<th>1792–1793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal professions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural landowning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Shopkeeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobility&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Includes bourgeois, *vivant de son bien, vivant de son revenu.*

<sup>b</sup> Nobility is not treated as an occupation. Those listed as nobles also appear in one of the other categories, most often legal.

*Note: Appendix II provides a breakdown of occupational categories.*

### Table 8: Occupations of Limoges District Administrators, 1790–1793 (N=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1790–1791</th>
<th>1791–1792</th>
<th>1792–1793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal professions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural landowning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Shopkeeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobility&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Includes bourgeois, *vivant de son bien, vivant de son revenu.*

<sup>b</sup> Nobility is not treated as an occupation. Those listed as nobles also appear in one of the other categories, most often legal.

*Note: Appendix II provides a breakdown of occupational categories.*
mately 23 percent of the total. Lawyers dominated the council throughout the period, composing nearly 50 percent of the 1791–1792 administration, though declining to roughly 30 percent the following year. The occupational picture here resembles that of the Haute-Vienne departmental administration, except for the virtual absence of professionals. Men from the liberal professions, a significant force among the departmental officials, did not appear on the Limoges district council until the 1792–1793 term, when one doctor was elected. Military men filled the void left by the professionals on the first two councils, giving way in 1792–1793 to artisans and to men identifying themselves simply as bourgeois.

Comparing the two districts, we see a situation similar to that which characterized the two departmental administrations: rural landowners predominant on the Caen district council, lawyers enjoying that position in Limoges. We must once again take note of the overwhelming preponderance of landowners, lawyers, and professionals on the Caen district council. Of the thirty-nine officials elected to the three consecutive councils, only five came from occupations outside these three groups, with the occupation of one additional official unknown. In Limoges, the occupations ranged more broadly, particularly in the 1792–1793 term, when all but two of the eight categories were represented.

Artisans first sat on the councils of both districts in the 1792–1793 term—two in Limoges and one in Caen. The increase in artisanal representation at the district level does not appear large; it is similar to that at the departmental level. Proportionally, however, artisans and shopkeepers enjoyed significantly greater influence on the district councils, which were smaller. That influence was greatest in Limoges. The only artisan elected to the Caen district council, François Jacques Samuel Boiszerard, was a wealthy goldsmith who lived on the rue Saint-Jean, at the heart of the most prosperous parish in Caen. His affinity would have been more with his clientele, the Caen social elite, and other merchants than with the majority of artisans. Jean Baptiste Poncet and Jacques Peyrat, the two shopkeepers elected to the Limoges council, were a marchand de fer and marchand de bois, respectively, and both lived in the faubourgs of Limoges. They represented a more modest segment of the artisan/shopkeeper community than did Boiszerard in Caen.

Though we come to them last, the municipalities were the first local administrations created by the Constituent Assembly. Motivated by the midsummer outbreak of municipal revolutions in most of the major French
towns, the Assembly moved quickly to institutionalize and bring under control this effervescence of political activity. On December 14, 1789, the deputies passed legislation calling for the election of municipal councils in every city, town, and village of France. Each commune would also elect a mayor and a procureur, who acted as legal adviser to the council. The council itself was composed of two parts: the officiers, who along with the procureur formed the corps municipal, which met on a daily basis to deal with the routine business of municipal administration; and the notables, a group twice the size of the corps municipal, who together with the officiers composed the conseil général, convened by the mayor on an irregular basis to address more important matters. The size of the general councils varied according to population. The citizens of Caen elected fifteen officiers, including the procureur, and thirty notables. In Limoges, the council numbered twelve officiers and twenty-four notables.

Despite their position at the bottom rung of the local administrative hierarchy, the municipal councils, particularly those of the departmental chefs-lieux, may have been the most important local administrative bodies. More than either the district or the departmental councils, the municipal councils of the chefs-lieux represented a coherent and potent constituency, and they were the only one of the three councils chosen by direct election. During periods of political ferment, the populations of the chefs-lieux forcefully expressed their sentiments in both words and action. All three local councils met in the chef-lieu, and none could ignore, at times of crisis, the pressures and demands of an often unruly urban population. When grain shortages occurred, both Caen and Limoges received preferential treatment over other hungry towns. Indeed, a number of departmental administrations, including that of Calvados, considered shifting their meetings to other towns to escape popular pressure.

The municipal councils often acted as intermediaries between the urban


9. Godechot, Les Institutions de la France, 105-106. In Caen, after September, 1792, the general council was to meet publicly three times each week. A. C. Caen, D2 (Délibérations du Corps municipal et du Conseil Général de la Commune, 4 janvier 1792-11 Germinal an II), minutes of September 1, 1792.
populace and higher authorities. A council might alternately act as a mouth-
piece for the demands of its constituents and as a political thermometer for
the departmental administration. If one gauges the success of their efforts by
their ability to preserve public order, the municipal councils of Caen and
Limoges were reasonably effective, at least until the debacle of the federalist
revolt produced a total disruption of Caen daily life. The Caen municipal
council must bear at least partial responsibility for this, because of its failure
to impress upon the federalist leaders the lack of popular support for the
proposed march on Paris. Although the majority of the council members did
not actively participate in the revolt, neither did they manifest any concerted
opposition to it. The Limoges municipality, on the other hand, made very
clear its opposition to any departmental protest or resistance. The council
denounced the departmental administration for its support of the May 30
Côte-d’Or resolution and gave a hostile reception to later couriers from
Lyon and Bordeaux.

The conduct of the two municipal councils was a major factor in determin-
ing the political posture of Calvados and the Haute-Vienne after May 31,
far more important than that of the district councils. To understand their con-
trasting attitudes and actions, we must examine the municipal councils
themselves, with an eye not only to the social character of the men in office,
and how that changed over time, but also to the social character of their
constituencies.

The first municipal councils were elected in February, 1790, to a two-year
term. As with the departmental and district administrations, half the mem-
bers of the general council stood for reelection each year. An officier could
serve no more than two consecutive terms but could return to the general
council as a notable for a third term and subsequently be elected as an off-
icier again. New elections were held in November or December, 1790, and
thereafter occurred at yearly intervals until their suspension in 1793. After
the federalist revolt, representatives on mission nominated men to fill vacan-
cies on the councils, usually after consultation with the local Jacobin club
and comité de surveillance. This system prevailed until after Thermidor.

In Caen, we have five separate councils to consider—February, 1790, No-
vember, 1790, 1791, 1792, and 1793, the last being the council named by
Lindet and Oudot in August, following the revolt. For Limoges, a sixth
council requires analysis. In August, 1792, the departmental administration
finally authorized the replacement of Limoges’ mayor, Louis Naurissart,
who had abandoned his post the previous winter, after the February grain
scandal. The municipal council convened section assemblies, which insisted
that they be permitted to elect an entirely new municipal council, despite the
fact that regularly scheduled elections were barely three months away. The
departmental council acquiesced in the demand, and the sections elected a
full council. Elections in November brought a few additional changes in the
municipal personnel, and this council remained virtually intact until 1794.
The representatives on mission Brival and Lanot named only three new offi-
ciers in September, 1793, two of whom had previously been notables.

In this study of the municipal councils, I have chosen to include only the
corps municipal—the officiers, mayor, and procureur—both for reasons of
manageability and available data and because this part of the council held
the greatest responsibility and the greatest power in the management of local
affairs.

The occupational composition of the municipal councils in both Caen
and Limoges, shown in Tables 9 and 10, departs radically from the patterns
of the district and departmental administrations. Not surprisingly, rural
landowners do not appear on these councils, with the exception of one on
the 1792 council in Limoges, where the lines between city and country were
not as firmly drawn as in Caen. More unexpected is the steadily declining
influence of men with legal training on both town councils. Whereas lawyers
dominated the Haute-Vienne departmental administration and the Limoges
district council, they quickly became a minor factor in the Limoges munici-
pality. Five lawyers sat on the February, 1790, council, but their numbers
dwindled to three with the next election; and in 1792, only one lawyer, the
procureur, secured election to the council. Lawyers fared somewhat better
in Caen, where their decline began somewhat later. Their numbers peaked at
seven (44 percent of the sixteen-member council) with the second election of
1790, dropped by one the following year, and stood at four (25 percent) in
1792. The council appointed by Lindet and Oudot included only one law-
yer, the same number that sat on the Limoges councils of 1792 and 1793.
This exclusion of lawyers in Caen seems to have been by design. The repre-
sentative on mission who followed Lindet and Oudot, Jacques Léonard
Laplanche, explicitly stated his intention to rid local administrations of "the
men in black coats." 10
TABLE 9 Occupations of Caen Municipal Officials, 1790–1793 (N=16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>February, November, 1790</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1791</th>
<th>1792</th>
<th>1793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal professions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural landowning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Shopkeeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Appendix II provides a breakdown of occupational categories.

TABLE 10 Occupations of Limoges Municipal Officials, 1790–1793 (N=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>February, November, 1790</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1791</th>
<th>August, 1792</th>
<th>1792</th>
<th>1793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal professions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural landowning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Shopkeeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Appendix II provides a breakdown of occupational categories.

Merchants and artisans, in contrast to lawyers, increased their influence between 1790 and 1793. Taken together, the electoral success of these two groups traced a similar pattern in Caen and Limoges. Merchants and artisans in Limoges constituted 46 percent of the February, 1790, council; grew steadily to reach 69 percent with the 1791 elections; slipped slightly in 1792; and returned to the 69-percent level in 1793. An equal number, but a
smaller proportion, of merchants and artisans sat on the Caen town council. They accounted for 38 percent of the council members during 1790; slipped moderately in the November, 1790, elections; but recovered in the 1791 elections and reached a strength of 56 percent in 1792 before declining by one, to 50 percent, on the council appointed after the revolt.

If we examine merchants and artisans separately, a somewhat different picture appears. Surprisingly, artisans showed greater strength on the Caen municipal council than in Limoges. On the 1790 and 1791 councils, artisanal strength hovered at around 15 percent in both towns. But on the 1792 Caen council, the number of artisans jumped to six (38 percent), while in Limoges the number declined slightly before rebounding in 1793. Conversely, merchants and manufacturers did better in Limoges than in Caen. Merchants never constituted more than 25 percent of the Caen council, whereas in Limoges they surpassed 50 percent in 1791 and remained near that level through the next two years.

One might have expected the patterns to be reversed, for they do not support the traditional interpretation of federalism as a movement of the commercial bourgeoisie. One would not expect a municipal council dominated by artisans in a federalist town or a council dominated by merchants in a Jacobin town. A closer look, however, will help untangle this apparent paradox.

The assignment of occupational categories to local officials in Limoges poses certain difficulties, because of their disconcerting habit of calling themselves négociants in one year and marchands in another. This was true, for instance, of six of the seven men on the 1792 council who are classified as commercial. It is impossible to know if they exaggerated their status in 1792 by calling themselves négociants or were attempting to paint themselves as good sans-culottes in 1793 by listing themselves as marchands. This in itself does not pose a problem for purposes of classification—marchands are grouped with négociants as commercial in any case. Those merchants, however, who further qualified their occupation as marchand tanner or marchand teinturier, for example, are here considered shopkeepers and are grouped with the artisans.11 Some of the merchants on the 1792

11. It is difficult to distinguish wholesale merchants from retail merchants and shopkeepers in the documents of the Revolution. Any criteria will be arbitrary to some extent. Distinguishing between négociants/marchands (classified as commercial) and marchands particuliers (classified as shopkeepers) probably leads to a slight inflation of the number of wholesale merchants. A small merchant might neglect to designate his particular specialty, but a wholesale merchant would not likely list his occupation as marchand mercier, for example. In marking a distinction
Behind the Scenes 207

Limoges council very likely belong in this latter category. Only one of the seven, Joseph Ardant-Masjambost, can definitely be said to have headed a substantial commercial enterprise, based on records from the forced loan of the year IV and the accompanying estimates of family fortunes. None of the seven, with the possible exception of Ardant-Masjambost, belonged to the Limoges commercial elite. Not one of them attended the 1789 assembly of the juridiction consulaire for the election of deputies to the Limoges assembly of the third estate, and none was among the Limoges négociants asked by the departmental administration to form a grain-purchasing consortium in 1791. To find that commercial elite in public office, one must look to the 1791 municipality, headed by Louis Naurissart. Seven merchants sat on this council, too, but none of them returned on the 1792 council. In addition to Naurissart, the 1791 council included Gabriel Grellet and François Pouyat. Naurissart, Grellet, and François Pouyat’s father were all members of the six-man grain consortium formed just before the 1791 elections. Joseph Pé tiniaud, another négociant on the 1791 council, had been a juge consul before 1789. All but Naurissart voted at the 1789 assembly of the juridiction consulaire.

Although men engaged in commerce dominated the 1791 and 1792 municipal councils in Limoges, the character of the councils was very different. The 1791 council numbered six former Amis de la Paix (the moderate club that had challenged the Limoges Jacobins in late 1790), including Naurissart, Grellet, Pé tiniaud, and Pouyat. In August, 1792, the insistent demands

between merchants and shopkeepers and grouping the latter with artisans, I am following the lead of Maurice Agulhon, who makes a similar distinction between merchants and small merchants in Pénitents et francs-maçons de l'ancienne Provence, 148–53.

12. A. D. Haute-Vienne, I.252 (an IV, forced loan and list of rich). All seven of the merchants appear on these lists. Ardant-Masjambost stands well above the rest on both lists, with a levied “loan” of 3,000 livres and an estimated fortune of 190,000 livres. Two of the other officiers, Grégoire Louis Boudet and Joseph Bres, were levied contributions of 1,000 livres, but their estimated fortunes were considerably less than Masjambost’s, at 30,000 and 60,000 livres, respectively. Martial Labroussé père was levied a loan of 900 livres, but this figure may have been revised after his fortune was estimated at only 10,000. Mathieu Nadaud brought up the rear in this group, paying 200 livres on an estimated fortune of 9,000. All of these figures pale in comparison with those for Louis Naurissart, probably the richest man in Limoges, who was levied 10,000 livres based on an estimated fortune of 800,000. The registers did not indicate which of those listed had paid this special tax. The figures for estimated fortune were based on 1790 currency valuation.

13. A. C. Limoges, AA7 (Assemblée des différents corps de la ville pour nommer des députés à l'Assemblée du Tiers-État de la ville de Limoges). The municipal archives of Limoges are split between the Archives Municipales and the Bibliothèque Municipale. These documents are held at the Bibliothèque. A. D. Haute-Vienne, I.850 (documents pertaining to Limoges grain supply).
of the Limoges sections forced that council from office prematurely. Jacobin club members dominated the next two councils, totaling eleven of thirteen officiers on both the August and November, 1792, councils.

We see, then, that social, economic, and political lines separated the old commercial elite from the merchants represented by the 1792 council. An incident involving the 1791 grain consortium suggests that the social divisions cut deepest. The departmental directory originally named seven négociants to coordinate the purchase of grain for Limoges. The seventh was Jean Baptiste Nieaud, mayor of Limoges for the 1790–1791 term and cofounder of the Jacobin club. The others, who referred to Nieaud disparagingly as a teinturier (despite his thriving wool trade and a fortune estimated at 500,000 livres), refused to work with a man “who had so mismanaged the municipal administration, and whose principles were in complete opposition to their own.” They would not accept this “nouveau-riche” with his unimpressive family lineage. Nieaud, who had one month earlier been elected to the departmental council, quietly withdrew from the group. His social affinities lay with the Jacobins, who would one year later dominate local politics.

In Caen, the situation on the 1792 council, with its strong contingent of artisans, is similarly complicated. A comparison of this council with the 1793 municipality (appointed by Lindet and Oudot), which also included six artisans, reveals the danger of accepting occupational categories at face value. The artisans on the 1792 council included an apothecary, a parfumeur, and a bijoutier, all catering to the social elite in their trades and all living in the wealthier, central districts of Caen. A fourth artisan on the council, David Nicolas, was a marchand mercier with close business and social ties to Jean Samuel Paisant, a wealthy fabricant en blondes who also sat on the council. Among the six artisans on the postrevolt council we find, to be sure, a confiseur and a marchand papetier, both with well-to-do clienteles. But we also find, more characteristically, a poor vinaigrier, Jean Cachelou, and the printer for the Jacobin club, Pierre Chalopin fils. As with the Limoges council, more differences exist between the 1792 and 1793 Caen councils than the tables reveal.

The availability of tax records for both Caen and Limoges lends another dimension to our analysis of the municipal councils. Several factors render meaningless any comparison of the tax payments made in one town or de-

14. A. D. Haute-Vienne, 1850. The quotation is my own paraphrasing of a department transcription.
partment with those in another. The tax rate was not uniform nationwide. The Constituent Assembly divided the tax burden among the departments roughly according to the regional distribution of Old Regime taxes. They made no systematic effort to levy the new taxes equitably, and departmental entreaties resulted in adjustments in 1792 and 1793. Both Caen and Limoges received rebates after appealing to the Legislative Assembly. Departmental administrations divided their tax quotas among the districts, which in turn assigned quotas to the *communes*, which were then responsible for levying individual taxes. In addition, each municipality had the option of levying a surtax, not to exceed four *sous* per *livre*, to defray local expenses. Within this system, two equally wealthy men in two different towns, even within the same department, would only by chance have paid identical taxes. Within a town, however, the tax rates were consistent, and so we can employ the tax rolls to gauge separately the social evolution of the Caen and Limoges councils.  

The pattern of the *contribution mobilière* paid by members of successive municipal councils followed roughly the same trend in Caen and Limoges. As Tables 11 and 12 show, the mean tax paid by municipal *officiers* in both towns gradually, but steadily, declined. The one exception to this trend—the 1791 Limoges council—corresponds with the political developments of that

---

15. For this study, I used the rolls of the *contribution mobilière*, a tax I consider preferable for two reasons to the *contribution foncière*, the other principal revolutionary tax. First, the *contribution foncière* taxed property; and many of the elected officials at the municipal level, especially after 1791, did not own property and therefore do not appear on these rolls. Second, many of those who did own property also owned property outside the town—a *maison de campagne* or a *manoir*. Records for these rural cantons have often disappeared, but even when they do exist, the task of scanning them would be enormously time-consuming. The fact that some officials owned land in other departments further complicates the task. The *contribution mobilière*, therefore, offers a much more accessible tax record. And the rolls for Caen and Limoges are exceptionally complete. Of the 158 officials on the eleven municipal councils under consideration, I found tax records for all but 19, just 12 percent.  

The Constituent Assembly passed legislation for the *contribution mobilière* in January, 1791. It was not to be a tax on property like the *contribution foncière*, but the deputies clearly realized the inadvisability of attempting to levy a tax on income. They settled on rent as the most visible and most easily verifiable indicator of wealth, and this became the primary base of the *contribution mobilière*. There were other elements to this tax as well. All taxpayers paid a tax equivalent to three days’ wages; those with domestic servants paid an additional imposition, as did those who owned horses or mules. Those with large families were taxed at a lower rate, while bachelors paid a higher premium. Day laborers and artisans received a tax break, and citizens who paid a *contribution foncière* could deduct that payment from their *contribution mobilière*. It should be noted that this allowance for deductions would tend to reduce slightly the *contribution mobilière* of the wealthiest taxpayers, who in most cases would also have paid a *contribution foncière*. See Godechot, *Les Institutions de la France*, 156–58.
TABLE 11  Contribution Mobilière of Caen Municipal Officials, 1790–1793 (N=16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>February, November,</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>1793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials paying:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–49 livres</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–149 livres</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150–499 livres</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500–999 livres</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 livres and above</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean tax (livres)</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>97^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median tax (livres)</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^1 If we exclude the one council member who paid 560 livres tax, the mean tax for 1793 is 54 livres.

TABLE 12  Contribution Mobilière of Limoges Municipal Officials, 1790–1793 (N=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>February, November,</th>
<th></th>
<th>August,</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>1793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials paying:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–49 livres</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–99 livres</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100–249 livres</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250–499 livres</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 livres and above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean tax (livres)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median tax (livres)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

year. The municipal elections of 1791 marked the temporary political resurgence of the moderate, wealthy bourgeoisie of Limoges. Louis Naurissart, as mayor, headed a municipality composed of the Limoges commercial elite. The 1791 council witnessed the nadir of Jacobin club influence in municipal affairs and the zenith for supporters of the disbanded Amis de la Paix. The tax figures for the 1791 council reflect that political shift.
A second discrepancy in the general pattern of declining taxes—the 1793 Caen council—is explained by a statistical quirk rather than a political shift. The mean for 1793 is distorted by the one officier who paid a tax of 560 livres. If one excludes this figure from the total, the mean tax paid becomes 54 livres, very close to the mean of the previous year. It should also be observed that tax data is missing for four members of this council, more than for any other Caen council. The occupations of three of these men are also unknown; the fourth was an artisan. Three of the four were new to politics in 1793 and disappeared from local politics after the year II. The difficulty in finding tax information for them stems from a lack of positive identification. These men were simply not active long enough in local politics to be positively identified. Had tax information for these men been available, the mean tax shown for 1793 officiers in Caen would probably be slightly lower than that for 1792.16

For a similar reason, the mean tax paid by the February, 1790, council members in Limoges was probably higher than that indicated in Table 12. Again, no tax information could be found for four men. Of these four, one was a prominent doctor, one was a noble, one was a Pétiniaud (a ubiquitous name on the Limoges rolls) and therefore certainly wealthy, and the fourth was a former avocat du roi au présidial. If the tax figures for these four men could be included in the computations, the mean tax shown for that council would rise to at least the level shown for the 1791 council.

If we examine the median tax in each council, we find a more regular and consistent downward trend. The median tax in the 1793 Caen council was slightly lower than that in the 1792 council. In both Caen and Limoges, the highest median tax was paid in the 1790 council, with the sharpest drop coming between 1790 and 1791 in Caen and between 1791 and August, 1792, in Limoges. The median tax does, however, underestimate the wealth

16. The process of positively identifying municipal officials was a difficult one. It was somewhat easier in Limoges, where election results almost always listed the occupations of those elected. I was also aided in Limoges by the roster of Jacobin club members, which listed first names and occupations and often mentioned the offices held by members. In Caen, I was more dependent on jury lists (which I also used in Limoges) and certificates of residence. Both of these sources generally included addresses and occupations. By comparing signatures on these lists with those on the procès-verbaux of council meetings, I could be very confident in my identifications. For the 1793 council, this was not always possible, however, since not all members consistently signed the procès-verbaux and because a few of those appointed appeared at only one or two meetings. Some, particularly among the notables, never accepted their appointment.
of the Naurissart municipality in 1791. The mean tax, I believe, represents more accurately the economic and social character of the Limoges council of 1791.

Looking again at the two tables, one sees that the gradual decline in tax paid is paralleled by a shift in the distribution among the five categories. Although the extremely wealthy never overwhelmingly dominated any council, eight of the sixteen members of the February, 1790, Caen council paid 500 livres or more. Year by year in Caen one sees the largest bloc of officiers move down one level, until in 1792 nine of the sixteen officials paid less than 50 livres tax. In Limoges, the shift was less dramatic—there was never a great number of officials in the higher categories—but in the councils of 1792, one again sees the vast majority of municipal officials paying less than 50 livres tax. Taxpayers in the two highest categories are virtually absent from the last three councils in both towns.

The declining trend in taxes, along with the occupational profile of the councils, suggests a broadening of the social base of local politics in Caen and Limoges. In Limoges, the legal elite was increasingly excluded from municipal politics. Lawyers in Caen suffered the same fate, but only after the federalist revolt. In both towns, merchants and artisans combined to dominate the councils from 1791 on, and there appears to have been some shift away from the commercial elite to less prominent and less wealthy merchants, particularly in Limoges. Taxes paid by council members fell dramatically in Limoges in August, 1792, after the discrediting of the Naurissart municipality. In Caen, the first big drop came between 1790 and 1791, probably in part because of the Affair of 84 (the alleged conspiracy of nobles), which occurred just prior to the 1791 elections. The mean and median taxes for the 1792 council show a further significant drop.

Although this broadening of local politics occurred in both towns, the shift was more substantial and came earlier in Limoges, where it appears to have affected the local posture toward the federalist revolt. In Caen, on the other hand, it was the revolt itself (or, more precisely, its repression) that produced a wholesale change in the municipal council.

Highlighting this contrast is the fact that all but one of the officiers who served on the 1792 council in Caen had previously sat as a notable or officier. In Limoges, only four of those elected in 1792 had experience in municipal politics. Thus, whereas there was still considerable continuity between the 1792 Caen council and earlier municipal administrations, the
officials elected in Limoges in 1792 were new to municipal politics and had very few ties to the *haut-bourgeois* elite that had dominated Limoges politics during most of the period from 1789 through 1791.

In evaluating the composition of the municipal councils, we can consider several factors not pertinent to the district and departmental councils, such as Freemasonry, Protestantism in Caen, and the impact of Jacobin club membership (which can be more fully gauged at the municipal level than for district and departmental administrations). An earlier chapter discussed the role of Freemason lodges in Caen and Limoges at the end of the Old Regime. The influence of Freemasonry on local politics appears to have declined as the Revolution progressed. In both Caen and Limoges, the number of Masons on the municipal council peaked in 1790—at five, in each case. Thereafter, their numbers diminished. Only one Mason sat on the 1792 Caen council, and only two sat on that of Limoges in the same year. This pattern suggests that the lodges attracted as members men already active in local affairs in the 1780s. Having fallen inactive after 1789, the lodges did not enroll the new men drawn into municipal politics in 1791 and 1792. As progressive as the lodges may have been, their role was taken over after 1790 by the section assemblies and popular societies, associations more in tune with revolutionary ideals. Although the lodges themselves fell dormant after 1789, however, their influence clearly did not. The rivalry and opposition between the two Limoges Freemason lodges seems to have revived in the hostility between the Jacobin club and the Amis de la Paix in 1790 and 1791.

A more intriguing factor in evaluating the nature of Caen politics is the city’s sizable Protestant population. No estimate of this group’s numbers on the eve of the Revolution exists, but an 1820 report to the Calvados prefecture put the Protestant population in Caen at 1,200. Although Protestants could not openly practice their religion until 1787, there was no persecution of the Protestant population in Caen during the eighteenth century. No long-standing animosity divided the Protestant and Catholic communities, as it did in Nîmes, for example. In fact, a 1788 letter from the Caen mayor and *échevins* to the minister of state referred to Caen Protestants as “that

---

17. A. D. Calvados, M4886 (Protestant population in Calvados, 1820). The only other large Protestant community in Calvados was in Condé-sur-Noireau, south of Caen, where 300 to 500 Protestants lived. The prefectural report estimated another 689 Protestants in the district of Caen, principally in Douvres.

respectable class of our fellow-citizens” and described them as “a very numerous class, and unquestionably our wealthiest fellow-citizens.”

A number of Protestants were prominent in Caen, particularly the merchant families, such as Massieu, Chatry, and Signard d’Ouffières. Protestant families controlled the most lucrative branches of Caen commerce in the late eighteenth century. Jean-Claude Perrot has observed that the willingness of Protestant merchants to secure foreign grain purchases for Caen throughout the eighteenth century earned them the high esteem of the town elite.

Five Protestants sat on the municipal council of February, 1790. Both Chatry brothers, as already noted, were elected mayor of Caen early in the Revolution, though both declined the office. As the Revolution progressed, fewer Protestants appeared on the municipal council (the officiers of 1792 included only one), but the Protestant presence at all levels of local government remained important. Samuel Chatry, a Caen notable in 1792, was demoted to that position simply because he had already served two consecutive terms as an officier, and he remained very active in municipal politics. His brother, Jean Louis Isaac, sat on the departmental council from 1791 through 1793 and was an extremely conscientious administrator. François Jacques Samuel Boiszerard, a municipal officer in 1790, served as a notable in 1791 and was promoted to the district council the following year. Pierre Mesnil, a Caen négociant, was a member of the patriotic committee in 1789, spent two years on the district council, beginning in 1790, and then joined the departmental directory for the 1792–1793 term. Gabriel de Cussy, of course, represented Caen in the Constituent Assembly and two years later became a Calvados delegate to the National Convention. All of these men knew each other—they witnessed each other’s marriages and family baptisms—and most played an active role in the federalist revolt. The ties within the Protestant community clearly did not dissolve as the Revolution


21. In 1787, Louis XVI declared a policy of tolerance for non-Catholics, granting them the right to officially register births, marriages, and deaths, even those that had transpired in previous years. It is in these registers, primarily, that I found the names and relationships of Caen Protestants. They are contained in A. D. Calvados, L40–41 (Eglise de Caen; Etat civil). The earliest recorded act was dated 1739.
began, but to suggest that Caen’s participation in the federalist revolt represented some sort of Protestant conspiracy would be unwarranted. Protestantism did, however, act as a cohesive force within the Caen commercial elite, many of whom actively participated in local politics, and also constituted a link between that commercial elite and their coreligionists among the artisans and shopkeepers of Caen.

The role of the Caen and Limoges Jacobin clubs in municipal politics was undeniably one of the most important factors during the early years of the Revolution, and the contrast between the two towns is a sharp one. The limited sources available suggest that the Caen Jacobins were not a dominant force in local politics, particularly after February, 1792, and the number of Jacobin club members on the municipal councils reflects this. Jacobin club members apparently dominated none of the Caen municipal councils. On the February, 1790, council, there were no known Jacobins, and only one club member sat on the next council. The peak of Jacobin influence came in 1791, when the officiers elected included three Jacobins. The confrontation between the club and the departmental administration in February, 1792, over the installation of the Criminal Tribunal split the Jacobin club, and its sway over public affairs declined thereafter. Only one Jacobin club member sat on the 1792 municipal council.

These figures probably slightly underestimate Jacobin strength in Caen because of the incompleteness of the records. Claude Fauchet’s arrival in 1791 clearly boosted club membership, and Esnault complained in his diary of the excessive influence of the Jacobin club during that year. But the events of early 1792 undercut Jacobin prestige, and the formation of the Carabot club further challenged the club’s position in Caen. We lack membership rolls for the Carabots, but every indication is that this club functioned in a client relationship to the departmental administration, requisitioning grain, searching the mail, and leading the volunteers to Evreux. The Carabot president during much of the revolt, Jean Michel Barbot, often served as a messenger for municipal officials and worked as a clerk at the

22. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L813, contains a complete list of the Limoges Jacobin club membership from the year III. No such list exists for the Caen club, but the Caen Bibliothèque Municipale collection of papers from the Revolution includes a fair number of Jacobin club letters and declarations, along with a few scattered procès-verbaux, from which I obtained the names of some club members. A few additional names turned up through incidental references in various archival documents. A. C. Caen, 1275, contains papers directly relating to the Jacobin club.

23. Lesage (Esnault), 51–74.
Tribunal of Commerce, where Samuel Chatry sat as president in 1793. The Carabots, then, appear never to have constituted an independent source of popular political pressure, which the Caen Jacobin club had at one time represented.

One might expect that after the collapse of the revolt the Jacobin club enjoyed a resurgence. But despite the efforts of the representatives on mission and other Paris Jacobins who accompanied the “army of pacification,” the people of Caen showed a strong reluctance to return to the club. Even as late as December, 1793, the Journal de l’Armée complained about the disappointing turnout at club meetings. Attendance picked up in subsequent months, but the Jacobin club appears never again to have been a truly vital force in Caen politics.

The situation in Limoges was quite the reverse. Four future Jacobins sat on the February, 1790, council (the club was not formed until late that year), and the next council included nine Jacobin club members. In 1791, men associated with the Amis de la Paix made a concerted effort to regain control of municipal politics, and the number of Jacobins on the council fell to four. But on each of the next three councils—August, 1792; 1792; and 1793—eleven of the thirteen officiers were Jacobin club members, a reflection of the extremely important role played by the Limoges Jacobins in local affairs. Not only did large numbers of club members sit on each local administrative council in 1793, but the club acted as a watchdog over elected officials and effectively represented the views of the Limoges popular classes.

The striking contrast in Jacobin strength on the municipal councils prevailed at the district and departmental levels as well. Available evidence shows sixteen Jacobin club members on the Haute-Vienne council for the 1792–1793 term, compared with just nine in Calvados. On the 1792–1793 Limoges district council, eight of thirteen administrators belonged to the Jacobin club, while in Caen the number of Jacobins on the district council appears never to have exceeded two.

One final observation can be made with respect to all three administrations in these departments. Electors in Calvados invariably showed a greater aversion for Old Regime officials than did Haute-Vienne electors. This contrasting attitude toward men associated with the royal bureaucracy is consistent with the posture of the two departments during the federalist revolt.

The demands issued by the Norman federalists embodied their strong objections to the expanding powers of the National Convention (particularly the Committee of Public Safety) and its emissaries to the departments, the representatives on mission. The federalists similarly denounced the excessive influence of Paris on national politics. What one sees here is a continuing antipathy among the Caen (and Calvados) elite toward the encroachment of the centralizing state, an antipathy that was equally apparent during the waning years of the Old Regime. Limoges and the Haute-Vienne, largely because of harsh economic realities, never manifested a comparable resistance to the central government.

The relative social homogeneity of the departmental and district councils in these two departments points to the importance of municipal politics in explaining the divergence in the political postures of Calvados and the Haute-Vienne in 1793. The character of the municipal councils fluctuated much more than that of either of the other two councils, and one sees the introduction of a “popular” element into Limoges politics reflected both in the municipal officiers elected in 1792 and in the increasing influence of the Jacobin club. Revolutionary politics was particularly vital in the urban setting, and this relatively simple observation suggests two things. First, the urban setting itself exerted a substantial influence on revolutionary politics. Second, politics is a process, not a static phenomenon. Exploring the social dynamics of politics will be more enlightening than examining the social background of political actors alone. Therefore, we must place the revolutionaries of Caen and Limoges in their contexts by considering the political geography of the two towns and the nature of the political arena in Calvados and the Haute-Vienne.

For electoral and judicial purposes, both Caen and Limoges were divided into sections in late 1790. Municipal authorities created five sections in Caen and four in Limoges, all roughly equal in population, though differing in total area. Maps 5 and 6 show the sections of the two towns.

I have located the address, at least the section, for nearly all of the officiers

25. A. C. Caen, L315 (Division de la Ville en cinq sections, 1790). I found no papers relating to the creation of sections in the rather more disorganized Limoges municipal archives. However, the boundaries of the four sections have been roughly traced on a 1785 map of Limoges that I obtained from the departmental archives. This map is also included in Paul Ducourtioux, Limoges d’après ses anciens plans (Limoges, 1884).
MAP 5. Parishes and Sections of Caen

Reprinted, by permission, from Jean-Claude Perrot, Genèse d’une ville moderne: Caen au XVIIIᵉ siècle (Paris, 1975), I, 43.
MAP 6. Limoges, 1793
Colleen Baker
TABLE 13 Sectional Representation in Caen and Limoges, 1790–1793

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caen municipal councils (N=16)</th>
<th>February, November, 1790</th>
<th>1791</th>
<th>1792</th>
<th>1793</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civisme</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fermeté</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberté</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalité</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limoges municipal councils (N=13)</th>
<th>February, November, 1790</th>
<th>1791</th>
<th>August, 1792</th>
<th>1792</th>
<th>1793</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>République</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalité</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberté</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in both towns from 1790 through 1793. A glance at Table 13 shows that the sections were not evenly represented on the municipal councils. In Caen, sections Union and Egalité were virtually unrepresented. Nearly 90 officiers came from the town’s three central sections. Within that bloc, section Liberté dominated the 1790 councils, with the edge thereafter shifting to section Civisme, until the 1793 reorganization balanced the situation somewhat.

This distribution becomes meaningful when related to the social character of Caen’s urban geography, a task made possible by two sources: Jean-Claude Perrot’s masterful study of Caen during the eighteenth century, *Génèse d’une ville moderne*; and the revolutionary tax rolls for the Caen sections. Section Liberté, dominant in the 1790 Caen municipal councils, included the Place de la Liberté (formerly Place Royale), where many of Caen’s wealthiest merchants lived. It contained most of the parish Saint-Jean, the oldest part of Caen, where the nobility and rich bourgeois had their hôtels and also where most Caen Protestants lived. The Affair of 84, in November, 1791, began with a confrontation at the church Saint-Jean. On
the rolls of the *contribution mobilière*, section Liberté paid 151,000 livres, an average of 114 livres per entry, both figures at least 50 percent higher than those of any other section. Adding this to earlier evidence, we would expect section Liberté to have been dominant during the first years of the Revolution, and indeed it was.

Section Civisme's ascendancy in the 1791 elections coincides with the socioeconomic evolution of the municipal council. Within this section's boundaries lay the parishes Saint-Etienne, Saint-Sauveur, Notre Dame, and part of Saint-Pierre, the heart of the commercial and artisanal district of Caen. The residents of section Civisme paid 97,000 livres into the *contribution mobilière*, an average of 59 livres per entry. The difference between this and the section Liberté average tax closely parallels the drop in the mean tax paid by municipal council members between 1790 and 1791, the year in which Civisme replaced Liberté as the dominant section on the council.

The character of these two districts and the relationship between them had undergone considerable change in the quarter-century before the Revolution. The parish Saint-Jean (section Liberté) had once been more purely the domain of the nobility and wealthy bourgeois (in the Old Regime sense of the term). The prosperous commercial enterprises of Caen had grown up in the parishes Notre Dame and Saint-Pierre (section Civisme), but since 1768, many of the big banking and commercial houses had shifted from that area to the less congested Place Royale and Île Saint-Jean. In the 1790s, section Civisme was not as wealthy as it once had been, but there remained strong ties between the retail merchants of that district and the négociants of section Liberté, as exemplified by the close relationship on the 1792 council between the fabricant Samuel Paisant, of section Liberté, and the marchand mercier David Nicolas, of section Civisme. The common interests of these two groups considerably outweighed their differences. The shift in political influence after 1791 from section Liberté to section Civisme represented a rejection of the nobility and bourgeois rentiers of the parish Saint-Jean, who were associated with the Affair of 84, rather than a reaction against the commercial elite of Caen.

Section Fermeté, the third Caen section that was well represented on the municipal councils, is more difficult to characterize socially. Unlike Liberté and Civisme, section Fermeté extended into the faubourgs, and it embraced within its boundaries one of the poorest areas of Caen, the parish Saint-Jean.

---

Gilles. But it also included a sizable part of the parish Saint-Pierre, as well as an area around the Château that, as in most eighteenth-century French towns, housed many of the town's lawyers. The section as a whole paid 60,000 livres into the contribution mobilière, an average of 43 livres per entry. The Fermeté officiers—the vast majority of whom were lawyers and artisans—came from the part of the section near the center of town, and not from the parish Saint-Gilles.

The last two sections, Union and Egalité, together sent only eight officiers to the five municipal councils we have considered. Section Union lay entirely in the faubourg l'Abbe, beyond the Abbaye-aux-Hommes, and included another of Caen's poorest neighborhoods, the parish Saint-Nicolas. The taxpayers of section Union paid only 38,000 livres to the contribution mobilière, the lowest total among the five sections, for an average of 34 livres per entry. Section Egalité consisted primarily of the faubourg Vaucelles, made up of the parishes Vaucelles and Saint-Paix. This was the third of Caen's poorest districts and even in 1789 was considered the most "revolutionary" of the town's neighborhoods. Its border with the parish Saint-Jean may have contributed to this reputation among the Caen elite. The Orne River separated the two, with Vaucelles on one side and the military garrison protecting Saint-Jean on the other. During the tense days of grain shortage in 1789, the military governor simply leveled his cannons across the bridge. The fearsome reputation of Vaucelles may have inspired the municipal authorities in 1790 to include a sliver of the parish Saint-Jean in section Egalité. This insurance against the rabble somehow securing election proved effective—those few officiers who did come from Egalité lived on the Saint-Jean side of the river. Section Egalité as a whole paid 53,000 livres into the contribution mobilière, 40 livres per entry, just slightly more than the residents of section Union. The difference is probably due to the inclusion of that small corner of the parish Saint-Jean.

This pattern of sectional representation takes on more meaning when related to immigration into Caen in the late eighteenth century. As already described, by 1770 the central district of Caen had reached its maximum population density. After that date, immigrants tended to settle in the faubourgs, forming a ring of relatively poor neighborhoods around the old city. Perrot notes that during this same period, "the financial segregation of the quarters was accentuated; the most capitalistic activities anchored them—

27. Ibid., II, 926.
It was precisely those central sections that dominated Caen politics after 1789. As we have seen, the people of the faubourgs had very little voice on the Caen municipal councils during the Revolution. Even in the year II, they were largely absent from the council, though they appeared somewhat more frequently among the notables.

In Limoges, the situation was quite different, and the discrepancies in sectional representation on the council are explained by other factors. There was no clear social demarcation between Limoges neighborhoods on the eve of the Revolution, nor was there such a significant break between the heart of the city and the faubourgs. Moreover, section boundaries in Limoges radiated out from the center so that all the sections, except Union, contained both part of the central districts and part of the faubourgs.

In Limoges, then, the pattern of sectional representation does not reflect the evolution in the municipal council's composition. As Table 13 shows, men from section République consistently outnumbered those from other sections on the council. République included slightly more of the central town than the other sections and also encompassed much of the commercial area, though it did not monopolize it. The bustling row of shops along the rue du Clocher lay in section Égalité, which shared the commercial district with République and consistently sent a strong contingent to the council. Section Liberté lagged behind these two in its representation, for two possible reasons. It included the faubourgs Montmellier and Saint-Martin, both more sparsely populated than the other faubourgs. Furthermore, most of Limoges' lawyers lived in section Liberté, and as we have seen, they fell out of favor with the voters after 1790. Section Union came in a weak last in sectional representation, but its position is easily explained. Union consisted almost entirely of la Cité, the ecclesiastical part of town, which was only incorporated into Limoges in November, 1791. Not surprisingly, the newcomers were not quickly assimilated into Limoges politics.29

This striking contrast in the political geography of Caen and Limoges was reflected in the public celebrations held in each town during the Revolution. Mona Ozouf has made a detailed study of the revolutionary fetes of Caen.
and found that most patriotic processions during the Revolution bypassed the faubourgs of Caen. Fewer than one-third of the thirty-four processions traced by Ozouf entered the faubourgs at all. Of these, four were agricultural fêtes, three occurred during the year II, and four others were military parades of the National Guard, very probably sent out to the faubourgs by municipal authorities as a salutary show of force. In contrast to the processions of the Old Regime, which nearly always finished at the heart of the parish Saint-Jean (the noble quartier), those of the Revolution generally headed to the Place de la Liberté, that square fronted by the homes of wealthy merchants. As if to pay further tribute to commerce as the lifeblood of the town, the municipal council shifted its meeting place early in the Revolution from the Abbaye-aux-Hommes to the church of the Eudistes, on the west side of the Place de la Liberté. The most common route of the revolutionary fêtes linked the Place de la Liberté to the Place Saint-Pierre, traversing the two dominant sections in Caen municipal politics and linking the artisanal district to the residential neighborhood of the haute-bourgeoisie. These revolutionary fêtes not only reflected the primacy of the central districts in Caen political life but helped to establish and strengthen that primacy.

In Limoges, the pattern of revolutionary processions was quite different. Rather than being planned by the departmental administration or the municipal council, as early as 1791 the fêtes were generally organized by the Jacobin club. The parades and celebrations in Limoges had a more spontaneous flavor than those in Caen. Citizens in attendance at public ceremonies often concluded the affairs with unplanned marches through the streets of Limoges. In contrast to the fêtes in Caen, confined most often to the central districts, the processions in Limoges generally stretched out to embrace the faubourgs as well. Thus, one sees an almost perfect symmetry between the urban geography of municipal politics in Caen and Limoges and the fêtes that gave revolutionary politics its public expression.

We shift our attention now from the local elites themselves to the political arena in which they interacted. How did politics operate in Caen and Li-

moges during the first four years of the Revolution? The two chefs-lieux are of primary interest here. Unlike departments such as the Seine-Inférieure—where Le Havre rivaled Rouen—or the Bouches-du-Rhône—where Marseille overshadowed Aix-en-Provence—Caen and Limoges were the unchallenged, supreme towns in their departments. The administrations, courts, and popular societies that functioned in those towns dominated departmental politics. By examining their interactions, we will see how some of the factors analyzed earlier in this chapter came into play. The situation in 1792 and 1793 is of greatest significance to us, but we must consider it in context and not isolate it from the developments of earlier years.

Let us first consider the administrative corps. The Constituent Assembly had established a hierarchy of responsibilities and authority among the local administrations but had generated no explicit policy regarding cooperation and consultation among them. Throughout France, the departmental administrations tended to meet with the district and municipal councils of the department chefs-lieux at times of crisis, and we have seen that both the Haute-Vienne and Calvados administrations did so during June, 1793. But practice during normal times varied, as it did between these two departments.

There appears to have been much closer contact among the three administrations in the Haute-Vienne than among those in Calvados. Early in 1793, upon observing that the National Guard commander, the district president, and the Limoges mayor frequently attended departmental meetings, the council formally invited the three to attend all its meetings. The departmental administration held public meetings approximately every five days, and by May, 1793, even the departmental directory had opened its meetings to the public.

The Calvados administration was neither as accessible to its constituents nor as solicitous of the subordinate councils. There is no evidence that departmental meetings were ever open to the public, though delegations from the clubs and sections of Caen often gained admission to deliver particular requests. Nor is there any indication that representatives of the municipal

---

32. A. D. Haute-Vienne, I,57 (departmental administration minutes, February 3, 1793).
33. A. D. Haute-Vienne, I,57 and I,72 (departmental directory minutes). Jacobin clubs nationwide mounted a lobbying campaign in 1790–91, calling on the Constituent Assembly to pass legislation requiring that all elected bodies hold public meetings. No such legislation appeared; but in Limoges, the pressure of the Jacobin club undoubtedly influenced the departmental administration in its decision to hold public meetings. Kennedy, *The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution*, 215.
and district councils regularly attended departmental meetings. Indeed, in spring, 1793, the district and the department clashed over departmental army recruitment policy, with the district council insisting that the departmental directory had exceeded its authority by changing recruitment procedures. Most communication among the three administrations appears to have passed through the offices of their procureurs.34

There were, of course, less formal ties among the three councils. In Calvados, Jean Louis Isaac Chatry was one of the most diligent departmental administrators during the 1791–1793 terms, and his brother, Samuel, participated on every municipal council in Caen from 1789 through 1793. In the Haute-Vienne, Jean Baptiste Nieaud moved in 1791 from his post as mayor of Limoges to a seat on the departmental administration, where he remained through 1793. Nearly all of the departmental councils included former district or municipal officials. But if we focus on the 1792–1793 term, we see the following: The Calvados departmental administration included three members who had served on the Caen district council and three who had been municipal officials in Caen since 1789. The Haute-Vienne administration included only one former Limoges district official, but seven of the ten departmental administrators who lived in the district of Limoges had at one time been Limoges municipal officials. The contrast between the district councils was less marked. Two of the Caen district administrators in the 1792–1793 term had previously been Caen municipal officials, whereas in Limoges, three of the district administrators had previously served on the municipal council.

When we consider all aspects of this analysis together, the contrast between the two departments is striking. The district of Caen sent seven representatives to the Calvados departmental council, while the district of Limoges placed ten members on the Haute-Vienne council. Of these, only three of the Caen men had previously served on the municipal council, while seven of the ten in the Haute-Vienne had at one time sat on the Limoges municipal council. Taking account also of the closer cooperation among the three Haute-Vienne administrations and the greater accessibility of the Haute-Vienne departmental council, we can conclude that Limoges exer-

34. Unfortunately, the minutes of the departmental council meetings have disappeared, so one cannot say with absolute certainty that district and municipal officials were not in attendance. However, none of the available documentation (including municipal and district proces-verbaux, miscellaneous departmental records, newspapers, and diaries) suggests that they attended.
cised considerably more influence on its departmental administration than did Caen.

This conclusion appears even more justified when we consider the contrasting roles played by the local popular societies. The Limoges Jacobin club remained a vital and active force throughout this period. By 1793, 43 percent of the Haute-Vienne administrators, 62 percent of the Limoges district administrators, and 85 percent of the Limoges municipal officiers were members of the Limoges Jacobin club. These percentages represent more than Jacobin strength in local government. They also demonstrate the extent to which the Jacobin club served as a central political forum, bringing together men from all levels of local administration to discuss the contentious issues of the day. The club met at least weekly, and generally more often, throughout the Revolution, with meetings always open to the public. The Limoges Jacobins maintained regular contact not only with the Paris Jacobins but with clubs in other cities around the country. Discussions focused on local and national issues, ranging from the conduct of public officials to the effectiveness of grain requisitions to reports of political developments elsewhere in France. Members debated very practical matters as well as more lofty ideological issues, such as the fate of Louis XVI. Local disputes and broader political controversies no longer needed to be resolved in confrontations between municipality and district or between club and department. The Jacobin club, by 1792, was a common denominator among all three councils, and club members carried the Jacobin viewpoint back to their respective administrations.35

This kind of political forum did not exist in Caen, at least not by 1793. The Jacobin club may have served that function in 1791, but by 1793 it had ceded its role as the most important club in Caen to the Carabots, a group more subservient to departmental administrators. No evidence exists to indicate that the Carabots ever functioned as an independent forum for discussion and debate. Nothing suggests more succinctly the difference between the political philosophy of the Carabots and that of the Limoges Jacobins than their mottoes. The Carabot banner admonished those who looked its way, “l'Exécution de la Loi ou la Mort,” while the Limoges Jacobins called out to those who would listen, “Vivre Libre ou Mourir.” The

35. Michael Kennedy stresses the fact that provincial Jacobin clubs “were nerve centers for the distribution of news and propaganda.” Kennedy, The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution, 54.
mottoes reflect as well the divergent perspectives of Caen and Limoges during those critical months of 1793.

The contrast between local politics in Caen and Limoges seems to parallel the opposition described by Soboul at the national level between moderates favoring “representative democracy” and radicals championing “agent democracy.” In Caen, that battle was won by the moderates controlling the departmental administration, who insisted on an orderly political arena in which people would show the proper respect for and confidence in their elected representatives. In Limoges, the more radical “agent democracy” triumphed. The people of Limoges repeatedly intervened in the political arena, both through the Jacobin club and by spontaneous action, most notably during the grain incident of February, 1792, and again the next summer, when the sections of Limoges recalled their elected “agents,” the Naurissart municipal council. Clearly, debates over important issues proceeded in a very different fashion in these two towns.

The shape of local politics affected not only the definition and resolution of local issues and concerns but also the relationship between each town and national affairs. Three different networks of communication unified the country during the Revolution. The first of these was the administrative network. The National Assembly and the ministries communicated the business of government to departmental, district, and municipal administrations through official channels. The Jacobin clubs constituted a second unifying network. The Paris Jacobins reprinted speeches, Jacobin policy statements, and official minutes from the National Assembly to be sent to affiliated societies all over France. The third network, a less coherent one, consisted of the numerous newspapers printed in Paris and sent to subscribers in the provinces. To some extent, there also existed an interdepartmental network of communication, in which departmental administrations and popular societies corresponded with their counterparts in other departments, but this tended to be regional in character and never achieved a truly national dimension. One might also mention personal correspondence, which was certainly important; but this, as we have seen, often traveled through administrative or Jacobin channels. That which did not is only rarely available today for inspection.

Local perceptions of national events naturally depended a great deal on available sources of information. Official communications were more or less a constant factor throughout France, except for the extent to which individ-
ual deputies corresponded with the authorities back home. The Jacobin network was more variable, for it depended on the existence in any particular community of an affiliated club. But the reports sent out were generally consistent; they were not tailored to different constituencies. The newspaper network featured the greatest variability, or flexibility. A multiplicity of newspapers offered a diversity of editorial perspectives, and each community’s interpretation of national events depended in part on the newspapers available to it.

Limoges and Caen differed with respect to each of these channels of communication. The National Convention sent the same information to both departments, to be sure, but the pattern of communication between national deputies and their constituents was different in the two departments, at least in 1792 and 1793. In Calvados, the conventionnels de Cussy, Doulcet, Dumont, and Lomont sent frequent letters to Caen, but almost always to administrators or one of the administrations, most often the departmental council. This solidified the council’s position as the supreme arbiter of local affairs. The sole Montagnard deputy on the Calvados delegation, Bonnet, did occasionally write to the Caen Jacobin club, but with limited effect, given the club’s waning influence in 1793. When Bonnet visited Caen in March, 1793, he spoke to the club and commented that one could always count on “the good people of Vaucelles and the faubourg l’Abbé.”

But as we have seen, those people had very little voice in Caen politics. Furthermore, the Caen Jacobin club had split with the Paris Jacobins in September, 1792, thereby eliminating that source of information from the capital. The principal newspaper available in Caen, by virtue of the municipal council’s subscription, was Gorsas’ Le Courrier dans les Départements, which in 1792 and 1793 presented the Girondin viewpoint.

In Limoges, official channels of communication did not dominate the flow of information from the capital as much as they did in Caen. The majority of the Limoges conventionnels were Girondin supporters, and they did correspond with the departmental administration. But the Montagnard deputies Bordas and Gay-Vernon frequently wrote to the Limoges Jacobin club, as did the Jacobin Xavier Audouin. Indeed, Gay-Vernon, undoubtedly the most prolific correspondent among the Haute-Vienne deputies, sent nearly all of his letters to the Jacobin club. The strength and vitality of the Limoges

36. Lesage (Esnault), 105.
club and its continued affiliation with the Paris Jacobins enabled it to provide an alternative source of information on national issues. In addition to letters, the club received printed speeches and pronouncements from the Paris club, items that presumably no longer went to Caen after its club had split with the mother society. Finally, there is the question of printed news. We cannot identify all of the newspapers available. However, in December, 1792, the Limoges Jacobins canceled their subscription to the Gorsas paper, which played a prominent role in Caen, in favor of a less moderate journal.

The patterns of political interaction described earlier prevailed during the crisis period of June and July, 1793. In Calvados, the departmental administration dominated the situation. Louis Caille, the district procureur-syndic, and Samuel Chatry, the wealthy Caen négociant, did play important leadership roles, but otherwise, departmental officials were most active and prominent during the revolt. A district official, Robert Tirel, voiced the most serious objection to the insurrectionary measures and was shouted down. The mayor of Caen, Le Goupil Duclos, missed the crucial early morning meeting of June 9 because he had been told that it would not be held until later in the day. Le Goupil and the rest of the municipal council lent only passive support to the revolt as it developed. The Carabots, following the departmental lead, provided the core of the expeditionary force to Evreux and carried the call to arms to the populace. The people of Caen responded by ignoring the authorities and refusing to enroll in the volunteer force.

From the start, the sections expressed their skepticism of reports from the capital by insisting that a delegation visit Paris to verify the situation. The delegation, led by Louis Caille and the departmental president René Lenormand, returned to give an alarming report, later decried by Le Goupil as misleading and inflammatory. It did, however, convince the section assemblies of the need for drastic action. Thereafter, the departmental council, now absorbed by the general assembly, did all it could to control the flow of information from Paris by prohibiting the circulation of any decree issued by the Convention. Despite these efforts, the Caen sections finally compelled the general assembly to abandon the revolt, which had collapsed owing to the lack of any popular support.

In the Haute-Vienne, the revolt collapsed before it could start, largely because of the more open nature of Limoges politics. The departmental administration showed an initial inclination to support the protest against Paris by its adoption of the Côte-d’Or resolution, but it could not dominate the
situation as the Calvados departmental council did. It was precisely during this period that Jacobin club meetings were most animated and most heavily attended.\textsuperscript{37} The Limoges municipal council and the Jacobin club immediately objected to the departmental action, and when messengers arrived from Lyon and the Jura, the municipal council intercepted and denounced them before they could state their mission to the administration. The departmental council had little choice but to repudiate their entreaties. Alarming reports did come from the moderate Haute-Vienne deputies in Paris, but these were countered by reassuring letters from Bordas and Gay-Vernon. On the heels of their letters came reports from the Paris Jacobins and the National Convention indicating that the Revolution had once again been defended and that calm had returned to the capital.

We have seen, then, that both the makeup of the local administrations and the way they interacted (with each other, with their constituents, and with national deputies) had a major impact on the political stances of Calvados and the Haute-Vienne in June, 1793. In Calvados, the departmental administration dominated the political arena. The Caen commercial elite played a strong role in that administration, which also included many market-oriented rural landowners. In 1792, the departmental council managed to undercut the influence of the Caen Jacobins and encouraged the growth of another club, the Carabots, which stood in a client relationship to the administration. The Caen municipal council, representing primarily the Caen commercial community, also deferred to or supported the departmental administration in nearly all important matters.

A very different situation prevailed in the Haute-Vienne. Landowners and merchants constituted only 11 percent of the 1792–1793 departmental council, which was dominated instead by lawyers and professionals. The Haute-Vienne administration did not monopolize local politics, as did the Calvados council. The town of Limoges exercised considerable influence on the departmental administration, by virtue of both the seven citizens of Limoges who sat on the council and the vigilance of the Jacobin club and the municipal council. The Limoges commercial elite was unable to maintain control of municipal affairs. That elite itself stood divided, as first evidenced by the 1782 splintering within the Freemason lodge and made very plain by

\textsuperscript{37} Fray-Fournier, \textit{Le Club des Jacobins}, xxvi.
the revolutionary conflict between Jacobins and Amis de la Paix. Large-scale merchants dominated the Naurissart municipality, but in August, 1792, Limoges voters rejected those men. Small-scale merchants and artisans, most of them club members, subsequently controlled the Limoges council.

The popular classes of Limoges thus exerted greater influence on local politics (both through the Jacobin club and through the municipal council) than did the menu peuple of Caen, who remained relatively inert during the Revolution. This was a crucial factor in June, 1793, for while the popular classes of Caen did not actively support the federalist revolt, they possessed no organized medium through which to express their opposition. As we have seen, it was concerted popular opposition, voiced by the Limoges municipal council and the Jacobin club, that steered the Haute-Vienne away from the federalist movement.

The vitality of popular politics in Limoges and the lack of it in Caen emerge, then, as the chief immediate factors determining the towns’ political stances in June, 1793. This raises a fundamental question. Why could the popular classes of Limoges mobilize and effectively apply pressure to their elected officials, while the people of Caen could not?

Several factors have already been suggested. The pattern of immigration into Caen in the eighteenth century left recent immigrants isolated in the faubourgs, not fully assimilated into Caen’s urban life. This contributed to their passivity during the Revolution. So did the nature of the Caen economy. The overwhelming importance of commerce in Caen left the town’s artisan community and commercial workers dependent on the commercial elite of Caen. This patron-client relationship manifested itself in Caen politics, most prominently in the creation of the Carabot club in 1793. The leniency of the punishment meted out to federalist leaders by Lindet and Laplanche is further evidence of the importance of the commercial elite, both to the Caen economy and to Caen politics. 38

In Limoges, the situation was different. The artisans and workers of Limoges were not isolated in the faubourgs but instead lived nearly side by side with their social and economic betters. They could not be so easily excluded

from Limoges political life. In addition, while commerce was important to the Limoges economy, it was not dominant. Textiles, the construction trades, and the fledgling porcelain industry all employed a considerable number of workers. The consecutive poor harvests also played their role. Although wholesale merchants such as Pétiniaud de Beaupeyrat and Naurissart may have been thanked for provisioning the city in 1789, the continuing poor harvests and high prices created an antagonism between the Limoges popular classes and the merchants who seemed to be profiting by their misfortune. This helps to explain the outburst of February, 1792, when the grain crisis forced Naurissart to flee. But other factors, related to the economy and the social structure of the two towns, must explain the consistent activism of the Limoges Jacobin club and the passivity of the people of Caen.

Sustained political activism on the part of the lower classes in Limoges required both opportunity and capability. Opportunity presented itself when the split divided the Limoges elite, creating a situation in which rival factions turned to the *menu peuple* for support in their struggle for political dominance. The persistent grain problem kept the public mood in Limoges at a heightened pitch, providing the political motivation for the popular classes. This is not to say that the popular classes controlled Limoges politics; but so long as they had allies in Paris (in the Paris Jacobin club and the Montagnard deputies of the Haute-Vienne), they could not be ignored. In Caen, no such opportunity for the popular classes existed, because the commercial elite was much more homogeneous and cohesive. Common economic interests linked landowners and merchants (witness the numerous petitions calling for improvements in the Orne River channel), Protestants and Catholics, wholesale merchants and shopkeepers. Far from appealing to the *menu peuple* for support, the Caen political elite did all it could to control popular political activity, and no serious grain problem existed to incite popular unrest.

Similarly, the capability for political activism among the lower classes was much stronger in Limoges than in Caen. In part, this was due to the social geography of the two towns, already discussed. But patterns of sociability more generally, I would argue, were a crucial factor here. Not only were the lower classes of Caen dispersed in the faubourgs, they had no popular associations to build on as a base for organizing revolutionary clubs. In Limoges, by contrast, nearly every adult male belonged to a penitent con-
fraternity at the end of the Old Regime, and the organizational structures of those groups carried over to the Jacobin club during the Revolution. Far beyond occasionally rioting in protest of grain prices, then, the Limoges popular classes were capable of sustained political expression that manifested itself at the ballot box in the municipal elections of 1792 and in the political forum of the Limoges Jacobin club. In 1793, it was this that restrained the Haute-Vienne departmental administration from joining the federalist revolt.