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Not Seen and not Heard? The Representation of Young Women and their Political Interests in the Traditional Print Public Sphere

Katherine A Smith & Valentina Holecz

A number of marginalised groups, including women and young people face multiple disadvantages in the traditional print media public sphere. As an inherently political space, young women's position within the public sphere has implications for their wider role in politics and society. However, few studies analyse this specific intersection of youth and gender. Therefore, using recent original data, this paper analyses how young women and their interests are represented in the traditional media public sphere. It undertakes this analysis through the lens of political claims analysis, a method that collects data on strategic interventions that express a political opinion either verbal or non-verbal, by collective actors in the public sphere, in addition to content analysis of this news content. This is an exploratory analysis of original political claims data and news content gathered from a range of newspaper publications across nine European countries from the period 2010-2016. It finds that the main qualities of representation of young women and their interests confirm patterns within the existing literature, with a centrality of young women's bodies to political claims relating to young women's interests within our sample, and a low level of agency or "active" role for young women within claims relating to their own interest. Furthermore, we confirm empirically trends which offer examples of more progressive representations of young women and their interests, including the significance of civil society actors in promoting the rights of young women and the theme of gender (in)equality in professional life, which enables space for a greater level of agency for young women than most other debates.

Keywords: young women, political interest; agency, public sphere, traditional media press, political claims, content analysis

Young Women and the Public Sphere

Our analysis of the representation of young women in the public sphere seeks to understand the nature of what is present in the traditional news public sphere, but also what is lacking from this coverage. Rohlinger makes the case that social scientists' focus upon the content of the

media, resulting in the obscuring of those who are missing from coverage (Rohlinger, 2015:2). She argues that when analysing vulnerable groups who are systematically invisible or portrayed through stereotypical metaphors, it is essential to consider and take into account the presence of this "strategic silence" and point out who and for which reason actors speak on behalf of others groups (Rohlinger, 2015; Taft, 2004; Osgerby, 2004; Ross, 2002; Sapiro et al. 2001). In relation to young women, we are therefore interested in analysing the marginalisation of young women from such debates within the public sphere, but also how "active" their level of voice and input is, in examples where young women and their interests are present. However, as Taft (2014) notes, girls are also no longer entirely invisible as activists in the realm of politics and the public sphere. In examples which are increasing in frequency, yet albeit still comparably rare, youth scholars have noted that girls are compared to the models of the ideal (neoliberal) citizen (Harris, 2004), with some cases of high-profile positions in public debate: an example cited by Taft (2014) being the case of Malala Yousafzai and her extensive media coverage as a Pakistani girls' education activist. Therefore, with marginalisation not simply equating to invisibility, it remains essential to analyse the qualitative thematic nature of young women and their political interests in the public sphere.

Indeed, one theme present in the representation of young people more generally, is their positioning as the subjects of moral panics in the media (Osgerby, 2004) stemming from generational change, or indeed a framing of young people as out of control and in need or regulation (Muncie, 1999): a framing which does not account for youth agency. Similarly, the representation of women is also the subject of thematic trends which contribute to their marginalisation in the public sphere. These include a stereotyped framing, for example as homemakers, wives and parents (Jiwani and Young, 2006), negative framing, for example as subordinated, unpowerful or sexualised (Collins, 2011), a high frequency of women-as victim gender framing (Ross, 2002) and the restriction of women to "women's issues" (Collins, 2011). Furthermore, the successes of young women as represented in the public sphere can be positioned as having been on at the expense of "others", namely men (Martino et al, 2008), thus presenting the interests of young women and young men as oppositional (Schlozman et al., 1999; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006). The discursive practices that prevent young women being described and portrayed as active subjects with a variety of identities it not, it should be stressed, the result of "a hegemonic master plan with this goal in mind" (Taft, 2004:70). However, the predominant description of younger women in national newspapers maintains,

with the exception of a small number of high profile examples such as Malala Yousafzai or more recently Greta Thunberg, a dominant image of a homogeneous group which is passive, noncritical and depoliticised (Rawolle 2010). Indeed, a public sphere which presents a debate with little regular representation of young women as active participants fails to provide tools to for newspaper readers to understand and overcome existing gender inequalities. Newspapers also portray what Taft calls the "ideologies of individualism and personal responsibility" with disregard for social system and institutions (2004:73), with examples such as the notion that through hard work, like exercising your body and standing up, "you can become a confident and reliable leader" (ibid:74). Themes around body images, anorexia, hyper-sexualisation, self-esteem, sexual assault are often combined (Ringrose, 2016:7). These arguments portray young women as a homogenous vulnerable and passive group that can make poor "choices" as not being precautious on their sexual life, or being assaulted (Egan, 2013; Ringrose, 2016). This illustration reinforces the image that young women should be protected. Here, the narrative of arguments are built using legitimacy afforded by experts, politicians, families and older women in order to "show them the right path" and protect them. Such arguments stem from the fears of older generation of what young women could possible experience if not instructed correctly (Egan, 2013; Smith, 2010; Ringrose, 2016). The general interest of one homogenised group called "young women" is also problematic as it does not take into account specific intersectional identities which could exclude a variety of "young women" and their wide variety of interests (Elliot et al, 2017). Newspapers therefore usually fails to consider what Elliot et al call "identity bridging" (ibid), and instead they build upon arguments which mobilize medical or political "experts" talking for younger women. In doing so, young women are described as passive subjects with little agency at the mercy of potential alarming situations (Smith, 2010; Ringrose, 2016). Reporting such descriptions, situations are reduced to a simplistic objectivation and sexualisation around young women and it avoids a deeper analysis where young women could be seen as more complex actors than helpless vulnerable object (Renold and Ringros, 2011; Duschinsky, 2012). In fact, media arguments focus primarily on the improper behaviour of younger women with regards to their bodies, and how to avoid young women's "premature" sexual desire, rather than advocating objective sexual education to young women and young men (Van Zoonen, 2005; Egan, 2013). As a result, what is reported by media coverage can be understood as a description of a romanticised time of sexual innocence, where the "real" experience practised by younger women is not accurately told (Ball, 2008; Egan, 2013; Kehily, 2002:71). Overall, existing literature has outlined the different ways in which young women and their political interests face inequalities of representation in

the public sphere, both in terms of their quantitative marginalisation, and the qualitative themes to which their representation relate. Given the multiple dynamics which are outlined in the literature, both in relation to young people, to women and to young women more specifically, our analysis will offer an opportunity both to empirically assess data from recent a sample of political claims which relate to the interests of the specific intersection of young women, and to develop further our theoretical understanding how this specific intersection is represented in the media.

Mixed Methods Approach: Political Claims Analysis (PCA) and Content Analysis

This paper uses a mixed methods approach to address the question of young women's interests in the public sphere. It combines Political Claims Analysis (PCA), a predominantly quantitative method, with further qualitative content analysis of the news articles from which these political claims originate. The benefit of this approach is the ability to capture on a sufficiently large scale (via PCA coding), claims in the public sphere which relate to young women's interests, while providing sufficient room for exploring quantitative and qualitative patterns which relate to these interests. For the purpose of this study, young people are defined as between 18-35, a definition consistent with Arnett's concept of a delayed, emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004).

The Political Claims Analysis method (PCA) gathers data from newspaper articles, which relate to verbal and non-verbal actions which are "purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticisms or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of claimants and/or other collective actors" (Koopmans et al, 2005). Political claims analysis is an actor-based method combining features of protest event analysis and political discourse analysis (Koopmans and Statham, 1999). Its focus is on the analysis of the role of collective actors in the public sphere, which in the case of our research include governmental, political, professional, labour, education, youth and civil society actors. It also gathers data regarding the nature of actors that the political claims address, in whose interest they were made, and the "issue" of the claim, among other details. Because this data covers numerous forms of actions within the public sphere, it consequently provides us with a highly useful dataset, encompassing diverse forms of actions, both verbal and non-verbal. Additionally when we consider the number of political claims coded (4525 in

total), this diversity of action and scale of data provides a good scope for analysis of the interests of youth subgroup of young women.

Data collection was carried out with teams of researchers across nine European Universities (from Switzerland, France, Germany, Sweden, the UK, Poland, Spain, Italy and Greece) who undertook a common coding method and common codebook. News articles from the period 2010-2016 were sampled. Five newspapers were selected per country team based on criteria of high circulation and readership, quality of newspaper and upon having a range of political orientations. Newspaper articles were retrieved using digital platforms such as Nexis, Factiva and newspapers' own digital archives, depending on newspaper availability country-by-country. Articles searches were carried out with keywords "Youth", "Young", "Teenage" and "Student" including appropriate translations for each country team, in order to isolate those articles most likely to relate to the interests of young people. Each team then cleaned its article searches to ensure the exclusion of articles which are not relevant (for example from newspaper sections on comment, sports, opinion, obituaries, weather, review, TV guide, motoring and letters) in order to create a master list per country, from which coders in each country team drew a random sample of articles from which to code political claims. Each team's coded claims were inputted into an online platform, from which the summary data was generated.

The analysis of coded political claims within our dataset is nevertheless complemented by our further analysis of political claims and their associated newspaper articles via qualitative content analysis. This allows us to capture richer a richer level of data, thus enabling us to capture with greater complexity the themes, narratives and framings within these news articles. For this analysis, we retrieved the relevant articles from which all coded political claims that relate to the interests of young women (young women as object) originate. The limitations of a PCA method which relies upon human interpretations for coding entails a clarification within our definitions. While there will naturally remain some degree of uncertainty as to whether all young women's interests (as well as their inclusion as actors and addressees) has been captured fully by this dataset from the sample due to factors such as the existence of alternative intersectional identities of actors and differences in how coders may frame participants in their coding output, we can be nevertheless clear that we are concerned with the study of young women and their interests insofar as these are framed as young women and young women's interests within the public sphere.

Young Women's Interests: A Quantitative summary of Political Claims

When considering the role of young women's interests in the public sphere using political claims analysis, a starting point is to consider quantitatively their involvement in these political claims. The raw data shows that among the full sample of 4525 claims, which relate either the interests of young people or are made by young people relating to any collective societal interests, 110 of these claims relate to the interests of young women (young women as the 'object' of the claim), 18 claims are addressed towards young women (young women as the 'addressee' of the claim) and 20 claims are made by young women as actors (young women as the 'actor of the claim'). To assess young women's interests and their representation in the public sphere, we are naturally interested in whether or not young women play an active role in claims relating to their own interests: a category of 'object' that young women can be expected to play some substantial role in.

Table 1: Cross tabulation of political claim Object & Actor

	Object		
Actor	Political Claim relates to interest of young women	Political claim relates to interest of other actor	Total
Political Claim made by a young women actor	**8**	12	20
	7.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Political Claim made by other actor	102	4403	4505
	92.7%	99.7%	99.6%
Total	110	4415	4525
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1 shows a cross tabulation of claims according to whose interest they relate (object), and in this case who makes the claim (actor). It indicates that young women and their organisations were actors in a low proportion (7.3%) of claims that relate to their own interests. Indeed, the fact that young women are not frequently involved in actors within this sphere of debates and exchanges is suggestive of a weak role in the public sphere. Furthermore, a similar calculation of the proportion of claims relating to the interest of young women in which the claim was addressed at young women (addressee) is also relatively low at 13.6%. This raises the question of which actors are making claims in the interest of young women. Using the broad categories of actors, **Table 2** shows the actor categories who make claims relating to young women, and

for the purpose of comparison, young men and youth (all categories). It should be noted that these categories should not be treated as oppositional: for example commonalities between claims relating to the interests of young women and young men may well speak to patterns of claims made where interests are framed in gendered terms. But rather, the categories are points of comparison in order to disentangle the patterns of actor which relate to youth interests, gendered interests, and the specific intersection of young women's interests.

Table 2: Categories of Actors making claims in the interests of Young Women, Young Men and Youth (All categories)

Actor of claim	Youth (All Categories)	Young Women	Young Men
State Actors & Judiciary	**31.7%**	**25.5%**	**27.3%**
Education Related Actors	14.1%	12.7%	4.6%
Youth Actors	13.6%	15.4%	4.5%
Other Civil Society Organisations & Groups	12.8%	**17.3%**	13.6%
Political Parties/Groups	11.0%	8.2%	9.1%
Professional Organisations & Groups	10.5%	**18.2%**	**36.4%**
Labour Organisations & Economy Related Groups	4.0%	0.9%	-
Other Actors	2.3%	1.8%	4.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 demonstrates three main points of similarity and difference between these categories. Firstly, common to all categories of youth is the high proportion of political claims made by "State Actors and Judiciary". It indicates that powerful and hierarchical actors play a large role in making political claims relating to youth interests. Secondly, where gender is included in the object category (in both the cases of young women and young men), there is a higher proportion of claims made by "Professional Organisations and Groups" which amounts to the second highest proportion of claims relating to the interests of young women, 18.2%, and the highest proportion of claims relating to the interests of young men, 36.4% (compared to 10.5% of claims relating to the interests of youth all categories). Finally, and uniquely to the intersection of young women's interests, there are a comparably higher proportion of claims made by "Other Civil Society Organisations and Groups", which indicates a concern for young women's interests by civil society groups at the community level.

Young Women's interests, as interpreted from the data, show all three trends: a high proportion of claims are made by the government level, suggesting the role of some of the most powerful

actors, yet there are also relatively high proportions of claims made in their interests made by community-level and professional actors, which point to other dynamics. As outlined in the literature, these results illustrate a relationship between young women's interests and powerful actors who seem to "speak on behalf of their interest": an articulation that Smith (2010) and Ringrose (2016) outline in their studies as a method of obscuring younger women and focusing on the narrative of "experts". Of course, there are limitations to this quantitative analysis alone. Consequently, we will next outline the findings of a content analysis of the 84 news articles from which the 110 claims relating to the interests of young women derive.

Young Women's Interests: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Political Claims and Associated News Articles

In order to substantially analyse the representation of young women's interests in the public sphere, 84 news articles, containing 110 claims relating to the interests of young women were analysed using thematic coding. To summarise the findings of our coding exercise, by far the most central theme within this sample of articles was young women's bodies, which is broadly made up of discussion and political claims surrounding firstly young women's health, and secondly the theme of sexual assault. A present yet more peripheral theme was the promotion of gender (in)equality in professional life. As a second more peripheral theme, we find that in a few cases where young women are visible as activists, that they are heavily criticised, with references to shock-inducing forms of activism.

Young Women's Bodies: Health

Young Women's health is a predominant theme which emerges when analysing the thematic content of news articles that relate to the interests of young women. Within these, we note the presentation of young women as clinical, viewed often from a heavily scientific and expert medicalised perspectives, with experts as the actors of the political claims. Furthermore, the content of articles relating to the health of young women is dominated by political claims relating to abortion, contraceptives and fertility. There is a notable number of political claims which relate to the accessibility of abortion and contraceptives, which outlines a broader debate between actors wishing to promote reproductive rights, and others wishing to increase

restrictions of the reproductive rights of young women. In an example from the Swedish press, a medical doctor makes a verbal statement in response to scientific findings of the dangers of modern birth control pills, *stating that young women should not act on these findings, as it would lead to women not taking the pill, thus increased pregnancy and consequently more abortion*s; this demonstrates a lack of agency afforded to young women to make decisions on the basis of evidence. As Rohlinger argues, doctors and other experts play a central role in the media public sphere on the issue of "if and when a young women should have an abortion" (2016: 43). The reproductive rights of young women are certainly an important political interest for inclusion in the public sphere, especially considering the presence of political claims relating to its restriction. However, we note the heavily gendered focus on young women alone with regards to contraception and reproduction which appears within these articles. In one example from the Italian press, young female graduates are described by a sociologist as *part of an avant-garde who work and have intense rhythms of life, and consequently are not "willing" to have as many children*, which is framed somewhat negatively. Here, the possible success of younger women is described as having been what Marino et al. (2008) stated at the expense of their male partner. With the exception of a small number of claims and discussions relating more broadly to sex education, we see little role of narratives relating to more gender-universalised political interests in contraception and reproduction.

As secondary sub-theme relating to health is dominance of narratives surrounding young women's weight and exercise. These are dominated by themes of body image including anorexia, weight loss and physical exercise. We note that political claims relating to these themes in the public sphere come from two broadly perspectives. The first perspective is the view that young women should be encouraged to do more exercise and sport through government or municipal programmes. In one example from the Spanish press outlines a programme *to encourage young women (only) to attend the gym for free in order to improve their fitness* (which consequently led to an infringement of their privacy rights to visual images of their own body). In a further example from the German press, a political claim made by a "job mentoring" organisation makes a link between exercise and improvement of young women's bodies as a route into employment through building self-esteem and confidence. In this example, the organiser points out that *they occasionally find it difficult to motivate young*

women on their period who they describe as having a bad temper; a detail which once more places additional focus on young women's bodies, even within a political claim which relates to encouraging young women to enter the job market. These two illustrative examples indicate what Taft (2004; 2014) has outlined: young women are framed as having the individualised potential to become strong and confident through individual hard work, for example in these examples via exercising their bodies. Nevertheless, they face simultaneous stereotyping and body shaming. The second perspective is the viewpoint that young women have an unhealthy relationship with their bodies, largely due to a culture that values an unrealistic and unhealthy image of an ideal body. In an example from the Swedish press, a model agency responds to media accusations that they have tried to recruit young anorexic women from outside an eating disorder clinic, which falls within a broader article that is heavily-critical of this practice. We note that these viewpoints are not necessarily contradictory; indeed, a healthy body image can well be compatible with a healthy level of exercise. However, these forms of political claim send somewhat differing message to young women in relation to either achieving a more ideal body type, or conversely by aiming to counter this narrative.

A notable feature within these political claims and news articles more broadly relating to young women's health is that young women have a low level of agency with regards to health-related political claims; their voices are rarely included and there are few references to aspects of choice for young women. Indeed, these political claims are dominated by expert voices, in some cases academic but largely medical. This offers a level of explanation for the high proportion of claims made by professional actors with relation to gendered categories of youth in our previous quantitative analysis (including young men); it appears that expert voices dominate these political claims, which in the case of young women are focussed on such health issues. The dominance of experts and a low level of agency for young women is a common feature of political claims and their associated news articles relating to young women's health.

Young Women's Bodies: Sexual Assault

The second theme that relates to young women's bodies is the subject of sexual assault. This is a theme which is present in numerous claims cross nationally. It is nevertheless a particularly central theme of the political claims (and associated news articles) relating to young women's interests in the UK press. This theme comprises largely of news articles which report upon the incidence of sexual assaults followed by comments, often in the form of political claims, made in many cases by police officers and other government-level actors on behalf of young women. It is notable that young women and their organisations do not play a more significant role in making comments or political claims in most examples. In an example from the UK press, a local politician responds to incidents of sexual assault within a town centre by stating that *young girls were putting themselves at risk by wearing "scantily clad" clothing*. This example is demonstrative of a common feature of these claims- the notion that young women are to blame for being sexually assaulted. Some other claims which fall into this theme relate to the experiences of young girls of being pressured into acts without consent by young men. We note that most articles relating to sexual assault place little or no emphasis on the voice of young women or their organisations, contributing to a sense of a lack of agency and an overarching theme of passive victimhood. In one of our sampled articles from the Swedish press, young women are described as the victims of increasingly horrific and extreme examples of sexual assault. A police officer makes a claim within the article that *young women should not feel pressure to do sexual acts to gain status or friends*. While this is of course a positive message, the article places young women on the peripheries of such discussions; it does not include any voices of young women or their organisations and does little to untangle why such a trend is on the increase.

Overall, the theme of sexual assault relates to an important aspect of young women's rights which undeniably requires representation in the public sphere. We nevertheless question the dominance of sexual assault related claims, as well as aforementioned claims relating to women's bodies from a health perspective, in forming such a central feature of the

representation of young women's interests in the public sphere, without the voice of young women and without also a representation of a broader spread of the political interests of young women. As scholars argue, media coverage of sexual assault where younger women are described only as the object of the article, avoids giving tools to a broader and deeper analysis of a unequal and structural action where young women could be seen as more complex actors than helpless or vulnerable objects (Renold and Ringros, 2011; Duschinsky, 2012).

Gender (In)equality in Professional Life

A further theme which is present in our sample of articles which relate to the political interests of young women is the theme of gender inequality in professional life. This theme is present in claims from professional organisations who wish to promote this further, as well as within claims which relate to a described trade of for young women between career and family. We note that a high proportion of the claims made relating to the interests of young women from the German press relate to the issue of promoting gender equality in the workplace. In one example from the Polish press, a government minister presents a policy to e*ncourage companies to provide facilities which may enable young women to "balance" work and motherhood, such as dedicated rooms*. In this claim young women are described as having a dual identity, as a worker and a mother. We note that these claims where gender inequality in professional life provide some of the few examples within our sample of 110 claims, where young women are described to have some substantial (if not strong) levels of agency. Discussions surrounding the idea of a trade-off between motherhood and a career often use arguments which reference structural factors which need to be overcome in order for greater gender equality in professional life to be achieved.

Young Women as Activists

Finally, we make note of a quality of some few political claims in the sample which relate to young women as activists. While prominent in the literature, we do not find any example of "model" young women activists who receive extensive coverage. However, their nonetheless relative rarity may well be beyond the albeit large sample size of our political claims analysis. However, there is certainly some level of consistency with the literature; it is clear that a high

standard is placed upon young female activists (Harris, 2004) that, if not met, reflects in their negative framing. Our findings show that in the few cases where young women are represented as activists, political claims are likely to frame young women activists negatively, with connotations of their activism as shock inducing and excessive. In one example from the French press, a young activist is criticised for using shock inducing tactics of using a calf foetus as part of an action which staged an "abortion", a criticism which cites the fact that it upset the catholic church. In another example from the Polish press, young women as political actors in the formal political sphere are portrayed as using activism excessively and are compared, in a negative sense, to the Suffragette movement. Furthermore, we note that these examples also do not escape some of the dynamics of political claims as previously outlined, such as the focus on young women's bodies; in the aforementioned French article we note that the young activists' physical appearance is heavily focussed upon and criticised.

Conclusion

The combination of quantitative analysis of political claims, combined with qualitative content analysis of news articles associated with these claims has revealed a number of findings which are present in patterns in both sets of data. Our quantitative analysis indicates that young women do not frequently play 'active' roles as the actors of political claims which relate to their own interests. This is consistent with our analysis of news article content which shows that low levels of voice and agency are afforded to young women in political claims relating to their own interests in the public sphere. We find that these also link strongly to the patterns of actors which dominate political claims which relate to young women; the lack of voice and agency afforded to young women has a relationship with the nature of those who are making the claims. Our quantitative analysis of actors indicated that more powerful actors, namely "State and judiciary" and "Professional Organisations and Groups" play the largest role in making claims relating to the interests of young women. This is consistent with our qualitative content analysis, which indicated that in particular relation to the (highly central) theme of sexual assault, that government-level (mostly police and politician) actors dominated claims making. Furthermore, we found that the high propensity of professional organisation actors amounted in the large part to the dominant role of medical (and occasionally academic) experts

in relation to claims on the second central theme of young women's health. These findings regarding the dominance of sexual assault and young women's health, the low levels of agency and the significant role of powerful and expert actors, each link to portions of the existing literature on the representation of young women and their interests in the public sphere. Furthermore their centrality in the representation of young women and their interests should be questioned, without also a representation of a broader spread of the political interests of young women. However, an interesting feature of our findings which draws upon both our quantitative and qualitative findings is the role of civil society as an actor of (albeit secondary) importance in claims about the interests of young women. Quantitatively this over-representation of civil society actors was unique to the category of young women, which on analysis of their associated news articles revealed that they are a large category of actors making claims largely in favour of the rights of young women.

Furthermore, our content analysis of news articles has allowed us to explore the qualitative framing of young women in the (comparably few) cases where they are present as activists, in a way that quantitative analysis would be unable. While we do not claim to refute any claims of the literature that young women are sometimes visible as "model citizen" activists, our sample does not provide us with any examples of this framing. However, what we do find, building upon this notion of a high standard placed upon young women activists, and described by Harris (2014), is that some young women activists, where they break outside of the concept of a "model citizen" (for example through repertoires of activism deemed "excessive" or shock-inducing) that they face heavy criticism in the public sphere as a consequence. Finally, our qualitative findings indicate that the theme of gender (in)equality in professional life was a significant theme relating to the interests of young women, albeit secondary in terms of scale, from our sample of political claims. While we certainly would not want to make any incorrect assertion that this provides a large scale counter to the relative lack of agency afforded to young women overall within our sample, this theme provides some (albeit less frequent) examples whereby young women have agency, either through being framed as having choices or via the inclusion of some of their voices in these claims. In combining youth and gendered labour market inequalities, this is an important theme of political claims which is specific to the interests of young women.

Overall, our main findings are consistent with existing literature on young women's role in the public sphere. However, we confirm empirically some secondary themes running counter to this trend, including the role of civil society in advocating young women's rights and the theme of gender (in)equality in professional life. These themes offer some level of counter to the largely negative features of the representation of young women and their interests in the public sphere, and offer an albeit rarer example of agency afforded to young women with the traditional print media public sphere.

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