The distinction between ordinary and supersingular elliptic curves can be generalized to (Jacobians of) curves of higher genus. If \( C \) is a curve defined over \( \overline{\mathbb{F}}_p \), its \( p \)-rank \( f \) measures the number of \( p \)-torsion points on its Jacobian or, equivalently, the length of the slope 0 segment of the Newton polygon of its \( L \)-function. For all \( g \geq 3 \) and all \( p \) and all \( 0 \leq f \leq g \), Faber and Van der Geer proved that there exists a smooth curve of genus \( g \) over \( \overline{\mathbb{F}}_p \) with \( p \)-rank \( f \). A similar result for hyperelliptic curves was proven by Glass and Pries. In this talk, we discuss a new result about \( p \)-ranks of curves which are a cyclic cover of the projective line. The proof uses the method of degeneration to the boundary of a Hurwitz space. (Received September 24, 2012)