Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France

Horowitz, Sarah

Published by Penn State University Press

Horowitz, Sarah.
Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France.
Penn State University Press, 2013.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/28730.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/28730
POST–REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL NETWORKS

If patterns of epistolary communication highlight a series of understandings about the workings of friendship, social network analysis offers another perspective. Looking at the networks of Chateaubriand, Guizot, Béranger, and some of the women to whom they were close illuminates crucial structural differences between men and women’s ties. This chapter focuses on two moments in time—the 1820s and the 1840s—to show the degree to which political affiliations shaped social ones. In the Restoration, politics had a profound effect on men’s personal ties, as factional allegiance was a force for both cohesion and division. But in the July Monarchy, social bonds began to be depoliticized among the political classes. In this respect at least, the divisions spawned by the Revolution began to heal. For Béranger and Chateaubriand, two men who had ceased their political activity, ideology was only one of a number of factors that shaped their friendships. In contrast, Guizot’s bonds with other men remained bound up in factional considerations. However, throughout both regimes, women’s networks were not determined by political affiliations, and they had little difficulty maintaining ties across the political spectrum. As a result, it was they who served as bridging actors between different factions and social groups. In the face of the upheaval of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary eras, women maintained the unity of Parisian high society and served as forces for social cohesion.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Network analysis, a technique pioneered by sociologists and mathematicians, has become increasingly popular in recent years. The explosive growth of the
Internet and the rise of social media have led to an understanding that we live in a networked world, one where our social connections influence what we think, how we behave, and what opportunities open up to us. Among historians, network analysis has been hailed as a way to revive social history after the challenge of post-structuralism, as it makes questions about individual agency central to empirical research. Because it focuses on systems of relationships, as opposed to attributes of institutions or individuals, network analysis can also bring new issues into focus, such as the transmission of ideas and the transformation of social habits over time. In this instance, social network analysis illuminates the forces for division and cohesion among early nineteenth-century Parisian political elites. For this reason, friendship is particularly interesting. By definition, family relationships cannot be destroyed; even if two relatives stop talking to each other, they are still related. But looking at friendship networks provides insight into whom individuals chose to have around them and with whom they communicated on a regular basis. Hence, at some level, it shows what men and women wanted in their relationships with others.

In order to compile information on the networks of Béranger, Chateaubriand, Guizot, and the women around them, I rely on the enormous quantity of documentation about their social lives. All three men wrote memoirs in which they discussed their friendships to a greater or lesser degree, and they left extensive collections of letters, either published or unpublished. Biographers have also been interested in these men’s social ties. We also have considerable information about the lives of some of the women with whom these men were friends. The networks of Mme de Montcalm, Mme Récamier, and Mme de Duras, all of whom were in Chateaubriand’s circle, are relatively well documented. For Guizot, we have some information about the relationships of his friends Mme de Broglie, Mme de Dino, and Mme de Castellane, as well as those of Mme de Lieven, his mistress from the late 1830s on. Works on Béranger’s friend Hortense Allart provide detail about some of her social ties. The information about some of these women’s networks is extensive, as in the case of Broglie and Montcalm, who both have published correspondence. Récamier’s social circle has long been a source of fascination, while works on Allart, Duras, and Dino have examined their closest friendships. However, we have only some indications of the relationships of Castellane and Lieven. As a general rule, there is far more information about the social worlds of the men studied here than the women. Nevertheless, there is
enough to provide a sense of some of the essential differences between men’s and women’s networks.\(^4\)

This chapter relies primarily on correspondence to track the personal relations of the men and women studied here. By definition, letter writing is a social act. Parisian elites also spent approximately half the year outside the capital and at the same time expected their friends to stay in regular contact with them. Thus friendship could not exist without a paper trail in this era (unless friends were staying with one another).\(^5\) Another advantage of using letters is that correspondents of the time often had clear ways of signifying who was a friend and who was not. For instance, Guizot and his male friends consistently used the salutation “mon cher ami” with one another, a term that Béranger and his male friends often used as well.\(^6\) Salutations are more complicated in women’s correspondence, however. Female friends typically called one another “chère amie” in their letters, and in some cases men and women used “mon cher ami” or “ma chère amie” as a form of address.\(^7\) Yet in other instances, men and women did not use a salutation with one another or used salutations that would have indicated formality and distance had they been employed between friends of the same sex, as was the case with Hortense Allart and Sainte-Beuve. In these instances, it was not the form of address that signified the nature of the relationship. Rather, it was the frequency of the letters and the fact that the correspondence was personal, affectionate, and sustained over a long period of time. Men and women also discussed the fact that they were friends in their correspondence with one another even in cases where the salutation did not indicate the nature of their tie.

For the purposes of this chapter, correspondents who used the formulations that signified friendship are counted as friends. Additionally, relationships between men and women who did not use these terms are considered to be friendships if their correspondence otherwise discussed their friendship and was personal in nature. Frequency and duration are also factors. Friendship is sustained over time, and there must be some indication that the contact between individuals was not limited to just one or two letters. Likewise, to be counted as a marker of friendship, letters must have some affective or personal content, such as news about the writer’s health or family.\(^8\) This weeds out those who wrote to Béranger requesting his literary advice or to Guizot asking for favors. Biographies and memoirs have been used to supplement the collections of letters in cases where a relationship cannot be tracked by correspondence.\(^9\)
This study also pulls in two additional types of data to give us a fuller picture of these networks. First, it examines the relationships among these individuals’ friends. Thus it takes note of the fact that Béranger was friends with both Manuel and Dupont de l’Eure and that Manuel and Dupont themselves were friends. In general, we have a great deal of information on the interlocking friendship ties in Guizot’s circle and somewhat less for Chateaubriand and Béranger. Additionally, a limited number of other types of relationships are included in this study. Ties between lovers and some family members, including spouses, are noted, but only where such relationships were integrated into their friendship networks. For example, Guizot’s brother is not included because none of Guizot’s friends was close to him. However, the relationship between Mme de Broglie and her brother Auguste de Staël is included because he had ties with many of her friends. In these instances, showing the family connection or love relationship can illuminate the conditions under which certain individuals became friends with one another. Of course, as discussed in the previous chapter, the boundary between love and friendship was often porous. For the sake of simplicity, I have placed bonds where there was significant ambiguity in one of these categories, based on whether the parties acknowledged their relationship as a love affair and whether there is evidence of sexual activity, at the same time as I recognize that these labels can be reductionist.

These sources must be approached with considerable caution. Memoirs, for instance, were typically written toward the end of a life and are thus subject to the vagaries of memory. Moreover, individuals might have wanted to downplay (or hide) certain ties to shield themselves from embarrassment. One advantage of using letters is that they capture relationships at particular moments in time. But the codes of nineteenth-century correspondence, the way in which these sources have been made available for future generations, and the very meaning of the terms “friend” and “friendship” complicate any notion that individuals’ letter collections provide uncomplicated access to their social networks. For one, we do not possess the complete correspondence of any of the men or women studied here. With some individuals—such as Mme de Dino—we have only a small sampling of their letters. In contrast, Guizot’s personal papers contain well over ten thousand letters that he either wrote or received, while Béranger and Chateaubriand’s correspondence both take up many volumes. Yet even in these cases we do not have their complete correspondence, as many letters—probably most—have been destroyed or lost. Some that were too personal or revealing were
burned at the sender’s request. Heirs also pruned these collections in order to protect their relatives’ reputations. Chateaubriand and Béranger’s available correspondence largely consists of letters they wrote, which means that we are dependent on the recipients having saved these men’s letters (and having been willing to make them available to the editors of these men’s correspondences). There are also considerable lacunae; Chateaubriand’s correspondence after 1830 remains largely unpublished, while we have relatively few letters from Béranger written during the Restoration. In Guizot’s case, there is little from before 1826.

Thus, despite all the available material, the networks analyzed here are not necessarily complete. For the women studied here, it is certain that we are missing significant information about their social ties. In general, we know the most about Guizot’s network and should regard this as closest to complete. Thanks in part to the painstaking efforts of Béranger’s biographer Jean Touchard, we have a great deal of information about the songwriter’s most important relationships, but relatively little about the connections between his friends. In Chateaubriand’s case, we know a lot about the network of Récamier, but less about the man himself. In part, this is a reflection of his personality: he had none of the warmth of Guizot or Béranger, nor their need for companionship. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the available evidence provides us with a general sense of these individuals’ social ties, the types of relationships possible for them, and how different social groups were connected to one another.

A second set of issues relates to the connection between language, emotion, and authenticity. After all, letters were written for a specific purpose and in an environment where calling someone a friend provided access to patronage networks and political favors. Thus one problem with using letters and memoirs to derive data about personal networks is that doing so requires taking individuals at their word. There were also social conventions that led correspondents to use terms of friendship with those who were not friends. Hence, it is important to know the cultural codes of the time and to be aware of how these men and women used the words “friend” and “friendship.” On the one hand, it is easy for an individual to claim to be linked by friendship to another; this is a tie that requires no formal method of affiliation. Yet on the other hand, the men and women of this study were relatively conservative in their application of the terms “ami” and “amitié.” “Ami,” for instance, was not an appellation for those who merely knew each other socially, as individuals of the time often made careful distinctions between who was a friend
and who was not. Take two statements that Guizot made in his *Mélanges biographiques et littéraires*, a collection of essays about notable personalities, most of whom he knew personally. In discussing the friends of Mme Récamier, he writes, “The comtesse de Boigne became one of her closest and most constant friends; without the same intimacy and in a more passing relationship, the duchesse de Luynes and the duchesse de Chevreuse, her daughter-in-law, enjoyed the charms of her company.” Later, while writing about Mme de Boigne herself, Guizot states, “I never entered into one of these intimate relationships with her that leads to mutual confidences and makes people privy to one another; I only knew the pleasures of her mind and her society.” In both passages, Guizot carefully qualified who was a true friend and who was a mere social acquaintance. Récamier might have spent a considerable amount of time with Mmes de Luynes and de Chevreuse, just as Guizot frequented Boigne’s salon. This was not considered enough to create a friendship, however, as such a bond would require an intimacy and a perceived knowledge of the other.

Individuals of the time also made clear distinctions between “amis” who were merely political allies and “amis” with whom they shared a personal connection. For example, Mme de Broglie wrote the following to Barante about Victor Cousin in 1824: “You will see our new friend, M. Cousin, friend whom I do not like that much.” Likewise, correspondents might discuss whether and why they could consider themselves friends. Thus, in 1868, Guizot and the comte de Montalembert—a former political adversary—began calling each other “ami” in their letters. This provoked Montalembert to write, “You are right to call me your friend; it is a title that I deserve and that I will bear with sweetness and pride, friends! We were already friends even when it seemed that we fought with each other the most.” These two men were immensely proud that they had turned their political differences into a personal friendship. In their discussion about why and how they could call each other “friend,” Montalembert gave careful deliberation and consideration to this issue.

Despite these calculations about who was and was not a friend, there were certain occasions when correspondents used terms of friendship with those whom they did not regard as friends in the fullest sense of the term. For instance, elites sometimes used the word “ami” to refer to high-status servants in their households, such as secretaries. Chateaubriand thus called his secretary Jean Baptiste Le Moine a friend in his letters. Chateaubriand may have had affection for him and placed a great deal of trust in him, but the core
of the relationship was an economic transaction. In practice, however, it is not difficult to determine who was a servant and to weed out these types of relationships. Alternately, as is discussed in chapter 5, politicians occasionally used words of friendship strategically in negotiations to signify a political allegiance and did not do so to make claims about their feelings. Fortunately, these empty expressions of love deployed between politicians are relatively easy to locate. For one, the terms of affection tend to be extremely formal and elaborate and even violated the codes of communication between male friends. The claims of friendship were offered only once, and the remainder of the correspondence shows the hallmarks of distance. As with secretaries, then, these instances of empty words of friendship are relatively easy to find and exclude.

Further, it is important to note that the appellation “friend” did not always describe a deep emotional connection. Some of the relationships discussed in this chapter were by all accounts important to the men and women involved. This is the case with Béranger and Manuel, who were buried together, and with Guizot and Mme de Broglie, who treated each other as confidantes. But some of these friendships seem to operate on the level of social convention and do not appear to be close. For instance, Mme de Broglie and Mme Récamier maintained a correspondence with each other for many years; we only have the former’s side, but Broglie called Récamier her friend in it. However, Récamier’s biographer states that Broglie did not actually like or understand Récamier. Likewise, in the 1820s, Mme de Dino and Guizot corresponded with each other on a regular basis and called each other friends. In reading her letters, however, one gets the impression that there is little genuine warmth to them.

Both of these relationships have all the hallmarks of friendship—regular contact and the employment of forms of address used between friends—but they seem to have arisen out of a desire to appear to be a friend more than anything else. Broglie and Récamier were both noted salonnières; they had some friends in common, such as Prosper de Barante, and Broglie was the daughter of Mme de Staël, who had been close to Récamier. It was perhaps easier for them to claim to be friends than to state that they were not. For her part, Dino’s relationship with Guizot probably arose from her efforts to facilitate the political career of her uncle-in-law, companion, and occasional lover, Talleyrand. Certainly, many of the women whose networks are discussed here were salonnières and might have had a whole host of reasons to act as friends toward those for whom they did not have a great wellspring of
affection. They might wish to attract prominent personalities to their salon, for instance. In this chapter, I make no judgments about the authenticity of a particular relationship as long as there is evidence that the parties treated each other as friends over a sustained period of time. That is to say, if their letters employed the conventional signs of friendship, I count them as friends. In other words, my aim is not to understand the innermost feelings of these individuals or the sincerity of their expressions. Instead, it is to examine with whom individuals thought they could be friends and with whom they were in regular contact.

THE POLITICAL DIVIDES OF THE RESTORATION

Figure 1 shows the social networks of Béranger, Guizot, and Chateaubriand from 1825 to 1829; it also includes information on the ties of Hortense Allart, Mme de Broglie, Mme de Dino, Mme de Duras, Mme de Montcalm, and Mme Récamier. This four-year window was selected because it offers the most information about these individuals' social ties. However, to be included here, the individuals do not have to have been friends for this entire period, but only to have had a relationship during these years. Thus, for instance, Mme de Duras is shown here, even though she died in 1828. Likewise, Chateaubriand's relationship with Hortense Allart is included, even though the two met in 1829. The names of some individuals featured prominently in this study are provided here; a full list can be found in appendix B.

Despite their quite different political positions and social milieus, all three men's networks were connected to one another in some way. Hortense Allart is the only direct tie between Chateaubriand and Béranger, although Mme Récamier also linked their social worlds, since she was friends with a number of those in Béranger's circle. Mme de Dino connects the extended networks of Guizot and Béranger to each other, as she was friends with Thiers, a friend of Béranger, and with Guizot and a number of other doctrinaires. There are more bridging figures between Guizot and Chateaubriand's networks, including Mme de Catellan, Mme de Récamier, and Mme de Castel-lane. Crucially, most of the individuals who connect different networks are women. A number of them, including Récamier, Catellan, and Dino, hosted notable salons of the day. Salonnières had the aim of sparking conversation among individuals who did not necessarily know one another, and they might pull in artists, intellectuals, foreign visitors, and politicians from different
As a result, it was up to them to cultivate ties with individuals who belonged to different social groups. Récamier is a good example of this, for her network is made up of a number of different subnetworks. Some of her friends—like Benjamin Constant, Mme de Broglie, and Prosper de Barante—were essentially legacies of her friendship with Mme de Staël during the years of the Empire, as they had all been close to Staël. Récamier was also friends with a number of members of the Bonaparte family, as well as with the young men who grouped around Jean Jacques Ampère and Pierre Simon de Ballanche. At the same time, some of her closest relationships were with conservative politicians, such as Chateaubriand and Mathieu de Montmorency. Many of these individuals knew one another, but were not necessarily friends; instead, they were largely connected through Récamier. Thus, insofar as these men and women’s networks represent a slice of Parisian high society (with Guizot and Chateaubriand definitely belonging to an elite stratum and with Béranger having strong connections to notable elites of the day), it is clear that it was women who ensured the unity of the Parisian monde. This is but another example of
women’s social roles, for they both maintained connections among men who were friends with one another and tied different elite circles together.

It is also notable that there are many friendships between men and women and that women were well integrated into men’s networks. Such bonds should challenge the notion that nineteenth-century sociability was divided along lines of gender, or that the concept of separate spheres was a sociological fact, as some scholars have claimed.24 Historians have also described the prevalence of gender mixing in this era as an aristocratic phenomenon deriving from the social habits and salon culture of Old Regime elites.25 Indeed both Chateaubriand and Guizot attended salons and circulated in largely aristocratic milieus. But Béranger is a different case. His background was decidedly nonaristocratic—yet he, too, had friendships with a number of women.

However, male and female networks were different, a fact that is particularly visible in figure 2, which sorts individuals into the four basic political camps of the time—the liberal opposition, doctrinaires, center-right moderates, and ultras. Liberals were those in the opposition since 1815. In terms of their ideology, they ranged from liberal monarchists to republicans to Bonapartists, but they were nonetheless generally united in this period.26 The doctrinaires were a relatively small, cohesive faction that occupied a position in the center-left. More conservative than other members of the liberal opposition, they wanted to serve as a moderating force between the left and the right.27 To their right were moderates, who were committed royalists opposed to the excesses of the ultras. These men and women of the center-right had often supported the policies of Louis XVIII, but not those of his more conservative brother Charles X. Within this camp was a faction known as the Defection. This group was made of up politicians like Chateaubriand and Hyde de Neuville who had been ultras in the early years of the Restoration but who moved to a more centrist position in the mid-1820s.28 On the far-right were the ultras who opposed all gains of the Revolution and supported Charles X.29

There are some individuals, such as Mme Récamier and her friend Pierre Simon Ballanche, who do not fit neatly into any factional camp. Récamier, for instance, claimed to be neutral, but she did have some political orientation. In the early years of the Restoration, when Chateaubriand was an ultra, he considered her too sympathetic to liberals, while Benjamin Constant thought she was too tied to conservatives. Her niece and adopted daughter, Amélie Lenormant, née Cyvoct, spoke of her as a good royalist who found the
ultras too conservative. For this reason she has been placed in the center-right camp. Ballanche presents an even thornier case, as he was a political thinker with idiosyncratic views. He was committed to a counterrevolutionary philosophy, but one that allowed for progress and radical change. His friend and biographer Jean Jacques Ampère suggests that he was never an ultra, and that by the end of the 1820s he thought that the Restoration regime was incapable of governing. For lack of a better way of understanding his politics, he, too, has been placed in the moderate camp. Individuals whose political views are unknown have been excluded from figure 2, as have Guizot and Chateaubriand’s British friends, since their political positions did not necessarily align with French factional divisions.

Figure 2 shows that men’s networks were determined largely by political affiliation. All of Béranger’s friends were liberals, while Guizot’s male friends overwhelmingly belonged to the doctrinaire camp. Chateaubriand had some
connections to ultras, but for the most part his male friends belonged to the center-right, as did he. To be sure, some men were able to maintain ties across factional divisions, including Talleyrand, Barante, and Ballanche. But as a general rule, it is clear that shared ideological affiliation was a constitutive element of male friendship. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that male friendship centered on notions of similarity and public allegiance.

Indeed, in a number of cases, political commitments were central to the formation of ties between men. For Guizot, three of his most important male friendships were formed in the first few years of the Restoration—that with Rémusat, Barante, and Broglie. All four men were friends with one another and they were all tied together by their similar political views. It was also after 1815 that Béranger became friends with Manuel and Dupont de l’Eure, two men who shared his far-left politics. Thus, during this era, men’s social ties were highly politicized, and factional commitments were a force for both cohesion and division. For men, the notion that France was a nation divided by ideological tensions fit with their personal experience.

Just as male social networks were highly politicized, so, too, were their political networks deeply social. This is striking in the case of the liberal opposition; its most prominent politicians, including Lafayette, Constant, Manuel, and Jacques Laffitte, were all either Béranger’s friends or friends of a friend. Indeed, the liberals are interesting precisely because they functioned as a united front without a set of shared ideological positions. For instance, these politicians orchestrated electoral campaigns in concert with one another with great success in the late 1820s. What united these men was a hatred of the existing regime, but also strong personal connections. Hence, in an era before official political parties, men’s social networks often served as networks of political affiliation.

In contrast to the intense politicization of men’s personal ties, politics did not bind women’s networks, and many women had friends who belonged to other factions. For instance, Mme de Dino shared the politics of her uncle-in-law and companion, Talleyrand, who was in the liberal opposition. In the closing years of the Restoration, she cultivated a friendship with Thiers, also a liberal, and had many ties to the men of the doctrinaire circle. Her closest friend, however, was the baron de Vitrolles, an ultra. Similarly, Récamier had many connections to ultras, but also to liberals like Constant and Ampère and to exiled members of the Bonaparte family. Hortense Allart’s network was also politically extensive. She herself was firmly in the liberal camp.
and had male friends who shared her factional commitments, but she was also Chateaubriand's lover.

Even women who were politically engaged had social ties that transcended factional divisions. Mme de Duras was Chateaubriand's most important political adviser, but she maintained a relationship with Talleyrand in the 1820s. Her biographer also asserts that in the early years of the Restoration—when factional tensions were at their height—she supported the moderate Richelieu government, to which Chateaubriand was bitterly opposed. Despite their political disagreements, their relationship was untroubled and she remained his confidante and tireless advocate. Mme de Montcalm was another politically active woman whose friendships crossed factional lines. A moderate who worked on behalf of her brother, the duc de Richelieu, she also maintained a number of close ties to ultras. There are exceptions to these patterns of female friendship; Mme de Broglie's intimates were largely confined to the doctrinaire circle, for example. Nevertheless, in general, political affiliation was less determinative of women's networks than men's. Thus, not only did women connect different social milieus to one another, they also served as links between different factional groupings.

One reason women could have more diverse social networks than men was their official exclusion from politics. Men had to remain loyal to their particular faction, both because it represented their political views and because it was a path to power. For example, when Chateaubriand's faction triumphed, it raised the possibility that he could become a cabinet minister. Because this option was not open to women, they were less invested in the success of any one political grouping. Additionally, while a male politician had to have an opinion on every issue up for debate in the Chambers in order to vote on it, a woman could choose to remain silent on an issue or to suggest that she did not have an opinion on the matter. Thus some women, like Récamier, claimed to be neutral, although she was not necessarily so. Likewise, in 1829, Mme de Dino stated in a letter to her best friend, the baron de Vitrolles, that “politics does not interest me at all anymore.” This was hardly true, for at the time, she was actively involved in promoting Talleyrand's political career. But she did not want Vitrolles, an ardent ultra, to know this, for Talleyrand was aligned with liberals at the time. However, Dino's claim of political disengagement was plausible only because of her gender: no man as close to Talleyrand as she could have held such a position. A few other women, such as Montcalm and Allart, did have fixed political views, but were seen as capable
of having personal as well as political loyalties. As public actors, men found this less possible. Moreover, the fact that bonds between men and women were not constructed around similarity enabled women to be friends with men whose politics did not match their own.

Thus, while the men and women who inhabited Parisian political circles did not live in separate social worlds in this era, they did have very different experiences of friendship. Politics shaped the personal lives of men but not those of women. For men, politics was a clear force for division, but it also brought them together. Shared political views were responsible for the formation of lifelong friendships for both Béranger and Guizot. This was not as true for women, however. Politics was not what tied Chateaubriand and Allart together, nor was it what bound Mme Récamier to her friends. In this respect, women’s social lives did not match the notion that early nineteenth-century France was a nation torn asunder by politics. Their networks show the persistence of old ideas about female sociability, and in practice they held Parisian political society together. In contrast, men’s social lives were far more shaped by the upheaval of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary eras.

THE 1840s: PERSISTENT AND DISAPPEARING DIVIDES

After the Revolution of 1830, the political landscape shifted. New factions appeared and others split up; many ultras became legitimists, while the liberal opposition of the Restoration broke apart. Some of its members, such as Thiers, supported the new regime, while others, including Béranger, maintained an oppositional stance to the July Monarchy. Many of the old political flash points died down as well. It was now clear to all but die-hard legitimists that some of the gains of the Revolution would remain in place and that France would not be an absolute monarchy. At the same time, the issue of popular participation in politics—and the degree to which the working classes would have their demands met or repressed—became central to the politics of the new regime.

Historians have also stated that this period was less factionalized than was the Restoration. After all, fears of popular unrest led many elites to feel that the threat did not come from within the ranks of the wealthy, but from those who were excluded from the political system. In turn, this opened up opportunities for reconciliation within the ruling class. And indeed, politics was less a force in Béranger’s and Chateaubriand’s networks in the July Monarchy
than it was before. Both of them had largely retired from political life, and to some extent their personal ties were depoliticized. Nevertheless, politics could still be a force for division. This was especially true for Guizot, the only one of the three who remained active in politics. Once again, however, women had no trouble maintaining ties to politicians of different stripes, and they continued to connect factional groupings to one another.

Figure 3 maps the social worlds of these three men from 1843 to 1847, a period for which we have a great deal of information about Guizot’s and Béranger’s networks. This is not the case for Chateaubriand, however, as the documentation regarding his relationships after 1830 is relatively scarce. He was also in considerable decline in this period and was far less sociable as a consequence. As with previous mappings, this figure incorporates information about the networks of some of the women to whom these men were close: Récamier, Allart, Dino, Castellane, and Lieven. I have not assumed any continuity between these men’s and women’s relationships in the 1820s and their ties in the 1840s. For example, while there is much evidence that Chateaubriand and Mme de Castellane were friends in the 1820s, there is no information about whether they remained so in the 1840s. As a result, no relationship is indicated here.

This figure shows a number of changes since the 1820s. The personal networks of Chateaubriand and Récamier have diminished greatly in size. Both were ailing at this point and had social lives that were considerably less active. However, Chateaubriand and Béranger’s networks have come closer together. They were joined by their friendship with each other, and both were close to the abbé de Lamennais. Meanwhile, the number of Guizot’s friendships increased. Being connected to the head of the government could be a lucrative prospect in this era. His network also appears to be less dense than it was during the Restoration, but this is primarily due to a lack of sources. Much of the information about the relationships within the doctrinaire coterie during the Restoration comes from Mme de Broglie, who died in the 1830s, and Rémusat, who was no longer friends with Guizot in the 1840s.

Figure 4 maps the friendship networks across the political divides of the period, placing individuals into four general groupings. On the right-hand side are legitimists who advocated the return of the Bourbon monarchy. To their left are those in the juste milieu. In power during the 1840s, this faction consisted of conservatives who supported the Orleans branch of the monarchy and opposed any opening up of the parliamentary franchise. A number of different factions opposed this government, including liberals and liberal
Catholics, those who supported Thiers, and republicans and socialists on the far-left. For the sake of simplicity, I have consolidated these factions into two basic categories—the far-left and the center-left. The former group includes republicans, socialists, and all those who wanted to dramatically alter the nature of the regime. In the latter category are those who were generally happy with the structure of the parliamentary monarchy, but who advocated some opening to the left, such as parliamentary reform or an expansion of the franchise. It should be said that within these categories, there were many different shades of opinion. For instance, Thiers’s politics were hardly the same as those of liberal Catholics, despite the fact that they are in the same left-of-center grouping.

As before, the women around Béranger and Chateaubriand had politically extensive networks. Two of the men closest to Récamier during the 1840s were Chateaubriand, on the far-right, and Pierre Simon Ballanche, who was drawn to liberal Catholicism. Even more strikingly heterogeneous is Allart’s network. She had friends across the political spectrum. She herself was an unwed mother, a feminist, and a proponent of radical political views. Many of those around her had also turned their backs on the establishment. Her friends included Marie d’Agoult, who left her husband and her life in high society for Franz Liszt; George Sand, who dressed as a man; and Lamennais,
whom the Catholic Church had condemned. But she was also friends with Thiers, a man who gave up radical politics after 1830. As one of the most important politicians of the July Monarchy and a member of the Académie française, he was as close to the establishment as one could get.

Béranger’s and Chateaubriand’s social ties also changed shape, for they were depoliticized to a certain degree. Many of Chateaubriand’s male friends were legitimists as was he, but others were liberal Catholics or on the far-left. Likewise, Béranger continued to circulate in a radical milieu, and, as during the Restoration, shared politics remained a force for cohesion. This was true in the case of his relationship with Alphonse de Lamartine. The two men were particularly close when their politics aligned with each other. Nevertheless, Béranger had friends across the political spectrum, including Ary Scheffer, who had affinities with liberal Catholics, and Horace Sébastiani, part of the juste milieu. Béranger had been friends with all of these men during the Restoration, and their differences of opinion after 1830 did not fundamentally disrupt these ties. Yet he also had close relationships with those to whom
he had been opposed during the Restoration, including the legitimist Chateaubriand and the former ultra Lamennais. If male friendship was based on similarity, by the 1840s this similarity could be constructed in a variety of fashions. It might involve shared political views, a shared history, or a shared set of literary preoccupations.

However, quite particular circumstances enabled these connections between men on opposite sides of the political spectrum. After all, Chateaubriand was an unusual legitimist, for his sense of honor more than any real attachment tied him to the Bourbon branch. In his account, his political career ended after the Revolution of 1830 because he felt that swearing an oath of allegiance to the new regime would have involved a betrayal of his previous oath of loyalty to the Bourbons. In 1831, he also stated that he was a “republican by nature, a monarchist by reason, and a legitimist by honor”—but such political heterodoxy was hardly characteristic of others who shared his loyalty to the Bourbon branch. Indeed, the very fact that he was friends with Béranger shocked many of those on the far-right. In Chateaubriand’s memoirs, he spoke of receiving a letter from another legitimist who decried the fact that Chateaubriand was being praised by “he who attacked your king and your God.” Such a reaction only triggered an outburst of pride from Chateaubriand; he discussed his relationship with Béranger as a way to show his independence and open-mindedness, and to demonstrate that as a legitimist, he was not one of the stultifyingly dull ones. Likewise, Lamennais was hardly typical of those on the far-left. During the Restoration, he had been an ultra and had contributed to the far-right Le Conservateur, along with Chateaubriand. Certainly his friendship with Béranger was shocking to some of his other friends. If there were increasing opportunities for ties across political lines during the July Monarchy, the extent of Chateaubriand and Béranger’s networks were not necessarily typical of the time.

In contrast, the shape of Guizot’s network was not fundamentally different from his social world during the Restoration. His male friends continued to be political allies. A key reason for this difference is that Chateaubriand and Béranger were largely absent from the political life of this period. Political differences mattered much less to them than to Guizot. As the dominant politician of the time, Guizot knew that at any moment his rivals were trying to weaken his position. Anyone not an ally was a potential threat. The factionalized nature of Guizot’s network was also intimately connected to his temperament and his view of politics. His biographers maintain that ideological similarity was an essential element of his relationships with other men,
and that his approach to personal relations could be rigid and uncompromising. His view of politics as a form of warfare also shaped his inability to be friends with men from different political groupings. In the midst of war, one does not consort with the enemy.

Yet as in the Restoration era, Guizot’s female friends had ties that were not bound by shared ideological commitments. He was close to Mme de Castellane who was in turn friends with Rémusat, a former doctrinaire who had moved into the opposition. Moreover, Castellane’s long-time lover was Mathieu Molé. Although Molé’s politics were not that different from Guizot’s, the two men were bitter rivals, largely because they were both vying for control of the conservatives in the Chambers. Mme de Dino, too, continued to have ties to the doctrinaires, including to Guizot, Royer-Collard, and Barante, as well as to the duc de Noailles, a legitimist. Meanwhile, Lieven was Guizot’s mistress and yet she maintained friendships with legitimists like Berryer and Noailles and the center-left Thiers.

These women tended to be neutral or relatively disengaged from politics. Castellane did not care much about political struggles, although she did step in at times to help her lover Molé. Dino had been politically active until Talleyrand’s death in 1838. She was probably a centrist, as Talleyrand had been, but in the 1840s she was spending more and more time outside of France. For her part, Lieven was heavily involved in diplomatic affairs. Although she claimed to be politically neutral, she was not, and she moved Guizot to the right in the 1840s, especially in matters of foreign policy. For these women, claims to neutrality or to disengagement facilitated their relationships with men of opposing factions.

Yet Guizot was also able to be friends with a woman who had clear political differences with him. From the 1830s until her death in 1864, one of his closest friends was Mme de Gasparin. Despite being his confidante, she was clearly to the left of Guizot politically. For instance, in 1840, she supported Thiers’s left-leaning government, one to which Guizot was adamantly opposed. Indeed, she and Rémusat probably had more or less the same politics. But while Guizot’s ideological differences destroyed his relationship with Rémusat, the same was not true for his bond with Gasparin.

For his part, Guizot recognized this difference between male and female networks. In the 1837 letter to Lieven in which he spoke about his inability to maintain bonds with men whose politics did not match his own, he admiringly described her capacity to decouple politics and friendship. He wrote, “You, Madame, you should without hesitation make the most of your
privilege as a woman; be fair to everyone, good to everyone, friendly to all those who deserve it. What is better and more rare than fairness and friendship!" In Guizot’s estimation, this ability to have friends across the political spectrum was not exclusive to Lieven, for this quality belonged to her sex more generally ("your privilege as a woman"). In his mind, women could be friends with men because of their qualities as persons, connecting with individuals based on whether they “deserve” friendship. By contrast, he had to consider other traits. Politics overrode all other considerations in the formation of his bonds with men.

For Guizot, then, the basic pattern of his network was fixed in the Restoration; he needed to find ideological similarity in his relationships with men, but not in those with women. The same was not true of Béranger and Chateaubriand. Similar political views could still aid in the formation of their friendships, but were no longer necessary. In general, then, the July Monarchy saw the partial depoliticization of personal networks. This indicates that the members of the political classes were beginning to recover from the Revolution, as the ideological divisions it engendered were no longer as central to men’s lives as before. In this respect, some of the men who lived during the July Monarchy were catching up to the women who were consistently able to maintain ties across the political spectrum and ensure the cohesion of Parisian political society.