

Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media



# Gender, Citizenship and Newspapers

Historical and Transnational Perspectives

Jane L. Chapman



## Gender, Citizenship and Newspapers

*Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media*

Series Editors: Professor Bill Bell (Cardiff University), Dr. Chandrika Kaul (Department of Modern History, University of St Andrews), Professor Kenneth Osgood (Department of History, Florida Atlantic University), Dr. Alexander S. Wilkinson (Centre for the History of the Media, University College Dublin)

Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media publishes original, high-quality research into the cultures of communication from the middle ages to the present day. The series explores the variety of subjects and disciplinary approaches that characterize this vibrant field of enquiry. The series will help shape current interpretations not only of the media, in all its forms, but also of the powerful relationship between the media and politics, society, and the economy.

Advisory Board: Professor Carlos Barrera (University of Navarra, Spain), Professor Peter Burke (Emmanuel College, Cambridge), Professor Denis Cryle (Central Queensland University, Australia), Professor David Culbert (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge), Professor Nicholas Cull (Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California), Professor Tom O'Malley (Centre for Media History, University of Wales, Aberystwyth), Professor Chester Pach (Ohio University)

*Titles include:*

Jane L. Chapman  
GENDER, CITIZENSHIP AND NEWSPAPERS  
Historical and Transnational Perspectives

Michael Krysko  
AMERICAN RADIO IN CHINA  
International Encounters with Technology and Communications, 1919–41

Christoph Hendrik Müller  
WEST GERMANS AGAINST THE WEST  
Anti-Americanism in Media and Public Opinion in the Federal Republic of Germany 1949–68

*Forthcoming titles:*

Joel Wiener  
THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE BRITISH PRESS, 1830s–1914

James Mussell & Suzanne Paylor  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY IN THE DIGITAL AGE  
Politics, Pedagogy and Practice

Martin Conboy & John Steel  
THE LANGUAGE OF NEWSPAPERS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND  
Commercializing the Popular

---

**Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media**

**Series Standing Order ISBN 978-0-230-23153-5 hardcover**

**Series Standing Order ISBN 978-0-230-23154-2 paperback**

*(outside North America only)*

You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and one of the ISBNs quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

---

# Gender, Citizenship and Newspapers

Historical and Transnational Perspectives

Jane L. Chapman

*Professor of Communications, Lincoln University, UK*

palgrave  
macmillan



© Jane L. Chapman 2013

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2013 978-0-230-23244-0

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted her right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2013 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-31273-3

ISBN 978-1-137-31459-8 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137314598

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

*To two Kates  
Kate Allison and Kate Lacey  
each in their own way essential to this book*

# Contents

<i>Detailed Chapter Summary</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiv
<b>Part I Setting the Parameters</b>	
1 Introduction: Tracing Patterns, Linkages and Evidence	3
<b>Part II Pioneers and Emerging Commercial Tensions</b>	
2 France: Pioneering the Popular Newspaper Brand and the Female Market	25
3 France and Britain: Cultural Citizenship and the Rise of Consumer Society	63
<b>Part III Labour Movement Roots and the Politics of Exclusion</b>	
4 French India: From Private to Public Sphere	99
5 Britain: Collective Organization, Public Communications and the Vote	117
<b>Part IV Cultural Citizenship and Direct Action</b>	
6 Britain: Apocalypse and Press as a Double-edged Sword	145
7 British India: Women and the Hegemonic Colonial Press	171
<b>Part V Traces and Outcomes</b>	
8 Conclusion: Comparing and Contrasting Transnationally	191
<i>Notes</i>	209
<i>Bibliography</i>	213
<i>Index</i>	229

# Detailed Chapter Summary

## Part I Setting the Parameters

### Chapter 1 – Introduction: Tracing Patterns, Linkages and Evidence Boundary crossing

Choice of trends and ‘moments’; Scope and positioning; Defining cultural citizenship; Comparative transnational themes and methodologies; Conservative feminization; Theorizing mainstream press transnationally; Why colonial communications?; Processes of subaltern mediation.

## Part II Pioneers and Emerging Commercial Tensions

### Chapter 2 – France: Pioneering the Popular Newspaper Brand and the Female Market

The Rousseau legacy and women’s moral obligation; Newspaper contexts; *Le Petit Journal* blazes a trail in popularism; Lay-out and writing style; Content and readership; Readership, the serialized novel and fact-fiction cross over; ‘Faits divers’; Consumerism; Methodology; Advertising; Business orientation; ‘Puff’ or advertorial journalism; Analyzing women as news sources; Conclusions – the emergence of gendered tabloid properties.

### Chapter 3 – France and Britain: Cultural Citizenship and the Rise of Consumer Society

The influence of periodicals; Audience and the evolution of newspaper visual appearance; New Journalism; ‘New woman’ and other fashionable new terms; Press barons and trans-national gendered considerations; Comparisons between *Le Petit Journal* and *The Daily Mail*; Readers, stunts and advertisements; Evolution of emphasis and tone; *La Fronde* and the *Daily Mirror*; Female journalists; Blaming women; Press barons and transnational gendered considerations; The power of political consumerism; Conclusions.

### **Part III Labour Movement Roots and the Politics of Exclusion**

#### **Chapter 4 – French India: From Private to Public Sphere**

Research methods for female protest and communications; Context and background; Class, gender and counter-hegemonic communications; Publicizing women activists; Press censorship escalates; The threat of ‘banditism’ to press communications; Conclusions.

#### **Chapter 5 – Britain: Collective Organization, Public Communications and the Vote**

The newspaper landscape for suffrage; Cross-fertilization between newspaper and periodical sectors; Early campaigns and their newspapers; Labour movement background; Solidarity and public communications; Labour issues as public discourse on citizenship; Suffrage, parliamentary politics and public opinion; The vote and newspaper commercialism; Early militancy; Peaceful tactics; Lobbying and emulating the mainstream press; Conclusions.

### **Part IV Cultural Citizenship and Direct Action**

#### **Chapter 6 – Britain: Apocalypse and Press as a Double-edged Sword**

The anti campaign; *The Manchester Guardian*; Positive coverage for the vote; The changing barometer; Press fluctuations; Hardening of attitudes; Bias; The ‘pilgrimage’; The frustration of notoriety; Watershed; Conclusions.

#### **Chapter 7 – British India: Women and the Hegemonic Colonial Press**

Why *The Pioneer*?; Editorial influence of E.W. Wilson; Advertising; Assessing the influence of women as contributors to news; Women and peaceful democratic self-emancipation; Women and direct action; Simon Commission; Women and strikes; Foreign cloth boycott and burning; Conclusions.

## **Part V Traces and Outcomes**

### **Chapter 8 – Conclusion: Comparing and Contrasting Transnationally**

Ongoing tensions in newspaper gender awareness; Interpreting fragments; Transnational aspects of cultural citizenship; The demands of the performative in direct action; Tabloidization; The outcomes of cultural citizenship; Stereotypes, vanguards or followers?; Timing, significance and evolution of gendered traces; Interpretations of class, performance and collective action; Counter-hegemonic significations through repetitive challenges to stereotyping.

# List of Tables and Figures

## Tables

2.1	<i>Le Petit Journal</i> 1863 and 1896. Percentage of female-oriented articles representing citizenship or consumerism – taken from a 33 per cent random sample	44
2.2	Coverage of female-centred articles, <i>Le Petit Journal</i> 1863 and 1896 (percentages)	53
2.3	Changes in the space devoted to women, by type, <i>Le Petit Journal</i> 1863 and 1896 (percentage of articles)	54
2.4	Coverage of women, by editorial type, <i>Le Petit Journal</i> 1863 and 1896 (percentages)	57
3.1	Comparative analysis of citizenship versus consumerism as percentage of total articles on women	78
3.2	Comparative analysis of virtuous, victorious, vicious and victims articles, <i>Le Petit Journal</i>	79
7.1	Percentage proportion of framed reporting and women's direct quotes/writing in female-oriented articles	180

## Figure

7.1	<i>The Pioneer's</i> coverage of women's protest 1928–1930	182
-----	--	-----

# Preface

Tracing histories of the engagement between media and disempowered people – in this case women – is never going to be easy. There is no one central record, no archives of audience or systematic market research, as exist today. There are no folders or boxes (let alone digital items) marked ‘women and newspapers’ amongst relevant archive holders. The connections between gender, citizenship and newspapers from a transnational historical perspective are not obvious. Yet people who struggle for social and political inclusion have always needed to communicate as widely as possible, and to create public discourses by whatever means possible. As soon as the press is acknowledged as an agency for communication, the historical theme of women and mass circulation dailies becomes an obvious one. How to tackle it is less obvious, and this study does not take an easy route.

From its very inception, the research in the pages that follow attempted to fill gaps in scholarship, and this motivation mushroomed. It started with a relatively modest ambition, endorsed by a British Academy grant – to investigate the feminizing influence on the growth of mass circulation dailies in Britain and France in the late 19th century. We set about newspaper analysis in detail, and the findings are included later. The importance for this wider study is that the empirical data came first. The experiment was repeated, once more over a two year period, this time for an ESRC (Economic and Social Science Council) grant, featuring gender in the colonial world, entitled ‘Women, Press and Protest in British and French India, 1928–48’. Again, the empirical enquiry came first, but the seeds of comparative method had already been sown, and needed to grow. The media related activities of British suffragettes provided the stimulus for further attempts to compare and contrast.

Of course, all of this primary record collection across continents and countries (we visited 13 different libraries and archives in India alone) was underpinned by theorizations on class, gender and counter hegemony, but the relevance of the concept of cultural citizenship only became obvious at the data analysis stage, when comparing and contrasting the experiences of women and their representation in newspapers. It emerged as a shared historical experience, part of the process of collective action, as a social and political impact relating to public communication.

Perhaps that is the way it should be – a practical outcome of public discourses relating to struggles to change disempowerment, rather than a preconceived theory. Yet some scholars may find that the empirical findings do not fit their theorizations. This is a high risk strategy, but also an attempt to face the music. The introduction addresses potential criticism: why compare colonial with non colonial, why choose mass circulation dailies in the case of Britain and France, why select different episodes and points in history?

Taking women as readers, news sources, and journalists, the point is also to explore some confluences of influence: between consumerism and citizenship, between demands for constitutional reforms and direct action protest, between ideology and economics, between continuity and change. These are not always straight binaries, but rather mosaics with uneven contributory pieces, varying according to country, context and periods of history. Amongst the fluidity there are constants, however – issues of class and performance as they impact upon gender, for instance.

Among the complexities the reader will also discern empathy. We need to restore a place in history to those who tried to communicate in the public sphere, but were frequently forgotten almost as quickly as their ephemeral newspaper pages were. In 1937–8, some 10,000 Tamils fled from Pondicherry across the border to escape gangs of bandits who were setting fire to their homes at night, but female collective action emerged, and was communicated in the public sphere. In British India many women were jailed for protest, as well as suffragettes in imperial Britain. Their bravery acts as a motivation to restore the media record of such acts, and of many others that are mentioned later.

Newspaper records are not always complimentary, and could be damaging to campaigns for different forms of citizenship, but they act as a reminder of the potency of gender discourses, and of the fact that many issues are still live today. This is not dead wood history, but a continuing relationship in the public sphere between action and interpretation. Above all, this study uncovers some of the neglected workings of female influence on counter hegemonic communications. There is more to be uncovered. If others are motivated to elaborate on, or to contradict, the analysis and interpretations presented here, then all of the attempts to find gendered needles in haystacks will have been worthwhile.

# Acknowledgements

The period of gestation for this book has been a long one, dating back to 2007 when the British Academy first decided to fund one of my projects. Thus, it is difficult to express thanks for the long trajectory of support without adopting some well-worn terminology, such as ‘without whom this work would not have been possible’, but these words are literal in every sense. Without the support of Lincoln University, the School of Journalism and Dean of Faculty John Simons, I would never have submitted grant applications and without funding from the British Academy and the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), research assistants Kate Allison and Piers Clarke I would never have been able to visit archives in France and India. In addition, John Tulloch joined our ESRC team to contribute research on F.W. Wilson and Kate Lacey at Sussex University kindly contributed time and ideas during the early stages of the book project. At Lincoln University Ann Gray continues to provide vision and Rebecca Hewson-Heathorn organizational support, for which I am grateful.

At the time of writing, digital archives do not exist for most of my sources, so most of the primary work involved research on location, and thanks go to all the archivists in various parts of the world who helped my teams. This included visits to France’s Bibliothèque Nationale, Archives Nationales, the Museum of Paris and the labour history archives at Roubaix. I spent considerable time at France’s colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence. In India we visited the Nehru Library, the National Library and Archives in Delhi and Calcutta, the Regional Archives in Pondicherry and Allahabad, the State Archives in Lucknow, Chennai and Pondicherry, the French Institute in Pondicherry, and the offices of AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress), who kindly donated a large number of pamphlets, copies of theses and other material in Tamil. We visited *The Pioneer* headquarters and *The Indian Express* newspaper contributed articles. In the United Kingdom, I am grateful for the continuing support of the Cambridge University Library and the Centre of South Asian Studies in Cambridge, the British Library at St Pancras and Colindale. Archivists at the British Library’s African and Indian section deserve much gratitude for kindly allowing us to consult uncatalogued (for reasons of conservation) versions of *The Pioneer*. Special thanks to Kate Allison for compiling the data sets (that are publically available due

to the efforts of ESRC) and thanks also to Piers Clarke for compiling the website of visual evidence, <http://www.pressandprotest.com>

During all of this time, my continuing visiting fellowship at Wolfson College, Cambridge and the Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge has been invaluable, as has the support of Macquarie University, Sydney, where I am an Adjunct Professor. Members of the Macquarie Department of Modern History, the Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge, the History department at University College, Dublin, Women in French, and the French Media Research Group (ASCMF) all contributed feedback at presentations of the findings, which has been really helpful.

It was at Macquarie's art gallery that I helped to curate, with Rhonda Davis and Leonard Janiszewski, an exhibition of some of the research, entitled 'India, Past, Present and Abroad'. Their enthusiasm, along with that of Bridget Griffin Foley and her Media History Research Centre, has been constantly energizing.

I must underline the importance of support from Sandy Wilkinson at University College, Dublin for his unwavering faith in the project, along with the other series editors. At Palgrave Michael Strang, Jenny McCall and Clare Mence, along with production staff, have been constantly helpful and enthusiastic. The incisive comments of peer reviewers have contributed more than they will ever realize.

The essential support of the following journals and publishers has allowed re-publications of sections from articles and one of my earlier books, for which sincere thanks are due:

*Journalism Today* (2011): *A Themed History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell-Wiley) – Chapter 3 reproduces sections on New Journalism and on Ida Tarbell.

'A Business Trajectory: Assessing Female Influence and Representation in *Le Petit Journal*, Europe's First Mass Circulation Daily' in *Parcours de femmes – Twenty Years of Women in French* (2011, Peter Lang, Oxford & Bern) pp. 41–57. Chapter 2 reproduces some parts of this article, on the theme of business.

'Female representation, readership and early tabloid properties' *Australian Journal of Communication*, 2011, 38, no. 2, 53–70. Chapter 2 reproduces some sections on tabloidization and quantitative tables relating to *Le Petit Journal*.

'The origins of a public voice for marginalized workers and anti-colonialism in French India, 1935–37', *Web Journal of French Media Studies* (WJFMS), 2010, no.8, ISSN 1460-6550 single author <http://wjfms.ncl.ac.uk/splash.htm>

Chapter 4 reproduces some sections on private versus public in French India.

'Women and the press in British India 1928–34: a window for protest?' *International Journal of Social Economics (IJSE)*, 2011, 38, no. 9 (July), 676–92, co-author Kate Allison. Some sections, including quantitative tables are reproduced in Chapter 7. [www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1938131&ini=aob](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1938131&ini=aob)

Finally, thanks to my long suffering family and friends who have always had to endure my continuing obsession with research, writing and talking about it!

Jane Chapman, Cambridge, 2012

# **Part I**

## **Setting the Parameters**

# 1

## Introduction

### Tracing Patterns, Linkages and Evidence

#### **Boundary Crossing**

Contemporary sources between the 1860s and the 1930s point emphatically to the existence of wider debates not only about the changing role and attitudes towards women, but also concerning the nature, influence and role of the press. Gendered analysis of this adds to our understanding at a time when conflicting, multifaceted ideas and female images were emerging within the public sphere, but a connection needs to be made between press and social attitudes, between media development from a gendered standpoint and wider trends in society. How such trends or strands, as expressed and mediated in newspapers, contributed to the process of cultural formation forms part of our general appreciation of modernity.<sup>1</sup>

This is an integrated exploration of: women's representation in the press; their role as news sources and their professional activity; women as an influence on editorial matter; how women were perceived as a readership and/or as consumers by newspapers; and how through their actions in the public sphere they sought and received coverage.<sup>2</sup> These are the traces from the past of female influence in the relationship between newspapers and society that are analyzed through examples of print mass communications across continents, empires and periods. Arguably, historians do not know enough about the connections between women's emerging citizenship and the communication of that process by the public press and other communications distributed to the wider polity. Every example presented in this study focuses on the issues of press and democracy, press and change, and press as a vehicle for the articulation of female citizenship. This historicization addresses the extent to which newspaper mediation and women's attempts to

influence public opinion for political demands constituted a form of citizenship specific to the process of knowledge and information production.

This text focuses on the phenomenon of *cultural citizenship*, associated newspaper-related consumerism and the relationship between ideology and economics as evidenced through the communication of women's protest in the public sphere and the way it impinged upon newspaper commercial considerations. The approach is a comparative historicization of the concept of cultural citizenship, revealing aspects of its origins and development transnationally as these related to the agencies of gender and print communications. How female citizenship was framed and evolved through the prism of the public press is analyzed with examples taken from the 1860s through to the 1930s. The development of newspapers as mass communication systems in several different countries provides the framework for a series of detailed cameos of usage, representation and influence at selected formative and critical periods within media history. For Britain and France, this was the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century – the 'golden age' of newspapers. For India it was during the 1920s and 1930s.

The years between the 1860s and the 1930s are examined thematically, with chapters on developmental aspects of cultural citizenship. The aim is to trace patterns, linkages and evidence of gender through and in newspapers that existed in places and in ways that are not immediately obvious.

## **Choice of trends and 'moments'**

### **Moments**

The task is addressed via a collection of selected aspects and moments transnationally that provides insight into the process of negotiation between women and some organs of communication, in varying contexts. This is a mosaic of complementary and conflicting influences that are explored in detail, each contributing to an evolution in the manifestations of female cultural citizenship, but in different ways at differing periods of modern history, according to the country studied. Any emerging patterns are uneven.

Van Zoonen, referring to media as part of feminism's material and cultural struggle, reminds us: 'Mass media are central sites in which these negotiations take place, evidently at the level of media texts, but also at the level of the other "moments" of the mass mediated production of meaning' (1994: 148). Selection of 'moments' in this study has been

made around some dates and events that were important as *turning points*, although not necessarily successful ones. These include, during Europe's 'golden age' of the press: the launch of Europe's first mass circulation daily – *Le Petit Journal* – followed by the launch of Britain's first mass circulation daily – *The Daily Mail* – to cater for women by acknowledging them as a readership; the launch of two separate, and very different dailies – *La Fronde* and *The Daily Mirror* – run by and aimed at women; the adoption of direct action as a tactic by British suffragettes; and the peak years of militant violent agitation for the female franchise.

In a colonial context, the criteria for the study was also to look at local press, rather than those produced in metropolitan France or imperial London. Counter citizenship is traced through the launch and struggle for survival in the face of censorship of an indigenous paper in French Indian territory – *Swandanthiram* – that, at the time of writing, still exists. Most other contemporary journals were short lived. In British India, a local colonial daily – *The Pioneer* – has been selected because it supported women's emerging citizenship in a period of heated politics during the twilight of empire when constitutional negotiations and the economic effects of pro-independence protest were making headway. The moment selected coincides with a crucial change of editorship.<sup>3</sup>

### Trends

These 'moments' have been selected because their significance goes beyond the event itself, allowing for wider contextual analysis. For example, Part II addresses the way in which pioneering popular dailies in Britain and France catered for women. A theme that emerges is a wider tension between the old and the new, between commercial considerations and political content. As people became defined not only by production but also by consumption, women were acknowledged as a market for newspaper consumerism. Although circulation doubled between 1896 and 1906 and then doubled again by 1914 (Williams, 1961: 203–4), by and large female oriented content was still decided upon by men on behalf of readers belonging to the opposite sex. Perceptions about the nature of this communication were challenged by some women, who had a different vision of both content and operation.

Part III identifies a parallel formative experience for women who participated in labour organizations in Britain and in French India, where they were able to acquire experience of collective activities in the public sphere that were rooted in class actions. The emergence of subaltern women from private to public sphere in French territory is significant in timing because it heralded the origins of an independence movement.