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# Gender, Citizenship and Newspapers

Historical and Transnational Perspectives

Jane L. Chapman

*Professor of Communications, Lincoln University, UK*

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

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# 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.

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# 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.

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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