Gender and the rise of the female expert during the Belle Époque

Anne R. Epstein

In a 1900 article in the widely read Grande revue, French sociologist Gabriel Tarde wrote that the capacity to shape others’ thinking – what he termed “[l’]aptitude à exercer l’action inter-spirituelle” – depended the most on two factors: age and sex. A change had taken place since ancient times when the elderly had held the most power to influence. In Tarde’s Europe, this aptitude was more likely to be found in the middle-aged: “l’âge mûr, sans nul doute, ... est réputé le plus autorisé, le meilleur conseiller.” Women were more often subject to men’s influence than the other way around, although Tarde acknowledged historical and national variations in degree, sometimes with significant effects: “Au XVIIIe siècle français, où, dans les classes aristocratiques..., la femme a été moins suggestible et plus suggestive que jamais, cette féminisation relative des esprits s’est traduite par une transformation des idées et des mœurs qui a eu des conséquences infinies.” But the gender hierarchy had never in his view been entirely overturned.¹

Although Tarde may have been right in correlating age and the power to shape others’ opinions, by the time he wrote his essay women in France had actually started to acquire expertise that – when reinforced by traditional feminine attributes such as femininity and motherliness – would endow them with a gender-specific authority to which men completely lacked access. This article analyses the emergence of such womanly expertise in Belle Époque France as a social and cultural process conditioned both by structural changes in the French public sphere and by transnational influences. We will first examine how the gradual politicisation of issues arising from evolving perceptions of gender difference and relations and from women’s entry into the professions contributed to the emergence of a kind of “feminine” expertise in the late nineteenth century. The next section will demonstrate how French women experts’ participation in transnational networks both built on and reinforced their authority at home. Finally we will discuss the transformation of womanly expertise into a broader, yet still gender-specific form of public authority. It is my contention that certain French women, despite their marginal political status, were able to convert this gender-specific authority into a political resource they could use to shape opinions, policies, and institutions on the eve of World War I and beyond.

The emergence of womanly expertise

By the end of the nineteenth century, in spite of limitations on their access to higher education and professional training, Frenchwomen had begun to make inroads into professions understood as extensions of traditionally “feminine” domains such as childrearing, homemaking, charity and philanthropy, and what today might be termed “care work”. The specialist knowledge they began to acquire in their new roles as teachers, nurses, or social workers appeared specifically feminine, rather than gender-neutral, because it derived from experience in areas of life about which they, either simply because they were women or because they exercised appropriately womanly professions, were thought to know more about than men. These areas of feminine expertise included being female and the female life course (including maternity and childbirth); educating children, caring for the family, and managing a household, the traditional social and civic functions of the Republican mother; and womanly vocations such as teaching, social work, nursing, moral reform, and philanthropy. By the first decade of the twentieth century, feminism and women’s rights constituted additional areas of feminine expertise and eventually, authority.2

Some early examples illustrate how this gender-specific expertise functioned. The support of Olympe Gevin-Cassal, Inspector General in the Department of Children’s Services from 1896, was eagerly sought by a variety of enterprises aimed not only at children but also at mothers’ welfare and education.3 During this period women in positions of responsibility also began to attend national and international congresses in the capacity of experts: for example, a handful of Interior Ministry prison inspectresses debated with male politicians and civil servants and with philanthropists of both sexes at the Congrès pénitentiaire international and at national congresses on released prisoners between 1895 and 1900.4 These women’s expertise and credentials came from their professional experience with the penal system and with female prisoners in particular. In keeping with the logic of the times, their gender gave them wider authority to pronounce on the potential moral dangers and psychological consequences of the incarceration, treatment and release of female criminals than their male counterparts might have, and it was for this reason that they were selected to report on such concerns. But their authority did not extend to

---


4 Ibid, p. 79-82.
the condition of male prisoners, nor did it give them the wide latitude they would have needed to criticize the prison system as a whole, the judicial process, or political decision-making.

The division of responsibilities at major congresses, including those where most of the participants were women, and in large women’s organizations such as the Conseil national des femmes françaises, also confirms that credentials, expertise and professional experience were becoming as important as social prominence in determining the extent of a woman’s public authority. Though she might participate in the work of many sections of a congress, the respected and experienced educator Pauline Kergomard was the natural choice to head the section on Education of the CNFF, just as specialists in other fields might head other sections. The founding board of the Congrès de l’éducation sociale in 1900 comprised a significant minority of women, about half of whom had teaching credentials, and many of whom were school administrators. Like men, women had begun to be chosen on the basis of professional expertise to lend specific kinds of symbolic legitimacy to civic projects.

Changes in the gendered structure of the French public sphere by the beginning of the twentieth century also contributed to the emergence of female expertise and the recognition of woman as experts. What might have seemed like “feminine” interests and issues – maternal and child welfare, reproduction and birth control, and woman’s work – had started to attract the attention of national politicians, civil servants, and academics due to the government’s growing alarm about French population decline, venereal disease, and social cohesion whereas French women were increasingly concerned about seemingly manly issues of war, peace, and colonialism. Both Marguerite Durand’s daily newspaper La Fronde, produced by and for women, and the Dreyfus affair contributed to this sea change: on the one hand, as Mary Louise Roberts has suggested, helping raise the visibility and political value of the feminine by modifying the public’s understanding of womanhood and femininity, and on the other hand, by enabling intellectuals to make explicit the connection between women’s rights, human rights, national interests, and social progress. Because many of these questions ultimately came down to ethics and morality, which were understood as gendered, the cultural authority of highly regarded professional women became useful to those at the French political and intellectual center despite the institutionally and politically marginal position of such women.

---

8 Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand (BMD), Dossier CNFF.
Transnational networks and national expertise

The restructuring of French public discourse and concomitant emergence of womanly expertise did not take place in isolation from trends in the wider world. International displays of Frenchness at forums such as World’s Fairs provided evidence of the rising national and international value of gender in public life. At the Paris World’s Fair of 1900, a major showcase for French culture which had been in the works for many years, two women’s congresses, one feminist and one not, exhibited feminine social action and the achievements and aims of the French women’s rights movement (though these women’s congresses had precedents, and female delegates from France had attended such meetings held in other locations). Women also participated in other Congresses such as the solidarist Congrès pour l’éducation sociale; indeed, the World’s Fair’s organizing committee had placed education, a field in which women were exceptionally well represented, at the top of the conference agenda from the beginning.8

Three years later, in preparation for the World’s Fair of 1904, peace activist and Radical politician Lucien Le Foyer wrote feminist leader Caroline Kauffmann to solicit her cooperation in an initiative called the “Comité central d’organisation des bourses de voyage au Canada et aux États-Unis, à l’occasion de l’exposition de Saint-Louis en 1904.” The purpose of the organization, which had the support of “considerable personalities”, was to enable “a certain number of French men and women of limited means” to travel to St. Louis, in order to transmit “les idées et les sentiments français, et recevoir, en échange, l’enseignement par les faits que pourra leur donner le spectacle de l’activité américaine.” Many organizations had already backed the project and the organizers did not want women’s and feminist organizations to be “left behind”. French women as well as French men must be present in St. Louis, affirmed Le Foyer.9 Not only would support from the leader of a women’s rights group add legitimacy to the enterprise, it was also of crucial political importance that the image France projected to the world comprise ordinary citizens of both sexes. Women as well as men of modest means could also convey what they learned from their American experience to other members of their own social milieu. Heightened international awareness of gender issues also created opportunities for French women experts to participate in transnational intellectual networks, both enhancing their personal visibility and authority and also contributing to the reinforcement and recognition of womanly expertise in France.10 The case of the

---

9 Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris (BHVP), Fonds Caroline Kauffmann, Fonds Bouglé, Lucien Le Foyer to Caroline Kauffmann (16 December 1903), Correspondance 1893-1910.
Revue de morale sociale (RMS) provides a window on the role French specialists of both sexes played in circulating knowledge about gender and feminism across borders in the specific political context of the fin-de-siècle. Founded in 1899 in Geneva by an international group of reformist intellectuals that included numerous members of the new French Ligue des droits de l’homme (LDH), the journal’s aim was to identify, analyze scientifically and propose solutions to the “problem of the moral and social relations of the sexes”, which its’ editors termed the “intersexual” question. The first issue of the journal appeared just months after the Dreyfus Affair erupted in France, and featured a four-page list of members of the publication’s groupe d’initiative, later described as “[an] imposing group of men and women [my emphasis], all thinkers and workers, filling for the most part some important social function, who responded enthusiastically to our appeal.”

Forty-three of the original 166 founding members hailed from France. Eleven of these were women; and about thirteen of the actual contributors from France were women, compared to approximately 25 men. Given the restrictions on women’s access to the professions at the time, the professional profiles of the Frenchwomen who contributed to the RMS were impressive and varied. Maria Martin and Marie Maugeret both edited feminist newspapers, respectively, the moderate Journal des Femmes, and Féminisme chrétien, a Catholic feminist publication. Jeanne Oddo-Deflou and Jeanne Chauvin had been among the first women to obtain law degrees. Olympe Gévin-Cassal served in the Interior Ministry as Inspector General of Children’s Services and wrote children’s books. Pauline Kergomard, Inspector General of Nursery Schools, was the first woman to serve on the Conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique, and an advocate of expanded roles for women in public services. Ghénia de Sainte Croix (who wrote as Savioz and held Swiss nationality until her marriage to a Frenchman in 1900) was a widely published Paris-based journalist, essayist, and international activist, and a co-founder and secretary-general of the Conseil national des femmes françaises (CNFF). Isabelle Bogelot, also active in the Protestant women’s movement, had since 1881 directed l’Œuvre des Libérées de Saint-Lazare, a philanthropic work aimed at aiding prostitutes. Bogelot and de Sainte-Croix both campaigned actively against state-regulated prostitution, a cause they had in common with such male compatriots as M. J. Gaufrès, general secretary of the Ligue française de la moralité publique, as well as with Swiss co-collaborators.

---


11 Revue de morale sociale (RMS), 5, no. 15, 1903, p. 246.
12 The rest were Swiss, Italian, British, German, Finnish, Norwegian, and American. See “Groupe d’initiative,” RMS, no. 1, 1899, p. 5-8.
13 Not all the founding members ever published articles in the review, but it is significant that they put their reputations behind the enterprise.
who had been followers of Josephine Butler. Marie Bonnevial, a schoolteacher who wrote on women’s economic position and education, was involved in socialist politics, served as secretary-general and later president of the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes, and eventually became the first woman to sit on the Conseil supérieur du travail. Maria Pognon – feminist, pacifist, suffragist – was president of the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes and a member of the Ligue pour l’arbitrage international. A number of the women wrote La Fronde, a Dreyfusard daily founded two years before, produced entirely by women, and sympathetic to feminism. These included Savioz, Maria Martin, Maugeret, Louise Georges-Renard, Elisabeth-J. Hudry-Menos, and Olympe Gevin-Cassal. Jeanne Oddo-Deflou contributed to both publications as well as to fellow RMS collaborator Maria Martin’s Journal des Femmes.

Thus the French women whose collaboration the editors of the Revue de morale sociale sought in 1899 were clearly selected because they were already considered specialists in gender relations, moral reform, or feminism at home. But these French contributors and founding members, both women and men, also added value to the Revue de morale sociale’s project as members of a celebrated new group of moral experts: the intellectuels, or public intellectuals. The Dreyfus case had fed the


16 The French male contributors included political economists, legal scholars, theologians, physicians, leading members of the newly formed Ligue des droits de l’homme, as well as moral reformers, journalists, editors and philanthropists. Members of the founding board included professors from Parisian and provincial faculties of law, theology, and medicine, from the Collège de France, and from the Sorbonne, as well as editors and directors of high-visibility reformist, political, and scientific periodicals including Yves Guyot (the political journal Le Siècle), Gabriel Monod (Revue historique), F. Pillon (L’Année philosophique), George Renard (just retired from the Revue socialiste), Édouard Toulouse (Revue de psychiatrie), and Louis Comte (Le Relèvement social). Numerous academic contributors and sponsors had links to social science milieux, among them political economist Charles Gide, anthropologist Léonce Manouvrier, and social economist Alexis Delaire. For further information on these connections and the sources used to map them Anne R. Epstein, “Gender, Intellectual Sociability, and Political Culture in the French Third Republic, 1890-1914,” Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 2004.
international image of French intellectuals, notably but not only the members of the Ligue des droits de l’homme, as champions of human rights and justice and bearers of the legacy of the French Revolution. Members of the Ligue were sought-after partners for foreign intellectuals: for example, the Senator Ludovic Trarieux, president of the Ligue, was asked to head the six-member European delegation that traveled to St. Petersburg in June 1899 to protest the threat to Finnish sovereignty.17

Because the supporters of the RMS saw the transnational project of eradicating the sexual double standard – like the Dreyfus affair, the Armenian genocide, the Boer War, Finland’s fight to keep its autonomy, and the failed effort to abolish state-regulated prostitution in Geneva – as a problem of human rights,18 the endorsement of 12 active members of the French LDH, in particular the female activists Ghénia de Sainte-Croix, Maria Pognon, Marie Bonnevi al, and Jeanne Schmahl, provided a significant moral boost to the cause.19

Juxtaposing articles on gender issues in France with texts on other countries, all by purported national experts, with the support of an illustrious groupe d’initiative, became a strategy for creating a transnational discourse on gender injustice and embedding the combat to eradicate it in the universal moral project of defending human rights. In this sense, the review bears a striking resemblance to the form of action favored by intellectuals throughout Europe at this time: the petition. The key difference here was that both male and female “signatories” and authority were needed to make the appeal for gender justice. Participation in such enterprises in turn reinforced French women contributors’ status as experts at home, by demonstrating their implication in a transnational network of recognized authorities on gender issues and reform.

From expertise to authority

The period after 1900 witnessed an increase in women’s civic activism in France, and the politicization of gender issues drew in their male colleagues also. Women were invited to lecture before scholarly societies, at people’s universities, and at the independent institutions of higher learning that emerged beginning in the late nineteenth century: they organized and participated in meetings and congresses on civic education or philanthropy; founded civic associations to promote women’s interests and eventually suffrage; published articles in women’s, feminist, and literary-political publications; and joined reformist discussion forums. Organizations such as the CNFF lobbied parliament and worked their connections to get reform proposals onto the political agenda.

By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, some women had begun converting their expertise in women’s fields into a broader public authority on women and the feminine. In 1908 Jane Misme, a journalist and editor of La Française, was invited by the Société de sociologie de Paris to speak not about women in journalism, but

18 “Histoire d’un plébiscite,” RMS 2, no. 5, 1900, p. 4-25.
about female schoolteachers and women of letters as social types.20 August Moll-Weiss, director of the École des môres, lectured to the society in 1910 on “Housewives and feminism,” and Union de pensée féminine founder Lydie Martial the following year on “Evolution and women.”21 During the same period, Louise Compain, inspectress for a private child welfare agency, syndicalist, novelist, and publicist became a regular at the series of discussions, known as Libres entretiens, sponsored by Paul Desjardin’s Union pour la vérité. Here, along with Cécile Brunschvicg, Pauline Kergomard, Augusta Moll-Weiss, Hélène Porgès and other female experts, Compain discussed and debated subjects not always directly related to their professional profiles such as internationalism, the impact of the separation of church and state on the family (for which home economist Moll-Weiss was called in as an expert), suffrage reform and depopulation with prominent academics, lawyers, and government administrators. A special series on the economic and legal position of women featured several leaders of the CNFF.22 As in the case of the RMS, the endorsement of prominent intellectuals and political figures in the organizations that invited women to participate in their debates enhanced the women’s public profiles and drew attention to their ideas. With the political importance of gender issues on the rise, the women’s own “feminine” or “feminist” expertise, conveyed through their identification with specific causes, associations, or publications, made them sought-after collaborators for groups keen to display their openness to discussion of gender injustice.

That female expertise in specific domains could now be generalized to encompass the broader implications of gender relations testifies to the structural changes taking place in both French society and the public sphere. Moreover, once women had begun to appear as experts, their specialized knowledge and opinions, whether feminist or “feminine”, could be mobilized not only to enrich public debate, but also to support scientific findings or political positions. Works by “feminine” experts in particular attracted attention from scholars seeking scientific justification for the maintenance of traditional gender hierarchies in the family and society. The educator Anna Lampérière provides an emblematic example. The former director of a training program for nursery school teachers, she was working as a journalist and publicist to support her two young daughters when she became involved with Léon Bourgeois’s solidarist movement in the mid-1890s. She soon became one of the most active proponents of solidarist civic education, first creating the Société d'études féminines in 1898, then organizing and serving as Secretary General of the Congrès de l'éducation sociale in 1900), and later Secretary General of the Société pour l'éducation sociale, both presided over by Bourgeois. By 1898, she had published a full-length manifesto on female solidarism, Le rôle social de la femme, which

21 “La Ménagère et le féminisme (Séance du 8 juin 1910),” RIS 18, 1910, p. 499-515; « L'évolution et la femme (Séance du 10 mai 1911),” RIS, 19, 1911, p. 408-435.
22 Union pour la vérité, Libres entretiens, 1st series, 9, 1905; and Libres entretiens, 5th series, 1-6, 1908-1909. See also Epstein, “Women on the Margins,” p. 275-276.
attracted attention both at home and abroad through reviews in publications such as the *North American Review* and sociologist Émile Durkheim’s *Année sociologique*.\(^23\) Now a recognized expert on women’s social role, as well as a seasoned educator, she was chosen by the Minister of Education to conduct an exploratory study on the creation of a program of “feminine” university studies, the conclusions of which were published in 1903.\(^24\) By the time she followed up with a second book in 1909, her professional credentials, social resources, and identification with the movement’s leadership had established Lampérière as an authority on solidarism from a female perspective.\(^25\) Her works became a reference for scholars close to Bourgeois’s solidarist movement, such as the zoologist Edmond Perrier, who sought, by drawing parallels between human and animal behavior or between modern and traditional societies, to defend scientifically the status quo in gender relations and civic life against more liberal, “feminist” political visions of the Republic.\(^26\)

As these examples also show, intellectual men could be instrumental in fostering womanly expertise and authority when it complemented their own ideological and/or political projects. During the *Belle Époque*, more and more texts by women recognized as experts began to circulate and gain public recognition, sometimes with a boost by a prominent male mentor. Texts by foreign female authorities also appeared in translation, their circulation in French-speaking milieux set into motion by men of letters or academics sympathetic to their ideas who either translated or wrote prefaces for their works. For example, in 1900, RMS collaborator and LDH member Yves Guyot wrote the preface for the French translation of Josephine Butler’s memoirs, *Souvenirs personnels d’une grande croisade*, which dealt with the international campaign against state-regulated prostitution, a campaign in which a number of RMS supporters and collaborators took part. One of three texts by the Swedish writer and educator Ellen Key that appeared in French during the first decade of the 20th century, *De l’Amour et du Mariage* was prefaced by another RMS founding member the noted historian and LDH member Gabriel Monod.\(^27\) Key’s work, which reflects the tension in her thought between individualism and the good of society or, as she puts it, between “the interests of the individual and those of the


race,” as well as her ambivalence about feminism, appeared at a time when intellectual debates about solidarism and the role of the individual in society continued to preoccupy thinkers and activists in France. Monod’s preface placed it within this context and gave the book a certain cultural legitimacy. A second work by Key, *L’Individualisme*, later received a prize from the Académie française. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, several French former RMS contributors, now actively promoting various women’s causes, had published essays or books on feminism, moral reform, or social relations, among them Ghénia de Sainte-Croix (Savioz), Isabelle Bogelot, Käthe Schirmacher, Olympe Gevin-Cassal, Margueritte de Schlumberger, and Jeanne Schmahl. Though some books appeared in print at their author’s expense, most were published by reputable publishing houses, which might send them out to relevant journals to be reviewed or at least included on a list of books received.

### Conclusion: Womanly expertise as a political resource

In 1908, philosopher Léon Brunschvicg, as moderator of the Union pour la vérité’s first *Libre entretien* of the season, on “maternal authority,” explained the group’s choice of discussion format by saying that rather than taking up issues of principle, which would have certainly brought a lively exchange, they had:

> decided ... to formulate a few well-defined questions as they appeared to us in the facts about the current state of society’s evolution. On the basis of these questions, already considered and discussed in previous studies and in women’s or feminist meetings, especially of the Conseil national des femmes françaises, we could expect precise solutions that could later be expressed clearly in a legislative text.

In other words, even if associations such the Société de sociologie de Paris or the Union pour la vérité did not frequently sponsor lectures and debates on gender issues by female experts, their significance should not be underestimated. These were not just private discussions where friends and colleagues with similar worldviews got together to discuss topical issues – although they obviously served that function also. The minutes of these meetings were published, and some of those present or those who read the proceedings might be in a position to propose or influence current or future legislation. It was thus not a coincidence that the Union scheduled discussions

---

28 Ellen Key, *De l’amour et du mariage*, op. cit., p. 143.

of the economic, social, political and legal status of women in beginning in 1908-1909. Different measures affecting women’s citizenship were on the agenda. Most notably, the previous year, in 1907, CNFF leader Avril de Sainte-Croix had convinced LDH leaders to endorse the suffrage petition the moderate women’s group was about to submit to Parliament, which was considering electoral reform. During this time, the CNFF converted to suffragism and a French suffragist organization, the Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (UFSF), formed in 1909. In fact, the most active female participants in these Entretiens were Brunschvicg’s wife Cécile, Louise Compain, and Pauline Kergomard, two of whom were ranking members of the CNFF, which had the previous year petitioned Parliament to add women’s suffrage to the proposed reform bill. Also at this time Jane Misme – a founding member of the UFSF, of which Cécile Brunschvicg would become a leader and for which Louise Compain would later become publicist – began lecturing on women’s social role at the Société de sociologie de Paris, whereas men connected with the Musée Social had previously done so.31

These are just a few examples of how Republican politics and the enhanced public value of “the feminine” enabled well-connected professional women to expand their expertise into public authority. As sought-after collaborators, they drew on their newfound expertise in feminism and the feminine to gain access to various civic forums, influence political agendas, shape public discourse on the “woman question,” or publicize the specific political goals of organizations like the CNFF and the UFSF or of other, non-feminist, reformist associations. Moreover, the authority these women experts possessed could not be acquired by their male counterparts: it was gender specific. But because of the gendered structure of the public sphere, womanly expertise still functioned best as a complement to the masculine authority of the intellectuals who welcomed women as collaborators. Furthermore, womanly authority did not yet have the universal reach that men’s authority did, nor could it always replace manly authority, even – or perhaps especially, Tarde might have argued – in debates over marriage, divorce, and the family.32 In these areas, where women’s rights and women’s interests seemed to compete with those of men – or worse, of society or the family – the continued superiority of middle-aged men’s capacity to exercise “intermental action,” reinforced of course by law and custom, was revealed. Nonetheless, as gender issues and sexuality moved to the center of public attention in France during the Belle Époque, the opinions and specialist knowledge of female experts could inform public debate about citizenship, education, population issues, child welfare, marriage, family life, and even international relations. Their


32 See for example Jean Elisabeth Pedersen, Legislating the French Family: Feminism, Theater, and Republican Politics, 1870-1920, New Brunswick, NJ and London, Rutgers University Press, which underlines the overwhelming male dominance not only of parliamentary but also of literary-theatrical debates over marriage and the family.
participation in the transnational circulation of knowledge about gender issues and feminism both enhanced and drew upon their status as national specialists. Women’s expertise had become a political resource – both for feminists and for their opponents, within the government and in civil society – by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, as women and men of diverse ideological leanings began to share and circulate knowledge about gender relations to combat gender injustice, both in France and abroad.

**L’auteur**

**Résumé**
« La coopération intellectuelle transnationale et l’émergence de l’experte en France à la Belle Époque »
Le tournant du vingtième siècle voit l’émergence d’une expertise féminine en France, grâce à la restructuration de l’espace public, l’accès des femmes aux professions, et l’intensification de la coopération intellectuelle transnationale. Cet article démontre que certaines françaises, malgré leur statut politique marginal réussissent à transformer cette expertise féminine spécifique en ressource politique dont elles peuvent se servir pour influencer l’opinion, la politique et les institutions à la veille de la première guerre mondiale.

**Abstract**
The turn of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of the female expert in France, as a result of structural changes in the French public sphere, the entry of women into certain professions, and transnational developments. This article contends that certain French women, despite their marginal political status, transformed this gender-specific expertise into a political resource they could use to shape public opinion, politics, and institutions on the eve of World War I.

**Mots clés :** femmes et expertise, histoire du genre, espace public, pratiques citoyennes, circulation transnationale des savoirs.

**Keywords :** women and expertise, gender history, public sphere, citizenship practices, transnational circulation of knowledge.

**Pour citer cet article :** Anne Epstein, « Gender and the rise of the female expert during the Belle Époque », Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société, n° 14, mai-août 2011, www.histoire-politique.fr