Sourcing the story:

Journalistic practices and online news coverage of Irish healthcare policy

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____

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ABBREVIATIONS & EXPRESSIONS

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HSE: Health Service Executive, the Irish public health service organisation
Hiqa: Health Information and Quality Authority, the independent body monitoring the state's health and social care services
INMO: Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
IMO: Irish Medical Organisation
NAGP: National Association of General Practitioners
RTÉ: Raidió Teilifís Éireann, Ireland's public service broadcaster
TD: Teachta Dála, a member of national parliament (MP)

Irish-language terms:
Taoiseach: Prime minister
Dáil: The national parliament in Ireland
Oireachtas: The Irish parliament, comprising Dáil Éireann (TDs) and Seanad Éireann (Senators)

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Finally, to Noel: there's nobody else that I'd rather try to untangle this messy media-politics world with. Thank you for the love, laughs, support, and never doubting that I'd get there. I'm not sure calling it "the big essay" really helped, though...

_____

This work is dedicated to the memory of my wonderful, caring,
and much-missed grandmother Myrtle Hanbidge (1926-2017).
So much of what I value comes back to you.

"

*It is one thing – complex enough – to produce a single
good (a newspaper, a pint of milk) in such a way that
it is there for anyone on their doorstep each morning.
It is another thing to produce a daily service that fills each day,
that runs right through the day, that appears as a continuous,
uninterrupted, never-ending flow – through all the hours of today,
tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. What does that mean?*

"

-Paddy Scannell (1996)

ABSTRACT

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Sourcing the story: journalistic practices and online news coverage of Irish healthcare policy

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This research examines how the structures and practices of online news production influence story sourcing, and considers which stakeholders benefit from the perceived requirements of all-day publishing. Work environments and role conceptions appear to shape a news production system which journalists' actions continually reproduce; this balance between internal structures, external structures and agency – and how these combine to affect output – is analysed using structuration theory. Of particular relevance is the interpretation of online publishing as both an enabling and constraining force, the allocation of resources, and legitimation as a rule shaping perceptions about what news stories should be. Normative media theory, particularly notions of the media as a platform for diverse voices and a space to empower the public, strengthens this framework. Mixed methods provide multiple perspectives into online publishing; an enhanced content analysis of five mainstream websites' coverage of Ireland's health service over 14 weeks is complemented with interviews from practitioners and experts. By examining publishing trends, tracing the source material, and investigating the presence of different voices, an important and much-needed link is forged between practices and output. As the debate in media studies regarding the source-journalist power dynamic continues, the results suggest that the range of voices heard may be widening, but such a trend is facilitated by passive approaches to reporting, filling the apparent open-ended news gap with content that often lacks layers and depth. These approaches are becoming ingrained in the online production system, which may be problematic if basic information-processing is normalised at the expense of more original newsgathering. Such passive daily practices may also have repercussions on the opportunities available for journalists to gain the expertise and knowledge to effectively cover a policy area, thus affecting the public's understanding of the causes and solutions for problems regularly highlighted in news coverage.

Chapter 1 | INTRODUCTION

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The narratives surrounding the influence of the internet and digital culture on journalism are extensive: funding models, audience consumption patterns and expectations on journalists are in transition, but with the final destination unclear. The actual extent of change, and whether online developments are a cause for optimism or pessimism, remains contested among both journalism researchers and practitioners. Writing earlier this year, Nielsen gives a summation of what we should expect our journalism to offer: to "provide people with relatively accurate, accessible, diverse, relevant, and timely independently produced information about public affairs" (2017, p.1). Various ideals of journalism are explored throughout this research, but Nielsen makes an important point about the expectations which the media faces from observers. Rather than focusing on ongoing disappointment about journalism's failure in achieving what it _ought_ to be, he says, it is important to analyse what it actually _is_, which reinforces the importance of studying practices. This research aims to consider how the daily actions of online news production affect where source material originates, what voices benefit or are marginalised due to these actions, and how this affects coverage of a policy area. This dual consideration of sources – both the origins of content (such as information subsidy or original research), and voice (from whom we hear) – is intrinsic to understanding how online publishing influences the platform provided to different source groups such as official agencies, politicians, interest groups, or private citizens. While this study focuses on the production process, it uses the final output, the news content, as a starting point, drawing on a qualitative document analysis to trace original material and examine what factors lead to each story's publication. Two theoretical approaches underpin the work: the first, normative media theory, offers a basis from which assumptions are drawn about what the media's function should be. The second, structuration theory (Giddens 1984; Stones 2005), offers a framework to explain why journalism operates as it does, and the extent to which actors may alter such a system. This allows a consideration of the micro level of journalistic decision-making, the meso, organisational level, and the macro level where the broader sociological and political economy context form the backdrop against which news outlets are operating. As argued throughout this research, journalistic content is the result of structural forces, circumstances and decisions made at all these levels; factors which are both internal and external to the individual journalist.

This research focuses its lens on the well-established relationship between the media and the policy arena. Using coverage of healthcare and Ireland's health service ensures attention remains on this nexus where public concerns, state services, politics and media interact. The analysis of how online news production practices are affecting coverage of this sector includes discussions around hyper-temporality, the allocation of resources in newsrooms, concerns about specialised knowledge among reporters, and how the media translate policy decisions to the public. This introductory chapter offers an overview of the context in which the research takes places, as audiences are increasingly fragmented. The chapter also reinforces the importance of a national frame for any media analysis and outlines why Irish healthcare is a worthwhile arena in which to capture the media-policy dynamic. It concludes by detailing the structure of the thesis.

1.1 The research in context: Fragmented audiences and online news

In a MacTaggart lecture in August 2017, Channel 4 journalist Jon Snow gave an impassioned address about the communicative and social gap existing between media and the general public. Speaking about the Grenfell Tower fire in London two months previously, where more than 80 people died, he questioned why the room of journalists to whom he was speaking had not taken notice of the blog highlighting concerns about the building's fire safety. The media faced difficult questions in the aftermath: "Amid the demonstrations around the lower part of the building after the fire there were cries of 'Where were you? Why didn't you come here before?'" Snow questioned the disconnect between seemingly elite journalists and their public:

> Why didn't any of us see the Grenfell Action blog? Why didn't we know?
> Why didn't we have contact? Why didn't we enable the residents of
> Grenfell Tower, and indeed the other hundreds of towers like it around
> Britain, to find pathways to talk to us and for us to expose their stories?
>
> (Snow 2017)

These comments raise two valuable points about how the contemporary media functions. Firstly, Snow's reference to "pathways" encapsulates the idea that journalists have channels through which stories and sources are found. When pathways become routine and dominant, it may cause certain sources to be heard, while others are marginalised. In a pressured environment, journalists react to news events, drawing on familiar, accessible sources who have authority and legitimacy – and potentially their own agenda. Such behaviour leads to familiar narratives and familiar faces, as "eager sources eventually become regular ones, appearing in the news over and over again" (Gans 1979, p.118).

The second point expands beyond the professional journalism environment and considers the role of citizens' voices in the online sphere, such as the Grenfell Action blog. In *Why Voice Matters*, Nick Couldry acknowledges the place of an "alternative media infrastructure" online, but notes that this infrastructure is still not the media most people, or most governments, engage with daily (2010b, p.74). He argues that it is insufficient for people to have increased opportunity to express their voice, such as through social media, blogs, or reality television; it is imperative that such voice is heard and the speakers feel validated. Voice's duality is made up of both the process of speaking and the value it generates, he says (ibid., p.113). Frustrations with politics, establishment institutions, perceived injustices and personal stories are aired in online spaces where social movements gain momentum, and the actions of those in positions of power can be documented and deconstructed. However, it appears that, rather than functioning as a means to strengthen links between the public and their state, the disparity is growing, suggesting two emerging gaps: between news organisations and their audiences, and between citizens and government (Haas 2007).

Journalism is historically built on a normative link between the state and its citizenry and any change between these two groups likely influences media outlets' behaviour. Journalism is, therefore, trying to appeal to a more fragmented public who appear sceptical of institutions, but the idea of a single, collective identity in Western societies has long been challenged and pre-dates the digital, networked era. The weakening of traditional social structures and socio-political cleavages in Europe is linked to a demise in collective behaviours and identities since the post-War decades, a sense of detachment from the state, and declining voter turnout, while education and income increase (Gallagher et al. 2011; Gray & Caul 2000). Such a demassification trend (McQuail 2010) has grown over decades; the Walkman in the 1980s epitomised mobile privatisation (McGuigan 2007), while contemporary communication devices can strengthen this personalised environment, as users "experience the web 'reality' of immediate social interaction in new private spaces" (Breen 2011, p.10).

The communal impact of such distantiation from society is visible through this apparent hyperindividualism, defined by Deuze as "the extreme fragmentation of contemporary society into private public spheres" (2006, p.69). In recent years, this has manifested in discourse about customisation, filter bubbles, and echo chambers (Pariser 2011; Flaxman et al. 2016) amid the re-emergence of selective exposure as a valuable framework to capture audience behaviour in a multi-choice, hyper-personalised media environment (Arendt et al. 2017; Stroud 2010; Blumler & Kavanagh 1999; Zillman & Bryants 1985). This demassification, McQuail warns, will affect the influence of the media to provide a common basis knowledge or serve as the "cement" of society (2010, p.158). Such fragmentation of the public discharges traditional

concepts of the "general public", which had been characterised by a mix of groups, readerships, audiences and social backgrounds (Woolton 1990 in Chambat 2000, p.268). While diversity of voices and experiences may be filtered out in favour of personalised and individual preferences, the centralised governing state still exists as a uniting space and force of all these experiences. For that reason, governing and policy remain an intrinsic part of citizens' lives, even if many do not identify with a sense of collectiveness or have strong party-political attachments.

1.2 The importance of the national frame

Christians et al argue that philosophical approaches (normative traditions), political systems (models of democracy), and press systems (media roles) all warrant being the basis for analysis when considering how the media functions (2009, p.16). Although the international comparative approach has been popular, the place of the national frame is still foundational in shaping how the media operates in any state (Willnat et al. 2013; Hanitzsch 2007). Park and Curran attribute this variation between countries to three factors: communication systems are still effectively national; nations influence the shaping of a system through regulations and laws; and the nation still creates differences through language, political systems, and cultural traditions (2000). A country's stage of development can also be an indispensable influence when assessing the function of the media, thus resisting any singular, global notion of "democracy" (Christians et al. 2009; Strömbäck 2005).

Journalism in Ireland mirrors many elements of the historical and economic developments in Western media, with professionalism, concentration of ownership, foreign influences and shifting audience habits affecting the landscape. According to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) landmark conceptualisation of media systems, Ireland is part of the North Atlantic/Liberal model, associated with a strong role of the market, commercial press that is generally politically neutral, and moderate pluralism in politics. Ireland has heavy media users particularly for radio, illustrated in Figure 1.1, exceeding the EU28 usage average across all formats (Eurobarometer 2015). However, when trust in these five formats is examined (Figure 1.2), it is clear that high usage does not correlate to equally high trust, as Irish trust in the internet and social networks is below the EU average. The UK is also in Hallin and Mancini's (2004) Liberal model (alongside the US and Canada), however, such a model fails to capture some cultural variations. The different trust figures between Ireland and the UK in Figure 1.2 illustrate this, whereby trust is higher in the Ireland, especially in the written press. Industry scandals such as the Leveson Inquiry (Cohen-Almagor 2014) and a partisan press (Wring &

Deacon 2010) may have shaped perceptions of the media's role in the UK in a way not directly applicable to Ireland.

FIG 1.1

FIG 1.2
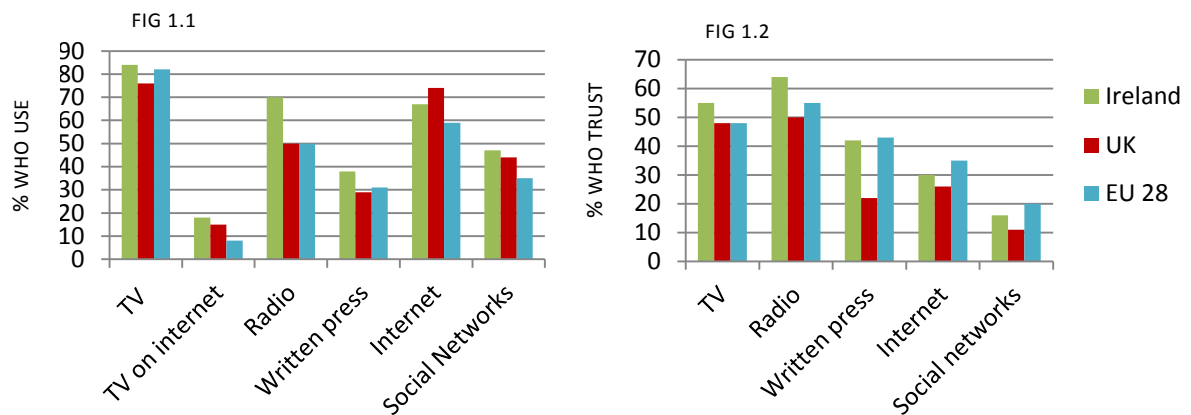
Figure 1.1: The percentage of respondents who use different media formats every day. Source: Eurobarometer 2015

Figure 1.2: The percentage of people who "tend to trust" different media formats. Source: Eurobarometer 2015

Of the 10 most popular TV, radio and print brands, public service broadcaster RTÉ is the most popular in Ireland, with 62% accessing it weekly (Reuters Digital News Reporter 2017). British channels BBC (34%) and Sky News (33%) are in second and third position, demonstrating the ongoing influence and competition Irish news producers face from British media. Furthermore, for news organisations in a small country like Ireland, the economies of scale are not comparable to national-level publications in larger markets (Horgan et al. 2007). O'Sullivan (2011) points out that even the national-level publications in Ireland are small by international standards, describing them as more akin to regional or even local newspapers in Britain or the US. This becomes an important distinction when Ireland is positioned within the broader context of international journalism studies. Wahl-Jorgensen refers to the "studying up" trend in scholarship, whereby researchers pay "a disproportionate amount of attention to elite and successful individuals, news organisations and journalistic practices within them" (2017, p.252). While commentary about organisations such as the BBC (Lee-Wright 2010; Hermida 2009) or The New York Times (Usher 2014) provide rich, valuable insights about changing news practices, there remains an undeniable gap in scale between such national-level outlets and national-level outlets in a media environment like Ireland. Wahl-Jorgensen (2017) suggests there has been an infatuation in scholarship with technological change in journalism at the expense of examining roles of the "less glamorous" or innovative workplaces that retain a dominant position. Such an assessment becomes crucial when investigating coverage of a

key national policy area: the national-level news outlets in that country are the most appropriate, and often the only, place to find content; as such, their coverage warrants attention regardless of their digital practices. Furthermore, the political, social and economic circumstances in Ireland in recent years, specifically the economic crisis which began in the late 2000s leading to a lengthy period of austerity, makes this an important time to consider the effectiveness of Irish journalists and their scrutiny of those in authority (Rafter 2014; Mercille 2013; Nyberg 2011; Fahy et al. 2009).

1.3 Changing technology and changing news

Winston's writings in the 1980s still have resonance as he refers to how "popular literature resounds with visions of techno-glory or apocalypse, the same set of phenomena being the source for both styles of pontification" (1986, p.636). Communication researchers have long resisted any sense of determinism, but the interest in the relationship between technology and journalism, and whether that is over- or under-stated, permeates contemporary literature (Blumler & Cushion 2014). Such a techno-centrist approach to journalism can, argue Siegelbaum and Thomas, "[disarticulate] technology and journalistic routines from both their material and economic contexts and their alignment with journalism's normative functions" (2016, p.387). Maintaining a link between technological change in media production and changes in journalism's social role is, therefore, needed to resist an overly newsroom-centric approach to journalism studies (Wahl-Jorgensen 2010).

McQuail summarises the trends in communication technologies as gradual shifts towards more speed, greater dispersion, wider reach and greater flexibility (2010, p.102). The shift towards mobile has been fundamental, arguably more influential than the web developments of the 1990s and early 2000s (Jones & Salter 2012, p.130).[1] Central to this growth is mobile's ability to offer the audience the power to access media content on-demand, outside of traditional formats and time slots. The trend in device use since 2010 is illustrated in Figure 1.3, showing Ireland is broadly in line with the global pattern; the PC, once dominant, is on a downward trajectory, with mobile gaining significant share. The past 18 months have seen a pivotal moment as mobile use overtakes PC as many developing countries bypass the PC stage (Smith 2014), happening slightly later in Ireland. Blumler & Katz's (1974) uses and gratifications model of audience behaviour suggests seeking "information and surveillance" is one of the public's motivations in seeking media content. Updating such demands, Newman and Levy's

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[1] The significance of mobile has also been recognised by search engine giant Google, which announced in 2015 that its new algorithm would penalise websites which were not mobile-friendly by moving them further down its search results (Cellan-Jones 2015).

find that "audiences increasingly want more news on any device, in any format, and at any time of day" (2013 in Picone et al. 2014, p.5). For many, news has become ambient (Hermida 2010), positioned as an always-on stream filtered around other increasingly privatised, customised feeds.
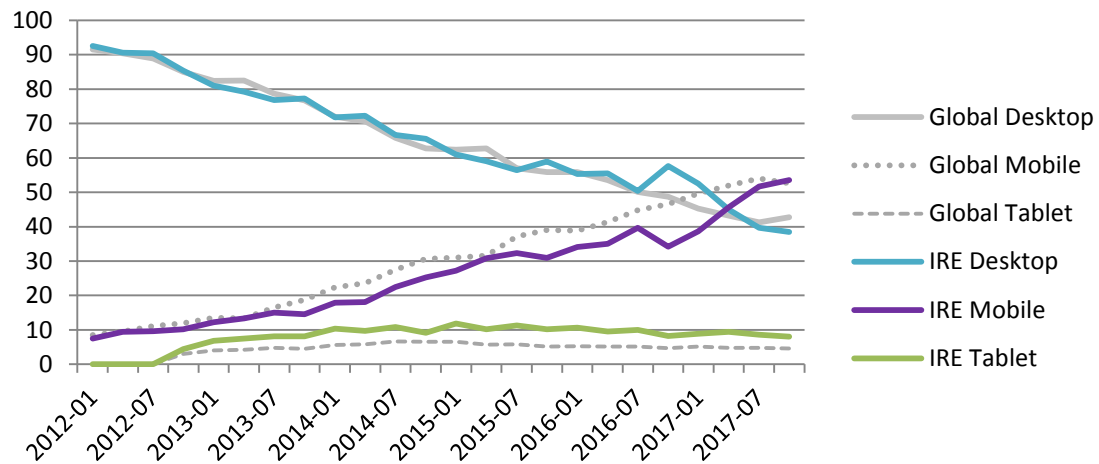
Figure 1.3: Platform use in Ireland and globally between 2012 and 2017. Source: StatCounter.com

This filtering of news, sometimes done consciously by audiences through their engagement with selected news brands, other times through algorithms (Pariser 2011), led to the meta-level, reflexive media coverage which appeared to peak in the period surrounding the 2016 US presidential election. Not only were concerns raised about audience polarisation through a lack of exposure to dissenting viewpoints, but critiques about the power of social networks, and in particular Facebook's role in fostering "fake news", gained momentum (Bell 2016; Herrman 2016). More than 100 stories addressing the subject of fake news appeared in Irish media between October 2016 and March 2017 (Digital News Report 2017) and, internationally, brands have used the concept to attract audiences and subscribers with slogans such as "Fighting fake stories with real ones" (The New Yorker).

The prevalence of fake news, and especially the ease with which it can be spread on social networks, should not be underplayed. However, a heavy emphasis on the subject may distract from other concerns in news content, especially in contexts like Ireland where fake news is not hugely problematic. Using truthfulness as the key determinant in assessing a news report's worth fails to factor in many of the apprehensions and avenues of investigation in communication studies such as framing, priming, agenda-setting, and media representations (Entman 2004; Byerly & Ross 2006). Furthermore, information subsidies and churnalism (Davies 2008) typically deal with accurate information, even if that information may be

subjective or skewed. Therefore, seemingly legitimate news may still be problematic and deeper analysis of news content's role is needed which expands beyond factual accuracy, especially in an era of information overload (Holton & Chyi 2012) in which constant streams of content may affect citizens' knowledge and empowerment. Chambot (2000) suggests an abundance of information leads to imbalance whereby voters feel a weak ability to act and participate in political and social debate. In an article published in *Journalism* in 2014, Jay Blumler and Stephen Cushion outline areas for future research which they believe would aid the democratic improvement of news, suggesting coverage must encapsulate more than rigid, idealistic rules:

> We propose for consideration a certain view of communication-for-democracy: beyond freedom of expression and the press (though inclusive of that); beyond the dissemination of information about events (though inclusive of that too); beyond even holding power to account (via interrogative interviewing and investigative journalism); but incorporating as well the norm of meaningful choice over those issues and decisions that may ultimately determine much of how we live with each other.
>
> (Blumler & Cushion 2014, p.269)

They describe this as a civically relevant journalism, which allows individuals to be informed about policy decisions. Referencing much of the techno-driven work in contemporary journalism scholarship, they refer to a danger that scholars, authors, educators and students will "focus more and more on the complex inner workings of journalism at the expense of attention to its external ties, impacts and significance" (ibid., p.261). The authors' points are particularly pertinent given this study's emphasis on a specific policy; how the media cover health policy shapes the public understanding of the sector.

1.4 Irish healthcare: 'Sins of omission and commission'

One of the most significant decisions defining the scope of this research is to focus on a single news area and selecting health policy coverage as that topic. The primary reason for this is its regular appearance in the news and the extent to which concerns about the health service resonate with the public. When asked about the most important issues facing the country, "health and social security" is the top result for Irish respondents (19%), ahead of government debt (17%) (Irish Political Studies 2015), and high levels of media coverage of the sector reflect this concern. Criticisms in standards of care, the administration of the Health Service Executive (HSE), the funding of treatments and drug costs, waiting lists, A&E overcrowding, watchdog reports, and industrial relations all gain regular media attention. The health service in Ireland operates on a two-tier system (Burke 2009) whereby public services co-exist, and overlap, with services offered by private health insurers, with whom 43% of the population

have policies (Department of Health 2015). Consultant doctors operate across both public and private patients, and public hospitals also cater to patients with private insurance. Professor of health systems Anthony Staines (2017) describes two distinct themes in media coverage of Irish healthcare: "sins of omissions and sins of commission". The sins of commission relate to the "repeated scandals, all real, and all serious", where actions and treatment of care have failed. The sins of omission are those not happening: he cites waiting lists for surgeries and tests, those who fall above the medical card threshold who cannot afford care, and poor mental health services. Prof Staines suggests a restructuring is needed whereby resources are shifted away from private care and acute hospitals, and into lower-costs services, such as in general practice. He claims "we have chosen to have the second most expensive, and one of the worst, healthcare systems in the developed world", tying it to a failure to reform in the post-World War II years.

Health is the Irish government department that requires the most exchequer funding; estimates for 2015 spending showed health would require €11.8bn, followed by social protection at €11.04bn (Irish Political Studies 2015) and health expenditure in Ireland is above the OECD average in per capita spending. The economic crisis and austerity budgets, which began in 2008, impacted government spending on health services: a drop of 12.2% in 2009-2010, and a drop of 5.8% in 2010-2011.[2] The OECD suggests the measures introduced in the wake of the financial crisis can be linked to an increase in waiting times for outpatient procedures due to the postponement of hospital investment and reduction in hospital staff. It also highlights how hospitals are working at nearly full capacity for acute beds (93.8%), compared with the OECD average (77.3%) (OECD 2016). This can be a sign of efficiency but also indicates over-reliance on the secondary-care level, resulting in problems accessing hospital care, according to the organisation. This accessibility problem was the primary reason for the drop in Ireland's overall ranking in the European Health Consumer Index 2015 rankings, from 14th in 2014 to 21st (out of 35 countries) in 2015 (Health Consumer Powerhouse 2015). Based on six indicators, Ireland performed poorly on the range and reach of services (18th), patient rights and information (22nd), and accessibility (joint bottom place). It performed very well on access to pharmaceuticals, topping the table, and relatively well on patient outcomes (9th), and preventions (7th) (ibid.).

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[2] Overall between 2000 and 2012, spending (as percentage of GDP) in Ireland rose 4.6% (OECD average: 3.9%)

The national-level Health Service Executive, established in 2005, succeeded ten regional health boards. However, there have been calls to abolish the HSE – from various sides of the political spectrum, at various times – and ongoing uncertainty about healthcare prevails. After the 2016 general election, the Committee on the Future of Healthcare was established with the goal of strategising a "single long-term vision"[3]. It produced a report in May 2017, claiming it was the first time to achieve cross-party consensus on a new model of healthcare. Among its proposals is a single-tier service in which no private health insurance patients receive care in public hospitals, and "shifting care out of hospitals" and into primary care to improve accessibility. The figures and background presented above offer some insight into the problems with the health policy area in Ireland, and it provides a topical, important subject upon which to base an analysis of current affairs coverage.

1.5 Studying online news and its societal role

As this chapter has suggested, journalism studies may benefit from investigations beyond the techno- or newsroom-centric approaches which focus primarily on how journalists are adapting to digital work. Systematic studies of published content are often removed from such approaches, but the output from news organisations should be central to any consideration of how technological developments in newsrooms affect journalism's democratic function. In his MacTaggart lecture referenced earlier in this chapter, Jon Snow – addressing an audience of media professionals – says:

> I want to urge everyone and anyone in this room with the power to do it:
> give individuals who work with, and for you, the space to do something –
> anything – in the wider community we are here to communicate with.

(Snow 2017)

Snow's comment touches on one of the core theoretical ideas in this study: that the positioning of power, and the allocation of resources (Giddens 1984) within a news organisation, is crucial to what news is covered and what content journalists produce. Opportunities and productive, healthy journalism cultures need to be fostered, and those with the domination resource in a newsroom have a role in shaping what is researched and published. It also becomes apparent that fully exploring the influence of the internet and digital production on journalism requires the research lens to extend beyond internal newsroom dynamics. Using practice theory, and specifically structuration theory, allows for a thorough exploration of the news system and its societal role. While normative media theory is inevitably media-centric, a broad social theory

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[3] http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/committees_list/future-of-healthcare/

offers a complementary perspective and an opportunity to draw on wider questions of how systems operate. Structuration, which theorises the reproduction of social systems as the outcome of the combined forces of structure and agency, can offer a framework to capture the multifaceted nature of news production. Loffelholz (2008) refers to a growing number of journalism theories which use approaches for general social phenomena, rather than the stand-alone approaches treating journalism as a more insular occurrence. Structuration theory is one of the "promising" approaches, still in need of development, which offers "several starting points for new, creative ways of thinking about journalism" (ibid., p.25). Since Loffelholz was writing in 2008, structuration theory has proven to be a useful framework for conceptualising technological change in newsrooms (Eide 2014; Mare 2014; Larsson 2012; Sjøvaag 2013; Archetti 2010; Steensen 2009b). Loffelholz suggests such theories can be effective as a developing attempt to link the macro-, meso- and micro- levels of journalism, and suggests that progress within journalism studies is not based on substituting outdated theories, but on the "gain in complexity through the emergence of new theories and modifications of older theories" (pp.22-25). This study uses Rob Stones' (2005) work on "strong structuration", a modification that provides a clearer basis for empirical research than Giddens' original work. As far as can be determined, strong structuration, used in organisational and business studies, has not yet been applied to journalism studies.

The research presented here, therefore, offers an analysis of online journalism production that draws on media and sociological theory to investigate how and why journalism operates as it does, and the influence this has on news content and how healthcare concerns are portrayed. Stones' (2005) quadripartite model, introduced in Chapter 2, is used to present a system of news production that captures structural constraints both internal and external to the agent, individuals' actions, and outcomes. This structure helps to answer the study's research question:

> How do the practices of online news production influence the sourcing and
> publication of health policy-related news content?

The study also contributes methodological innovation, both conceptually and mechanically, through the use of a content analysis approach not previously used to explore practices, but one which is needed to answer this research question. The research also adds to the existing corpus on digital news in Ireland, which has been sparse in recent years, and includes websites not previously studied. However, rather than simply being an isolated case, Ireland acts as a useful case study for many small European countries, and provides a counter-perspective to the US and UK studies which have dominated research into Anglophone newsrooms.

1.6 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 2 establishes a sociological grounding for the research by considering the role of daily routines and practices in the construction of news. It introduces structuration theory as a framework, with the duality of structure concept at its core: structures and agency interact to contribute to the reproduction of social systems, in this case a news production system. Establishing this position early in the thesis presents a theoretical foundation to which the following chapters can be anchored: both external factors beyond the newsroom, and actors' agency, contribute to the routinised, familiar patterns of news content. Chapter 3 presents an overview of normative ideas about how news should function in a democratic society; particular attention is given to the role of the public and the association with the state. Additionally, the political economy dimension is presented as a structural consideration contributing to the backdrop against which news organisations are operating. The chapter, combining historical narratives about the media's function and evolution and technological change, examines whether online tools and working environments have ultimately enhanced or restricted journalism's ability to fulfil such normative expectations. Chapter 4 brings the focus on to the role of the news in supporting the hegemonic model of society due to its association with official sources and arenas of existing power. The discussion also encompasses the rhetorical nature of news, and how such a function serves both sources and journalists in achieving their respective communicative goals. It also addresses the reliance on routine sources of news and information subsidies. The chapter shifts attention to coverage of healthcare, using the discussion thus far on sources as a means to examine how the journalistic practices can affect coverage of a specific area.

Having presented the foundations of the existing literature, Chapter 5 outlines this study's methodological approach and explores how, despite some researchers' reservations, content analysis can be used to investigate practice. The need for a flexible, reflexive approach is highlighted, with each stage of the process informing the next (Altheide 1996). The chapter includes a rationale for the sample, an overview of the two-phase coding process and details some of the novel tools used for capturing, managing and analysing the data. It also outlines the approach to the interviews, carried out after the coding was complete, which helped to contextualise and complement the content analysis data.

Over Chapters 6-8, which present the results and analysis, a discussion evolves where it becomes evident that the daily actions of online news publishing facilitate practices that lead to a reliance on certain sources and routine channels. Chapter 6 begins by establishing the temporal nature of publication on each website, capturing the all-day publishing trend while

also noting the fact that the newspaper-brand websites still publish content overnight, indicative of a "print-first" approach. It then relates this temporal aspect with the origins of content, suggesting that much of the daytime content is from routine sources and routine channels, and the chapter concludes with a proposed reconsideration of Sigal's (1973) channels of production, typifying news content into eight channels. Chapter 7 shifts attention to the voices from whom we hear in the news, exploring whether the dominance of elite sources has been extended in the digital environment. It then connects these voices with the channels and sources of content, as well as the temporal aspects, as discussed in Chapter 6. This facilitates an understanding of what sources are benefiting from the all-day publishing trend and the channel through which they are accessed by journalists. Chapter 8 opens with a discussion on journalists' mixed attitudes towards PR and easily-accessible information, before shifting to some of the specifics of healthcare coverage. A clear division is apparent between the journalists, loyal to professional values and news values, compared with those attached to the sector, who are much more critical of coverage. Questions arise about the democratic effectiveness of some news coverage due to an overreliance on certain sources, as the public may not be offered more in-depth coverage if journalists' focus remains on immediacy and fuelling the all-day news trend. Throughout the three chapters, concerns about the allocation of resources, the positioning of power in news organisations, and the role of decision-makers in shaping content and normalising certain newsroom cultures is at the forefront. The findings also demonstrate that a passive approach to news reporting, and efforts to fill the perceived open-ended news hole, can actually benefit a range of voices. However, this may be problematic for journalism's ability to function as an independent observer due to a reliance on easily available source material.

The conclusion, Chapter 9, uses Stones' (2005) quadripartite model to reflect on the four aspects contributing to a news production system – external structures, internal structures, agents' practices and outcomes – which the results and discussion chapters have explored. It suggests that online journalism can be understood as a sub-institution, heavily shaped by journalism's well-established cultures and norms, but which has adapted to the digital landscape. The chapter concludes with some of the study's limitations, scope for future research and recommendations for journalism practitioners.

Chapter 2 |
NEWS CONSTRUCTION AND STRUCTURATION THEORY

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The multiple, complex factors influencing how journalists behave and how content is produced have been studied from various perspectives, examining the economic, political, sociological and cultural constraints (Schudson 2011). Rather than treating each in isolation, however, drawing on multiple aspects can present a more holistic, and insightful, understanding of journalism. The sociological perspective is the dominant lens presented in this research, but draws heavily on the others by adopting a theoretical framework founded on the relationship between the individual and the context in which they operate. Practice theory, with its focus on the actions of everyday life, is the starting point, with Anthony Giddens' structuration theory used for deeper analysis. The duality of structure concept lies at structuration's core: actions are continuously reproduced due to the combination of structures and actors' agency. Such a perspective facilitates a discussion of both factors which continually interact, shaping how news is sourced and assembled. Due to its relative abstractness, the theory has faced substantial criticisms which led to some modifications. For this research, Stones' (2005) "strong structuration" adaptation is used, which offers a more robust basis for empirical research and provides a four-stage theoretical model for analysing systems. This "quadripartite model" is used throughout, alongside references to the original works from Giddens, primarily _The Constitution of Society_ (1984).

This chapter examines the role of the individual journalist, and the factors contributing to their actions, first presenting an overview of news routines before introducing practice theory. Some principal elements of structuration theory are then outlined, followed by Stones' modifications. The focus then shifts to the application of the theory to journalism studies, and specifically newsroom changes. Following this, the discussion returns to daily practices and how the agency dimension of structuration is realised in a newsroom setting. The level of autonomy with which journalists operate may be contentious in the broad sense, but there appears to still be high levels of fluidity and flexibility present in day-to-day actions.

2.1 Making the news

Considering news as a social construct may be "axiomatic" (Schlesinger 1989, p.284), but an overview of what this means is still useful. Newsrooms have been studied for more than half a

century, allowing the analysis of "rules, roles and processes" (Domingo & Paterson 2008, p.18). In particular, the early contribution of ethnographic studies offer rich observations into production process, as well as foundational insights into gatekeeping and socialisation (Fishman 1980; Gans 1979; Tuchman 1978; Breed 1955; White 1950). The trend continued with what Ilan (2015) refers to as the "second wave" of ethnographies looking at digital transitions in newsrooms (García-Avilés et al. 2014; Tameling & Broersma 2013; Robinson 2010; Domingo & Paterson 2008; Erdal 2008). In an overview of some of these formative studies, Cottle (2007) notes the unintended consequences of heavily routinised news, such as event orientation displacing longer-term processes of change, and the dependency on official sources. The routinised nature also facilitates a repeated "vocabulary of precedents" (Ericson et al 1978 in Cottle 2007, p.3) to help journalists assemble and justify their news selection. These repeated actions are used to generate a version of events for the public; Schlesinger gives a useful summary as he describes how making news is "putting 'reality' together", and is the "product of judgments" made by journalists (1987, p.165). This conception of judgments serves as a reminder about the inherent power of journalists in shaping news coverage, even if that power sometimes feels constrained by work pressures.

While researchers observe the idea of news routines and construction, such formulaic language does not necessarily translate to journalists' perceptions of their work (Zelizer 2004; Schudson 1989). However, Schultz points out the "recognisable patterns" that ethnographers observe (2007, p.192). These daily routines also align with a professional commitment to certain rules such as balance or striving towards objectivity, discussed in Chapter 3, which further contribute to how news is assembled. While these rules may be ideological – but manifest in practices – temporal and spatial factors also contribute to routinisation (Singer 2004; Shoemaker & Reese 1996). In this news environment, journalists strive to fulfil professional obligations while seeking to incorporate a "broad sociological construct that incorporates expertise, ethics, public service, and autonomy" (Singer 2004, p.842). Referring to the work of Gans, Tuchman, Fishman and others, Ryfe summarises how journalistic routines facilitate the balance between actions and ideals as they "speak to functional and symbolic needs of the profession" (2009a, p.199), a pragmatism raised again later in this chapter. However, Ryfe warns that routines can become "sticky" and difficult to alter (2009a; 2009b), which can lead to dysfunction (Lowrey 2008). This becomes particularly relevant in times of newsroom change, where reforms or efforts at innovation may face resistance due to strong commitments to existing behaviour and culture.

Within news production studies, researchers regularly draw on the term "routines" (Lecheler & Kruikemeier 2016; Usher 2013; Becker & Vlad 2009; Butler 1998), but Cottle has argued that

a move towards "practice" is needed, echoing the call for a shift towards practice more generally in media research (Cammaerts & Couldry 2016; Couldry 2004). Cottle suggests the notion of routines "tended towards a form of organisational functionalism" whereby journalistic agency and practices "became lost from view" (2007, p.10). This denies journalists their agency in what is a "purposeful" construction of news products (ibid.). Practice theory (Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 2008) can, therefore, provide a useful starting point for news production studies. It is outlined below before one of its proponents, Anthony Giddens and his work on structuration theory, is introduced.

2.2 Practice theory

Reckwitz identifies Bourdieu, Giddens, late Foucault, Garfinkel, Latour, Taylor and Schatzki as the primary authors on practice theory, linked by an interest in the "everyday" and "life-world", where the emphasis is on the familiar, repeated behaviour, "embedded in collective cognitive and symbolic structures" (2002, p.244). Reckwitz refers to actors' "shared knowledge" (ibid., p.246) and socially shared way of giving meaning to the world, describing practice as:

> …a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice … forms so to speak a 'block' whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific inter-connectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements.

> (Reckwitz 2002, p.250)

This inability to reduce practice down to a single factor suggests a holistic approach, where various factors, influences and actions shape its defining properties. Individuals both physically and mentally act as the "carrier" of a practice, Reckwitz argues, which becomes important when examining many of the internalised values of journalism. Feldman & Orlikowski suggest practice theory proponents broadly subscribe to three key arguments: (i) that situated actions are consequential in the production of social life; (ii) dualisms should be rejected; and (iii) that relations are mutually constitutive, so no phenomenon can be taken to be independent of other phenomena (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011). This holistic approach facilitates an analysis that recognises the role of the individual, but acknowledges that this ability for agency is positioned against structural constraints that may be beyond an actor's control.

Elaborating on practice theory in journalism studies, Ahva (2016) proposes that practice has three equally weighted elements: activity (doing); materiality (the objects of place); and reflexivity. She notes the importance of reflexivity, as this avoids any notion that people merely "act out" practices. Instead, there is some symbolic meaning and understanding to their acts, as they interpret and evaluate their behaviour (ibid., p.5). Schneider (2013) offers a comprehensive explanation of why journalism can be considered as a practice, based on its association with both bodily activities (talking, reading, writing, as well as using products like computers and newspapers) and mental activities (selecting stories and sources, and shared background knowledge and norms). However, the reflexivity that Ahva highlights is key: Schneider says that shared practices do not eliminate the potential for differences in how practices are realised in action: "Journalists act as individuals when they conceive their stories, collect quotations from sources, and write their stories" (ibid., p.49). Tied to this is the community of which journalists are part and, citing Barnes (2001), Schneider says journalists' practices are part of the socially recognised forms of activity learned from others in their community. Such a perspective introduces the dual factors contributing to a journalist's actions in producing a story: the individual operates with knowledge and agency in a space shaped by social and professional expectations, which may act as constraints. This balance between following professional norms and rules, versus individuals having any effect on the rules constituting acceptable practice, is what Sjøvaag refers to as the "fluctuating issue" in academic studies examining journalists' role in maintaining news systems (2013, p.162). Rather than aligning with either perspective, one advantage of a practice approach in journalism research is, according to Ryfe, how it incorporates "the micro-level of performance, to the meso-level of practice, to the macro-level of social fields" (2017a, p.10). Although there is this potential for multiple layers, Ryfe is critical of how many studies that draw on practice theory fail to incorporate journalistic performance. He proposes that content analyses only assess journalistic performance indirectly (ibid., p.2), suggesting the need for further empirical research to exploit the theory's potential. Despite these concerns, however, the use of content analysis to assess practice is explored in this study's methodological approach outlined in Chapter 5, demonstrating how a more exploratory content analysis can act as a novel approach to theoretically examine both output and process. While practice theory offers a broad conceptualisation, the more specific perspective of structuration theory provides a detailed and insightful framework upon which this study can be underpinned.

2.3 Structuration theory

Anthony Giddens is among the primary proponents of practice theory, contributing to the field with his writings on structuration, motivated by his efforts to bridge the schism of structure and

agency being considered wholly distinct forces (1984). Debates over the dominance of structure or agency have long existed to account for human behaviour and there have been moves in recent decades to reconcile, rather than polarise, the two (Ritzer 2004). Giddens argues that both the macro- and micro- levels of social life feed off each other and one should not have to choose between them (Gauntlett 2002). In structuration, the *duality of structure* is the process by which the two elements, structure and agency, interact and reproduce systems in the social world. In the process, reflexive agents draw on *rules and resources*, and *stocks of knowledge*, acquired by participating in or observing the system of which they are part (Giddens 1984). Giddens defines the idea of structuration as "the conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems" (ibid., p.4). Social systems, he explains, are "the patterning of social relations across time-space, understood as reproduced practices" (ibid., p.377). As Giddens is putting forward a broad, macro theory, he acknowledges that social systems vary widely in terms of the "degree of systemness", and rarely have the internal unity found in physical and biological systems (ibid.). This facilitates some of the fluidity that is present in a news production system, and therefore certain elements of the theory will be more applicable than others.

Structuration theory supposes that such social systems are only sustained and exist because of the actions reproducing the system's structural properties. Yet much of the complexity, and contesting, of structuration lies in Giddens' conceptualisation of structures. He suggests structures are effectively psychological; they are "memory traces" lying within an agent's consciousness, causing people to act in familiar, socially accepted ways:

> Social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have 'structures' but rather exhibit 'structural properties' and that structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents.
>
> (1984, p.17)

Giddens ties these structures to knowledgeability and agents' understanding of their situation (ibid.). He elaborates by describing how structures in a given social setting comprise both rules and resources, which he divides into three categories: signification (meaning), legitimation (norms) and domination (power/resources). These three categories exist primarily for analytical purposes, as Giddens says all three dimensions are involved in any social action. He also suggests structures are both enabling and constraining: each constraint can also "open up certain possibilities of action at the same time as they restrict or deny others" (1984, p.173),

which becomes a key concept when trying to evaluate the effects of online news production on journalism.

| Structure	SIGNIFICATION	⟷	DOMINATION	⟷	LEGITIMATION
(modality)	INTERPRETIVE SCHEME		FACILITY		NORM
Interaction	COMMUNICATION	⟷	POWER	⟷	SANCTION
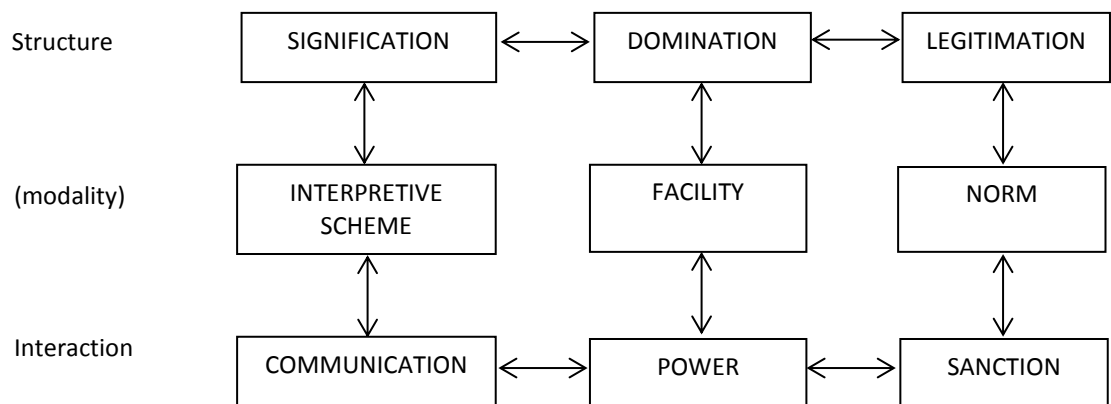
Figure 2.1: The dimensions of the duality of structure (from Giddens 1984, p.29)

Figure 2.1 illustrates what Giddens refers to as the dimensions of the duality of structure, showing the rules (signification and legitimation) and resources (domination). The modality is the act, or thought process, which actors use in action. In acts involving *signification* (the meaning actors give to their actions) and the sustaining of communication, an interpretive scheme may include shared, established *stocks of knowledge* about appropriate behaviour. This also allows actors to rationalise and provide reasons for their actions (Giddens 1984, p.29). Such interpretive schemes are tied to the conjectural knowledge about how other agents within the context "would interpret the actions and utterances of others" (Stones 2005, p.91). In acts involving *legitimation,* the "rules" of a locale are drawn on to avoid sanctions (which may be legal or social). This presents the basis of how agents are, broadly, expected to act, as they evaluate risks and rewards. The resources tied to the structure of *domination*, and the influence of such on acts and the distribution of power, is central to structuration, although Giddens does not frequently refer to the term "facility". He does, however, draw on resources as a modality, and divides resources into the allocative and authoritative on which agents draw in their actions. Allocative resources refer to control, or "capabilities… or more accurately to forms of transformative capacity – generating command over objects, goods or material phenomena" (1984, p.33). Authoritative resources refer to command over persons or actors. Giddens argues that evolutionary theories give priority to allocative resources (ibid., p.258), but authoritative resources have a "parallel significance" in the expansion of power: "Any co-ordination of social systems across time and space necessarily involve a definite combination of these two types" (ibid., p.260). The resources available in a newsroom, therefore, may not be limited to

19

the numbers of individuals or the tools available, but expand to the professional control and opportunities that those in positions of power – who have the domination resource – provide to journalists.

2.3.1 Criticisms and modifications of structuration theory

Given its broad scope, it is not surprising that Giddens' work has faced opposition. Den Hond et al (2012) describe three categories of criticisms levelled at structuration: (i) the fundamental logic behind the theory and the duality concept; (ii) conceptual critique on the theory's comprehensiveness; and (iii) its relationship with empirical research. These criticisms, and their relevance to this research and journalism studies more broadly, are addressed below.

The fundamental logic of the theory

It is not possible to suggest that structuration and the duality concept serves as an appropriate framework across all social systems. However, in journalism studies, there is a broad acceptance that news is a result of an array of individual and circumstantial factors. For example, McQuail identifies two key issues shaping the media produced by news organisations: the level of freedom an organisation has, regarding wider society and within the company's structures, and the media-organisational routines and procedures for selecting content (2010, p.277). Other conceptualisations highlight the internal and external factors, such as Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchy of influence model listing (i) journalist; (ii) media routines; (iii) organisation; (iv) extra-media forces; and (v) ideology as key influences. Similar work by Hanitzsch et al (2010) and Preston (2009) capture the interconnected dynamic between the individual and the broader structural context, thus supporting the need for a theoretical approach that incorporates these various factors. For that reason, the duality approach seems an appropriate perspective to take in studying journalism practice, as focusing on either agency or structure alone may fail to fully capture the intricacies of the system. Jensen suggests that the integrative nature of structuration is the one comprehensive conceptual framework available which can move empirical and theoretical research in media and communication studies beyond the "entrenched dualisms" of structure and agency (2002c, p.1).

Another concern levelled against the theory is Giddens' proposition that structures are psychological. Craib argues that the weight of social expectation is underplayed if structures are considered psychological:

> Not only are one's memory traces imbued with a lifetime of rules and experiences, but in most societies the stock of resources forms a

> monumental reality. The weight of social structure is overwhelming once it
> is enacted. But Giddens' picture does not grasp this weightiness.

<div align="right">(2011, p.28)</div>

This criticism should not be understated, and Stones (2005) acknowledges that it would be "absurd" to continue to insist there is no place in structuration for external structures which either "pre-exist agency or have a causal influence on the outcome of agent's practices" (2005, p.61). In a news context, deadlines are examples of structures beyond a journalist's control, alongside the broader political economy environment and market-driven actions taken by news organisations. The resources in the newsroom setting are tangible, thus influencing actors' *transformative capacity*, or ability to bring about change (Giddens 1979, p.92). The concept of resources, and a lack thereof, appears in many commentaries about news production, especially as editorial budgets may shrink and staff numbers are reduced. Hanitzsch and Mellado refer to "procedural influences", which they describe as the "operational constraints faced by journalists in their everyday work … related to limited resources in terms of time and space as well as to established standards and routines of news work" (2011, p.407). They find such procedural influences to be a more powerful limit on journalists' work than economic or political factors. They also highlight "organisational influences", stemming from both editorial newsroom decision-making and actions at the management level. It becomes clear from such research that tangible structures and resources impact on journalists and are relevant to any analysis of why journalists operate as they do. Structuration captures these structures through the domination/resource framework, and although Giddens suggests they are psychological, Stones' (2005) approach acknowledges the unquestionable presence of such constraints, which appears to be a more useful assessment for the journalistic context.

Comprehensiveness of the theory

The other critiques which Den Hond et al (2012) highlight is the theory's comprehensiveness and relationship to empirical study. To apply such broad sociological concepts to a journalistic context requires a strict narrowing of focus, and not all aspects of structuration will be explored in this study. However, rather than this being a limitation, Giddens himself has said that the application of the theory works best when applied in a "spare and critical fashion" rather than burdening studies with excessive abstract concepts (1991 in Stones 2005, p.2). However, his explanation on how to employ these selective concepts is ambiguous, and Stones highlights how Giddens has resisted demands for detailed guidelines (ibid., pp.2-3). These criticisms have led to some major revisions and modifications of the theory (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Stones 2005; Parker 2000; Sewell 1992). Archer and Mouzelis have

challenged the fundamental duality at the core of Giddens' theory, instead arguing in favour of a dualism which retains the distinction between structure and agency (Parker 2000). However, as discussed, structuration's duality perspective, identifying the intertwining between the two forces, is more applicable to a journalistic context given the balance between individual action and external factors.

The need for modification was extensively addressed by Stones with his proposal of "strong structuration" theory. Stones says his adaptation incorporates some adaptations based on the criticisms of Archer, Mouzelis, Sewell, and Thompson, as well as the more "sympathetic" contributions of Cohen and Shilling (2005, p.46). An advantage of the strong theory of structuration is "its refusal to remain focused upon only the philosophical level, to the neglect of the conceptual and methodological links between the abstract and the particular" (ibid., p.7). He redirects the lens away from Giddens' broad "ontology-in-general", by incorporating more focused "ontology-in-situ" insights, while maintaining the original theoretical underpinnings.

*Quadripartite nature of structuration*
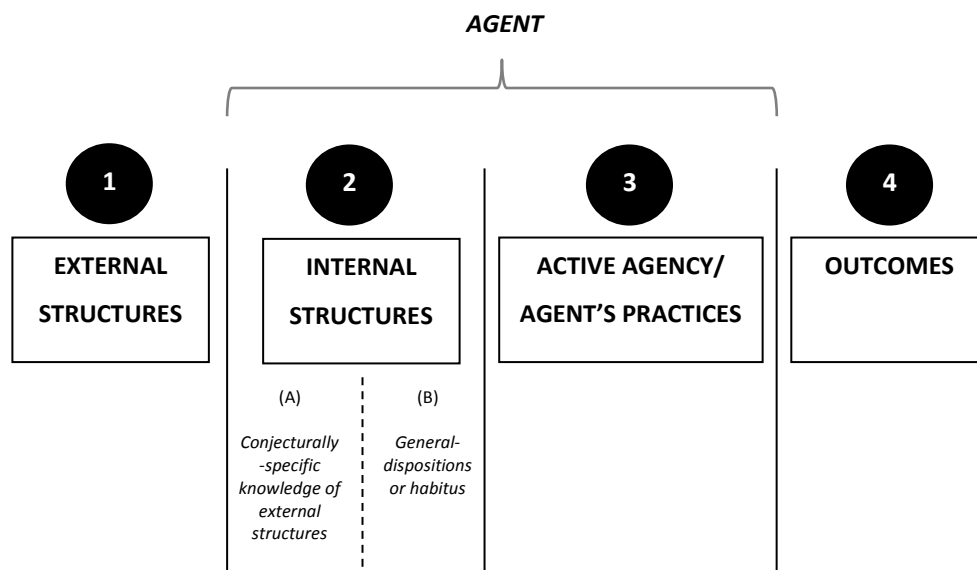
Figure 2.2: The quadripartite nature of structuration (from Stones 2005, p.85)

Among Stones' major contributions is his model of the quadripartite nature of structuration (Figure 2.2), which features (i) external structures; (ii) internal structures; (iii) active

agency/agent's practices; (iv) outcomes. The first element relates to *external structures*, whereby structures' presence is "autonomous from the agent in focus" and tied to the context in which an agent operates. One important feature is Stones' reference to the "action-horizon" of in-situ agents as "perceived". This interpretation of certain structures is discussed later in the chapter and forms a substantial component later in the discussion chapters. The second and third elements are internal to the agent. The *internal structures* (element two) can be divided into the conjecturally-specific (such as a specific news organisation's approach), and the general-dispositional (similar to Bourdieu's habitus). Element three, *active agency/agent's practices*, refers to how an agent "either routinely and pre-reflexively, or strategically, draws upon her internal structures". This is the "active, dynamic moment of structuration, but this is a moment that can never float free or be uprooted from the other parts of the structuration cycle". The recognition that this moment is anchored to the structural factors is fundamental, as it helps to explain how and why journalists will not have full control over every aspect of their actions. Element four, *the outcomes*, "can involve change and elaboration, or reproduction and preservation" (Stones 2005, pp.84-86). The outcome in this study is tied to the published content, as well as the reinforcement or challenging of journalistic practices. These four aspects provide conceptual clarity to the various aspects of the news production system and contribute to the discussion throughout this research.

2.4 Structuration and changing newsrooms

Although strong structuration has not been applied to journalism studies, as far as can be determined, structuration has been used in its original format to explore news practices and innovation, changing routines, converged news environments, and journalistic autonomy (Eide 2014; Mare 2014; Sjøvaag 2013; White & Wingenbach 2013; Larsson 2012; Liang 2012; Sydow & Staber 2002). The advent of online publishing can be seen as a "critical juncture" (Ryfe 2006, p.138), or "critical situation" for news organisations, which Giddens describes as "circumstances of radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind", which he says can threaten institutional routines (1984, p.61). Usher's (2013, p.808) study finds agents can alter structures most when new technology offered fresh opportunities, but such new tools and workflows have provided news producers with both challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, in cautioning against a sudden, automatic or deterministic transformation, Larsson warns: "Just because the technology is in place does not mean that actual change in the use will take place" (2012, p.259). Larsson is writing about the non-use of interactivity by journalists, and cites Domingo (2008), saying interactivity has been an "uncomfortable myth" in many instances. This cautious, slow evolution in online news has proven to be a more accurate reflection of the situation, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Larsson concludes with a useful assessment:

> Most agents involved in the journalistic context, be they journalists or readers, tend to reproduce established structures rather faithfully, thereby further strengthening the "bite into time and space" (Giddens 1984, p.171) enjoyed by what can be referred to as the institution of journalism – a social practice that has functioned in similar ways for literally hundreds of years.
>
> (2012, p.260)

This institutional nature of journalism (Ryfe 2006) is one reason why fundamental change may not be found. However, as Eide and Sjøvaag argue, this does not mean digital challenges or professional reorientations should be underestimated. In acknowledging the resilience of journalism as an institution, they say "responses to challenges can lead to institutional change", adding that adjustments and reorientations made by news organisations need attention (2016, p.4). For some, new routines have opened up fresh opportunities (Mare 2014), while Liang (2012) talks about how sometimes a "jolt" is needed to break up inertia in newsrooms. In her study on Chinese coverage of the Iraq War, such a jolt came when changing technology was combined with new competition and an altered political environment. However, crucial to note, these structural factors did not bring change in themselves, but simply created opportunities for innovation: "Ultimately, change was made possible by reflexive agents who were able to capitalise on the momentum" (ibid., p.453). This potential role of the individual has, according to Steensen (2009), been undervalued in research into innovation in online newsrooms. He finds that practice outdid familiar routines, and individual action can alter a system in the longer term by shifting expectations:

> This emphasis on agency in turn affects the establishment of structures in line with Giddens' (1984) tail-biting theory of structuration: individuals empowered with the ability to influence and shape organisational routine will shape a routine where individuals are expected to play important roles.
>
> (2009, p. 832)

The case Steensen describes, online features production, gives an example of how particular individuals built up a rapport and were able to bring change, and thus affect the culture and future expectations. This is a manifestation of Sewell's summary of how Giddens sees systems being altered: "If enough people or even a few people who are powerful enough act in innovative ways, their action may have the consequence of transforming the very structures that gave them the capacity to act" (Sewell 1992, p.4). Thus, the way individuals adjust to new possibilities, and act out the potentials through practices, can then become normalised. However, as Stones cautions in stage three of his quadripartite model, the potential for such individual's action takes place only within the context of the other structural and individual dimensions, and agents do not necessarily have full control over all circumstances.

2.4.1 Interpretation of structures

Routines and cultural practices are often deeply engrained in journalists' professional lives and may be more powerful than spatial requirements or limitations. This aligns with Giddens' "memory traces" conceptualisation and Stones' reference to the "perception" of structures in his quadripartite model. Two examples of this are outlined below showing how the apparent rules of journalism, internalised by an agent, can affect the final news product (Schneider 2013) and impact on attitudes towards newsroom changes (Ryfe 2009b).

Schneider's study (2013) illustrates a paradox whereby journalists who want to raise awareness about homelessness write in ways which ultimately impede these goals. She finds journalists' professional commitment to certain practices is the reason, based on beliefs about newsworthiness, how sources are used, and the code of objectivity. The finished stories about homeless people often reinforced negative associations, such as violence and drug abuse, under the guise of fulfilling news values. Schneider gives examples of how these journalists consider homeless people to be unreliable sources who lack the legitimacy and media-friendly traits of experts. They were seen as harder to get hold of, not willing to give their names, and considered to not know as much about homelessness as the experts; they were instead only quoted to give a personal story rather than informed comment on the broader issues. Journalists' commitment to objectivity also meant they were reluctant to consider themselves as advocates, discussed further in Chapter 3. One of the key points that Schneider makes is that, in fulfilling these professional expectations through their practices, the potentially problematic standards are reproduced and normalised, an outcome central to structuration.

A second example of perceived structures is Ryfe's study (2009b) of a new editor's attempts to effect newsroom change by shifting away from daily beat reporting to more enterprising reporting. He finds that routines are "sticky, and not easily displaced" (ibid., p.674), and the editor's plans were not successful: reporters resisted, and the old product (the newspaper) still had to be filled every day. On the ground, actors might not necessarily experience structures (such as a rigid need to pursue specific beats), he finds, but instead they experience interpretations of these structures:

> The limits of [journalists'] response to the situation did not lie solely in the structure that constrained their actions. It also lay in their interpretations of that structure. The structure obviously limited their ability to imagine doing journalism differently, but it did not extinguish that ability.
>
> (Ryfe 2009, p.675)

This final point – how the journalists' actual ability to do something different was still present, even if they resisted such change – aligns with the core elements of structuration and its perception of individuals and the psychological, normative aspect of their work. In both

Schnieder and Ryfe's cases, there was resistance from journalists towards breaking away from the professionalised routines in which they were ingrained. To try to explain this commitment to perceived roles, Schneider cites Schatzi, saying that the underlying reasons why actions are selected in any situation are because these actions are the ones which maximise the actor's capital (1997 in Schneider 2013 p.57). She summarises: "Journalists engage in activities that others will recognise as a legitimate performance of the norms of journalism and in so doing reaffirm these as legitimate aspects of journalistic practice" (2013, p.57). This "legitimacy" resonates with the interpretive scheme to which Giddens' and Stones refer: how agents in the same context "interpret the actions and utterances of others" (Stones 2005, p.91) is a powerful factor. However, the value placed on peers reinforces a media-centric approach towards the assessment and rationale of journalistic actions, rather than something more civically minded. Sjøvaag (2013) also touches on this in her consideration of journalistic agency through the structuration lens; she says that journalists enforce the rules of the profession in order to achieve higher levels of autonomy and a higher position, and in the end the institution is rewarded. Such a potentially media-centric focus is raised again in Chapter 3 in discussions about hyper-temporality and transparency in online news.

Newsrooms as an enabling/constraining force

Giddens says most structural sociology is inspired by the idea that society's structural properties form constraining influences; however, structuration proposes structures as both enabling and constraining, opening up certain possibilities of action while restricting others (1984, p.169). This conceptualisation facilitates a framework to examine factors that affect, positively and negatively, how journalists produce their work (Erdal 2007; Cottle 2007). Altmeppen argues that the organisational context is a prestructured arrangement that both enables and restricts the journalist's job (2008, p.58), while Dickinson and Bigi also draw on this concept in their assessment of how video journalists operate: they balance the job satisfaction with constraints such as the high pressures (2009, p.520). The technological developments in newsrooms are an appropriate example of this enabling/constraining concept; for example, new publishing opportunities for newspapers are paired with increased pressures to maintain a secondary output. Therefore, this dual, more nuanced perspective is useful rather than an effort to commit firmly to whether technology has acted as an enriching or restraining force in newsrooms.

2.5 Daily actions and autonomy

In much of the literature on news routines the enabling factor is present with a somewhat pragmatic undertone, suggesting routines ensure that an output is produced in accordance with

deadlines and public expectations. Routines are for "getting work done in newsrooms" say Molotch and Lester (1974, p.105); routine "facilitates the control of work" (Tuchman 1973, p.110); routines are part of the shared knowledge about what counts as "good journalism" (Schneider 2013); routines "make it easier for journalist to accomplish tasks in an uncertain world" (Lowrey 2008). Adhering to these conventions can offer some comfort or reassurance about what should be done; for Giddens, routines within practice help to minimise unease:

> Routine, psychologically linked to the minimising of unconscious sources of anxiety, is the predominant form of day-to-day social activity. Most daily practices are not directly motivated … In the enactment of routines agents sustain a sense of ontological security.
>
> (1984, p.282)

Routines are, therefore, associated – to various degrees – with both physical and psychological dimensions of journalism. The physical ensures work is completed, while the psychological reduces cognitive dissonance regarding appropriate behaviour. While the enabling aspect of routines is not in question, what is more contestable is the extent to which they restrict journalists' action. The routines within an organisation can be central to the level of autonomy with which journalists operate (Skovsgaard 2013; Hallin & Mancini 2004); although the value of autonomy is well-established, media workers are not always free to perform as they would like, which affects their behaviour and outcomes (Hodgetts et al. 2008; Sanders 2003). This supports Bourdieu's consideration of journalism as a weakly autonomous field, whereby freedom is determined by a journalist's location within a specific field (Bourdieu 2009, p.55). However, it is important to differentiate between two central ideas: autonomy in the broad sense, and individual decision-making regarding how a story is assembled. Even if the former is constrained, the latter can still be present regarding, for example, who is contacted as a source. Therefore, although journalists may not have absolute freedom of action, the organisation and structures within a newsroom do not necessarily determine their actions (Erdal 2007). Manning provides an overview of the balancing between habitual behaviour, pressure, and individual decision-making:

> Most news journalists and news workers have to meet deadlines as a matter of routine, and they will develop a number of techniques and organisational practices in order to accommodate this imperative. This is where human agency meets social structure. To adapt a phrase, journalists may make their own news, but they do not make it just as they please under conditions chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and determined by the rhythm of the news organisation.
>
> (2001, p.54)

The temporal pressures to which Manning refers will be addressed in Chapter 3, and act as a substantial factor restricting certain aspects of news reporting. However, an informed understanding about their behaviour is typically present among journalists: Cottle observes that, generally, they act "knowingly and purposefully". It does not mean they are on ideological missions or have full freedom, but "are more consciously, knowingly and purposefully productive of news texts and output than they have been theoretically given credit for in the past" (2007, p.10). This knowledgeability, so central to structuration, is intrinsic to the reasoning and rationalising of why journalists act as they do. In selecting certain issues as news and assembling the stories in certain ways, the nature of news production is seen as a constructive process in which journalists are active participants.

The spheres of influence, mentioned earlier in this chapter, generally place the individual at the centre (Preston 2009; Shoemaker & Reese 1996) but Soloski points out that, although journalists work with a certain level of autonomy, two factors act as control mechanisms: what could be considered "sanctions" in a structuration framework. The first is a sense a professionalism, which is transorganisational and, secondly, the specific news policies which can be intraorganisational, such as an individual media outlet's policy of not using certain photographs (1989, p.218); these two factors overlap with Stones' (2005) distinction between general-dispositional knowledge and conjectural-specific knowledge. However, these perceived constraints provide a framework for action rather than requiring certain specific actions, Soloski says, and are broad enough to permit journalists some creativity in the reporting, editing and presentation of news. This is also noted by Manning, who cautions against a production-line image, saying "particular journalists *do* make a difference": "Editorial experience, journalistic flair and the 'grit' of the investigative reporters clearly have their place" (Manning 2001) (italics in original), while Brindle surmises that journalists take "on-the-run decisions" about most day-to-day coverage (1999, p.44). These assessments serve as a reminder of the power residing in journalists' work, and the agency aspect present in the third stage – agents' practices – in Stones' (2005) quadripartite model. As highlighted, this stage cannot be taken in isolation and is shaped by internal and external structures which lead to behaviours which actors can rationalise by drawing on the perceived rules and resources, such as the commitment to objectivity or temporal constraints.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the importance of daily practices, and the theorising of such repeated action, in considering the news production system. Journalists' knowledgeability and interpretation of their role is crucial to understanding their actions, and cannot be removed

from the news production process. Taking a sociological approach to news production ensures the actions and practices of journalists are the starting point from which to consider published content. The primary method in this research is a content analysis of news texts, as outlined in Chapter 5. Hansen warns that content analysis is often criticised for its quantitative nature, and refers to the need to place what is recorded in content analysis within a theoretical framework "which articulates, in the form of a model of communication influence, the social significance and meaning of what is being counted" (1998, p.96). The sociological perspective presented here positions the role of human agents as a central factor, while acknowledging their existence within structural constraints. Journalists themselves are often the primary actors directly involved in the creation of news content, but their relationship with a second wave of actors – sources – is central, as discussed in Chapter 4. As both these sets of actors are human, it is valuable to work within a framework in which their roles – their normative goals, their social conventions, their power, and their effectiveness – are fully recognised. Therefore, the structuration dynamic is appropriate for this analysis, and provides an extensive vocabulary on which to draw, including the conceptualisation of rules and resources, and the enabling and constraining elements of structures. The broad, macro nature of structuration has attracted criticism in the past, but combining Giddens' original writings with Stones' modified version ensures that many of the concerns are addressed for an empirical context.

While this chapter highlights the role of individuals' actions in daily practices, Chapter 3 shifts the focus towards some of the structural constraints present in newsrooms, which are also central to structuration. Such structural factors – social, economic, technological, temporal and spatial – are discussed alongside the normative goals to which professional journalism, broadly, subscribes. Adding the dimension from normative media theory provides a basis on which to discuss the goals of contemporary journalism and consider any changes and challenges which online news production has initiated.

Chapter 3 |
NORMATIVE CHALLENGES: STRUCTURES AND NEWSROOMS IN A DIGITAL AGE

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The move towards online media has brought challenges for news producers trying to balance professional ideals and market expectations. Steensen argues that journalists' roles are shaped by two axes: a historical axis of traditions, and an axis of the particulars of labour in modern society (2009, p.702). Therefore, when analysing a move away from traditional formats, the environment in which journalists work must be given due consideration. This was highlighted in Chapter 2 examining daily practices, and this chapter focuses on some of the structural constraints. As Stones' (2005) quadripartite model suggests, structures expand beyond resourcing and the external, macro-level, and well-established principles like professional values can be internalised by an agent, thus steering their behaviour. The chapter comprises three sections: the first examines the normative foundations to which journalists are attached, highlighting the connection with the state, a commitment to normative goals and some of the challenges to journalism's professional status. The second section shifts to the resourcing of news, with attention on declining newspaper sales, corporate ownership and alternative funding for online formats. The third section examines journalists working online and how this environment aligns with professional values, while addressing temporality and news, and the dynamics of the print-online production cycles. Examples of both continuity and change are clear throughout, as many solidified perceptions about journalism's function prevail amid adaptations for online. What becomes apparent is that journalists and news organisations are using many of the digital tools available, yet they are often "hesitant in abandoning [journalism's] conventions" (O'Sullivan & Heinonen 2008, p.368), and uncertainty on many fronts continues. Long-established cultural norms continue to influence journalists regardless of their format, but the market environment in which news organisations are operating may be challenging the ability to carry out such idealised functions.

3.1 Journalism as a profession

Any discussion of journalistic practice and performance can benefit from understanding the expectations about journalism's societal role and how such a position evolved. Nerone identifies two families accounting for journalism's rise: one emphasising politics and the

public sphere, the other emphasising the marketplace (2012, p.447), and both impacted on Ireland. Horgan et al (2007) identify the modern media landscape in Ireland forming following the Irish Independent's establishment in 1905. However, prior to this, Foley (2004) notes the development of the public sphere element (Habermas 1989) during the 19th century as debate grew around Ireland's political independence. Professionalism of the industry based on the working norms of journalists in Britain and the US created a public sphere at this time of intense political debate in Ireland (Chubb 1984). In Ireland, much of the professionalisation process occurred parallel to Britain, starting in the latter part of the 19th century, but was more fraught in Ireland due to local political factors (O'Brien 2016). The growing hegemonic professionalisation visible by the early 20th century (Nerone 2012) is associated with shifting expectations about the media's role; the application of an idealised model challenged the essence of pure libertarianism, which had prioritised freedom of the press, but an assumption evolved that the media it had some level of responsibility to society (Nerone 2012; Merrill & Nerone 2002; Peterson 1956). Broader social factors in the mid-20th century, such as growth of broadcasting and cinema, increased urbanisation, advertising, and the rise of propaganda media have been linked to audiences' increased demands for truth and balance (Nerone 2012; Cramer 2009; Peterson 1956). Within the sector, the establishment of organisations, unions, press councils and codes of practice added professional elements, as did the growing attachment to this sense of public responsibility (McQuail 2010, p.172; Allan 2004).

Although a professionalisation movement is evident, debate remains about whether journalism can, or should, qualify as a profession, due to factors such as a lack of a definable knowledge base (Schudson & Anderson 2009; Broddason 1994). Journalism has, thus, been conceived as "a profession, an industry, a literary genre, a culture or a complex social system" (Deuze 2005, p.444), while Zelizer (2009) highlights the competing, complex visions at its core. She asks: "Is it a craft, a profession, a set of practices, a collective of individuals, an industry, an institution, a business or a mindset?", concluding that it draws on all these conceptualisations. In recent years, the role of "produsers or "pro-am" contributor (Jones & Salter 2012; Deuze 2008) has developed alongside some commentators' call for a renewed professionalisation (Donsbach 2014; Sambrook 2013; Gade 2011; Preston 2009), leading to clearer distinctions and recognition for those with recognisable journalism skills, qualifications, and knowledge. Siegelbaum and Thomas (2016, p.392) believe news work has been cheapened by the "much-vaunted 'democratisation'" which emphasises an "everybody can do it" mantra, thus lowering the value of journalistic labour. While the specifics about journalism's classification remain unclear, the professionalisation period provided certain unifying functions which have proven foundational and remain a driving force. Such expectations about what journalism ought to be

are typically internalised by journalists, contributing to an actor's general dispositions or habitus (Stones 2005; Neveu & Benson 2005). Some of these ideals are explored below.

3.1.1 Functions of the press and ties with democracy

Journalism's historical roots can be accounted for, but defining the purposes and functions of the news media is more difficult, with no cohesive model upon which it is built. A variety of sources inform normative expectations: social and political theory; professional theory and practice; the public as citizens, contributors and audiences; media market expectations; agencies of the state; and external parties affected by the media (McQuail 2010, p.163). The oldest influence dates back to early social and political theory; Pickard refers to this "implicit" social contract between the state, the public, and media institutions in the liberal US system and now entrenched in most Western models (2011, p.177). The notion of the "fourth estate" links the media to the political world (Zelizer 2004); the term appeared in the UK in the late 18th century via parliamentarian Edmund Burke, as democracies developed with the press acting as a guardian or watchdog. The concept has faced criticism: Eldridge and Steel believe it is too inward looking, as a fourth estate model for journalism "rests upon an assumption about *its* [journalism's] moral commitment to fulfilling *its* self-declared democratic obligations" (Eldridge & Steel 2016, p.817) rather than something more civically minded, while Josephi (2005) and Zelizer (2012) are among those questioning the presumed link between journalism and democracy. Nevertheless, in the Western setting it is difficult to extrapolate journalism from democracy when many expectations about its role remain linked to its connection between the state and the citzenry. While Conboy suggests the fourth estate approach is "high on emotive value but low on concrete evidence" (2004), he concedes that it provides credibility to the variety of practices which constitute journalism. McChesney (2015) provides a distinction which may be useful: he insists that when discussing democratic goals for journalism, democracy must be used in its purest sense with citizens' decision-making abilities at the centre, and he cautions against the misinterpretation of liberalism as democracy. This refinement is central to any assessment that journalism has a duty to do more than simply report on events or, as Blumler and Cushion in Chapter 1 say, go beyond dissemination or accountability, to achieve a model of "communication for democracy" (2014, p.269).

The extent to which news coverage contributes to a more engaged electorate may be context-dependent and vary relative between media organisations within that setting (Strömbäck 2005). Chubb, writing in the 1980s, notes that journalists in Ireland traditionally followed the fourth estate model of a "political role as probing reporter and independent commentator" (1984, p.78). The recent Worlds of Journalism report for Ireland (Worlds of Journalism 2016) finds "reporting things as they are" is the most popular role conception, with 94.4% reporting it as

either very or extremely important; 61.5% believe the same for "monitoring and scrutinising political leaders". It falls to 54.2% for "providing information people need to make political decisions". The idea of informing the public to facilitate democratic action was an intrinsic part of Peterson's (1956) summation of the socially responsible model of the press contained in *Four Theories of the Press*, stemming from the Hutchins Report in the US in the 1940s. According to Peterson, the press should, among other things, service the political system by providing information and debate on public affairs; enlighten the public to make it capable of self-government; and act as watchdog against government. McQuail has since elaborated on this, suggesting social responsibility proponents now include being truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant, that the media should be free but self-regulated, and that it should follow codes of ethics and conduct (2010, p.171). These functions or roles form the basis of various iterations of how the media should perform which are present in scholarly analysis and surveys (Worlds of Journalism 2016; Gil de Zúñiga & Hinsley 2013; McChesney 2013; Christians et al. 2009; Schultz 2007; McNair 2003) (Appendix A). Deuze (2005) summarises five ideal-type traits or values: (i) public service (as watchdogs or 'news-hounds', active collectors and disseminators of information); (ii) being impartial; (iii) having autonomy; (iv) a sense of immediacy; and (v) a sense of ethics. These ideals contribute to journalists' professional identities, although there may be discrepancies between what the public consider important and what journalists prioritise (Gil de Zúñiga & Hinsley 2013). Furthermore, there may even be distinctions between what is actually covered, compared with what journalists think *should* be covered (Strömbäck et al. 2012), which suggests news values (Harcup & O'Neill 2001) may be a more powerful newsroom force than anything more civically or democratically minded.

The social responsibility concept appears in many normative iterations and prevails beyond its US origins (Christians & Nordenstreng 2004) despite criticism that it is too vague and used to justify oppressive regimes (Merrill & Nerone 2002; Altschull 1995). "Appealing to a sense of social responsibility" was one of the journalists' motivations Williams identifies in his study of coverage of Aids and HIV in Britain in the 1980s; many specialised correspondents believe they had an important role to convince their news organisation of the need to report on the disease (1999, p.74). This balance between individual journalists feeling an obligation to convince an editor of an issue's worth, alongside a commitment to the greater good, resonates with the idea of journalists acting as socially responsible existentialists. Singer, citing and building on the work of Merrill (1989, 1997), summarises this role as a "combination of freely choosing to be responsible in order to fulfil a social role based on trust" (2006, p.13), saying such behaviour is needed now more than ever. This acknowledgment of journalists' active role

can be tied back to the conceptualisation of practices highlighted in Chapter 2, and connects with the idea of how their actions have a fluidity. It is of particular relevance to aspect 3 – active agency/agent's practices – in the quadripartite model (Stones 2005), which is the moment where structuration occurs, influenced by journalists' internal beliefs about the purpose of their role.

3.1.2 Objectivity and the audience

The objectivity principle has dominated much of the research into normative journalism and permeates professional codes of conduct; often criticism comes from alleged media bias, and failed objectivity (Blumler & Cushion 2014). The concept effectively means journalists strive to be "impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible" (Deuze 2005, p.447), and it has saturated newsrooms in the West, with an even more rigid presence in the US than Europe (Schudson 2001). However, objectivity is challenged from various sides as both an ideological approach, as well as being unrealistic and impossible to achieve (Hallin & Mancini 2004). For example, Marx believed that by practising a code of objectivity, the possibility of change was denied (Altschull 1995). In more recent years, public journalism advocates such as Jay Rosen, David Merritt and Arthur Charity believe genuine democracy depends on a form of journalism committed to promoting active citizen participation rather than the detached watchdog model (Haas 2007, p.2). Rosen, writing early in the development of online news, believes an information overload means journalists can no longer act purely objectively:

> Public life cannot regain [itself] on a diet of information alone, for there's far too much of it for even the most well-intended citizen to digest. If journalists view the job as merely providing information – implied by telling the news in a detached way – they will not be particularly helpful to public life or to their profession.
>
> (Rosen 1996, p.110)

This perspective overlaps with critics of the mainstream, commercial model who argue that journalism's lack of commitment to encouraging participation has led to citizens withdrawing from the democratic process (McChesney 2015). However, as outlined in Chapter 1, other fragmented social trends may also contribute, but this is the challenge which journalists face, and a changing media environment may require fresh approaches. Public journalism calls for deeper thematic, problem-solving approaches to reporting rather than episodic, event-based content. Such an approach may sit uncomfortably with many journalists "schooled in the dank-cellars of objectivity, aloofness and value neutrality" (Merritt 1995, p.265) , but Turner argues that open opinion is a more honest tactic than the "spurious" performance of objectivity (2010, p.8). The idea of objectivity as a performance is captured in Schudson's description of it as "a

moral ideal, a set of reporting and editing practices, and an observable pattern of news writing" (2001, p.149). The role of practices and patterned behaviour, and how this provides a sense of professional legitimacy, is further discussed in Chapter 4 when objectivity and sourcing, and the apparent legitimacy provided by such an ideal, are examined.

While the debate within communication studies prevails, calls for a shift away from objectivity may be difficult to align with public expectations about the media. It appears the concept of objectivity or balance remains a staple for audiences: the journalist offering a range of views and "leaving it up to the viewer/reader to decide" is preferred to news where the journalist argues their point of view (Newman et al. 2015). As raised in Chapter 1, the notion of neutrality has gained a renewed relevance in recent years as trust in the media weakens and accusations of media bias, fake news and "alternative facts" prevail (Blake 2017). Transparency is seen as a potential online-driven norm which could help to re-engage audiences, and may be more valuable than objectivity, or even be used as a basis upon which to demonstrate objectivity (Hellmueller et al. 2013; O'Sullivan 2012; Friend & Singer 2007). Although it may be difficult to carry out in practice (Karlsson 2010), Riordan describes how some digital-native websites balance opinion-led journalism and impartial journalism. Sites such as Vox, Quartz, and Politico in the US have many of the same editorial standards upheld by legacy media but, she says, "they are also being transparent when they cannot give a full picture … They also promote a 'show your work' ethos of transparency about their viewpoint" (2014, p.33). This is indicative of a readjustment which journalists working in the online space have embraced; heavily shaped by traditional values, but modified to better fit their audience, contributing to a "new normal" (Agarwal & Barthel 2015, p.376). It also demonstrates the ability of journalism as an institution to evolve, and how those working within it adapt (Eide & Sjøvaag 2016).

Meijer (2001) believes the shift towards objective media compromises the role of the public's voice, and she criticises how "quality" journalists negatively perceive many public interest stories. The so-called quality approach focuses on the public and politics, whereas popular journalism, dismissed by many as tabloid or soft, considers the private sphere and everyday life, she says. Similarly, Ryfe (2017b) discusses how tabloid media – which tend to have a focus on the private sphere – are often overlooked within the journalism field, which can have serious class and gender implications. Another of Meijer's critiques is that when human voices do appear to discuss the personal, it is often in a sensationalised manner, while the hardened role of detached news reporting has also been associated with a masculine culture which women internalise to fit into the newsroom (Lobo et al. 2017). By its nature, the fourth estate model suggests a focus on the establishment, yet what happens in the official political arenas

may not fully capture the concerns of a citizenry. This can be linked to Davis' (2010) argument that the notion of a single state and a shared public space for communication is outdated, and media must reflect issues which are perhaps not perceived to be as traditionally newsworthy but impact on individuals' lives. He cites concerns such as casualised employment, obesity, indirect taxation hitting the poor and welfare spending; issues that stray from content such as "race-horse" election information or negative and confrontational coverage. One of Davis' key points is that politics and the idea of state is now more fragmented and complex than ever, and the media must try to respond to this, rather than narrowing the parameter to partisan politics. This has particular relevance in a policy area such as healthcare, when decisions and actions in the partisan or political sphere may seem removed from the lived experiences of those in need of care.

Audience input to journalism

Opening up journalism to the public is a development associated with news organisations' moves online. Participatory journalism and the growing role of audiences is one of the two main "pillars of change" affecting journalistic roles, along with newsroom convergence, according to Spyridou et al (2013, p.78). Although this contributes to a challenging of journalism's boundary as a profession (Carlson & Lewis 2015), the manner in which news organisations perceive their readers is seen by some as one of the primary factors contributing to outlets adapt to online platforms (Bozkowski 2004). In their 11-country study of European journalists, O'Sullivan & Heinonen (2008) find recognition among journalists that connecting with the audience is seen as an important benefit of online journalism. While there is little doubt that increased engagement with readers is possible, the actual level of engagement is less certain due to the perception that it contradicts existing roles (Vobic & Milojevic 2014; Spyridou et al. 2013; Robinson 2010). A related development impacting on the professional roles of journalists is the growth of the "produser" – the consumer-turned-producer which Deuze describes as "someone with whom professionals now have to compete" (2008, p.112). They are not necessarily inferior journalists, and can contribute expertise that professional journalists may lack (Jones & Salter 2012), as visible in Couldry's account of medical professionals who blog to clarify misinformation in mainstream media (2010a). Whether newspaper journalists consider such pro-am work to be "real" journalism is contentious: 57% of European journalists disagreed with a status of legitimacy (O'Sullivan & Heinonen 2008). Lewis' overview of research into the area demonstrates an ongoing tension, and he refers to how journalists are "caught in the professional impulse toward one-way publishing control even as media become a multi-way network" (2012, p.836). The extent to which such citizen contributions are actually contributing to shaping news should, therefore, not be overstated:

some news organisations are open to multi-perspectival news, "while others involve their audience in a superficial way" (Scott et al. 2014, p.738). Consequently, a presence in the news does not equate with active participation: there is a distinction between participation *in* journalism, and participation *through* journalism (Ahva 2016). This aspect of new media sources, and the extent to which they are contributing to news as a source, is further discussed in Chapter 4. At this stage, it becomes clear that the heightened role of the audience encounters resistance, which is indicative of the hesitancy associated with many potential newsroom changes. The role of journalists remains heavily shaped by the professional model and the commitments to certain rules highlighted thus far which become internal structures (Stones 2005). However, while these may steer daily actions, the ability to fulfil idealised expectations may face challenges. One consideration in any analysis of normative performance is how news is funded, and the resources available to journalists and newsrooms. This structural factor is discussed in the following section.

3.2 Funding online news

3.2.1 Newspapers under threat

The internet's association with newspapers' financial difficulties, closures and staff reductions (McChesney & Pickard 2011; Starr 2009) comes despite an early complementary relationship between the two formats; many early internet users were considered information-seekers whose curiosity spanned both print and digital (Stempel et al 2000 in Maier 2010, p.7). As the online platforms developed, however, the transition from print advertising to online advertising has not been economically comparable, and this "unravelling" of the link between journalism and advertising (Hardy 2017, p.157) is associated with many of the difficulties facing news outlets (Krumsvik 2012). Despite the correlation, Picard (2010) challenges any causal relationship between the internet and the decline of newspapers, pointing to a drop in print sales since the early 19th century. It is erroneous to blame the internet, he says, while acknowledging that online trends have compounded the problem. Similarly, Meyer (2009, p.231) refers to the "long drift" towards more specialised media, accelerated by the internet. It is also worth noting that falling newspaper sales is primarily a Western trend as circulations increase in countries with growing middle classes and low broadband penetration rates, while falling in mature markets (Kilman 2014), supporting previous observations on the life-cycle of news media (Picard 2010). Despite the trajectory over the past two decades, many newspaper brands remain functioning and dominant, and have kept operating profits up through extensive cost-cutting (van der Burg & Van den Bulck 2017). In Ireland, the majority of newspapers have seen sizeable drops in circulation over the past decade (Fig 3.1), and Ireland's financial

crisis since the late 2000s "compounded a difficult situation" for publishers (McMenamin et al. 2012, p.172).
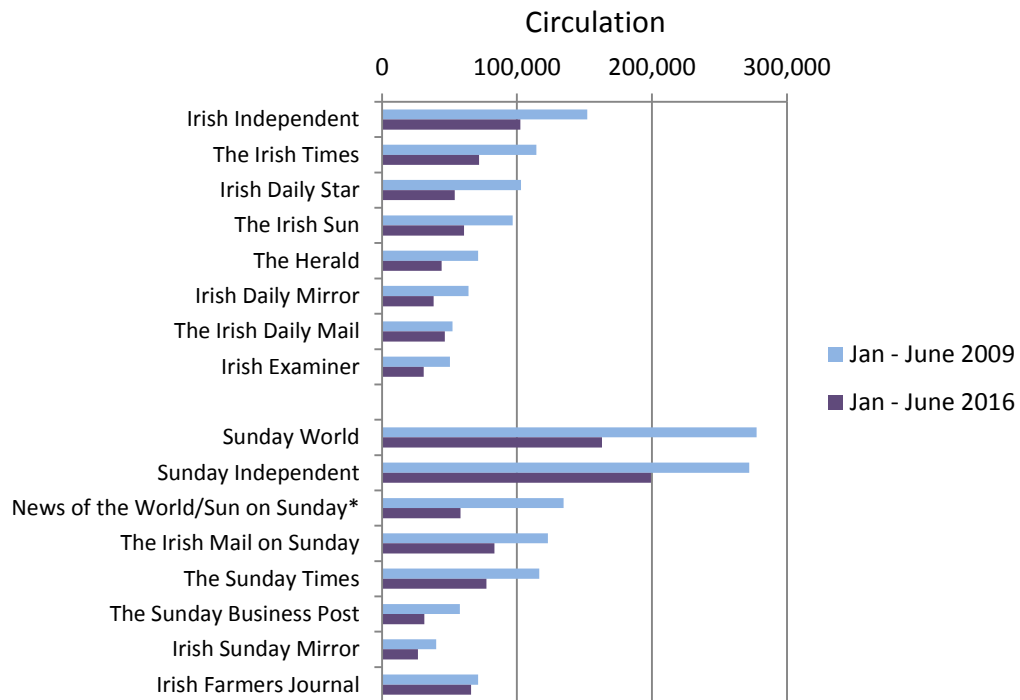
Figure 3.1 Circulation figures of daily and Sunday national newspapers from 2009 and 2016. Source: NewsBrands Ireland.
*The News of the World closed in 2011 and the Sun on Sunday was established in 2012. Full data in Appendix B.

3.2.2 Corporate ownership and Irish media

Ireland's categorisation as part of the North Atlantic/Liberal model (Hallin & Mancini 2004) is associated with a strong market role, commercial press which is generally politically neutral, and moderate pluralism in politics. The most distinctive characteristic of media history in the model is the early establishment of commercial newspapers which would dominate the press. Progress was slower in Ireland due to political developments in the early part of the 20th century, combined with the country's relative poverty, and competition from British imports. Although Hallin and Mancini refer to one positive of commercialism – how it frees newspapers from dependence on politicians and the state – such a liberal, pluralist view may fail to fully capture concerns about corporate, market-driven media and its implication for both the public and newsrooms (Benson 2017b; McChesney 2015; McChesney & Pickard 2011; Starr 2009; Croteau & Hoynes 2001; Herman & Chomsky 1988). The critical political economy perspective is one of the three which Schudson identifies for studying news construction, saying it looks at the big picture which is "both its strength and weakness" (1989, p.268). While this research identifies more with Schudson's sociological perspective, Chapter

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2 demonstrated how the "big picture" political economy aspect remains inherent; it is intrinsic to element 1 – external structures – in Stones' (2005) quadripartite model. Structural constraints are a central part of the structuration process, and therefore, the system. Many of these constraints in a newsroom – the *allocation of resources* in particular (Giddens 1984) – are associated with the market-driven decision-making and should not be understated, as trends in media business and technology remain relevant (McQuail 2010, p.97). Much of the argument in critical political economy theory relates to the protection of elite, established interests (Herman & Chomsky 1988), and this becomes pertinent again in the context of sources, discussed further in Chapter 4.

In *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, McChesney (2015) describes the paradox at the core of media system in the US and other Western settings: an information era of dazzling breakthroughs, set against a depoliticised society. He highlights how concentration of ownership accentuates the corporate media system through hypercommercialism and a denigration of journalism and public service, calling it a "poison pill for democracy" (ibid., p.2). The corporate dominance and concentration of ownership across local and national media organisations in Ireland concerns analysts (McCullagh 2007; Horgan et al. 2007; Morash 2010); Communicorp and Independent News & Media are two of the dominant media organisations across print and radio, but cannot be considered rivals. The founder and principal shareholder of radio company Communicorp, Denis O'Brien, also has the largest share (29.9%) in Independent News and Media (INM). This overlap ensures O'Brien has interests in the two-bestselling Sunday newspapers (a 56.25% share of the Sunday market), a 45.5% share of the daily newspaper market (National Newspapers of Ireland 2014), as well as the two most popular commercial radio stations, Newstalk and Today FM. Such a monopolising approach in a region has, according to political economist Vincent Mosco, been a key strategy of media organisations internationally (2008, p.50), and the growing trend of organisational mergers ensures old divisions are fading as portfolios swell (Krumsvik 2012). There have been numerous instances where O'Brien's influence in editorial work in have been highlighted (McCullagh 2007; Sheridan 2014; Gartland 2015) and between 2010 and May 2016, O'Brien had initiated 12 legal cases against media organisations in Ireland, a figure that does not include legal threats (Keena 2016). Such examples ensure that concerns about ownership cannot remain wholly detached from daily newsroom practices, and act as structures – both external and internal to journalists – which form part of the news production system. Similarly, mirroring the trend in much Western media, the expansion of corporate-owned portfolios and building up of market share in Ireland has often come at the expense of smaller, independently owned organisations. This can have implications for profit expectations and work environment

(Meyer 2009; McMenamin et al. 2012; Cawley 2017; Cawley 2012b) and such tangible, on-the-ground changes may directly influence day-to-day production practices, newsroom expectations, and the *allocation of resources* (Giddens 1984).

3.2.3 Market values in online news

Despite the collapse of print advertising revenue, Hardy describes how digital journalism remains at the "apex of two key trends" – the disaggregation of advertising and media (as advertisers are no longer so reliant on traditional media to access consumers), and the greater aggregation of advertising *within* media (2017, p.157). One manifestation of this latter trend has been native advertising whereby the sponsored material is designed to resemble news content (Ferrer-Conill 2016). Such collaborative work between the editorial and commercial departments has raised ethical concerns about allowing access to editorial space in such a manner, and is seen to jar with many traditional journalistic values about independence (Carlson 2015; Benton 2014a). Despite this, many news organisations engage with the approach, and it may be part of some journalists' growing acceptance of certain market principles. Hanitzsch (2007, p.374) has suggested that market orientation is central to journalism studies, whereby some media subordinate goals to the market rather than prioritising the public interest: "The media can address the people in two seemingly antagonistic ways, in their role as citizens or consumers, with the former being increasingly displaced by the latter." However, such a diametric attitude fails to distinguish between the varying rules of signification (Giddens 1984) that can exist within a news organisation, as journalists and management pursue different goals (Altmeppen 2008). Furthermore, even within the newsroom level, there are suggestions that the traditional dichotomy may be under recalibration: Klinenberg (2005) believes the growth of market principles in editorial divisions is one of the most dramatic recent changes to journalism, which may be facilitated by the data available around audience behaviour (Tandoc & Thomas 2015; Christin 2014; Tandoc 2014). In Denmark, Pihl-Thingvad finds almost 80% of journalists consider it important or very important to provide a competitive product, suggesting journalists have "internalised this ideal as an essential part of their professional identity" (2015, p.406). However, she warns against a simplistic assessment that suggests the organisation and the individual journalist value conflicting ideals: "Rather than either professional ideals or commercial ideals, Danish journalists value both." Such complexity contributes to the internalised structures on which journalists draw in day-to-day actions (Stones 2005), and is indicative of another readjustment in contemporary journalism, similar to the shift towards transparency identified earlier in this chapter. From a practitioner perspective, Neil White (2016), editor of a regional UK newspaper, talks about the collaboration between editorial and commercial departments, such

as journalists giving advertising leads, or editors' involvement in commercial pitches. He says this must not necessarily be seen as a negative:

> Editorial staff no longer swagger around as if owning a monopoly on intelligence. We care about our advertisers because they fund our titles. We care about the subjects of our stories because they are our readers. We engage with them in a way in which we should have done decades ago.
>
> (ibid., p.32)

In Ireland, almost 69% of journalists said profit-making pressures had strengthened over the past five years, and almost 61% said the same of advertising considerations (Worlds of Journalism 2016). These pressures serve as a reminder of the constraints facing journalists at the meso-level, even if they retain control over many micro-level decisions (Manning 2001), as discussed in Chapter 2.

3.2.4 Opportunities and limitations of online media

Freedman (2014) suggests the successful positioning of the major legacy media organisations is reinforced by the apparent weaknesses of their net-native rivals who have, in many instances, failed to find sustainable models. This is despite news websites having low distribution costs, and simple websites being easy and affordable compared with the high barriers to entry associated with traditional newspaper and broadcast industries (Jones & Salter 2012). The cost base for online-only publications will be lower, but even finding sustainability, let alone profitability, has been a challenge (Kaye & Quinn 2010). Cawley (2012) refers to the Irish case of the Cogair website in the mid-late 1990s. Its founders were heavily critical of the established media and used the tagline "the site for the stories The Irish Times won't print". It aimed to produce stories exposing corruption, but ceased publication due to a lack of resources. The closure is indicative of how the more amateur approach cannot bypass the problems of resourcing, furthering a digital divide. Jones and Salter describe how those with greater personal wealth are in a better position to participate in unpaid journalism as those with less time and money are sidelined due to their circumstances "regardless of how insightful they may be" (2012, p.70). This reinforces how certain voices and experiences may continue to be marginalised, despite what are typically seen as low-cost online platforms.

At the other extreme, an online venture worth highlighting is Storyful which was established by former RTÉ journalist Mark Little in 2010. The company, which verifies global social media for newsrooms, was bought by News Corp in 2013 for €18million. Such a takeover symbolises the enduring power of the media organisations, exemplifying McChesney's concerns that the internet would not break the media oligopoly (2004 in McManus 2009,

p.223). Political economists point to the continuities between old and new media capitalism, as Mosco says: "New media may lead us to call it digital capitalism, but it is still capitalism and there is no doubt about which is the more important term" (2008, p.55). Curran (2012, p.19) describes how leading news organisations "colonised" the internet, pre-empting competition by setting up websites; they could dominate by cross-subsidising content and had existing reputations. He summarises the situation bluntly, saying: "The rise of the internet has not undermined leading news organisations. On the contrary, it has enabled them to extend their hegemony across technologies" (ibid.). News aggregators also prioritise mainstream news sources, while social networks – lauded for their democratising potential – are themselves tied up in corporate ownership (Freedman 2014).

While the critique of ownership is pertinent and would perhaps ideally be more diversified, without these major news organisations it is difficult to imagine a news environment that provides extensive daily coverage. Speaking about Norway, which has a similar population to Ireland (but has offered press subsidies since the 1960s, discussed further below), Krumsvik, believes "old" media will continue to fund journalism. Low online advertising revenue, the low entry threshold, new competitors, low customer loyalty, and payment barriers mean the internet is simply too competitive for profit, he suggests: "Market leaders tend to maintain their dominance, while others manage simply to hang on" (2012, p.738). Krumsvik's use of the terms "profits" raises an interesting point. One Irish media commentator considers the prospect that the new generation who have never known a pre-internet existence will get their news from outlets which are not chasing major financial success. Expecting them to be loyal enough to a brand to pay for content through a paywall is unrealistic, he says, refering to free sites TheJournal.ie and Broadsheet.ie, saying "perhaps a model that brings news to Ireland's youth, in an engaging way, will not be profit-propelled at all" (McConnell 2013). However, this relies on the disentangling of the media and the market, which McChesney (2015) – while calling for such a change – acknowledges will require fundamental and wide-ranging restructuring. Furthermore, the extent of coverage which these websites can offer may also be problematic, suggesting that, in the current internet market, there is a need for the main news brands to remain operational.

Paywalls and alternative models
The 2017 Digital News Report 2017 found 9% of Irish people have paid for online news in the past year (25/35 countries), up 2% since 2015. This low figure may be unsurprising as, in general, news content online exists within the "for-free" culture of the web (Hardy 2017) and the low barriers to entry ensure there is no shortage of content (Kaye & Quinn 2010). It is this "for-free" attitude that many news organisations, who continue to invest resources into

sourcing and publishing stories, have often struggled to grasp. Picard says journalists seem "genuinely shocked" by the fact many people will not pay for news but, as he adds: "News has never been a commercially viable product and has always been funded with revenue based on its value for other things" (2010, p.18). He warns that if higher quality content is to be paid for, then only the politically, socially and economically active members would be likely to pay, which has major societal and democratic consequences. Such division among audiences also highlights the problematic distinction between having an informed "public" and informed individuals (Patterson & Seib 2005). This chimes with Singer's unease about bifurcation and the ethical implications of such a stratified press, where a divergence may appear between paid-for print and free-to-access online material. She says: "The elite audience seems likely to benefit … because of its ability to pay for access to context, verification, and other earmarks of what has long been seen as quality journalism – earmarks that online content may lack" (2013 p.214). Some outlets such as the *Guardian* promote their egalitarian access – with the message "unlike many others, we haven't put up a paywall – we want to keep our journalism as open as we can" appearing on stories in 2017, while others temporarily drop their paywalls for certain events (Ananny & Bighash 2016). Among Irish daily outlets, in Ireland, The Irish Times has a soft metered paywall and saw a 53% increase in digital subscribers between July 2016 and July 2017 (ilevel.ie 2017b). It previously had a paywall, between 2002-2008 before it was reinstated in 2015 (Lichtermann 2015). The daily edition of the UK-based Times Ireland edition (owned by News Corp) has a hard paywall. It launched its online-only edition in September 2015 and, challenging the negative narratives about the print market, launched a print edition in June 2017. In 2017, the Irish Daily Mail launched its MailPlus app, which offered its Irish newspaper content digitally for the first time.

Whether news organisations are motivated by ideals or bottom-line decisions, the fragmented approaches indicate clear uncertainty surrounding the most appropriate course of action. In his summary of the political economy of online news, Freedman identifies a scenario in which it appears difficult to foresee any way in which news can be funded:

> For all the possibilities of vigorous debate and fresh perspectives, the business model of online journalism appears to be one in which audiences largely refuse to pay for content, advertising revenue is dominated by search engines and pure-play companies, cannibalisation remains a concern... and traffic goes more and more to internet portals and aggregators who invest virtually nothing in original news content and simultaneously fail to expand significantly the range of source material.
>
> (2010, p.47)

Research and commentary into sustaining journalism are often focused on commercial models, but Hardy (2017) argues that alternatives are needed to ensure viable journalism. State supports for media are popular in the Nordic countries and other parts of Western Europe but have not made traction in Ireland or the UK beyond public service broadcasting (Benson et al. 2017; Nielsen & Linnebank 2015; Picard 2007; Alonso et al. 2006). Flynn (2017) draws attention to recent Irish industry recommendations such as a 0% VAT rate for newspapers; a licence fee on all internet-capable devices; charitable status for journalism; and levies on internet service providers and social media giants, much of whose traffic is driven by users accessing legacy media content. The recommendations for the industry which Flynn highlights are generally indirect supports, suggesting Irish journalists – or perhaps the public – may struggle to accept direct state subsidies which are better-established elsewhere. The concept of state intervention faces opposition by many as can be considered a philosophical debate (Cramer 2009): Pickard describes it as a rare "anathema" with critics on both the left and right, and from both practitioners and the public (2011, p.175). The recommendation about social media companies addresses a concern raised by many media commentators regarding the dominant role of social networks that benefit from the content news outlets provide on their platform, leading to calls for the major tech companies such as Facebook and Google to make contributions to journalism (Greenslade 2016; Brady 2012).

In 2016, Independent News and Media proposed a takeover of the Celtic Media Group's seven regional papers in Ireland. Frank Mulrennan, Celtic's chief executive told an Oireachtas communications committee in February 2017 about the "broken business model" in newspaper publishing, citing a 65% fall in print advertising and 35% fall in circulation since 2008. The merger, which ultimately never proceeded, had been opposed by the NUJ on competition grounds, but Mulrennan made the point that concern should not be focused solely at the newspaper sector: "It is vital that you understand that our competition does not come from other newspapers – it comes from Google and Facebook, which are swallowing up ever-increasing slices of Irish marketing budgets." (Mulrennan 2017)[4] This chimes with much of the commentary surrounding the role of the major internet organisations; in a column entitled *Facebook is eating the World*, Emily Bell identifies the enabling/constraining effect (Giddens 1984) which such companies have on journalism. She says: "The internet and the social web enable journalists to do powerful work, while at the same time helping to make the business of publishing journalism an uneconomic venture." More than one in four Irish news users have ad

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[4] https://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/committees/communicationsclimatechangenaturalresources/presentations/mediamergers/2017-02-07-Opening-Statement-Celtic-Media-Newspapers-Limited.pdf

blockers (Newman & Levy 2017), while other factors such as Facebook's Instant Articles, which bypass the news organisation's website, also affect advertising revenue (Marshall 2016).

Looking at alternative funding models, in the Irish context, The Irish Times is owned by a trust, which Strömbäck and Kaid suggest eases financial pressures (2008 in McMemamin et al 2012) but Mercille argues this should not be exaggerated as it remains tied to commercial interests (2013, p.296). Philanthropy and sponsorship are among the alternative models that Kaye and Quinn (2010) highlight, but they warn about the reliance on one group, while Benson refers to the catch-22 where they face "competing demands to achieve both economic 'sustainability' and civic 'impact' (Benson 2017a, p.1). Browne (2010) has considered the place of foundation-funded journalism in Ireland, examining the short-lived Centre for Public Inquiry, funded by Irish-American entrepreneur Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropies. Now defunct, it was tainted in controversy and Browne suggests transparency may be as significant a concern in foundations as it is with commercial media. Elsewhere, the Irish website TheStory.ie describes itself as "an experiment in journalism and crowdsourcing", and shares government documents such as Ministers' diaries and logs of freedom of information requests, seeking one-off donations on its website. However, while crowdfunding can be sustainable for alternative projects, it cannot yet be a substitute for the work done by mainstream news organisations, but may offer some inspiration (Carvajal et al. 2012).

Stuart Hall said analysis of media ownership is not a "sufficient explanation of the way the ideological universe is structured, but it is a necessary starting point", suggesting it steers how the media operate (1986 in Freedman 2014 p59). However, while concerns about ownership are vital – especially when they impact on the allocation of resources in newsrooms – the discussion has moved beyond simply dominant corporations or moguls, as broader concerns about funding news more generally arise. Such apprehension applies to all categories of news producers, from the dominant national news outlets – whether owned by a trust or a corporation – down to small or voluntary-run websites reliant on individuals giving over time for little financial rewards. The existing dominance of the major legacy brands has transferred online, questioning the democratic hopes for the internet; however, the public may be reliant on these brands for extensive, frequent news coverage. As the market logic prevails, the weakening of the advertising-news model during a time of technological uncertainty has developed alongside newsroom practices which may feel far removed from the ideals set out earlier in this chapter. Some of these newsroom-related concerns are discussed in the following section, as it becomes apparent that the external structures (Stones 2005) of how online news work is resourced affects journalists' working environments and may impact on professional identities.

3.3 Evolving newsrooms and changing journalistic roles

Accessing news online was a relatively easy adjustment for audiences, who had swathes of information at minimal extra cost. However, it has not been a simple or natural evolution for newspaper organisations. Mitchelstein and Boczkowski say that newspapers typically expanded only as a profit-driven reaction to competitors, rather than embracing the technology to idealistically pursue longer-term opportunities (2009, p.564). Many made basic moves, symbolic of a "cautious" attempt to deal with changing technology and user expectation (Quandt & Singer 2009, p.131) and this reactive, seemingly delayed response has been the basis of criticism from some of those relishing in newspapers' decline (Shirky 2009).

In the early days of online news "shovelware" – the reproduction of newspaper content for online readers – dominated. However most organisations moved on and alternatives to simply the previous day's content and breaking news started to appear by the early 2000s (Boczkowski 2004; Deuze & Paulussen 2002; Bardoel & Deuze 2001). Shovelware is related to trends in digital news where previously existing content is repurposed and repackaged (Deuze 2006); Hartley uses "bricolage", coined by Levi Strauss, to describe "the creation of objects with materials to hand, re-using existing artefacts and incorporating bits and pieces" (2002 in Doudaki & Spyridou 2013, p.909). However, there are concerns about this cut-and-paste culture when work taken from other media outlets is not appropriately attributed (Phillips 2011; Phillips 2010b; Gillmor 2008). Phillips (2010b) acknowledges this "cannibalisation" practice is nothing new, but flourishes in the online environment due to the intensity of competition and the lack of technical or temporal barriers in lifting material, and she is also apprehensive about homogenisation of content. Concerns about the quality of news is not limited to online material (Davies 2008; Nunn & Biressi 2008; Franklin 2007; Postman 1985), however, it remains important to examine how the internet has changed, or reinforced, trends in news content. While Maier (2010) concludes that newspapers offer more depth of coverage than online news, Ghersetti finds no major difference between an organisation's print and online outputs, suggesting that "professional structures, procedures, and values" serve to regulate news production in a uniform way (2014, p.383). It highlights how difficult it is to capture the parameters of what constitutes "online news", especially when many of the most popular websites are tied to legacy brands who can cross-subsidise content (Curran 2012). In the Irish context, Cawley (2012) finds that new types of media have been absorbed into the prevailing news ecology at institutional and occupational levels rather than making a mark in their own right. Such absorption is indicative of the process of remediation (Bolter & Grusin 1999), rather than the extensive displacement potential of online news, suggested in previous

revolutionary-style predictions. Such radical narratives from researchers have evolved into more deconstructive accounts of internet news production (Ahva & Steensen 2016).

The level of integration between online and print productions is one factor Boczkowski (2004) identifies as impacting heavily on how news organisations implement convergence. Previous studies in Europe have shown the location of the newsroom as a concern: in a separate building (Cawley 2008), or moved closer to the print newsroom on a trial only to be returned to a separate space (Colson & Heinderyckx 2008). Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant*, considered a trendsetter during the 2000s, has gone through a period of de-convergence as it re-separates its print and online newsrooms due to both a lack of a solid business model and cultural resistance from reporters (Tameling & Broersma 2013). This apparent backtracking on convergence encapsulates some of the clear uncertainty around the adjustments under way in newsrooms at both the financial and practice levels. Nevertheless, two decades into online news production, digital integration is a part of most news organisations' work and no longer the exception, even if the extent of its implementation varies (Menke et al. 2016). García-Alivés et al (2014) suggest factors such as market situations, workflows and content, skills and training, and audience participation all affect the convergence process. These diverse factors incorporate structures that are both internal and external to an organisation, and are indicative of the multi-faceted influences on any news production system.

3.3.1 Journalists in the online newsroom

While technological developments have been a catalyst for change, often cultural clashes are the biggest obstacle to incorporating new technology in newsrooms, raising challenges at a human relations level (Deuze 2008; Singer 2004; Gordon 2003). Colson and Heinderyckx (Colson & Heinderyckx 2008) find technological barriers are "often simpler and more predictable" than the responses of staff, while Erdal refers to the "reality of structural constrains and counter co-operative practices" as part of the convergence process (2008, p.48). Uncertainty about how to implement convergence has been met with some uncertainty from journalists unsure about how to adjust. The influence of management, workplace changes, and financial pressures contribute to what Spyridou et al describe as a phase of "embarrassment and confusion" for many journalists (2013, p.92), in particular older journalists whose professional experience and value is questioned (Meyer 2009). Nikunen (2013) examined the recent implementation of pension packages in Finnish newsrooms as part of a restructuring programme, which was concurrent with a shift towards a converged working environment. Pension packages ensured age became a defining factor when considering whose journalism career would continue as younger tech-savvy journalists arrived as replacements. Such moves may have consequences for expertise and knowledge in the newsroom, which is also a resource

upon which journalists draw. In their study of Irish journalists, Rafter and Dunne (2016) refer to a "hollowing out" of the industry as many experienced journalists, moving into public relations and public affairs, are replaced by younger workers. Young age profiles can be a positive, they say, particularly for energy and perspectives, but concerns arise from this depletion of experience.

Since their arrival into newsrooms the late 1990s, online journalists are often considered, or see themselves as, secondary to the traditional reporter and can be self-deprecating about their work (Agarwal & Barthel 2015; Colson & Heinderyckx 2008; Singer 2003). Vobic and Milojevic (2014) attribute this to their political relevance, news production requirements and institutional status. Online journalists they interviewed in Serbia and Slovenia view their service as providing timely, objective news to enable others to participate in public life, but do not regard themselves as "true journalists" (ibid., p.1031). Time constraints mean they rarely make original news, they "shovel" content online, and note feelings of isolation and inequality. One worker says: "What we do is not actually journalism. We sit, skim the web looking for information and reassemble it" (ibid., p.1033). Most have a willingness to act as watchdogs, but financial and time constraints mean it is not possible. The work environment, routines and developments may vary from traditional journalists but, crucially, it appears that online journalists do not necessarily pursue different ideal roles. Vobic and Milojevic conclude that "new" journalists are not being invented through online work (in terms of social self-positioning), as they still cite Deuze's (2005) five ideal-typical values: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics remain. Instead, there is an adaptation of old models into new contexts and purposes. Elsewhere, Reich finds the work of online journalists is similar to print, and that the changes are "neither revolutionary nor irrelevant, but rather a conservative revolution" (2005 in Preston 2008 p.62). Agarwal and Barthel summarise this as journalists who are "informed strongly by the past but pushed inexorably toward the future" (2015, p.376), which supports the idea that online journalism may function as a sub-institution of journalism more broadly, one in which different work practices are normalised.

Atypical employment in journalism has also affected how journalists operate and perceive their role (Vobic & Milojevic 2014; Paulussen 2012; Mosco 2011; Deuze 2008). The precariat workers, not limited to media, are part of what Chaudhuri and Ghosh describe as the millennial generation: young people experiencing fluidity in employment and rapid societal and technological change (2012 in Nikunen 2013 p871). Such a description supports Bauman's account of the contemporary volatile "liquid life":

> Journalism is connected to liquid modern life in a sort of reinforcing loop
> ... Liquid life prompts journalists to behave in the way they do, otherwise

they are kicked out, refused to print or fired, because they do not fit. On the other hand, by playing this game, journalism reinforces this liquid modern way of life.

(Bauman in conversation with Deuze 2007, p.673)

This sense of "playing the game" and reinforcement through participation is central to the idea of structuration, but the lack of alternatives and an agent's *hierarchy of purpose* (Stones 2005, p.26) – what can be seen as the other priorities in their life – may explain journalists' ongoing involvement. This precarious situation may influence day-to-day approaches to work, with Preston (2009) arguing that these precarious employment and managerial practices seem incompatible with the environment needed for journalists' professional autonomy. Deuze argues that journalists – even those employed full-time – must therefore "construct their own professional identity" (2008, p.111) in a workplace of shifting expectations. Given some of the pressures of work environments, questions are raised about whether the changing conditions under which journalism is practised conflict with ethical action and journalists' central professional roles (Phillips et al. 2010). There may be a sense of what Siegelbaum and Thomas identify as normative failure, whereby journalists "cherish their normative functions but feel dissociated from their ability to execute them" (2016, pp.387–388). However, the idealism of journalism remains a draw, regardless of the apparently poor job market and working conditions, and discrepancies that appear between ideals and practice (Høvden 2016; Pihl-Thingvad 2015; Mellado & Van Dalen 2014; Willnat et al. 2013).

3.3.2 Timeliness

Timeliness is inherent in the concept of news in the journalists' sense of getting the story first, as well as being positioned in the temporal backdrop of news production (Rimestad 2015; Moores 2005; Sydow & Staber 2002; Schlesinger 1987; Schudson 1986). Bødker (2017) highlights how timeframes have shifted over centuries, from quarterly, to weekly, to daily, and now, on many websites, to every other minute. Time remains tied to the journalistic process (Schultz 2007) and Deuze includes immediacy in his five ideal-type journalistic values, saying "journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed (inherent in the concept of 'news')" (2005, p.449). He says: "When experienced through the eyes of journalists, speed can be seen as both an essentialised value and a problematised side effect of newswork." This essentialised/problematised balance echoes the enabling/constraining aspect of structuration: breaking news quickly facilitates certain journalistic functions, but with such urgency come limitations. Thus, the abbreviated timeline has brought opportunities and challenges. Journalists also acknowledge this somewhat-paradoxical role: European journalists agree that the internet is sacrificing accuracy for speed (O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008), while also

accepting that the internet is very beneficial for news speed (Fortunati et al. 2009). Among Irish journalists, time limits are seen as the second biggest influence on work (behind journalism ethics), with 72.5% saying it is "extremely" or "very" influential; 90% say the time available for researching stories has fallen in the past five years, while working hours have increased (Worlds of Journalism 2016).

Writing in a pre-internet era, Schudson gives a critical assessment of how a fixation on speed is founded not on a commitment to the audience, but on simply beating rival media outlets. The drive for immediacy, he says, is tribal and is a matter of journalist pride, but has "little to do with journalistic quality or public service. It is a fetishism of the present" that disguises the "bureaucratic and prosaic reality of most news gathering" (1986, p.81). Such an image portrays the focus on temporality as something driven by journalists, rather than the public, which can lead to its engraining as an internalised journalistic structure (Giddens 1984, Stones 2005). However, the hard temporal parameters present in print and broadcast are potentially disassembled online as deadlines become fluid. With the deconstruction of formal deadlines, instant updates and an accelerated news cycle can flourish. Zelizer (2012) makes the point that in the current digital information environment, the already-abbreviated timeline against which journalism has always worked has shrunk further. In some cases, traditional verification processes may be set aside in favour of speed; Bruno describes the "twitter effect" as a successor to the CNN effect, both temporal-driven trends (2011). The apparent need for constant updates is associated with the 24-hour news cycle: one news editor in Siegelbaum and Thomas' study said news is repeated and "incremental developments are magnified dramatically" (2016, p.400). Such incremental developments may be coming from sources seeking to have an input: Overholser referred to how "journalists now spend more time looking for something to add to the existing news, usually interpretation, rather than trying to independently discover and verify new facts" (in Friend & Singer 2007, p.64). This perceived temporal pressure calls into question the power dynamics between journalists – who are in need of content – and sources, discussed further in Chapter 4.

Production cycles and the print-online dynamic
Schlesinger describes how time "looms large" in news production, and says "much of our sense of what is relevant, and therefore our awareness of the passage of time, is structured by mass media production cycles" (1987, p.83). These cycles have been rigid in newspaper and broadcasting production, with distinct deadlines for content, and the routines of "dailiness", and regularity, tied into the service for audiences (Moores 2005; Scannell 1996). This balance between a print and online product have been developing for close to two decades in many news organisations. To evolve successfully online, Salwen (2004) suggested that news

websites should not be constrained by parent print and broadcast outlets' concerns about original online content undermining the longer-established format. Similarly O'Sullivan and Heinonen observe that there has been a narrative that newspaper organisations should "unshackle themselves" from their print origins (2008, p.367). This narrative was still visible at a high-profile level in two reports published by The New York Times in 2013 and 2017. The 2013 report calls for a "strategy to make the newsroom a truly digital-first organisation", describing a "print-centric" newsroom:

> Stories are typically filed late in the day. Our mobile apps are organised by print sections. Desks meticulously lay out their sections but spend little time thinking about social strategies. Traditional reporting skills are the top priority in hiring and promotion. The habits and traditions built over a century and a half of putting out the paper are a powerful, conservative force.

> (Benton 2014b)

By 2017 the concerns remained evident, with the recent report suggesting: "We need to reduce the dominant role that the print newspaper still plays in our organisation and rhythms, while making the print paper even better" (The New York Times 2017). Achieving that goal has been an issue for some staff: June 2017 saw walkouts amid cutbacks among copyeditors and other production staff. Workers pointed out how "Cutting us down to 50 to 55 editors from more than 100, and expecting the same level of quality … is dumbfoundingly unrealistic" (Mullin 2017). On the newsdesk, one newsroom respondent in the 2017 report also pointed out a disparity between the public declarations about the digital strategy, vis a vis their experience: "Most of the time, you time and edit stories to print requirements, no matter what the official doctrine says. I've had things hold for weeks while waiting for a print slot."

This suggests clear inconsistency between public declarations and internal structuring and practices, and is not limited to The New York Times. In one study looking at the Financial Times, the resilience of print culture is also noted. There was a "misalignment" (Schlesinger & Doyle 2015, p.313) between peak times on the websites and the publication of content, which caused frustration among management. Daily publication cycles still echoes those of print, with a high number of stories appearing in the early evening as the print deadline approaches; "overcoming the conventional rhythms" can be a struggle (ibid.). While some of the traditional time-based production rhythms remain in place, the spatial-temporal basis of audience consumption has changed as a "news at work" trend develops (Boczkowski 2010). Some practitioners believe that responding to daytime user activity with a "digital-first" publishing schedule is a key part of networked news process, even if uncertainty remains about what that

actually means (Ryfe 2016). One Guardian editor disparagingly refers to the "hangover from a legacy/print experience" (Cherubini & Nielsen 2016, p.14) as many outlets still launch things at midnight. Time of publication is one of the workflows which audience analytics can inform, he says, and that the best advice is "launch [it] when your audience are awake". Despite such guidance, Menke et al's (2016) study of newspaper newsrooms in six European countries finds a print culture remains dominant. There is strong agreement among editorial staff that "the production of a good print edition always is our first priority", and respondents say about three-quarters of the work is invested into the print edition. The authors conclude that the dominance of print may be linked to it being the main source of revenue, and the fact there still appears to be no solid online business model.

While a print-centric approach is often considered as negative, it offers a counter position to the instant-update culture often visible online. Ananny asks how fast publics need the networked press to be, and why. He argues that the media must not only call a public to action at key moments, but also offer time for uncertainty, self-doubt, and listening. Studying network news time, he says, is the study of "networks of humans and non-humans continuously creating and adapting to forces that control the speed of actions, and the significance of that speed" (2016, p.417). While having control over speed is central, he says the way in which speed is interpreted by a network of actors is also important. This interpretation concept resonates with the perceived rules and resources in structuration (Giddens 1984) raised in Chapter 2, specifically the signification (meaning) rule. Actors may interpret time as a rule and place certain values on it, but these actors have agency and can, potentially, reinterpret this structure. A lack of consensus about what news is online (Zelizer 2012) implies a new flexibility which, when combined with a potential relaxing of temporal pressures outside of hard deadlines, may present an opportunity to reassess the value of content. There has also been a backlash to the "always-on", instant news culture, and there is some suggestion that the speed element is, in fact, a decreasing journalistic value (Willnat et al. 2013). "Slow journalism" can been seen as a counter-movement, with its emphasis on long-form, narrative style and its consideration of context, perspective and interpretation of events (Drok & Hermans 2016). Proponents of slow journalism resist the immediacy and reactionary culture tied to online content, and its very name suggests that hyper-temporality is part of the problem against which they wish to take a position.

3.3.3 Digital divide: hype versus experiences

A 2014 report from the Duke Reporters Lab researching regional newsrooms in the US found a clear digital divide among the industry's "digital haves and have-nots", and much of it may be applicable to Ireland given the scale of Irish publications. The authors say that awards and

conferences suggest a universal take-up of data reporting and digital tools, but "the reality of data journalism is out of whack with the hype… hundreds of news organisations are still stuck in the analogue past, doing meat-and-potatoes reporting that doesn't take advantage of the new tools" (Duke Reporters Lab 2014). The main factors cited were budgets, people, and time, but other organisational and social factors were also highlighted: many senior management in news organisations still consider digital content as "bells and whistles", and an emphasis remains on repurposing the newspaper content for online audiences: "With limited resources, the first goal is to fill airtime or newsprint or stock the website. The goat must be fed, and the easiest feed is the diet it's been fed for years." This continuity – how the common solution is to continue with familiar practices – captures the recursive nature at the heart of structuration, explaining why systems continue their "bite into time and space" (Giddens 1984, p.171) which was explored in Chapter 2.

The authors also note that the "boom" in digital journalism is occurring disproportionately at larger organisations, with many smaller operations being left behind. Yet, as highlighted above, even in the case of *The New York Times* where the tools and resources are present, there is an apparent gap between management objectives and newsroom practices; altering long-established perceptions about news may not happen just because priorities are shifted (Ryfe 2016). The report's findings echo previous observations from Turner (2010) regarding whether there has been a true "reclamation of consumer sovereignty" in the digital era. He says there is no shortage of evidence supporting an altered mediascape for audiences, and acknowledges that new functions under development. However, there has been "clear areas of exaggeration" from both the industry and the academy regarding the scale of this so-called industry shift (ibid., p.10). He was particularly critical of those advocating such drastic change: "These arguments are products of a Western media elite: white, male, early adopters, probably residing in the USA, are presenting arguments for which they claim a global provenance" (2010, p.210). Furthermore, the oft-assumed trajectory towards converged, multi-platform news environment cannot be assumed as the most appropriate course of action for newspapers. While the technological wherewithal may exist in an organisation, there are potentially strategic factors which may be contributing to a division between a print and online product – and such a division cannot be critiqued simply on the basis of its apparent failure to adapt. Even within journalism studies, the emphasis on "studying up" (Wahl-Jorgensen 2017) suggests there should be a higher value on digital innovations and a preferred shift away from more static, existing formats. Chyi and Tenenboim's recent "reality check" assessment of this presumed trajectory among US newspaper raises questions about whether a heavy focus on digital has been the appropriate strategy. They conclude that "newspapers are stuck between a

shrinking market for print and an unsuccessful experiment online" (2017, p.14), but point out the reach and market dominance still existing with the print products. This captures some of the uncertainty and ambiguity evident in online news production strategies and how, even two decades in, the best direction forward remains unclear.

3.4 Conclusion

What becomes clear when examining the research on the development of online news is that the considerations must extend far beyond what is technologically possible. Social and market factors have contributed to the changes, or potential lack of, among many newspaper titles in particular. Furthermore, there is extensive variation on the interpretation of developments, as Curran captures:

> What are we to make of this baffling difference of opinion? Millenarians declare that a journalism Armageddon is upon us; yet, media controllers say that there is no crisis. Anguished journalists warn that standards are plummeting; yet, liberal journalism educators proclaim the advent of a journalistic renaissance … there is no underlying agreement about the seriousness of the difficulties faced by old news media, still less a shared understanding about whether the future of journalism is rosy or bleak.
>
> (2010, p.468)

Rather than attempt to align with one of those polarised viewpoints, there is clearly a need for nuance: circumstances and practices vary not just between country, but between news organisations, and between individuals within the news organisation. Many of the roles identified early in this chapter are normative and outline what is often strived for by both journalists and media observers. However, such ideals may not fully align with published content. Agarwal and Barthel say determining "whether the web is the devil on the media's left shoulder or the angel on its right has been a difficult question to answer" (2015, p.377), but some clarity can come from less reductive approaches. Referencing structuration, Eide (2014, p.681) argues that in journalism "some resources, like the economic ones, might be constraining, while others, like professional values, might be enabling", and this perspective facilitates a consideration of the many facets, positive and negative, of the online news production environment. Opportunities for instant dissemination may be set against the perceived pressure and demands of all-day news publishing; market-driven demands may contribute to viability, but also contribute to lower job satisfaction; building audiences through social networks may be limited by concerns about the dominance of such social networks. The allocation of resources, tied to the domination structure in structuration, becomes apparent when examining newsroom dynamics, and what is expected from reporters and editors. The

political economy aspects discussed in this chapter present the context against which news production takes place. Uncertainty from management clearly prevails: decisions on how best to integrate a converged newsroom, whether to charge for content, and whether to prioritise the print or digital and print form are examples which point to hesitation about how to best proceed. Some uncertainty is also visible in journalists leading to questions over their normative role; while journalists maintain substantial control over their practices, as discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter demonstrated how constraints are intertwined in their actions, whether market-driven, spatial, temporal, resource-related, or internalised professional values. The following chapter combines many of these factors to elaborate on one particular journalistic activity: sourcing. It examines what groups are seemingly legitimate enough to be granted a media platform, how external actors gain significant control, the sourcing channels and patterns on which journalists rely, and the role of specialist knowledge.

Chapter 4 |
SOURCING NEWS: PRACTICE, ACTORS AND VOICE

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Chapters 2 and 3 examined some of the structural factors shaping the news production system, suggesting professional ideals and individual actions interact with broader constraints that influence journalists in their day-to-day work. This chapter builds on these by considering how daily practices, professional goals and work cultures combine to influence how stories are sourced and to affect the voices from whom we hear. This dual approach to sources – the origins of the material, and the actor whose perspective is included – is important to highlight at this stage, as it becomes a tenet of the discussion section in Chapter 7. Whether journalists' role as autonomous, independent actors is undermined by the reliance on external actors' contributions is one of the enduring questions in journalism research. This issue has taken on a renewed relevance in the online setting, where source networks may be opened up, but work environment pressures appear to have increased; journalists striving to produce seemingly legitimate, professional content may be adversely affected by hyper-temporal demands, diminishing resources or their own level of experience. For that reason, they must adapt to find content, thus solidifying the space for information subsidies and routine channels of news.

Central to this discussion is the concept of power: power within a newsroom, and power between journalists and their sources. The chapters open up with a discussion about how established voices retain an influence in news coverage, with specific attention given to Hall et al's (1978) work on primary definers; it appears that journalists' commitment to professional values such as objectivity reinforce the power of established voices in the news. The use of sources is then conceptualised within a framework of rhetoric, whereby journalists and their sources are striving for specific, if distinct, communication goals. The discussion moves on to the influential role of public relations material and routine channels of news production, and how the opportunity exists for non-official voices to capitalise on the acceptance of PR material in newsrooms. The role of the public as sources in news is also highlighted, and questions remain regarding social media, and whether it has altered how private citizens are used. The chapter closes by shifting its focus to coverage of health policy, a topic in which many broad concerns about journalism are visible, such as the political dimension, news values and the role of specialist reporters and expert knowledge. The overall discussion captures some

of the complexity and apparent contradiction in news sourcing, as daily actions may manifest in long-term trends that do not necessarily align with journalists' professional ideals.

4.1 Defining the news: established voices and the status quo

The role of sources in influencing news content is well established; the nuances of this relationship between journalists and their sources, and where the balance of power lies, is of interest to those concerned about the influence of external actors (Franklin & Carlson 2011; Berkowitz 2009; Carlson 2009; Reich 2006; Manning 2001; Gandy 1982; Hall et al. 1978; Sigal 1973). Three themes of source-journalist relationships are prevalent in research, according to Phillips: (i) adversary, which journalists tend to prefer, highlighting how power is held to account; (ii) source inclusion as reflective of power structures; and (iii) journalists as an interpretive community who act as a "pack" (2015, pp.40–42). These three themes can all be allied with the discussion around internalised forces steering journalistic behaviour, as raised in Chapters 2 and 3. O'Neill and O'Connor explain how source use "goes to the heart of the debate about power relationships in society" as sources with access to journalists can set the news agenda, influence ideology and define the parameters of a debate (2008, p.488). Manuel Castells has defined power as "the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor's will, interests and values" (2009, p.10). Castells is writing about the concept in a broad societal sense, but it aligns with some of the dynamics in journalism; whether the empowered actor is the journalist or the political actor is contested and goes to the heart of any analysis about sourcing practices (Carlson 2009). Much of the literature describes a dual exchange and a symbiotic relationship between journalists and sources. For Gans, it was famously a metaphor of two partners in dance, with potential on both sides: "Although it takes two to tango, either sources or journalists can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading" (1979, p.116). In providing material which journalists consider to be useful, and which facilitates journalists in the day-to-day work, the third-party source has a significant influence – establishing what Giddens calls the *dialectic of control* in social systems. He explains this concept by saying that there are regularised relations of autonomy and dependence between actors in social interactions: "All forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors" (1984, p.16). This can be applied to a news production system and the analysis of how sources and journalists interact; journalists may have the ultimate decision on what is published, but their circumstances often contribute to a reliance on available content.

Legitimation as a rule (Giddens 1984) is central to actors' behaviour, and Carlson identifies the "reciprocal utility" that exists between journalists and official sources, as both become legitimised: the sources gains "authoritative status" while the news gains authority "through having used this authoritative source" (2009, p.530). He refers to this as the *mutual legitimation* perspective on source-journalist relations, one of three he identifies, alongside *primary definition* (based on Hall et al, 1978) which sees sources firmly in control, and the *competitive definer* model which stresses the competition that exists over frames. Although Hall et al's primary definition theory has faced critique, it still presents a powerful case for the role of officials and elite voices in news content (Manning 2001). *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978) examines coverage of crime and the associated moral panic in the UK, with the authors describing how journalists continuously offer access to accredited sources. This leads to structural bias within the media, they say, in which these privileged sources are over-used. Such approaches to news reporting allows the institutional source to establish the initial definition, which sets the terms of reference for future coverage (ibid., p.58), as their status provides built-in advantages. The authors present an example:

> Once race relations in Britain have been defined as a 'problem of numbers' (i.e. how many blacks there are in the country), then even liberal spokesmen, in proving that the figures for black immigrants have been exaggerated, are nevertheless obliged to subscribe, implicitly, to the view that the debate is 'essentially' about numbers.
>
> (ibid., p.59)

Schlesinger and Tumbler are among those critical of the primary definer model, for reasons including the possibility of more than one primary definer, alternative sources trying to counter-define, off-the-record briefings that can often cloud the role of a definer, the passivity of the media being overstated, and the assumption it makes about one-way flows of information (Schlesinger 1990; Schlesinger & Tumber 1994). The opportunities for non-elite sources and marginalised voices to influence news agendas are not fully acknowledged in the primary definition approach, they suggest. Addressing this passive role that the model assigns journalists, Carlson identifies the shift away from the primary definer model, pointing out that "primary definition is an actively pursued goal for various organisations, but *automatically* attained by none" (2009, p.535, italics in original). This acknowledgment that there is no mindless reproduction of source material is recognition of the moment of structuration in news reporting where actions are enacted. It echoes the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3, where the role of the agent is highlighted: circumstances and the role perceptions – seen as both external and internal structures – shape their decision-making, but they maintain an active role.

Hall et al's critique that the media simply reinforce existing systems is a familiar one (Murdock & Golding 1973; Herman & Chomsky 1988; van Dijk 1988). Soloski (1989) says that, for journalists, the "natural" place to find sources who are newsworthy is in a society's power structures, as the current politico-economic system is seen as the natural state of affairs. This is tied to the Gramscian idea of hegemony, referenced throughout *Policing the Crisis,* whereby the ruling classes build dominance and sustain authority. One of the ways this is done is by building consent and legitimacy among the masses. Louw summarises this hegemonic approach as "getting as many of 'the dominated' as possible to accept as 'natural' the 'leadership' and 'worldview' of the dominant group/s" (2005, p.19). Therefore, news will, in many ways, sustain the status quo. However, crucially, Soloski (1989) ties this outcome to professional journalistic values, rather than a broader ideological agenda, and this was also acknowledged by Hall et al, who make clear that journalists do not take such an ideological approach in a conspiratorial fashion (1978, p.59). Hall et al link it to two factors in the news production process: the practical pressure of working against the clock, and the professional commitment to impartiality and objectivity. This suggests a situation whereby the event-driven nature of news, and the environment in which it is positioned – a workplace where immediacy, speed and accuracy are generally valued – may shape the composition of news more than a coherent and acknowledged ideological perspective (Stevenson 1995, p.33). One feature of structuration theory worth considering here is how conscious journalists are of their role in supporting the existing social systems. This relates to how the mechanics and familiar actions of day-to-day work can potentially detract from acknowledging the broader trends of which they are part, and the *unintended consequences of action*:

> Human agents always know what they are doing on the level of discursive consciousness under some description. However, what they do may be quite unfamiliar under other descriptions, and they may know little of the ramified consequences of the activities in which they engage.
>
> (Giddens 1984, p.26)

Maintaining a focus on day-to-day work and short-term professional objectives may, therefore, sever the link between daily practices and the broader repercussions. This can be counterproductive for what journalists are actually seeking to achieve, as Schneider's (2013) study of homelessness in Chapter 2 illustrated, where the interpretation of rules is so formative. Another example illustrating this balance between daily actions and long-term implications is visible in Usher's (2013) study of a radio newsroom. She considers why a journalist contacts

other journalists and industry experts for a piece that tried to determine what "typical women" would do in relation to an upcoming film. Usher observes:

> The [finished] story did little more than simply provide different points of view on the possible outcome of the movie. It did not, for example, reach out to real women, though it could have simply by going across the street to the mall near the office. Instead, it was easier to ask the question to sources who would reliably answer the phone and be within quick and easy access to a soundbooth.

> (2012, p.815)

The reporter acknowledges weaknesses with her approach – "it's not good that I have other journalists in the piece, but they're easy to get hold of" (ibid.) – which Usher suggests indicates the journalist's reflexive knowledge (Giddens 1984; Ahva 2016). Furthermore, it resonates with "availability" and "suitability" that Gans talks about as key factors in source selection (1979), also categorised as knowledge, credibility, willingness, and timely communications (Meer et al. 2017). Usher concludes that such a sourcing practice shows the influence of deep structures, in particular time, on newswork, as discussed in Chapter 3. Journalists try to combat these time constraints by building up a network of reliable sources and drawing on familiar routines (Berkowitz 2009; Shoemaker & Reese 2014). However, this often-narrow network used to validate stories can then become influential in shaping news content, as many will come from official and established backgrounds due to their credibility and legitimacy. McQuail refers to this as "an almost inevitable form of unintended bias … concealed behind the mask of objectivity" (2010 p322). The role of objectivity becomes a prevailing internalised structure (Stones 2005) for journalists, as outlined in Chapter 2, and the following section examines its role in affecting source use.

4.1.1 Journalism, sources and objectivity

The attachment to objectivity was identified by Hall et al (1978) as one factor contributing to the use of official sources, and Carlson (2009; 2016) suggests that understanding why sources matter must begin with an understanding of this commitment to objectivity. The objectivity norm, combined with distance and impartiality, ensure that attributing information to sources benefits journalists in two ways, he says. Firstly, by providing indemnity from charges of bias if quotes used include negative messages, and secondly, if information is challenged, attribution to a third-party source transfers to them the verification responsibility. Furthermore, by using perceived credible sources, journalists can distance themselves from any questioning of the story's validity (Kunelius & Renvall 2010). These rationales all suggest elements of self-preservation for journalists, rather than anything more publically minded.

Sources are often used to provide an appearance of balance to a story; this can result in a reliance on simply presenting two sides, often from well-established or official sources, rather than attempting to establish further perspectives, or making a judgment on the worth of either side. This is raised in Hodgetts et al's study, where health journalists who have a commitment to balance are reluctant to advocate for a cause. One reporter said: "Any issue around health and welfare is hugely politicised so if you start taking sides and advocating, then you set yourself up to be accused of being politically aligned" (2008, p.54). The authors cite Singer's concern about a "too-rigid notion of objectivity… [which can] get in the way of communicating the merits of competing claims" (Singer 2006, p.7); what Cunningham (2003) refers to as an "awkward embrace of an ideal". This may have repercussions for a public's understanding when an issue is seemingly polarised in the media, with journalists' priority to present "two sides", rather than any deeper analysis. Two people may be presented to achieve perceived balance, even if one represents an extreme minority within, for example, the science community (Dixon & Clarke 2013). In a subject such as climate change, traditional journalistic values may be evolving towards a "weight of evidence" approach (Hiles & Hinnant 2014), but this is not extensive: Gaber (2016) refers to a "phoney balance" in the BBC's coverage of the Brexit campaign, relying on a "he says, she says" approach which resulted in misleading claims and rebuttals receiving equal airtime. Instead, Gaber highlights the need for better editorial judgment, and "standing back and assessing arguments" in order to achieve balance. This, however, may require those with the domination resource (Giddens 1984) to try to alter the culture as objectivity has become a powerful steering force for journalists. It shapes the perception of the work they do – and how they can defend against allegations of bias – which, therefore, impacts on who they include or exclude from coverage.

Another related behaviour occurs when journalists use sources selectively and draw on the accepted structure and language of news stories, and the appearance of objectivity, to promote their own opinions. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) refer to this as deception, but the practice prevails (Schneider 2013), and it may be one way in which journalists use some of the constraints which they perceive in news reporting to tackle untruths. One example demonstrating this is cited in Williams (1999), relating to the HIV and AIDS coverage in Britain in the 1980s. A reporter explains how sources were used to discredit controversial, and inaccurate, claims by a senior politician that "normal" sex is safe. The reporter's strategy was to get experts to discredit it: "You can't just sit there rubbishing it yourself – you're a reporter of other people, but you're selective about who you're picking up the phone to get" (Miller et al 1998 in Williams 1999, p.74). Journalists, therefore, act as both subjective actors and news professionals; Deuze suggests they are influenced by their socio-demographic background,

gender, motivation and commitment, family situation, life-cycle, and role models. Their agency is shaped by the "constant interplay" of structural constraints of the production process and personal values they bring to the job, which contribute to "organisational identity" (Deuze 2008, pp.110-112). Such an organisational identity comprises the rules and resources upon which journalists draw on in daily work (Stones 2005), which shape how they act in the moment of structuration – seen in this case as the moment in which sources are contacted and stories assembled. Operating in a detached, seemingly objective manner provides journalists with signification and legitimation towards their work (Giddens 1984).

4.2 News as a rhetorical device

The use of sources to build an argument can be further conceptualised by considering the potential of the news text to act as a rhetorical device. Rhetoric is traditionally associated with a one-to-many speaker situation, Aristotelian imagery and mass persuasion but, with a more contemporary understanding, it can be used to consider news texts as facilitators – and creators – of discourse. Kuypers and King present a working definition of rhetoric as "the strategic use of communication, oral or written, to achieve specifiable goals" (Kuypers & King 2009, p.7). Goals may be applicable to both the journalist, who uses the construct and language of a story to project their professionalism, as well as the sources, who may be trying to portray their message to the public. Thus, in combining elements of rhetorical theory and news production, there are two particular aspects relevant to this discussion: i) the news story as a rhetorical device, which is assembled based on journalists' decisions; and ii) the potential of news stories to act as vehicles for carrying the rhetorical messages of politicians or other actors. Much of this discussion about rhetoric, and the following section on PR material and routine channels of news, can be linked broadly with the concept of framing which Kuypers defines as:

> The process whereby communicators act – consciously or not – to construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more or less noticeable (even ignored) than others.
>
> (2009, p.182)

Framing has been used extensively in media studies research (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007) and there is much overlap with the concepts of primary definition and the power of sources. Furthermore, the concept of salience, defined by Entman as "making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences" (1993, p.53), is also central to the role of rhetors, as outlined below.

4.2.1 Journalists as rhetors

In his key text *The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation*, Vatz (1973) argues strongly in favour of the constructivist nature of rhetorical situations, which includes news texts, regarding their contained meaning. Of particular importance is the role of third-party actors in generating such meaning for observers, the majority of whom lack first-hand experience of an event and, typically, "we learn of facts and events through someone's communicating them to us" (ibid., p.156). This "someone", who could be a journalist or editor, has the power to give salience when decisions are made to include or exclude certain people or events. Vatz says the very making of these choices, thus creating a reality of a situation, gives a sense of moral responsibility to the rhetor for what they choose to make salient. All rhetors are "involved in this sifting and choosing, whether it be the newspaper editor choosing front-page stories versus comic-page stories or the speaker highlighting facts about a person in a eulogy" (1973, p.156). This selectivity is also touched on by Schlesinger in his observation of the partiality that comes with portraying "reality" in the news:

> The 'reality' it portrays is always in at least one sense fundamentally biased, simply in virtue of the inescapable decision to designate an issue or event newsworthy, and then to construct an account of it in a specific framework of interpretation.
>
> (1987, p.165)

Once these newsworthiness choices are made, they are given salience and their pertinence implied. The role of the media in legitimising an event – or turning a "pseudo-event" (Harcup & O'Neill 2001, p.273) into media coverage – draws on the rhetorical potential of news as a format. White (2000) argues that news stories contain rhetorical potential that goes beyond simply the ideological content of individual stories, and the generic construction of standard news items has the ability to support and naturalise certain ideological positions and social values. Van Dijk (1988) suggests two aspects to rhetoric in discourse: the content and the form. He refers to layout and visual prompts, such as large headlines and decisions about the front page, as part of persuasive rhetoric of news reports, as news does not generally use creative language. Van Dijk argues that, while rhetors want their message to reach readers, that is not all; they want it to be accepted and appear credible, and therefore the message's meanings must be understood, accepted/believed, and integrated, tying in with Kupers reference to "specifiable goals" in Kuypers and King's definition of rhetoric. It also reinforces Entman's assessment of framing, whereby frames have "at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture" (1993, p.52). The properties of news reports, as well as the content, are, therefore, central to both the journalists'

professional role, as well as the function they fulfil for sources. This echoes the journalist-official sources co-dependency referred to earlier, whereby it is clear that both sides benefit: what Carlson refers to as the "mutual legitimation" perspective (2009).

4.2.2 Persuasive language and quotations in news texts

The use of quotations in news stories is central to news construction and a standard news practice; quotes are seen as a means to break up text, can change the tone or add colour, offer different perspectives and bring authenticity and legitimacy, and many journalists or editors will consider a story to be incomplete with quotations (Mencher 2011; Hohenberg 1983; Fedler 2001). While verbal reaction is a staple of news reports, somebody saying something is often newsworthy enough to trigger a story:

> The issue of quoting goes to the heart of the newsgathering enterprise. News, after all, emerges as much from what people say as from what they do in their other behaviour. What people say – accusations, speeches, apologies, and rebuttals – make news. Reputations are built and broken by reports of quotations.
>
> (Killenberg & Anderson 1993, p.37)

Zelizer highlights three dimensions characterising the collective nature of quotes: i) speaker reference, in which quotes lend authority to the sources behind the news; ii) quotes lend authority to the collective of journalists behind the news; and iii) quotes create a collectivity of news audiences and allow journalists to connect audiences with different news texts (1989, p.369). Zelizer's first and second point serve as a reminder about the credibility which external voices offer, which may be central to theorising their presence in next texts: the legitimation rule of structuration in action (Giddens 1984). As discussed above, Van Dijk argues that rhetors strive to have their content believed and seen as credible by those it targets. To elaborate on this, he points out that for content to be believed, it is important to have opposing voices to give an illusion of diversity (1988, p.85). Certain sources will be prioritised and given a higher positioning in a story, he suggests, which can be linked to Hall et al's primary definer concept already mentioned. Hall et al cite Becker's (1963) "hierarchy of credibility": "the likelihood that those in powerful or high-status positions in society who offer opinions about controversial topics will have their definitions accepted" (Hall et al. 1978, p.58). Furthermore, the selection and inclusion of certain sources – or exclusion of others – and the corresponding power dynamic this offers a journalist is an intrinsic issue in analysing news content. As Gans highlights, journalists pursue some sources while are passive towards others (1979, p.116), thus affecting what version of events the public receives and contributing to the hegemonic model earlier discussed.

Franklin (1999) believes the mediatised nature of contemporary politics means government policy is becoming increasingly packaged in media-friendly ways, which journalists often republish with few amendments. Such a trend encourages a collusive, and often passive, media-government relationship, he says, rather than the adversarial watchdog role often cited: "News media risk becoming little more than delivery services for government policy messages, carefully crafted by press officers" (1999, p.19). This passive "delivery service" image, or simply transporting a message unquestioned, is at the core of the concept of "pronunciamento", which Genest says refers to the statements, speeches or comments from government officials which originate from either identified or unidentified sources (1995, p.168). Paletz and Henry take a broader understanding of the term. They include pronunciamento as a distinct news category which they said, like other forms of routine news, describes the "direct transferral of information, ideas and accusations" from interest groups (1978 in Gandy 1980, p.105). In their study over a six-year period, 42.3% of stories about a particular organisation (Common Cause in the US) are recorded as "straight pronunciamento". This pronunciamento is an important concept to engage with when weighing up the role of the media in the decision to use – or specifically build stories around – messages from interested parties. Even extracts of statements can play a contributing role and may suggest a blurring of the lines of whether a journalist acts as a disseminator of information which has value for citizens, or simply a mouthpiece for third parties.

Killenberg and Anderson identify ethical problems for journalists who choose to use a "soundbite" quote to hook the audience with "catchy but unsubstantive bait" (1993, p.47). These soundbites are often the most interesting part of a statement, and something a politician or actor may strive to get into an interview. However, their inclusion runs the risk of the journalist entering a duplicitous partnership with the speaker (ibid.), and this is evident in the debates surrounding whether journalists should grant controversial speeches or language a platform. Sigal refers to US senator Joseph McCarthy, who used the "frozen patterns of the press" to his advantage in the 1950s: "Newspapers, McCarthy recognised, would publish whatever he said as soon as he said it, while refutations would not run until later, if at all" (1973, p.67). This concern was reignited in 2017 among those critical of the "normalising" of Donald Trump's presidency in the US. Rosen (2017) suggests that remaining detached and passive is a professional failing: "If nothing the president says can be trusted, reporting what the president says becomes absurd … it's hard to respect what you are doing." However, the detached observer role which can act as a defence, providing what Giddens (1984) may refer to as a *rationalisation of action* used to justify more passive, seemingly neutral behaviour.

Brown et al conclude that "newspapers relinquish control of news to routine channels with male government executives as typical sources" (1987, p.45) which also highlights the gender dimension. McQuail refers to the concerns in feminist literature about the "relative invisibility of women in news and their ghettoisation to certain topics" (2010, p.121), or suffering what can be seen simultaneously as both a marginal presence as well as a stereotyping (Byerly & Ross 2006; Ross & Carter 2011). The *Hearing Women's Voices?* report (Walsh et al. 2015) examining Irish radio content finds just 20% of experts were female. Alongside journalism's bias towards those in positions of power as discussed earlier in this chapter, typically more likely to be men (Carli & Eagly 2001), a reluctance by women to participate in broadcast media may also be a factor (Howell & Singer 2016). There are also concerns that the detached, objective approach to news reporting lends itself to viewing social affairs through a male lens, meaning that higher number of female journalists may not necessarily alter the dynamics (Lobo et al. 2017; Ross & Carter 2011; Van Zoonen 1988).

 As discussed in this chapter thus far, and in Chapter 3, the link between journalists and those in positions of power remains strong, which leads to a reliance of official sources as contributors to news coverage. However, to further comprehend such groups' influence, it is essential to shift the focus on to the channels through which these voices become dominant. This chapter has addressed some of the reasons, both ideological and subconscious, *why* these powerful groups are included, yet it is also essential to consider *how* they reach journalists, the manner of which may heighten their influence if they provide easily accessible content. The symbiotic link between the politicians and the media has been highlighted, but Blumler and Gurevitch's assessment captures an additional aspect:

> Politicians need access to the communication channels that are controlled by the mass media, including the hopefully credible contexts of audience reception they offer. Consequently they [politicians] must adapt their messages to the demands of formats and genres devised inside such organisations and to their associated speech styles, story models and audience images. Likewise, journalists cannot perform their task of political scrutiny without access to politicians for information, news, interviews, action and comment.
>
> (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995, p.33)

The "adaptation" is fundamental and supports Gans' assessment about how influential sources do not bully their way into the news, "they use their power to create suitable news" (1979, p.119). As political communication evolved to be increasingly professionalised and mediatised (Louw 2005; Mancini 1999; Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999), it has engaged with many of the traditional methods and approaches from public relations (Davis 2010), which has an influence

on news coverage. This media logic (Altheide 2004) involves adjusting strategies to accommodate how the media functions, and specifically production practices in newsroom (Esser 2013; Figenschou & Thorbjornsrud 2015; Brants & Van Praag 2006), and opens up discussion about the role of public relations in news, and the channels through which journalists are sourcing news.

4.3 Routine news, PR and channels of production

The reliance on information subsidies (Gandy 1980) and PR has formed the basis of research in journalism studies for decades (Hansen 1998; Curtin 1999; Kiousis et al. 2009; Butler 1998; Ciboh 2017; Lewis et al. 2008a; Jackson & Moloney 2016; Moloney et al. 2013; O'Neill & O'Connor 2008). However, two "disruptions" – technological developments, and structural/commercial developments – have altered the journalist-PR source dynamic, according to Jackson and Moloney (2016, p.765), who argue that both factors affect journalists' practices as they may be operating with reduced resources. This resource aspect is central, as highlighted in Chapter 3, as the establishment of online news platforms have often come as a second format, often with an accompanying trend for shrinking newsrooms (Nikunen 2013; Compton 2010), as the demand for content increases. Gandy describes an information subsidy as "an attempt to produce influence over the actions of others by controlling their access to and use of information relevant to those actions" (1982, p.61). The central concern regarding information subsidies is how they can skew the news agenda in favour of what information is volunteered to journalists. This shifts a significant amount of influence to the professional communications and public relations professionals seeking coverage, groups that are typically already powerful, well-resourced and well organised (Gans 1979). However, it is not just politicians or officials who engage with such material: Phillips warns how concerns about PR extend to NGOs and charities as "their job is to get the journalist to see things from their point of view" and exclude oppositional reading (2015, p.46. See also Franklin et al. 2010). Gandy highlights the subsidy aspect of information subsidies, saying they are so prevalent as they provide content "at something less than the cost a user would face in the absence of the subsidy" (1982, p.61). In an era of increased output, declining resources, changing audience behaviour, 24-hour news, and a general quickening of journalism, a growing influence of information subsidies may, therefore, be unsurprising (Phillips 2015; Kiousis et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 2008b).

However, it is important to remember that the use of PR material is not a phenomenon tied to digital news. Macnamara (2016) gives a comprehensive overview of research into journalism-PR relations saying there have been up to 200 studies over the past 100 years, with the

majority finding that between 50-75% of stories include a PR element. Lewis et al highlight the influence of public relations material and agency copy within the British press and broadcast news, finding more than 40% of press articles contained public relations material with an agenda-setting role, or PR material formed the majority of the story (Lewis et al. 2008a; Davies 2008). In Ireland 59% of journalists said they use press releases every day (Heravi et al. 2014). Despite this heavy usage, strong tension and negativity remains in many journalistic accounts of PR practitioners and PR work (Macnamara 2016; McNair 2004); PR material may have lesser value (Boesman et al. 2015; Phillips 2010a), while even some PR practitioners want to see PR balanced with other sources (Jackson & Moloney 2016). Some argue the changing work practices which online news production requires leaves journalists subject to "exploitation" by the PR industry (Moloney et al. 2013), while Lloyd and Toogood point towards the trend of "the diminution of public relations' dependence on journalism, and the growth of journalism's dependence on PR" (2015, p.vii). These assessments raise questions about the balance of power between sources and journalists, as discussed early in this chapter, but Macnamara (2016) suggests more nuance is needed to understand the complex relationship between media and PR, as outright dismissal is not constructive for any analysis. Similarly, Van Hout and Van Leuven identify two poles regarding the PR-journalism nexus: one that considers churnalism and a heavy reliance on PR as a threat to democracy and journalism's independence, and another that recognises journalism is no longer based on eyewitness reporting, but is about managing information flows (2017, p.118). The concept of managing flows conjures up a relatively passive image of journalism, however Phillips presents a reminder about how journalism is often about assessing and verifying information, and the dissemination function of journalism ensures that PR from state bodies can have a valuable civic role:

> A report on a government announcement about a change in the delivery of school meals or a planning decision that will completely alter the landscape is of no less value that the discovery that a Member of Parliament has fiddled his expenses, or that a rock star is having an affair.
>
> (2015, p.47)

This may be particularly relevant in an area like healthcare in which public information campaigns are central (Park & Reber 2010; Schwitzer et al. 2005; Randolph & Viswanath 2004), but any acknowledgment of PR from officials as a valuable source may jar with some journalists who resist any suggestion of complicity and prefer the image of independent adversary. Such resistance calls into question whether news coverage is in fact driven more by media-centric news values (Harcup & O'Neill 2001) rather than a more civically minded duty

of informing the public (Christians et al. 2009; Strömbäck et al. 2012). PR material clearly spans a spectrum and some information will have value, yet much of the concerns in journalism studies stems from its ubiquity and lack of further verification (Franklin et al. 2010; Phillips 2015). Furthermore, concern about the prevalence of PR ties in with concerns about routine channels of news more generally, and how it impacts on opportunities for alternatively sourced news.

4.3.1 Typifying news and channels of production

Carlson summarises how "the reliance of official sources and routine news channels is one of the most reproduced findings in studies of journalism" (2009, p.529). The reference to channels can be tied to Sigal's (1973) work on three channels of production (routine, informal and enterprise), which was published at a similar time to other efforts to categorise different types of news (Molotch & Lester 1974; Tuchman 1973).

Channel	Details
Routine	Official proceedings, press releases, press conferences, non-spontaneous events
Informal	Background briefings, Leaks, Nongovernmental proceedings, News reports, editorials, etc
Enterprise	Interviews, Spontaneous events, Books, research, etc, Reporters' own analysis

Table 4.1: Sigal's channels of news production. From Sigal (1973) p.121

Despite their different approaches, such frameworks go some way to acknowledging the different origins of news, the different work practices required, and the nuances between different types of content. Sigal's work (Table 4.1) finds 57% of stories originate through routine channels. Other research using this framework reports varying levels for routine channels, some as low as 37% in a study of CNN/Al Jazeera coverage (Bashri et al. 2012) or up to 59% in a study of political news in Nigeria (Ciboh 2017).

	Planned: "Happening accomplished intentionally"	Unplanned: "Happening accomplished not intentionally"
Promoted by effector	Routine	Serendipity
Promoted by informer	Scandal	Accident

Table 4.2: Molotch and Lester's typology of public events 1974 (p.111)

Molotch and Lester's work Table 4.2, meanwhile, proposes that all news events serve a purpose (to news promoters, news assemblers and/or news consumers) and each "holds

different challenges to those who have or lack power" (1974, p.101). They classify events as either routine, serendipity, scandal or accident, depending on whether they were planned, and by whom they are promoted. Tuchman's (1973) typifying model (Table 4.3) focuses more on some of the practical issues of different news types, broadly split between hard and soft news, with subcategories of hard news.

Typication	How is an event scheduled	Is dissemination urgent	Does technology affect perception?	Are future predictions facilitated?
Soft news	Nonscheduled	No	No	Yes
Hard news	Unscheduled and prescheduled	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Spot news	Unscheduled	Yes	No	No
Developing news	Unscheduled	Yes	Yes	No
Continuing news	Prescheduled	Yes	No	Yes

Table 4.3: "Practical issues in typifying news" (Tuchman 1973, p.117)

These models are more than 40 years old but remain a valuable basis for considering news events, although the changing media landscape may offer the potential for updates. Shoemaker and Reese (2014, p.188) believe the internet has become a new routine research channel, while Boesman et al (2015) suggest inter-media sourcing is more common now than in the past. Boesman et al recommend that "other news reports" could be a distinctive channel, and Sigal's informal and enterprise channels could be merged. Elsewhere, Lecheler and Kruikemeier (2016) refer broadly to structured (media-focused activities such as press conferences, interviews, photocalls) and unstructured (more spontaneous, such as phone inquiries, background research) newsgathering techniques. However, there appears to be scope for a more detailed, updated typification model to clarify different news channels.

4.3.2 PR to challenge official voices?

An assumption often exists that official sources and routine news go hand in hand, but that may not necessarily be the case. This becomes a distinction worth raising when considering how traditionally non-elite groups can benefit from changing journalistic practices, and journalists' reliance on routine, or structured, sourcing patterns. Manning (2001) believes there is potential media space for politically marginalised groups but accessing that space requires certain skills and contacts, echoing Gitlin's arguement that alternative groups must adjust to the type of interaction that established organisations use (1980 in Schudson 2010, p.173). McNair highlights some instances of how this has been achieved: he refers to the use of PR by various environmental protestors, animal welfare organisations and other activist groups in the UK since the mid-1990s, noting: "All of these were, in sociological terms, subordinate,

resource-poor groups who utilised public relations entrepreneurially in order to secure a space for their arguments in the public sphere" (2004, p.329). Edwards explores how PR can be used strategically by NGOs and civil society groups to "facilitate voice" (2017, p.5) and increase visibility. Similarly, Williams (1999) describes how the Terence Higgins Trust became a credible alternative source to challenge media portrayals of HIV and AIDS in Britain in the 1990s. This was achieved through a media-friendly approach and offering high-quality information. The result was that rather than just an interviewer and doctor, a third person – somebody directly affected by the disease – was often included in debates. Carlson (2009) suggests further research is required to help comprehend how various actors have become "increasingly savvy at getting their voice into the news" and become competitive definers, and new methods must investigate how sources gain this news access. He refers to a hope that non-elite actors "may be able to do more with less" to add to source diversity, even if they remain unable to challenge the resources of elite actors (2009, pp.537-539). It becomes apparent that routine channels, which may be relied on more than ever due to the demands of servicing news websites, may not necessarily be tied to elite voices, and that different channels or typification categories discussed in the previous section may be associated with different source groups, but further research is needed to explore these links.

Davis has written about how pressure groups have responded to professionalised politics by adopting corporate promotional strategies which help to facilitate their goal of influencing government policy, raising public/consumer awareness, and defending against funding cuts (2000, p.42). Radical pluralism is one of his three evolving accounts of public relations, and he talks about how non-official sources can use PR to acquire legitimacy and "gain substantial levels of access" (ibid., p.40). The focus on legitimacy aligns with Giddens' use of the term in structuration, and Stones writes that the "individual's preferred norms are drawn upon against a knowledge of the wider legitimation structures, which indicate what is and isn't the appropriate thing to do" (2005, p.19). As journalism is typically a highly socialised profession, if it is seen as acceptable to regularly include contributions from particular actors, that can become engrained in the daily routine, especially if these actors come with familiarity and their own sense of legitimacy. Giddens cites Weber's definition of legitimacy as "belief in the validity of an order", whereby validity is anything defined by members of a given group (Giddens 1977 in Cassell 1993 p.320). Therefore, if journalists, as a "pack" (Phillips 2015), offer such legitimacy to a certain group – whether that is elite or non-elite sources – that will likely contribute to whether or not they become a valued and legitimate part of the journalists' source network.

Trade unions

Philo has written extensively about media portrayals of trade unions in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s (Philo 2007; Philo & Hewitt 1976; Philo 1990). Although union voices were present, he suggests there was simply "an illusion of balance", and it was government narratives dominating the news with a superior sense of legitimacy (1977 in Philo 2007, p.181). One potential distinction exists between blue-collar and white-collar sector unions, with union media relations more amicable between those organisations representing groups such as healthcare workers or civil service employees (Philo & Hewitt 1976). Much of Philo's work into the UK suggests that such groups are often also overlooked as key sources (Philo 2007), and a similar finding is made by Hansen (1991) in the US, and O'Neill and O'Connor's (2008) study on sources in local UK news. Looking at content in Ireland during the economic recession, Mercille finds just 3% of opinion/editorial content between 2008-2013 are written by trade union officials (Mercille in Houses of the Oireachtas 2015 p.815). However, Cawley (2012), also looking at the Irish media coverage of the similar period, refers to unions as being among the staple institutional sources used by journalists. These varied findings demonstrate uncertainty surrounding their status, and such groups' evolution since much of Philo's work was carried out may also be a factor, indicating the need for further study. Furthermore, it is unclear whether there are particulars to the Irish situation, or if it is due to more recent media-friendly strategies. Manning (2001) identifies four communicative attitudes taken by trade unions, and suggests that the most recent "accommodative" approach is now used, which contrasts with more adversarial approaches visible in the past.

4.4 The public as a source

The place of the public in the media-state nexus is tied to the role of democracy and having an informed, active citizenship, as discussed in Chapter 2. A Deweyesque idea of journalism as a "conversation" (Haas 2007) conjures images associated with deliberative, citizen-driven democracy, and public sphere as Habermas envisioned (1989). Although such a male-dominated, elite environment was unlikely to ever truly represent the voices of all citizens (Fraser 1990), throughout journalism's history there have been spaces for highlighting the plights of the less well-off such as the muckraking journalism movement in the US in the early 20th century (Cramer 2009) and a similar trend appeared in Britain in the latter half of the 19th century (Conboy 2004, p.122). This emphasis and concern for the public and human interest stories would soon be replaced by the detached professional model, as described in Chapter 3. However, even within this professional model, there are ideals about offering space for the public, such as providing a channel, forum, or platform for extra-media voices (Christians et al. 2009) or giving ordinary people a chance to express their views (Gil de Zúñiga & Hinsley

2013). Although this may be strived for, this chapter suggests that there is an inherent – yet not always intentional – bias in news production which favours social elites and raises questions about the media's democratic role.

One of Gans' recommendations following his study of news production (1979) is more perspectives, and more "bottom-up news", which he summarises as "more stories on how ordinary people are affected by the decisions and acts of high government officials and the rest of the political elite who are journalism's major sources" (Gans 2011, p.4). Such coverage would also report on how people viewed and interpreted elite decisions. More than four decades later, Blumler and Cushion (2014) are still seeking a similar shift, saying the challenge is to "ensure that the situations, experiences and claims of other less powerful and knowledgeable groups are presented sufficiently often in their own terms" (2014, p.269). When voices seen to represent the public are included in news, Bosch says they can be split into three categories: i) people who have a certain pedigree or affiliation (eg politicians or those from interest groups); ii) people included due to their experiences, usually a personal/often dramatic relationship with an issue; iii) people sourced by their supposed "ordinariness", such as in vox pops (2013, p.219). Elsewhere, Lewis et al suggest five ways in which citizens' views are included: vox pops; demonstrations/protests; public opinion/polls/surveys; and inferences about public opinion (which they split into two categories: general and unspecified, neither or which are based on data or evidence) (2005, p.19). Although Lewis et al appear to support the concept of vox-pops as a rare space for private individuals to communicate in their own words, Kleemans et al are more sceptical, suggesting they provide journalists with an "easy way out: random passers-by are readily at hand; the voice of the people is thereby represented: job well done" (2017, p.479). They argue that vox pops complement existing news events, rather than allowing individuals to take on a more powerful, authoritative role. Alternative formats to facilitate individuals' stories are case studies or human interest stories: Bosch cites Brosius and Bathelt (1994) who describe such news coverage as illustrating "causes, importance, and consequences of the problem from the unique perspective of an individual" to represent broader social phenomena (2013, p.218). One concern about this supposed representation aspect is "exemplification" (Zillman 2008): how the people seen in news media are used to make generalisations about the group on the whole. Zillman says some exemplars adequately represent the population, but others may not, and their selection in news "seems more inspired by dramatic and ideological slants" than a commitment to impartial reporting (ibid., p.21).

The use of diverse, "ordinary" voices may be important to resist feelings of isolation and disconnect between the media and their audiences, as highlighted in Chapter 1. Furthermore,

another concern relates to how an omission of perspectives can contribute to a marginalisation of minority opinion (Noelle-Neumann 1974), or a more general skewing of public debate or public perception. Shaw makes the point that if real factors are not included "the consensus reached by the body politic may be inappropriate to the real problems, events or issues confronting a democratic society. Out of sight *can* be out of mind" (1979, p.104. italics in original). The role of voice, and why voice matters, was touched on in Chapter 1; Couldry warns how an alternative space exists for people to communicate, but it remains detached from those in positions of power. He argues that voice's validity comprises both speaking, and the value it generates (Couldry 2010b, p.113). This gap that exists between these actions – having the space to make a statement, and it having an impact – may contribute to a sense of frustration. Kuypers and King suggest that things may now be even worse for citizens, and refer to the "illusion" of participation; "experts debate these issues while the citizenry watches...often feeling like powerless spectators" (2009, p.9). They say that so much policy discussion is tied into technical language and gets removed from the arena of public discussion; issues once centralised around "ordinary citizens" become the property of the specialised, technical elites:

> Although these 'intellectuals' can organise data and design complex 'solutions,' they may understand very little about the fears, prejudices, and aspirations of ordinary people. Denied participation in civic debate, we become less skilled in managing discourse. Increasingly, we may view ourselves as mere masses manipulated by experts, not active citizens who are in charge of their own fate."
>
> (Kuypers & King 2009, p.10)

One of the key ways in which individuals can obtain validation appears to be from journalists providing the public with this space to tell their stories; Kunelius and Renvall (2010) describe the importance of "ordinary" voices being able to tell the story of nursing home standards. The "storyteller prestige" is shifted to these voices, in this instance the family of patients and nurses, and it also allows readers to feel that their participation and influence is possible, which can in turn apply pressure on those in authority. The authors conclude that "ordinary" people can form reasonable arguments and challenge official definitions of issues, if given the chance to do so (ibid., p.528). Being given the chance places the onus on journalists to include more diverse sources, and for such a goal to be supported in the newsroom; it also reconciles with Jon Snow's plea in Chapter 1, in which he urges those "with the power", to "give individuals who work with, and for you, the space to do something – anything – in the wider community we are here to communicate with". These arguments also serve as a reminder that

the watchdog function can be achieved by shifting attention from what those in positions of power do or say, to what those affected by policy decisions do and say.

4.4.1 Social network as a source

Bruns suggests that as media producers' limitations on physical space, time, and bandwidth are removed, there is the scope for heightened coverage of "marginal" stories that are often considered uneconomical (2008 in Jones & Salter 2012, p.59). While journalists may recognise the potential for a wider range of voices, this may not translate to actual altered behaviour (Fortunati et al. 2009), similar to the reluctance to engage with audiences discussed in Chapter 3. In their systematic overview of the research into the use of online sources, Lechler and Kruikemeier (2016) conclude that the research into new media sources "contradicts expectations regarding the democratising and disruptive power of online sourcing techniques" (2016, p.163). Crucially, the authors find that online sourcing techniques have not led to a more diverse or public-centred way of reporting the news. However, Kleemans et al say it is not a surprise that sourcing routines are difficult to change: "Changing routines means changing the very core of the profession. This takes time and requires a feeling of necessity" (2017, p.179). The reinforcement of an existing system and journalism's ongoing resilience has been highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, but even gradual change and any adaptation towards online contributes to its role as an institution (Eide & Sjøvaag 2016; Ryfe 2006). While the foundations of sourcing appear to not be altered dramatically, Lechler and Kruikemeier (2016) find that, overall, journalists accept online sourcing into their daily routines. However, they are more resistant in using social media content as direct and quoted sources in news reporting. In Ireland, one survey shows that Twitter is used professionally by 99% of journalists (Heravi & Harrower 2016). Sourcing news leads was its most common use, (66%) followed by "sourcing content" (54%). Broersma and Graham refer to Twitter as a "convenient, cheap and effective beat" (2014 p446), but find it is overwhelmingly used in soft news stories. Furthermore, the development of Twitter and other social networks as a news beat may be seen as part of a trend of keeping journalists desk-bound (Paulussen 2012), focused on their screens and reliant on electronic flows of information. Preston (2009) believes this spatial dimension impacts on the social aspect of journalism, whereby relationships with sources were traditionally fostered. This micro-social system, as Manning (2001, p.105) refers to, serves as an exchange system for gossip, intelligence and job opportunities. Older journalists have lamented such demise, in particular within specialist beats, suggesting it impacts on journalists skillsets and social networks are not adequate replacements (Boesman et al. 2015; Phillips 2010a). Having such a network of sources can be seen as a resource upon which journalists draw, and which will likely be more associated with experienced reporters. However, to build up that experience and

the contacts, journalists must have opportunities, and it is here that the allocation of resources (Stones 2005; Giddens 1984) becomes important. Those with domination in a news organisation will likely have control over reporters, especially newer entrants (Phillips 2015), and therefore influence over authoritative resources, such as "the chances of self-development" (Giddens 1984, p.259).

4.5 The politics of health

The decision to concentrate on healthcare brings a focus to this research, with some of the specifics of the Irish case outlined in Chapter 1. The Irish system ranks relatively poorly when compared with other Western countries, in particular for accessing services. There are concerns about the system's structure (Staines 2017; Burke 2009), and many of these problems manifest in daily news. Coverage of healthcare, and the role of health journalists, provides the basis of much contemporary media research and it provides a useful lens through which broader journalistic practices can be examined (Bard 2017; Holland 2017; Stroobant et al. 2017; Hinnant et al. 2015; Bosch 2013; Wallington et al. 2010). It also offers a basis upon which to consider the power dynamics, journalistic routines and sources used within mainstream news about an issue that goes to the centre of the state-citizen nexus. Although the NHS in Britain has a longer history, and different structures and funding model, than the Irish system, many of the same features are applicable to any health service:

> It is a provider of health care, a social institution for the protection and support of individuals in need and also an employer... [it] is an arena in which professional groups obtain and use power, it is a user of public and private finance and a cause of household spending and finally [it] is a purchaser of pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical devices, and other commodities. Consequently, it is a highly politicised institution that embodies many contested values.
>
> (Entwistle & Sheldon 1999)

These contested values are symbolic of how the health service interacts with a range of actors: patients and patients groups, politicians, professional organisations, unions, the pharmaceutical industry, and suppliers. These actors, with different interests, are both subjects and sources, with media coverage used to highlight issues and generate pressure on officials (ibid.). Bosch uses the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) in his study into the exemplification effects of source choice. He points out a limitation of this, saying: "Being macro and technical in nature, health care arguably has more in common with many macroeconomic issues (e.g., taxes, subsidies) than social issues like abortion and gun control, and thus scholars should be cautious about assuming these results hold for other types of issues." (2013, p.232). However,

healthcare can include more social issues; away from the administrative and spending elements, personal health and lifestyle are factors that remain tied to the state system. Hodgetts et al (2008) cite research which shows that much media coverage of health issues take two approaches: (i) focusing on individual and lifestyle responsibility for health conditions, such as obesity; and (ii) focusing on biomedical technologies and scientific developments. These approaches depoliticise health in a way that neglects critical public health discourse, yet it is essential to consider it as a highly political issue: "Because health varies according to socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, and environmental factors, including crime, housing, social cohesion and participation, it is inherently political" (ibid., p.45). Various issues which may appear to be more based on personal health have also become politicised, such as abortion and contraception, vaccines and obesity (Franklin Fowler & Gollust 2015).

The media is one of the most important arenas in which cultural properties of health are observed and public narratives are created (Burch 2008) and it also plays an important role in communicating disease risk, showcasing medical breakthroughs and framing medical concerns. Hodgetts et al (2008, p.49) cite one journalist's categorisation of the different tiers of health stories: the top tier is "hard" news, such as ward closures, disease epidemics and industrial disputes. Then, the "run-of-the-mill" stories about research and the functioning of the health service. The authors find that stories, particularly the biomedical developments, are often repeated with a similar narrative. However, journalists were more wary of repeating the stories relating to social determinants such as poverty or ethnic disparity, and these stories were deemed to have weaker credentials and needed human interest angles to be made interesting. One health journalist shared their reservations about politicising social problems regarding health, and how a lack of statistics or solid information could limit coverage of health as a politicised issue. The authors suggest one reason journalists struggle to highlight social determinants aspect was because these factors appeared to be in conflict with the common sense or life experiences of their perceived primarily affluent, white, middle-class target audience (ibid., p51). A marginalising of voices was also touched on by Goldenberg who finds that journalists respond to groups seen to represent the substantial body of local opinion: these groups were generally the ones with resources, official status and knowledge (1974 in Manning 2001, p.159). This ties into the broader hegemonic discussion raised in section 4.1 in this chapter and how the status quo benefits from the mainstream media system, due to many journalists' interpretation of what they *should* be doing, and internalised beliefs about who is deemed a valid or legitimate source. The cyclical nature of this ensures that outsiders may need to establish a sense of legitimacy in order to partake.

As highlighted earlier in the chapter, information subsidies and PR strategies provide a common route to media access for healthcare providers and other stakeholders. These form part of what Bou-Karroum et al describe as "media interventions", the "organised and purposive activities that utilise a variety of media channels to inform, persuade, or motivate populations" (2017, p.2). Such campaigns are central to building public awareness (Park & Reber 2010); in their systematic literature review, Wakefield et al (2010) examine mass media strategies for health-risk behaviours, referring to campaigns on issues such as tobacco use, heart-disease prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, cancer screening, and sexual health. They argue that, from a civic perspective, mass media campaigns have the ability to efficiently disseminate clear behaviourally focused messages. Typically such campaigns lead to passive exposure, "resulting from an incidental effect of routine use of media" (ibid., p.1261), suggesting that the information is intertwined in daily media consumption. This suggests that, rather than just buying advertising space, or seeking public service announcement airtime (common in the US), the incorporation of such information into news coverage can be effective. They cite one study showing coverage of the World Transplant Games Federation international events was associated with increased organ donations, noting that increases were not sustained after media exposure dropped. PR campaign work's inclusion by news and entertainment media "represent a promising complementary strategy to conventional media campaigns" such as billboards or other advertising, they argue (ibid., p.1268). This is echoed by Randolph and Viswanath, who suggest that success in health promotion is more likely following the "successful manipulation of the information environment by campaign sponsors to ensure sufficient exposure" (2004, p.421). Media messages, they contend, can be supplemented with other approaches such as the generation of news coverage through campaign events, especially when the budget for buying mass media time is small. Such strategising from healthcare communicators – in which garnering news coverage is a target – aligns with the intentions of any sectoral organisation seeking coverage. It also serves as a reminder of the goal-oriented approaches and, as Randolph and Viswanath phrase it, the intended "manipulation" of the information environment must always be considered. This supposed manipulation, with notions of power at its core, must be present alongside any discussion of journalists as active gatekeepers who try to resist agenda-driven input from third parties, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Building awareness about public health by drawing on media-friendly material is one aspect of news coverage of the sector, but another key consideration for journalists is how they cover the decision-making of state agencies and politicians regarding how the sector functions. This is important for both the traditional accountability role of the press, as well as informing citizens.

Coverage of how the health sector operates is a central part of public awareness; a higher level of media coverage – volume, breadth and prominence – can increase individuals' policy-specific knowledge (Barabas & Jerit 2009), which reinforces the civic value of journalists' paying attention to policy areas. However, the nature of news coverage – and what may be an emphasis on news values, rather than the policymaking or governing dimension – may lead to a version of policy coverage that is somewhat unidimensional. In their study of Canadian media coverage of healthcare, Rachul and Caulfield (2015) find a high level of patient perspectives, noting how narratives are typically built around improved access to health services; the notion of the government letting residents and citizens down is common. They refer to this as a clear "patient-access ethos" which supports the expansion of treatments and funding. This can then lead to "empirical evidence about efficacy and safety [being] inappropriately diminished" (ibid., p.5). When rationalisation of funds was covered, they find it is typically related to those issues often perceived as more lifestyle-related, such as IVF. Concerns about the implications of the patient-access ethos are echoed in Hind et al's research examining coverage of the trastuzumab drug used in early breast cancer. Reports are dominated by individual patients or groups of patients, while "the views of those who must consider opportunity cost, such as purchasers, were reported less frequently" (2011, p.43). Access to the drug was generally framed as a right, drawing on other countries where the drug is available, rather than highlighting those where it was not available. These examples are indicative of how different angles can be taken by journalists, with implications on how the story is framed, what perspective is given priority in the report, and ultimately what voices are given salience or excluded. The active role and practices of the journalists involved in compiling the report, therefore, become crucial, and this is particularly pertinent when questions arise over the reporters' own level of expertise and knowledge, and how this can affect their perspective towards reporting. The following section builds on this distinction between different types of reporters, focusing on specialisation in journalism, the implications for news coverage, and perceptions about news values.

4.6 Expert knowledge and despecialisation

Focusing research on one subject facilitates discussion around the very role of specialised knowledge among reporters. Health is traditionally a beat covered by specialised reporters, similar to politics, crime, and education; often such beats are something towards which younger journalists strive (Soloski 1989). However, there appears to be a move away from specialised reporter in the multi-skilled environment in which journalists, in particular younger journalists, are operating. Nikunen finds this shift from specialised beats towards general reporting is one of the most significant changes in a post-converged era (Nikunen 2013; see

also Phillips 2010). Management suggest it increases knowledge-sharing between journalists' collective intelligence, and journalists are expected to move between topics to hold a broad base of skills and competences (Nikunen 2013, p.876), and it means the costs associated with specialised positions are reduced and such "economic necessity" of despecialisation is also raised by Siegelbaum and Thomas (2016) when considering normative failures in a changing news industry. However, rather than a move away from specialist knowledge, Donsbach (2014) believes the increasingly fragmented media world means journalists must have expertise in the subjects about which they report to empower them to act effectively:

> Only then will journalists be able to make sound judgments on the newsworthiness of events, only then can they ask critical questions to the actors, find the right experts, and only then can they resist infiltration of non-professional factors into their decision-making … [This knowledge] has to be sufficiently deep so that the structure of the field is understood and the main actors are known.
>
> (Donsbach 2014, p.668)

Expert knowledge, or a lack of, may also influence how a news story is assembled by a journalist; the potential knock-on effect of journalists without a niche knowledge of an area relying on official sources and pre-packaged content is one area worthy of concern. Boesman et al find that specialisation impacted on the channels through which a story originates: specialised reporters used Sigal's "enterprise" channels twice as often as non-specialised reporters (2015). Lack of expertise may also increase the reliance on external sources as journalists may not have technical familiarity with the topic, and therefore be unquestioning of the content. Nikunen cites one reporter who highlights the "real danger" of diminishing expertise from the newsroom: "When the journalists no longer have expertise in any area, they are dependent on the experts and may even be led by them, because in the rush you can't really say if there is another angle" (2013, p.877). Gans warned, however, of the "symbiotic relationship of mutual obligation" which beat reporters have with their sources, "which both facilitates and complicates their work" (1979, p.133), echoing the enabling/constraining dimension (Giddens 1984) of many aspects of news production.

4.6.1 Specialisation and news values

Catalán Matamoros et al (2007) find fewer than 6% of health stories in Swedish newspapers are written by specialised health journalists. While some were written directly by health professionals, academics, or "ordinary" citizens, general reporters write more than 80% of the health content. There are well-highlighted concerns regarding the accuracy of journalists reporting on medical research and developments; factors such as time restraints, problems

accessing sources and a lack of technical expertise are seen as barriers to the quality and reliability (Wilson et al. 2010; Schwitzer 2008). Leask et al (2010) interviewed both specialised and general reporters in Australia, and asked how they dealt with coverage of a medical epidemic. Specialised reporters had "more sound technical knowledge, channels to appropriate sources, power within their organisations, and ability to advocate for better quality coverage" (ibid., p.1). In efforts to find an original angle on stories, the specialised reporters were given more freedom to develop stories, and relied on contacts, local sources, and real-life cases. By contrast, general reporters with little expertise found it important to access "brief, readily digestible information" (ibid., p.4). Significantly, the researchers find that specialised reporters produce higher quality news content and have a better understanding of events. This is attributed not to age, but to the familiarity with technical elements, a network of contacts, and increased autonomy to select their own stories rather than "derive news and expert comments from other news" (ibid., p.5. See also Wilson et al 2010). One suggested means of tackling such inaccuracies has been to allow journalists more time to research, and to facilitate specific training (Schwitzer 2008, p.700) which, as discussed, requires a reallocation of resources (Giddens 1984) from those in positions of power in a news organisation.

Nisbet and Fahy highlight the politicisation process that may occur whereby the focus may shift from the thematic substance of the issue, to the "strategies and tactics employed by competing elected officials and interest groups, and how these strategies might play out politically". Although writing about science subjects, it may align with certain general social policy issues. They say divisive, polarising coverage based upon conflict narrative can also undermine trust in experts and officials, and reinforce "public cynicism about whether a problem can ever be resolved" (2015, p.225). Such conflict narratives (Schultz 2007) and other news values (Harcup & O'Neill 2001) ensure that the events covered in the news are more negative than those experienced by many individuals on a day-to-day basis. "Bad news" was the dominant news value (out of 10) in Harcup & O'Neill's study on content in UK newspapers (2016), even if this may clash with what journalists think ought to be covered (Strömbäck et al. 2012). Drawing on Shoemaker and Vos's level of gatekeeping analysis, Soroka (2016) highlights various factors which lead to a propensity of seemingly negative news in the media. These include system-level gates such as internal, journalistic conceptions about what constitutes news and ideas about what the audience is interested in, and thus, competing for that audience. Organisational-level factors include particular outlets' priorities, such as general sensationalism or an emphasis on crime. Individual-level factors include editors and journalists' preferences, as well as the human tendency to prioritise negative

information over positive information. These reflect the multiple factors influencing news content, as raised in Chapters 2 and 3.

Consequently, although they may be of high social significance, the stories health journalists write still must compete with other news and be judged by the same criteria, which means journalists may feel under pressure to produce dramatic content, made relevant to their audiences, and preferably personalised (Hartley 1982 in Entwistle & Sheldon 1999, p.123). Disparity between general reporters and specialist health correspondents also extends to role perception, or fundamentally different approaches to their work. Williams finds a tension between the two groups in their reporting of HIV and AIDS issues in Britain. General reporters, including freelancers who submitted work for the national newspapers, were considered to be responsible for much of the "shoddy" journalism, which included gay-bashing, victim-blaming and sensationalist copy. They were more focused on the news values associated with particular stories, rather than using the media as a source of information for the public regarding the disease and the sense of social responsibility which motivated many specialist reporters (Williams 1999, p.74), as discussed in Chapter 3. Concerns about news values, rather than the public interest, taking precedent is also evident in the coverage of the MMR vaccine in the late 1990s, and the unproven link with autism (Blakemore 2015; Flaherty 2011; Smith et al. 2008). Curran refers to the commercial forces behind the tabloid campaign against the vaccine in the UK, highlighting how they contributed to reviving an avoidable disease; "however, it did sell a lot of newspapers" (2010, p.471). The clashing of news values, market forces and journalistic values epitomises the varying signification rules (Giddens 1984) in a news organisation, not just across departments, but even among reporters, which serves as an important reminder about the role of the individual, and the skills, perspectives and beliefs they bring to a newsroom.

4.7 Conclusion

Carlson captures the importance of sources in news by saying: "Information cannot be divorced from the intentions of sources. Events look different to different people; who is asked shapes what is reported as true" (2016, p.239). Yet the desire to present a true version of events, linked to objectivity and other professional values, appears to lend itself to the version of truth as typically seen by elite actors. As this chapter has illustrated, the constructive and rhetorical nature of news ensures that individual journalists and editors maintain a powerful role by deciding who gets an input and what issues are granted salience. However, while this suggests that journalists maintain control, they engage with a host of sources all seeking to influence news coverage, and the symbiotic relationship swings back and forth, both enabling

and constraining journalists in their work (Giddens 1984). Furthermore, the temporal and resource-related pressures on journalists' to find news, to appear legitimate, and to convince audiences of their professionalism lead to a heavy reliance on routine channels. This is not always a problem, given the sometimes-valuable role of disseminating information from state organisations, but the ubiquity of the practice is most concerning, raising questions about journalists' independence. The reliance on information subsidies and PR activity is not solely to the benefit of the traditionally official voices, as this chapter has shown, as alternative sources can use PR strategies to gain a platform, but even this may warrants concern if journalists fail to be active in scrutinising any source's agenda.

The role of private citizens and "the public" in news is a complex feature to deconstruct, and is indicative of the apparent collision between short-term focused news values and broader normative goals for how the media should function. Whether individuals' stories are used to empower them as citizens and contribute to the media's democratic function, or simply for token contributions or dramatic effect, is reflective of some of the broader concerns about how news values and newsroom practices and priorities identify with journalism's broader societal role. However, while normative perspectives have historically laid the idealised groundwork, journalism will likely fail to live up to such expectations. Nerone reminds us that journalism is an "ism", in that it is a theory of what "perfect agents do in perfect situations", not necessarily a description of what actually occurs (2012, p.452). Furthermore, with contesting ideas about what journalism's goal should actually be, as discussed in Chapter 3, any assessment on the media's performance will vary widely depending on the perspective. Nielsen suggests that such critiques may not be the most useful approach for assessing journalism, as highlighting failures in such a manner detracts from understanding what is actually happening:

> Normative critiques based on goals actually-existing journalism cannot realistically achieve, never aimed to achieve, and/or duplicate what many others are doing are less useful than discussions of where journalism might focus its finite and often very limited resources, when and where journalists manage to do things they actually strive to do on the basis of professional norms and values, and that no one else will do.
>
> (2017, p.2)

For that reason, tying practices (such as source use) to journalistic outcomes (the final published content) is a useful way of comprehending what factors are shaping contemporary journalism, and what influence this is having on the information audiences are receiving. This process, and how it is influenced by internalised journalistic roles as well as factors beyond their control, is captured in the four aspects of Stones' quadripartite model: external structures,

internal structures, active agency/agent's practices, and outcomes. The following chapter outlines this study's methodology, which presents the basis for an analysis which ties together sourcing, production processes and published content.

Chapter 5 │ METHODOLOGY

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The goal of this empirical study is to analyse news content and consider how it is influenced by the practices associated with online production. This is achieved by examining what voices are used and how stories are sourced, and by investigating how this relates to newsroom factors such as time of publication and authorship details. Ryfe (2017a) has suggested the need to more fully incorporate the performance aspect of journalism, which may be seen as the actions and behaviour, into studies about practice. However, as this chapter suggests, linking practice to published content requires a fresh approach to content analysis, one which moves beyond the text. For that reason, novel methods are needed to develop the link between daily actions and output, and the extensive coding is complemented with interviews. This chapter begins by outlining the mixed-methods approach and research question. Attention then shifts to a discussion about content analysis and how it can be used to capture sourcing practices, despite some researchers' reservations. The qualitative document analysis method receives particular attention, with detail about how its reflexive approach has affected the analytical process and the research conceptualisation. The justification for the case selection is then outlined, discussing the health sample, the news websites under study, and the 14-week sample period. Details of the pilot study are followed by an overview of the coding process and an explanation of how source material was found. The two-phase content analysis, which was needed to capture elements of both the sourcing and publication process, is then described, followed by details on case studies. The chapter concludes with an overview of how the interview data was gathered and analysed: the interview data, obtained after the coding was complete, complements and further informs the content analysis data, and is based on contributions from journalists and policy experts, including the minister for health at the time the sample was gathered.

Although much of the data presented in Chapter 6 and 7 is quantified, the nature of how the information was obtained and recorded is a move away from more traditional content analyses and draws heavily on the work of David Altheide (1996). While Altheide refers to the qualitative term, this study is not a textual or discourse analysis; instead, it captures the distinction between quantitative content analyses and document analysis, which requires a more inductive, reflexive method. Garnering the data also required original approaches and a number of digital tools assisted this process. These include collecting stories via keywords and

RSS feeds, using survey forms for coding and generating databases, and using Nvivo software to bring transparency and a systematic rigour to the qualitative coding process.

5.1 Overview of methods and research question

The study uses a mixed-methods approach which provides some advantages: Teddlie and Kashakoori describe how quantitative methods are associated with confirmatory research and theory verification, whereas qualitative approaches are linked to exploratory research and theory generation (2003, p.14). Therefore, the qualitative element is important given the study's use of strong structuration theory which, as far as can be determined, has not been used in journalism studies, while the quantitative aspect provides a solid grounding for content analysis findings. A mixed-method approach can provide stronger inferences through triangulation opportunities, and facilitates a greater diversity of divergent views (ibid.). The triangulation element allows for "several perspectives on the same phenomenon" (Jensen 2002a, p.272) which can help to improve the accuracy of analysis (Neuman 2014).

A mixed-method approach can provide stronger inferences through triangulation opportunities, and facilitates a greater diversity of divergent views (ibid.). The triangulation element allows for "several perspectives on the same phenomenon" (Jensen 2002a, p.272) which can help to improve the accuracy of analysis (Neuman 2014). The study's methodological approach incorporates various stages, and at this point it may be useful to provide an overview and position each element before further discussion later in the chapter. To summarise, the study comprises three elements:

- A quantitative content analysis of all news stories related to the health service and health policy (n = 1,101);
- A qualitative document analysis of a reduced sample (n=896) to determine the sources/voice used and the origins of material. This includes analysis of three case studies;
- Interviews with journalistic practitioners (n=5) and policy experts (n=2).

The primary data in the study is a two-phase content analysis: the first phase records attributes about the story's publication, such as publishing time, authorship type and actors/sources included in the text. The second phase, based on a slightly reduced sample in order to focus explicitly on news reports (and excluding features, opinion columns and analysis), involves tracing back the source material, and recording this alongside the actors included. This allows the two phases of coding to be combined, and links found between, for example, the time of day a story is published, the dominant voices heard, and the origins of the material used

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in the news report. Such analysis can be carried out with any of the story attributes which were recorded (such as authorship type, specific publication), and combined with the origins of material, or the use of particular voices. It, therefore, becomes possible to analyse each news text from various perspectives: publication details, journalistic sourcing practices, and the outcome, in the context of what voices are heard. The intention of the interviews is to further inform the content analysis, by providing insight into production and sourcing practices within the news organisations, and offer commentary from others with involvement and familiarity with the sector.

These multiple methods are needed to build a link between daily practices and the published content and are used to answer the research question: *How do the practices of online news production influence the sourcing and publication of health policy-related news content?* These key terms, and their application in this research, are clarified below:

Practices: The frequently repeated actions evident in news production.

Online news production: News production that takes place in professional news organisations (both newspaper-brand websites and online-only organisations).

Sourcing: Both (i) where stories originate (the source material) and (ii) the voices/actors used in the text.

Publication: The trends regarding the time at which stories are published on websites.

Policy-related news stories: The focus is on stories relating to the health service which, as highlighted in Chapter 1, is a controversial subject regularly appearing in Irish news coverage. The term policy is meant not solely in the legislative or party-political sense, but covers the existing structures and operation of all aspects of the health service. This is discussed further in section 5.3.1.

The central research question remains relatively broad, so the research focuses on three aspects in which online news production has potentially effected change for news organisations: (i) timeliness and immediacy of publication; (ii) authorship, and the similarity/variation in the output of specialist and general reporters; (iii) where journalists source content and what actors/voices they include.

5.2 Using content analysis to investigate journalistic practices

The two-phase content analysis developed for this research draws on a triangulation approach which can facilitate more astute conclusions (Neuman 2014; Jensen 2002a). The first phase

involves recording the manifest data of the sample and the use of sources in each story, and the second draws on the more qualitative document analysis which Altheide (1987) describes and which is discussed further in section 5.2.1. Before the details of these two phases are further explored, it is useful to first discuss content analysis more generally, before leading on to the advantage of a qualitative document analysis approach for answering the research question.

Content analysis as a research method is based on the assumption that the material being analysed is a fair reflection of the behaviour and values of those who create the material (Berger 1998, p.23). As the purpose of this research is to study what information journalists are producing, content analysis is, therefore, an appropriate method to use; Kolmer even argues that it is not possible to assess journalists' daily work without reference to the output and final product (2008, p.117). He says that the qualities of published content enable researchers to consider the relevance of the cultural, political and economic framework for production of media content. These are all factors which connect to the four aspects of Stones' (2005) quadripartite model discussed in Chapter 2: external structures, internal structures, agent's practices, and output. Weaver (2008, p.107) believes observations and content analyses are more valid and reliable methods of studying what journalists do rather than survey data, while Berger (1998, p.26) points out that the unobtrusive nature of content analysis increases its reliability, which may be a concern with observational studies (Neuman 2014).

One of the advantages of content analysis studies is that, according to Schrøder, "they can serve to confirm or disconfirm intuitive impressions" through systematic descriptions of large sets of media discourses (2002, p.102). He adds that a "trade-off" is the "inevitable reduction of complexity that follows from the decontextualisation of meaningful elements", a concern Hansen (1991) also raises. However, such a trade-off may be more often associated with the purely quantitative, statistical content analysis approaches in which advocates seek a clear detachment (Krippendorff 2013). Focusing on content analysis and sources in particular, Hansen et al (1998) refer to one of the criticisms of quantitative content analysis: that frequency of occurrence does not explain influence. Drawing on the terms of primary definition of sources in news, they say that, to understand such sources' weight, "it is necessary to take into consideration the 'newsmaking scenarios' or 'fora' through which such primary definers become newsworthy and articulate their claims (ibid., p.110). These newsmaking processes are central to this study, but the link between process and output raises the argument made by some researchers that content analysis alone cannot be used to explain practice. Boesman et al (2015) and Reich (2006) suggest that content analysis alone is insufficient for tracing the origins of news content. Boesman et al suggest that: "The appearance of routine sources in a news story does not automatically mean that the story was

found through a routine newsgathering channel", and say that content analysis alone is "inappropriate for production studies" (2015, p.909). Reich (2006, p.501) argues that content analysis is insufficient as it examines the product, not the process. However, it is this limitation that the two-phase content analysis used in this research seeks to overcome. Both Boesman et al and Reich cite Manning (2001, p.48), who highlights the limitations of focusing solely on media texts. However, when Manning's original work is examined, there may be scope for a more thorough content analysis – moving beyond the media text – to be used to consider processes and power. Manning writes:

> Unless we begin to consider the news encoding process and news source strategies associated with the production of a news text, and the power relations underpinning these, the "hierarchies of definitional power" are left in a vacuum, located in the text but lacking a social context.
>
> (2001, p.48)

Manning refers to the "difficulties inherent in trying to make inferences about social practices or power relations from the evidence of media texts alone", rather than actually studying the encoding process itself. He adds:

> There has certainly been an explosion in the number and intensity of the information flows circulating in society but there is also some control and some order in the way they enter both the public and private domains. The task of a sociology of news and news sources is to trace the sources of order and control without reducing or essentialising a complex social reality.
>
> (2001, p.48)

The reference to news source strategies, practice and the "order" in how information enters the public domain can be clearly linked to the channels through which news originates, which is one of the primary focuses in this study. Yet to do that, information from outside of the media text must be examined. Therefore, attempting to capture some of this complexity can be done through content analysis, but may require additional approaches which expand beyond the news text. One of the limitations Hansen put on her study of sources was that "the content analyst is not able to detect information subsidies provided to the media organisations" (1991, p.482). However, that is no longer the barrier it once was: online search tools facilitate information-sourcing and it is easier than ever to trace source material. Bertrand and Hughes warn against making unwarranted inferences based on content analysis data alone, and "taking the discussion further than the data legitimately allows" by basing inferences solely on content analysis (2005, p.179). In this study, the fact that analysis process includes material which is

drawn from beyond the news text strengthens any inferences made about how source material and source actors interact.

While most content analysis studies are, by their nature, restricted to the text, and generate quantifiable results, the actual coding process in Phase 2 of this study extends beyond the text. Rather than considering this content analysis as either quantitative or qualitative, this study draws on Krippendorff's questioning of the validity of such distinctions: "ultimately all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers" (2013, p.22). For many researchers content analysis appears as a purely quantitative activity to gather statistical data, measuring the extent and frequency of messages (Sumser 2000, p.209), but there is the potential for content analysis to become much more qualitatively focused. Priest (2010) makes the distinction between "relatively superficial" manifest content, and "deeper, symbolic" latent content: qualitative content studies can "better take into account subtleties of the structure of arguments and narratives not easily captured by quantitative summaries (ibid., p.108). Krippendorff (2013) lists a number of alternative protocols that are more qualitative in nature, which includes the approach advocated by David Altheide known as *ethnographic content analysis*, which seeks a more iterative, reflexive approach as the analysis process develops. Kripendorff, however, warns that "unfortunately … this call has not yet yielded specific methods of analysis" (2013, p.27). Such a limitation and lack of specific protocols and precedents on which to draw meant that new tools were needed for this research. The following section presents a brief overview of Altheide's approach, and outlines how it was applied in this research.

5.2.1 Qualitative document analysis

Altheide (1987; 1996) has written extensively about the potential for gathering large amounts of qualitative material through what he calls *ethnographic content analysis* (ECA), or qualitative document analysis[5]. He says the context or social situations surrounding a document must be understood, particularly in the case of news reports:

> They are organisational products. This again suggests the importance of process, or how something is actually created and put together. Newspapers and TV newscasts are put together according to a routine and a complex division of labour and deadlines.
>
> (Altheide 1996, p.9)

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[5] Altheide refers to "ethnographic content analysis" (ECA) and "qualitative document analysis" interchangeably in his book *Qualitative Media Analysis* (1996).

This resonates with the role of practices as discussed in Chapter 2, and taking an ECA approach to documents offers the opportunity to collect both quantitative data, as well as narrative descriptions and textual analysis. Altheide says this flexibility, interactive and reflexive approach is in contrast to the positivist contentions of quantitative content analysis. Altheide presents 12 stages of the gathering and coding process for using ECA and the stages broadly mirror the analytical progression of this study and capture the reflexive approach to the process, illustrated in Table 5.1.

STAGE (Altheide 1996)	DETAILS OF USE IN THIS STUDY
Topic	Select the subject area
Ethnographic study/lit	Observe the news product to establish ideas
A few documents	Pilot period
Draft protocol	Pilot coding sheet
Examine documents	Pilot coding process
Revise protocol	Revision of coding
Theoretical sample	Decide on specifics of sample
Collect data	Data gathered over 14 weeks
Code data	Stories coded with coding sheets and in NVivo software
Compare items	Run queries and analyse data
Case studies	Selected based on suitability factors garnered during coding
Report	Results and analysis discussion

Table 5.1: The process of qualitative document analysis, including how each stage was used in this study. Adapted from Altheide 1996, p.13

Crucial to this approach is how each stage informs the next: Altheide says the aim is to be "systematic and analytic, but not rigid" (ibid., p.16). The need to be systematic in qualitative work is also highlighted by Sumser, who advises anybody doing any kind of content analysis to think in variables as much as possible to ensure the research is empirically sound, "as the burden of proof needed is often higher in qualitative research" (2001, p.209). In this research, variables under consideration include:

- Is this from a newspaper website, or online-only outlet?
- Was the story written by a specialist reporter, or a general news reporter?
- Was this story effectively a "print-first" story or did it appear online first?[6]
- Through which "channel of production" (Sigal 1973) did it originate?

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[6] This can typically be determined by the time of publication online. For example, the Irish Times publishes many news stories online at circa 1am. These are stories which are appearing in the following day's newspapers.

These variables developed throughout the initial pilot period and data collection as this reflexive approach is central to ECA, and further variables are discussed in the analysis chapters. Contextualising and adding narrative observations to news content, which Altheide advocates, can be a useful method of overcoming the limitations of a purely statistical set of results. For example, in Maier's (2010) comparison of online and print news content, he noted that one limitation was the news stories were only assessed quantitatively, with no evaluation of tone, accuracy, balance, and other journalistic values (2010, p.17). This research includes descriptions of the content produced, its context, and general observations as the aim was to gather information beyond statistical findings. Steensen believes there has been a methodological deficiency in research into online journalism, suggesting the field is dominated by surveys, interviews and content analysis. To strengthen the content analysis work, he suggests that it should be combined with more qualitative approaches to the analysis of texts which can help to understand the complexity of online journalism (2011, p.322).

An important factor in selecting methodologies is the suitability for the researcher: Kolmer (2008, p.120) says a certain level of circumstantial knowledge is always necessary to understand a text correctly. For Altheide, "ideally" the researcher using ECA will have a general awareness of news production methods and be familiar with the "context and process… to adequately consider the relevant aspects of a news report, including the knowledge to rule out erroneous explanations of news content" (1996, p.9). I believe my newsroom experience ensures an awareness of various factors of producing news content, such as the importance put on the positioning of sources, the significance of the lead sentence and how stories can be framed or content interpreted in various ways. However, this familiarity can, of course, bring problems when researchers have been socialised in similar settings to those whom they are studying. In this instance, the knowledge gained from eight years working in newsrooms (in production roles) means that observations may differ from what a more removed researcher without such experience may find. However, the nature of the content analysis approach arguably minimises this personalised impact as it is less interpretive or subjective than, for example, discourse analysis or ethnography.

5.3 Case selection

The following section addresses three of the key decisions made when selecting the sample: the health topic, the five websites, and the period of data collection.

5.3.1 Health

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, health is a valuable news area on which to focus and it is used here as a lens through which the broader news landscape is investigated. Although this research uses health policy stories as a sample, it only includes content from general-interest news websites rather than specialist health publications. The reason for this is two-fold: firstly, this is more beneficial for analysing the news to which general readers, who may not be drawn to read niche publications, are exposed. Secondly, selecting general news outlets allows the exploration of the potentially contrasting roles and output of specialist and general reporters, which is a key distinction and has implications for the tone and content of news reports, as highlighted in Chapter 4. As the emphasis in this study is on policy-related content, it is important to set the parameters of what this comprises. Bou-Karram et al define public policy as "government policy such as any statement or position taken by the government or government departments" (2017, p.2), however, a more open understanding may be useful to capture the diverse issues in the health policy sector. Hill has defined policy as "the product of political influence, determining and setting limits to what the state does" (1993, p.47). This emphasis on the state is important, as it captures how policy can exist separately to specific political parties' active agendas, and remain in place even as partisan government composition shifts. Dye (1998) cites Laswell and Kaplan's summation of policy as "a projected programme of goals, values and practices". However, crucially, Dye argues that policy is whatever "government chooses to do or not to do" (1998, p.3). This acknowledgment of inaction is especially important in an area such as healthcare, in which existing structures may have prevailed for decades, and such an approach incorporates active changes being sought or implemented by government, as well as the legacy issues which are constituted and reinforced through daily practices, even if no renewed policy documents or positions are present. Such a non-direct interpretation is also reflected in Miller's definition of health policy which most fully captures the approach towards policy taken in this study: "the aggregate of principles, stated or unstated, that . . . characterise the distribution of resources, services, and political influences that impact on the health of the population (1987, p.15).

While this relatively broad approach to policy was used in this study, clarity of selection criteria for news texts was also needed. The parameters of what qualified as a health policy story were based on whether or not the text answered either of these questions:

- Does the content deal with an issue that could directly impact on the health/health service policy/conditions/treatment of Irish residents?
- Does the State – in the political or legislative sense – have, or could it have, any role in this subject?

This emphasis on policy is important as much academic research and commentary on health coverage relates to the coverage of scientific/medical developments, or lifestyle, which was deemed irrelevant for this research. Where lifestyle stories are included, it is only in the context of a link to a potentially legislative or policy-based issue, such as efforts to deal with obesity (such as a "sugar tax"); stories based on, for example, weight-loss advice or health benefits of certain foods are excluded. This distinction is highlighted by Stroobant et al (2017) as hard/soft news. While their study, examining health news in a very broad sense, included stories such as new diets and lifestyle issues, such "soft" issues were excluded from this study to maintain the policy link. Other scientific developments were also excluded on the basis that, on their own, they did not have policy implication; however, if a source tied to Ireland became involved this may bring a fresh relevance. For example, if a new drug is developed overseas it would not be included. However, if an individual or activist campaign was seeking its use in Ireland, then it was included. As discussed in section 5.5, keywords guided the sample, but these were not definitive and manual checks ensured that all content included in the sample was relevant to the policy dimension.

5.3.2 Titles

The research looks at content from the websites of three print brands (The Irish Times, the Irish Independent/Sunday Independent, and the Irish Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror), and two online-only titles (TheJournal.ie, BreakingNews.ie). The print-brand titles were selected to find a balance between popularity, ownership (which could impact on the sharing of content between titles), a mixture of broadsheet and tabloid style, and a significant web presence. The inclusion of a tabloid title was important to include a diversity of approach to news that is often overlooked in research.

WEBSITE	OWNERS	FORMAT	ALEXA RANKING	FACEBOOK LIKES	TWITTER FOLLOWERS	OTHER JUSTIFICATION
Independent.ie	Independent News & Media Ltd	Print and online	1	274,000	184,000	Highest circulation print newspaper in Ireland
IrishTimes.com	Irish Times Trust	Print and online	3	248,000	140,000	Newspaper of record and second highest print circulation
IrishMirror.ie	Trinity Mirror Ltd	Print and online	6*	281,400	24,500	Not tabloid newspaper with highest print circulation, but tabloid with most significant web presence[7]
TheJournal.ie	Distilled Media Ltd	Online only	5	280,000	270,000	Only online-only website which is a member of the Press Council of Ireland
BreakingNews.ie	Landmark Media Ltd	Online only	8	194,500	29,000	One of the longest-running online-only websites, established in 2003

Table 5.2: The five websites selected. Information correct as of April 2015. Circulation for newspaper titles included in Appendix B.   *Alexa shows Mirror.co.uk, not IrishMirror.ie

For the print titles, the Irish Independent has the highest print circulation in the country, followed by The Irish Times (ilevel.ie 2017a - see also Appendix B). The Irish Daily Mirror is not the highest circulation tabloid, nor is it Irish-owned (owned by UK-based Trinity Mirror group, but publishing an Irish edition), but have a heavy web presence. As well as the most regularly updated website, it has a substantially larger presence on social media platforms than the other tabloid titles such as the Irish Sun (also British owned) or the Irish-owned Irish Daily Star.

The online titles were selected from a much smaller pool of options covering general news and feature regular all-day updates. TheJournal.ie, established in 2010, is the only net-native publication that is a member of the Press Council of Ireland and is owned by Distilled Media, which also owns the biggest property websites in the country, Daft.ie, and message forum website Boards.ie. The 2017 *Digital News Report* (Newman & Levy 2017) finds it to be the most popular news website in Ireland, and its popularity on social media is comparable, and often exceeds, the bigger newspaper brands, and its journalists appear on television and radio panel discussions. It covers news reports, comment and analysis, features, and lifestyle and entertainment. Newspaper publishers Thomas Crosbie Holdings (TCH) established BreakingNews.ie in 2003. Landmark Media, a holding company of TCH following the

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[7] The Mirror is the tabloid title in Ireland which has the most significant web presence. It is for this reason - as well as its owner - that it was chosen over the Herald (owned by INM and shares newsdesk with the Independent titles), the Star (weak web presence and INM a shareholder) and the Irish Daily Mail (owned by UK-based Associated Newspaper but lack of web presence).

publisher's entry into receivership, acquired the site in 2013.[8] Its focus is on relatively short news stories, with no bylines on articles[9], and on an information page on its website it attributes much of its content to various third parties. It shares ownership with the Irish Examiner, and the same content often appears on the two websites. As far as can be determined, the daily updates during the day on the Irish Examiner website are produced by BreakingNews.ie. BreakingNews.ie and TheJournal.ie offer two contrasting approaches to online news, and analysis of their output allows discussion of the variations within net-native publications, which can often be overlooked.

As with many websites, obtaining accurate and comparable statistics for traffic is difficult, however Alexa rankings suggest the five titles selected are among the most popular news websites in Ireland (see Appendix C). Alexa ranks sites based on the level of traffic from those who have Alexa toolbars installed on their browsers; while this is does not capture all visitors, it is a ranking previously used in journalism research (Neiger & Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2016; Boczkowski et al. 2011). Such rankings, combined with the websites' social media presence and their diversity of ownership and publication styles, ensure the five outlets are a suitable sample to get a broad and diverse insight into general online news coverage in Ireland. Table 5.2 shows the news organisations' owners, Alexa rankings (of Irish news websites) and popularity on Twitter and Facebook, as of April 2015 when the first sample was taken.

The Reuters Digital News Report 2017 lists the 16 most popular news websites in Ireland and its audience survey finds TheJournal.ie as the most popular news website, used by 32% of those surveyed. The list also features Independent.ie in third, IrishTimes.com in fourth, and BreakingNews.ie in fifth. The Irish Mirror is absent but remains a worthwhile source to include due to its tabloid nature. Despite its popularity – ranked #2 in the Digital News Report 2017 – the public service broadcaster website RTÉ was excluded from the sample on the basis that it would be an outlier in the context of the other news websites. Its website offering is based heavily on content from its television and radio broadcasts; the website is unable to receive funding from the public licence fee, so is therefore clearly a secondary platform for RTÉ news in terms of publishing new content. Other Sunday newspaper titles (such as the *Sunday Business Post* and the *Sunday Times*) also make valuable contributions to coverage of

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[8] In December 2017 it was announced that the Irish Times was acquiring the assets of Landmark Media, which includes the Irish Examiner and BreakingNews.ie. The deal was expected to take up to six months to complete.

[9] In the months after the data gathering period has ended BreakingNews.ie started adding bylines, primarily on some showbusiness or entertainment stories, but appears to be somewhat sporadic. At the time of the data being gathered bylines were not present.

the health service, but their weekly routines and lack of daily deadlines are deviations when compared with daily news publications. If this research was purely a study of media coverage of the health system then these other outlets would need to be considered, but the focus being on daily news productions means their inclusion would not be appropriate.

5.3.3 Time Period

Although a constructed week is considered the most effective sampling method for content analysis studies (Riffe et al. 1993; Hester & Dougall 2007), how stories develop within the news cycle and over consecutive days is an important consideration for this research. For this reason, the constructed week method would be ineffective and a solid, consecutive period was more suitable. The constructed week offers a more irregular sample which is not appropriate in this study, where the coverage of specific news events is under analysis alongside coverage of the sector more generally. To combat some of the concerns about consecutive days (Hester & Dougall 2007), the sample drawn is larger than previous content analysis studies which have examined source material. For example, Lewis et al (2008a) use two one-week samples a month apart, Paulussen and D'heer's (2013) study uses 14 consecutive days, and Stroobant et al (2017) use 28 consecutive days. This research uses two seven-week periods for analysis, approximately four months apart (April 27th-June 14th 2015; September 21st-November 8th 2015), totalling 14 weeks. Two separate periods were used to ensure that the selected sample was reasonably representative of coverage and to reduce the risk of selecting a period of disproportionately high or low coverage. The sample generated 1,101 stories overall, and the two phases produced a similar number of stories: 563 and 538 respectively. Figure 5.1 shows the number of stories produced by the five websites across both time periods. Independent.ie and IrishTimes.com published the most texts; they are the two daily newspapers with the highest circulation and are the only two publications in this sample with specialised health correspondents. IrishMirror.ie produced the fewest stories which was unsurprising given its tabloid nature and smaller newsroom operation. Of the two net-native titles, there is variation in the quantity of stories between the two websites, with BreakingNews.ie producing a higher number.
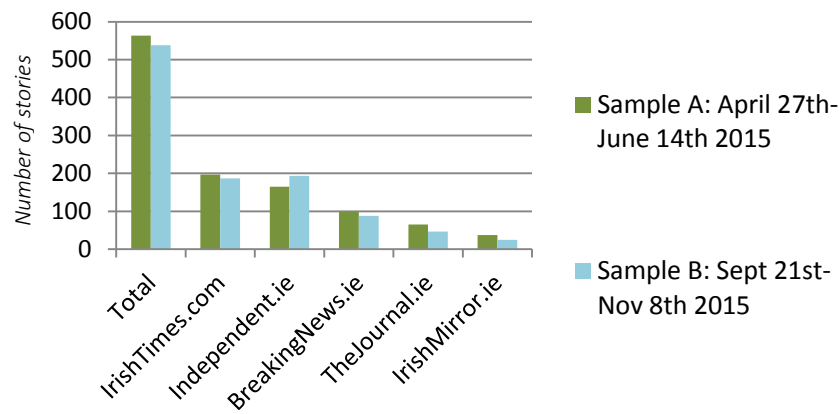
Figure 5.1: The total number of stories produced by the five websites across the two sample periods

Hansen warns of the need to be aware of cycles and seasonal variations which affect media coverage (1998, p.103). The political calendar means certain major events should be factored in, or out, and this sample excludes the annual political summer recess where news coverage is often skewed for the "silly season" (ibid.). The inclusion of coverage in the run-up to a general election (in early 2016) was considered but dismissed; this may have skewed the data, as much election coverage is now often focused on "the game" aspects rather than policy discussion (Lawrence 2000; Stromback & Kaid in McMenamin et al. 2012). Also, the unpredictability of an election date meant this added uncertainty to the research plan. Overall, the rationale of the sample echoes Barnhurst's summation about avoiding distortion of holidays or major events when selecting a consecutive sample, as this is "best suited to reveal routine rather than exceptional content" (2013, p.6), as was the intention in this study.

5.4 Pilot study

In early 2015, two pilot studies were carried out over two different seven-day periods (one in January 2015 and one in March 2015). This was to help with the operationalistion of the research, to test the data collection method, to estimate sample sizes, and to refine and amend the coding sheets. The main outcomes of the pilot periods were that:

(i) The initial data collection method needed to be expanded as relying on RSS feeds was not fully effective;

(ii) There was a need to add more source types to the coding sheet, and a reflective question at the end where comments could be added. This proved invaluable for noting provisional observations;

(iii) Deciding that, with some amendments and elaboration, the first round of coding could be a valuable source for quantitative analysis. Before the first pilot period, the first coding stage was initially intended to simply act as a database for storing and searching through stories. However, by including sources used, the first source type, and information about the reporter and time of publication it offered a potential for detailed analysis, facilitating extensive cross-tabulation and data which could be linked to the qualitative coding process.

(iv) A realisation that stories were not being updated during the day as much as initially anticipated. How to deal with the updates (and knowing which "version" of the story to take) was a methodological concern, but one that was eased knowing that updates did not appear to be common (discussed further below).

(v) The pilot studies helped to gauge the size of the desired sample. The number of stories collected during the actual study (an average of 78.5 per week) was comparable to the pilot period (80).

5.5 Accessing stories

The news stories were accessed and collated in two ways. The primary method was to access the stories via RSS feed which streams the stories as they are published. This collection was typically done every two days. The RSS software (Feedly) allowed searches, but a browser add-on (SPOI filter) that allowed keywords to be highlighted was more useful, as shown in Figure 5.2[10]. These keywords guided the search and allowed for a more efficient initial harvesting of relevant stories, but ultimately all published content coming through these feeds was checked for relevance. Furthermore, not every story which was highlighted by a keyword match was automatically included. As the lower story in Figure 5.2 illustrates, even if a keyword was present – in this case "hospitalised" in relation to a road collision – this did not mean it was an appropriate inclusion.

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[10] The keyword list included up to 50 words, such as "hospital", "health"; "emergency", "accident"; "Leo Varadkar" (the minister for health), "HSE"/"Health Service Executive".
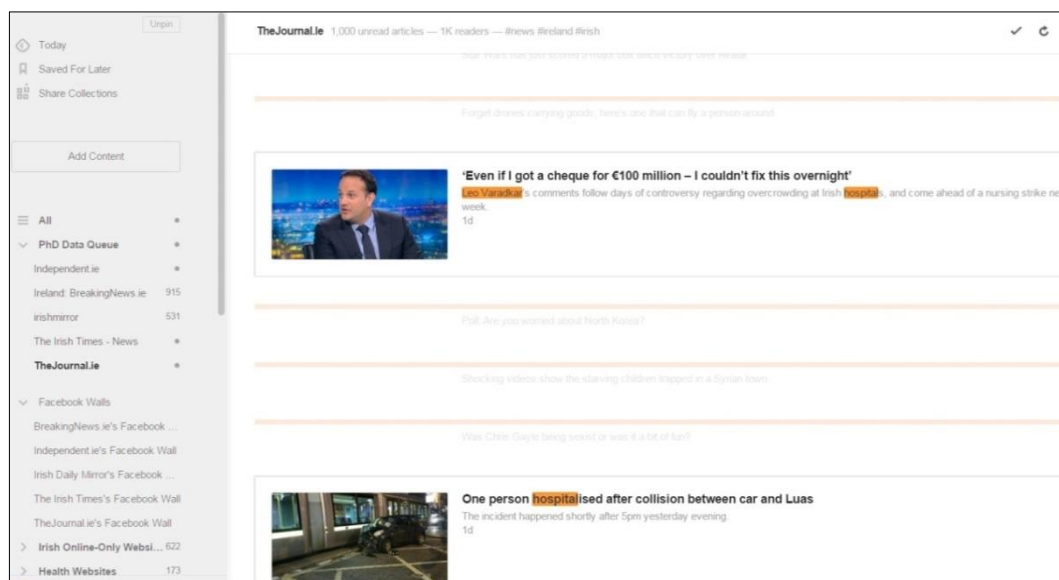
Figure 5.2: A screenshot from the Feedly RSS software combined with the SPOI keyword filter

Feedly allows the relevant stories to be directly exported to another cloud-based software programme, Evernote. However, for undeterminable reasons, the RSS feeds did not capture all content published by newspaper-brand websites (approximately 80% success)[11]. This was highlighted in the test period and resolved, as far as possible, for the actual data collection by also accessing the websites directly. Searches for relevant content were carried out, guided by metadata tags such as "health" which often appeared on the top of stories. Backtracking on the total output of individual journalists, particularly specialist correspondents, was also useful. A third check for missed content involved scanning the five websites' Twitter feeds, but this yielded no additional stories. The cross-checking of websites ensured that the omission of relevant stories was minimised, yet the nature of the search method (such as having no single keyword) means that it was not possible to ensure that every relevant story was captured. When the stories were imported they were each assigned an ID number referencing their publication, such as JR030 for a story from TheJournal.ie, and categorised into publication folders (Figure 5.3 shows a screenshot of the Evernote database). This ID number was used as the key link when merging the data from the Excel and NVivo databases, which allows the combination of both datasets for extensive analysis. Keeping the content in Evernote allowed for centralised, cloud-based storage of the articles, with various folders and tags ensuring the stories were filed and managed.

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[11] Although not possible to explain for certain, this was likely due to the content management systems and how stories are classified within the systems. The RSS feed is potentially tied to one metadata tag, or one category of content on the website, which may not be applied to all stories.
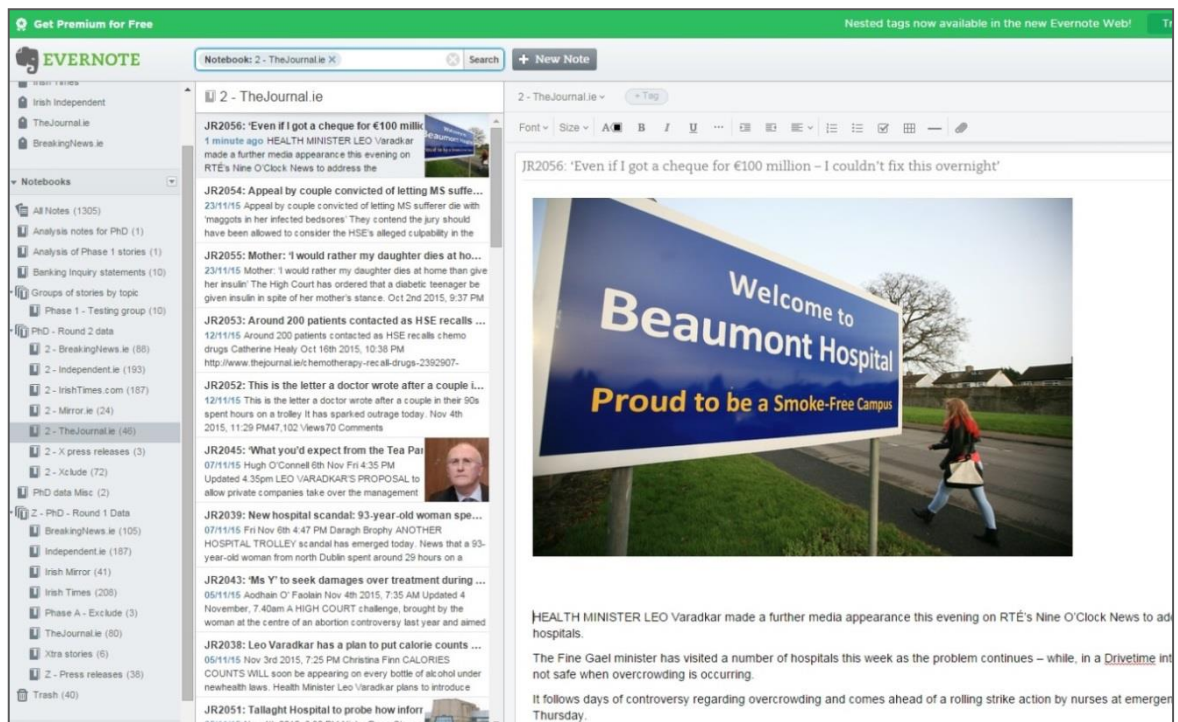
Figure 5.3: A screenshot of Evernote demonstrating how all the stories were stored and managed

As the data was not always gathered "live", the text recorded is the final version of the story. It was not always possible to tell whether the story was updated: one website, IrishTimes.com, showed different time stamps suggesting an update, but those time stamps are sometimes present when simple editing corrections are made; another, TheJournal.ie includes text saying the story has been updated at certain time, but it is unclear which information was added. This is a clearly a limitation, and is tied to more general concern about capturing data for content analysis of online news. Karlsson and Sjøvaag refer to how journalism online is "an elastic mode of communication that stretches in space and time" in ways not applicable to analogue media formats like print or broadcast (2016, p.182). They argue that data cannot necessarily be gathered retrospectively, due to its fluid nature and likelihood to change; content analysis needs to be planned in advance, and material gathered live, with the first version of the story the "most sensible" version to take. However, to incorporate a large sample size, this was not feasible and a decision was made that the final version would be used. This decision was heavily informed by the pilot period, which suggested that new sources triggering updates to existing stories was not very common (two stories in the pilot period featured clearly labelled updates). Furthermore, the data gathered also supports this as there are examples of new stories published during the day that are follow-ups of a story published earlier. Events or issues were not limited to one story page updated during the day; it appears that new story packages were published with separate links.

5.6 Phase 1: Coding stories

After the content was gathered, the overall sample (n = 1,101) was individually coded on a manifest level including date, publication, author, overall topic, sources used and timeliness (see coding sheet in Appendix D). Google Forms provided the coding form, which generated a spreadsheet database with information that could be analysed quantitatively in Microsoft Excel. One of the main features coded was the sources used in the story (eg government party, State organisation). A template for this list of sources was generated following the pilot period, with categories drawn inductively from the stories and amended or added to when needed. In court reports, the inclusion of the number of sources and their details was confusing, as solicitors/judges are often speaking on other people's behalf, recounting evidence, or providing victim impact statements. For that reason, the "sources used" details were excluded for these court stories (n=113). Similar concerns were raised in opinion and analysis pieces, whereby the use of sources is more complex and not comparable with news stories, and these texts (n=55) were also excluded from the "sources used" analysis.

Analysing the quotation structures within media content is an effective way of looking at opinion-leading media sources (Kolmer 2008) and this was the rationale for coding the first source used as a distinct category, separate to the recording of all sources used. Content analysis used in this way relies on the presence of journalistic standard practice of putting your best work, and the main point of the story, at the beginning. As Bell says: "The news story is always focused in its first sentence – its lead or intro…. it compresses the "news values" that have this story through to publication" (1998, p.69). While that is approach taken to most news reports, there are exceptions – such as delayed lead/drop introduction, or news content which reports chronologically – and such alternatives were factored into the reading of the texts. The first source referred to is a key aspect of the analysis into which source is deemed the most influential in the story, presented in Chapter 7. Altheide (1996) recommends a reflexive section at the end of the coding sheet for extra observations. This was included in the first phase coding sheet, and became useful for the second stage of analysis, offering initial thoughts and reflections on the stories.

5.7 Phase 2: Qualitative document analysis

After the Phase 1 database was complete, the data was imported into NVivo. NVivo is a type of CAQDAS (Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software), designed to assist with a variety of data types, such as text, transcripts, photographs, audio and video. It combines a code-and-retrieve system and advanced search functions. Hoover and Koerber (2011) explain

this further saying: "Code and retrieve allows the researcher to manually code snippets of the data according to their common themes. That coding can then be retrieved and viewed separately from the original data." They say it becomes particularly useful when one can then process and query the coding (2011, p.71).

The software adds efficiency to processing and analysing the data, and a level of transparency which is sometimes seen to be lacking in qualitative work. Hoover & Koerber (2011) say NVivo enhances their work in three key ways: efficiency, multiplicity and transparency. However, they note how it "does not do the intellectual work" and is a secondary tool in the research process:

> Although the automated features allow some types of coding to be accomplished much more quickly, these features do not by any means replace the need for careful reading of every line of data ... Just as a strong statistical program like SPSS cannot make up for poorly gathered numbers, strong CAQDAS cannot make up for poorly gathered material or shallowly considered analysis.
>
> (Hoover & Koerber, pp.71/77)

Similarly, Zamawe (2015) makes the point that the main function of such software is not to analyse the data, per se, but to aid and support the analysis process by acting as a data management package. However, the range of what NVivo can help analyse, and the relationships between codes, is undoubtedly one of its strengths. Bazeley (2009) argues that qualitative analysis can go beyond simply identifying themes and describing patterns in discourse. She says that matrix displays can be displayed which are generated on the basis of co-occurrence of codes, or of codes and the attributes associated with each node (in this study each story unit is a node, and an attribute was, for example, the publication or author type). Bazeley says this allows a researcher to "assess both patterns of association (how often things vary under different circumstances), and the nature of the associations (in what ways something might vary under particular or different circumstances)" (ibid., p.14). This becomes crucial when trying to link practices and output, as the various codes offer insight into not just the different voices being used, but the sourcing channels through which they are accessed by journalists.

5.7.1 Coding in NVivo and tracing source material

The original sample of 1,101 stories was reduced to 896, as explained in section 5.6, for this stage to focus on the origins of news stories. Features articles, and opinion and analysis columns were excluded, as well as court reports. The decision regarding court reports was

made due to their origins being homogenous: typically journalists acting as witnesses to legal proceedings. For that reason, it was considered unnecessary to process them in Nvivo for phase 2. Reducing the sample further to focus just on news texts was done to form a most-similar starting point for the comparative element, but this exclusion of these non-news texts (n=73) is a limitation of the study as it means that the journalists' contributions which do fall out of the news report category are excluded from the discussion about source use. However, the processes involved in assembling a news text are typically different to the approach for an opinion or analysis piece (which may come in response to or alongside a news report). While a feature is more similar to news reporting, the same timeline pressure may not be present so they were also excluded. One further point worth making relates to the distinction between features, opinion, and analysis. While some of these categories are easier to differentiate in physical print newspapers due to various layout and design cues, it is harder to distinguish this online. For example, some lengthy pieces which are not traditional news report formats are sometimes still published under the "news" > "health" categorisation on the websites, but are more analytical or opinionated. Therefore, the decision was made to maintain the focus on news reports which were written in the traditional news report structure, such as using the inverted pyramid structure (Mencher 2011), to ensure that the sourcing processes were more closely aligned.

For the second phase of analysis, the stories were imported into the NVivo software and each story was treated as an individual unit (known as a "node"). It was coded (in the NVivo method of highlighting and recording relevant text) for two elements: (A) The sources and perspectives used in each story and (B) the origins of the content. For example, quotes from a politician that were traced to a press release were recorded both as "politician", and "press release".

(A) Sources and perspectives:
This was relatively straightforward process of assigning each text attributable to a source to a category. This included whenever the source was speaking, directly or indirectly, or if the information used was directly attributed to a source or gave their perspective. Only information clearly attributable to sources or actors was coded. This meant that not all text in a story was coded, as much of it was general descriptive information or background. Appendix E1 shows the full list of perspective/sources found in the stories.

B) Origins of the content:
While the sources and perspectives were relatively straightforward to code, the origins of source material was more challenging. The original source was sometimes mentioned, such as

"in a statement", or "speaking to the Irish Independent", but in other instances it involved tracing back, where possible, the source material used. While still not fully transparent, the development of organisations' websites and media strategies mean that much of the information provided to journalists is now easily attainable for a researcher. In this study, this was done through searching for the content to see if the material appeared elsewhere (for example, searching for a quote which may direct to an original press release). If the content could not be found via search engine, then the presence of the sources in other media that day was also sought (for example checking whether an individual appeared on any of the key radio programmes). The website transcripts.ie was useful; while not comprehensive, it offers a partial database of guests who appeared on the main news programmes.

Figure 5.4: A tweet highlighting a radio appearance, used as a means to find out if a source was on radio. The original recording/podcast was then sought to confirm the quotes

Other searches for the content included looking for mentions of the person on Twitter on specific dates/times, illustrated in Figure 5.4. This was particularly effective for smaller, regional radio stations whose websites may not appear high up in Google searches. Listening to podcasts, and checking transcripts from parliament which may not show up in search engines, was also necessary. If the source material could not be obtained, it was coded as "unknown origins" which comprised 7.5% of content overall, and was most notably on BreakingNews.ie, where it comprised almost 20%. Appendix E2 shows the full list of categories for origins of content. These categories were generated inductively during the coding process and later refined for analysis. Figure 5.5 illustrates how stories were coded, and Appendix F shows other samples of coding from NVivo.
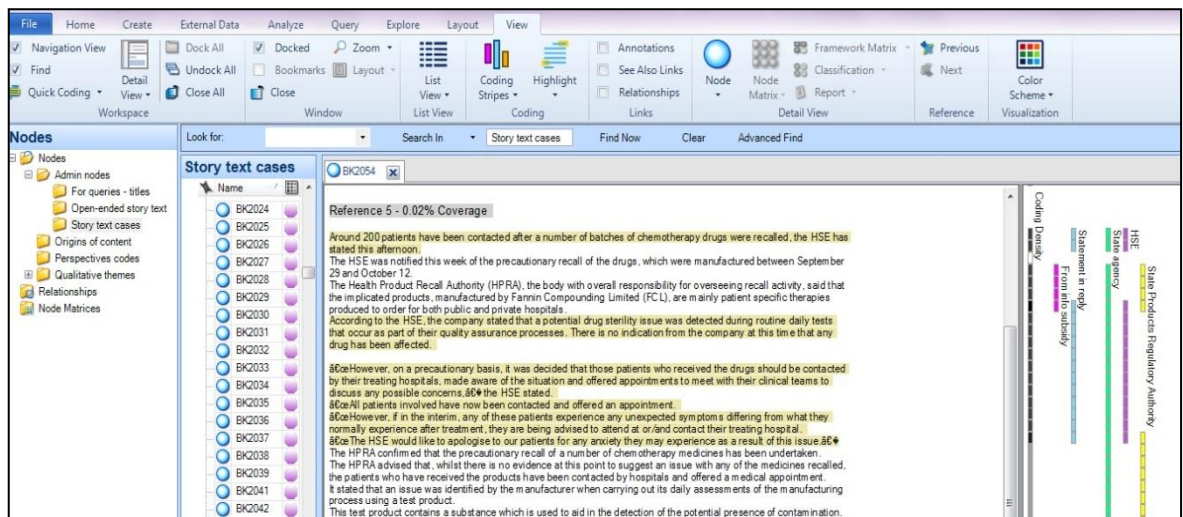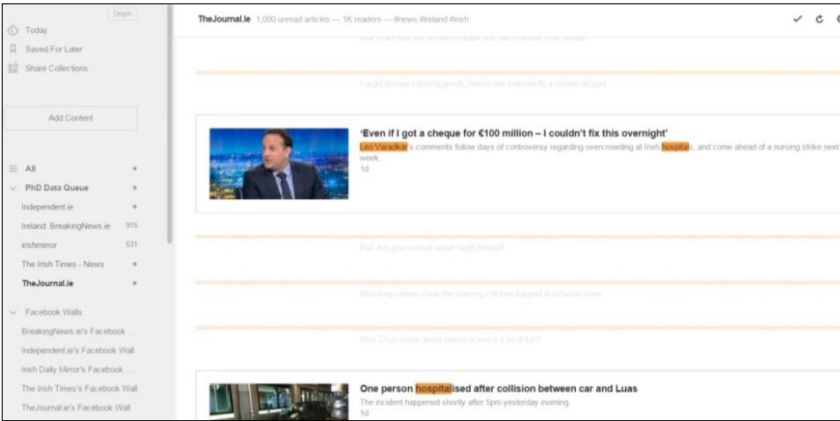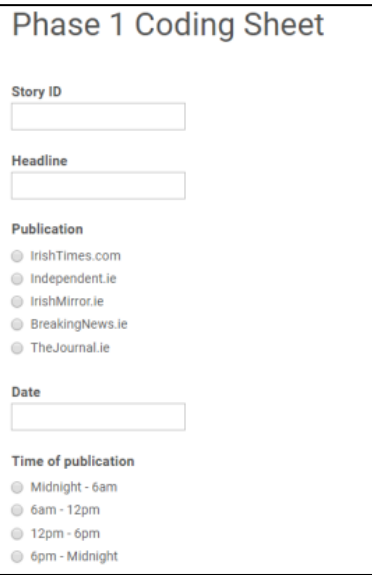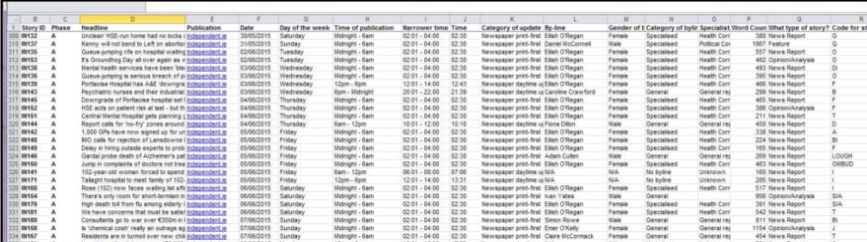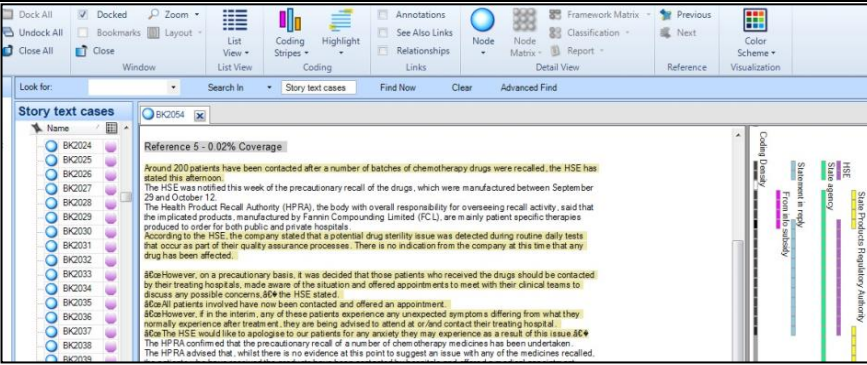
Figure 5.5: A screenshot of the NVivo software showing how stories were coded for both source/voice and origins

After coding of each story was complete, it would have been possible to manually add new attributes (which can later be quantified) to the story "node" in NVivo. However, this would have been labour intensive, and instead, another coding sheet was generated in Google Sheets with all relevant information added after each individual story was coded in Nvivo (see Appendix G). This generated a second spreadsheet that could then be merged with original Phase 1 coding spreadsheet, and also imported to NVivo and linked to the coded text. This added a second tier of attributes linked to the qualitative document analysis, and included codes such as "story trigger" and "channel of production" which could only be determined through the qualitative document analysis. Table 5.3 presents a summary of the various stages of the coding process to clarify how each story was sourced, coded and analysed.

At this stage it is worth highlighting another limitation of the study. Throughout the analysis, a general assumption is made that, when source content is accessed via information subsidies, the sources' arguments are disseminated with their messages or frames still, broadly, intact. A discourse analysis approach would be needed to explore this further to examine, for example, whether source messages are being challenged or reproduced, but this was beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, touched on in some of the case studies and other examples throughout.

TABLE 5.3: STAGES OF DATA COLLECTION AND CODING

1) The stories (n=1,101) were gathered via RSS feed (and from news websites) and exported to Evernote database where each was assigned an ID number.	
2) The texts (n=1,101) were coded using a Google Form. This recorded all the manifest data, such as date, time, byline, as well as what sources are included. Full coding sheet in Appendix D	
3) The Google Form generated an Excel spreadsheet which forms the basis of the database, including both codes and the text of the story.	
4) Story codes and text of the reduced sample (n=896) were imported into NVivo and coded. There are two categories of information coded: -The voices/ sources used, which is based on the text of the story -The origins of source content, based on tracing back material beyond of the	
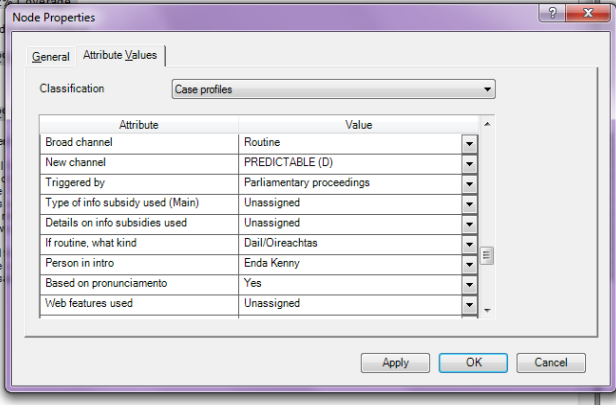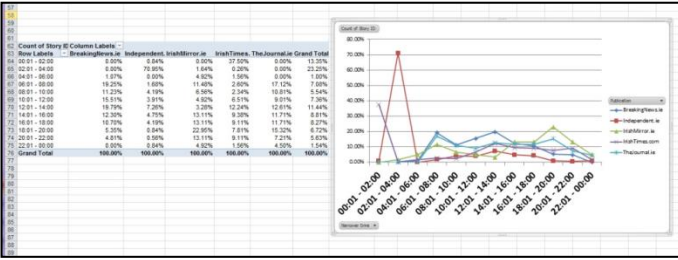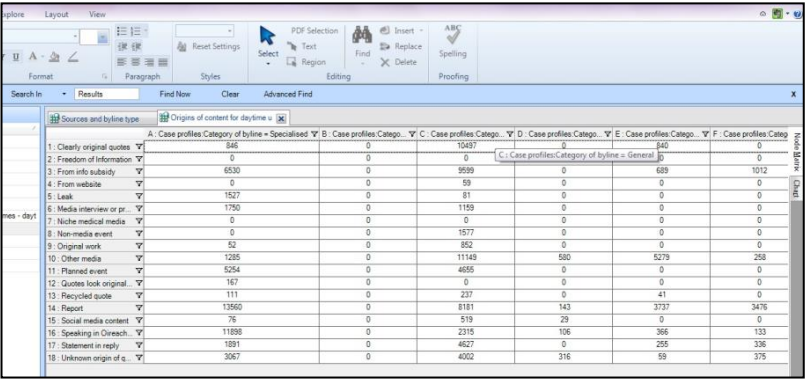
text.

5) After each story was coded in NVivo, some of its traits were recorded in a second Google Form. This was done to generate Excel attribute which could be be added to the Nvivo coding to deeper analysis. Full coding sheet in Appendix G.		Triggered by Information subsidy? Details on info subsidies used Channel: Routine/Informal/Enterprise New channel: A-H Based on pronunciamento? Other media used Type of other media used Does this look like original work? Story based: Other observations Person in intro:
6) These new Excel attributes, such as the "Channel of production" are imported into NVivo and added to the story coding about source use/voice to create the completed database ready for analysis.		
7) The analysis of the data used both the master spreadsheets in Excel (which merged both phases of coding) using pivot tables, and the NVivo coding used matrix queries. These queries could be modified to display either word count or number of stories, depending on which was most appropriate for the query.		

Table 5.3: The process for gathering data, coding and analysis

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5.7.2 Analysis of data

When both coding stages were complete, each story node has extensive details of information linked to it, which formed the basis for the analysis. The analysis used pivot tables in the Excel database and NVivo matrix queries. In NVivo any query could be run with more than 40 variables available to use alongside the qualitative coding of source material and voices used. Furthermore, the results in NVivo queries could be measured in either word count, number of occurrences, or number of stories. Many of the results presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 use word count to measure coverage given to different sources, as it was considered a more useful and less crude means of calculation, rather than the number of stories. It minimised overlap and confusion if multiple sources were used, as well as helping to counteract the potential of a story based substantially on a press release and a story that only used one line of the release being weighted in the same way. In other analysis, such as determining the trigger of the story, treating the story as a single unit is more appropriate.

5.8 Case studies

As part of the content analysis process, three case studies are highlighted to explore the development and content of particular news stories/events in depth. As per Altheide's (1996) 12-stage analytical approach referred to earlier in this chapter, the case study selection occurs late in the analytical process and is informed by the coding. Case studies offer an opportunity to analyse general coverage of particular events or issues and this freedom to explore certain cases in detail is one of the advantages of using mixed methods. Bertrand and Hughes say that using case studies will often result in "thick" information being gathered, which they define as "the description of data obtained by thorough and detailed investigation of a single case" (2005, p.253). The use of case studies can also help to inform more general journalistic production processes and offer insight (Priest 2010, p.220), and can tie the micro-level observations to macro-level trends (Neuman 2014, p.42). The three case studies used were chosen for their diversity of content and story type, breadth of coverage across all websites, and involvement of different actors; the selection process is therefore highly subjective. However, the aim of these case studies was not to suggest that the traits within are wholly generalisable, but instead was purposive, aiming to give more comprehensive examples about what the data means. The cases were selected to demonstrate different aspects of the news production process: the temporal dimension of daytime updates compared with print-first (Case Study 1 – A&E overcrowding); the influence of PR release in setting the agenda for an interest group (Case study 2 – Representative groups' resistance to free GP care scheme); and how private citizens use the media to seek accountability (Case study 3 – Hiqa report into baby

deaths in Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise). Much of the data analysis treats each story as an individual unit, but collating them into case studies allows for more astute observations and comparisons, as the context of similar stories highlighted what action, or inaction, had been taken by the journalist in assembling their version of the story. Throughout the discussion other specific examples of news content are also referred to, which helps to elaborate on the data more vividly.

5.9 Interviews

The content analysis is the primary method in this research but this is complemented with interviews. The intention was not to garner an extensive sample for comparative analysis, or to use the interview material to draw broad conclusions. Instead, they add further insight to the discussion chapters and build on the coding data. The seven interviews were carried out after the two phases of coding were complete, which facilitated an element of triangulation as some of the specifics from the sample were discussed. The journalist interviewees could bring some context to the findings, as well as confirming details about practices in specific newsrooms. Given the limitations discussed in section 5.3 regarding content analysis and its usefulness for analysing practices, this extra insight into processes is a valuable additional dimension to the research. Furthermore, agents' ability to articulate their interpretations about their actions is central to structuration theory (Giddens 1984); this space to "discursify" things can be seen as part of reflexivity and consciousness (Jensen 2002b).

The purposive approach taken to the interviews is associated with what Flick refers to as a loose, more flexible, theoretical research design, allowing decisions to be made during the course of the research's development. "It is more the idea of what is still missing in the data (and the insights they make possible) which drives sampling decisions" (Flick 2009, p.26). While the content analysis phase was more "tight" (ibid.), five journalists were purposively contacted for interviews based on their workplace, with the initial aim of garnering contributions from somebody from each of the five websites. This was achieved for four of the five websites: no individual from BreakingNews.ie was interviewed. The website does not publish bylines so it was difficult to find names of those working there. Two individuals were identified and asked to participate: one declined, and the other did not respond. A second person from TheJournal.ie was interviewed to add further perspective of net-native organisations. The journalists who participated were approached via personal connections and all agreed, subject to anonymity. Four out of the five interviews were conducted face to face, while one was conducted via email due to the interviewee's personal commitments, which led

to a more limited contribution due to the need to specify questions in advance. To retain anonymity, very little detail, personal or professional, is given about the interviewees other than the organisation in which they work(ed). The interviewees were all working in journalistic roles in their respective organisation during the data collection period (one journalist had left their organisation by the time of the interview), which adds a further element of triangulation and rigour to their contributions. The interviewees are aged between 25 and 45, and comprise five men and one woman. The interviews took place in cafes and typically lasted approximately 40 minutes, apart from one that lasted almost two hours. Much of the material in this lengthy interview was not used due to the personal details provided about some within the news organisation, as well as discussions which developed which were not directly related to the topic of this research. One interviewee was particularly concerned about some of their responses making them recognisable if their workplace was identified alongside these comments, so for that reason a sixth journalist is referred to – Journalist F – whose workplace is not identified.

A low-risk project notification was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee in Dublin City University prior to any of the interviews taking place. This was approved on the basis that the interviews involved "questioning public figures/professionals in their professional capacity regarding their professional activities", which is deemed an appropriate rationale for low-risk projects. The plain-language statement and consent form were also approved (See Appendix H1). The main risk identified was for the five journalists, all of whom wished to be anonymised. Given the relatively small nature of the journalism sector in Ireland, and the fact that they were willing to have their news organisations identified, there could be no guarantee that they would not be identifiable.

Although not systematic in such an approach, the interviews draw loosely on some of the elements of reconstructive interviews (Reich 2014; Bruggemann 2012) which Boesman et al (2015) describe as a means to avoid the "vagueness" associated with the conventional in-depth interviews, and allows journalists to provide testimony "anchored in a sample of specific sources and items", rather than simply evaluating their conduct (Reich 2011, p.24). This was done by asking about specific news events, and specific sources, and occasionally specific news stories. Boesman et al (2015) say content analysis alone is inappropriate for production studies, and while the qualitative nature of the content analysis in this study contests such a claim, including another source of information deeper insights about practice. The interviews were semi-structured and the aim was to gather expert insight not possible from the content analysis, but not to carry out any kind of survey with comparable results. The interviews used

an open-ended, general interview guide approach, which Patton describes as "topics and issues are specified in advance, in outline form; interview decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview" (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009, p.229). A sample topic/question sheet is included in Appendix H2. This varied between interviewees and the conversation did not follow the same structure, instead following the participant's lead, which allows the researcher "to follow up on and to work with them and not strictly delimit the talk to your predetermined agenda" (Flick 2009, p.39).

Two others were interviewed for their expertise and direct professional health sector experience. The first, Dr Jacky Jones, is a retired regional manager of health promotion with the HSE and writes a column in the weekly health supplement of The Irish Times, often critical of both the health service and the media. The second expert interviewee was Leo Varadkar, who was the minister for health at the time the data was gathered and minister for social protection at the time of the interview (April 2017). He became Taoiseach in June 2017 after becoming party leader of Fine Gael. He agreed to speak on the record, apart from some sensitive background material that is not used. The interview with Dr Jones took place over the phone, and the interview with Varadkar took place face to face in his Ministerial office. Both interviews lasted approximately 35 minutes (See Appendix H3 for details on all interviews).

All six audio interviews were recorded and transcribed using professional transcription services. The texts were imported into NVivo, added to the project's database, and coded by topic. Given the broadly similar subject matter contained within all seven interviews, and the fact these were part of the "loose" research design (Flick 2009), there was no systematic thematic analysis carried out. However, the transcripts were coded for three broad categories: (i) newsroom practices; (ii) sources; and (iii) coverage health policy issues. Table 5.4 shows the sub-topics which were coded which provides a further indication of the material covered in the interviews. These topics were generated inductively as part of the open coding process (Bazeley 2009).

NEWSROOM PRACTICES	COVERAGE OF HEALTH	SOURCES
Agency	Change in coverage over time	Citizen voices
Comments	HSE poor communication	Official sources
Credibility	Importance of media info	PR
Driven by clicks	Inter-media mention	Remediated content
Dual product	Negative media coverage	Social media as source
General digital changes	Patient experience	Source selection
Original and investigative reporting	Power of citizen voice	Specialised reporters
Print-first	Role of media in driving change	Trade unions
Newspaper/website relationship		
Resistance to change		
Resources		
Routine		
Timeliness > Strategic timeliness		

Table 5.4: The topics addressed in the interviews, generated inductively during the coding process

Five other potential non-journalist interviewees were contacted but did not respond or follow up on further emails: two from trade union groups, one from a patient representative group, one politician and one high-profile GP. This was unfortunate as it would have expanded the original material garnered for the study, and widened the perspectives included. In an effort to overcome this and to maximise diversity of contributions for the discussion chapters, a number of secondary sources are used, primarily other media reports and interviews. This does not provide the same depth or insight available from direct researcher interviews, but is an effort to achieve further viewpoints. A full list of secondary sources is listed in Appendix I.

5.11 Conclusion

The mixed-method approach used in this study provides multiple perspectives to look at how news online news production practices are affecting how and from where stories are sourced. The non-traditional approach to content analysis is required to answer the study's research question, and to establish the often-overlooked link between practice and published content. Furthermore, the two phases of coding, paired with the interviews, provide triangulation, thus strengthening any findings. The first phase of content analysis establishes the publication-related data, such as website, time, and authorship details; these attributes provides a crucial starting point from which online publishing activity can be investigated. However, much more data and deeper insight is needed to understand how these publication cycles are tied to source use. The second phase of coding moves the investigation on to analyse the source material and record the voices used: this dual approach is intrinsic to any analysis of source use and to fully understanding how different groups are affected by online publishing. Despite the qualitative aspects discussed throughout, a rigorous, systematic approach was taken during the coding process, which becomes apparent in the upcoming chapters and the presentation of the data,

much of which is quantified. The interviews provide a third perspective on news production, and provide insight into the news organisations under study, and also allow the participants the opportunity to articulate their experiences, thus providing an element of reflexivity which is so central to structuration theory. The interviews are used to complement this data, but there is the clear limitation that only a small number of subjects were interviewed, so these findings are tied to the data rather than being used to generate new inferences that may not be generalisable.

The following three chapters present the results and analysis, and it becomes evident that the two-phase approach to coding provides insights which would not be achievable through a more traditional content analysis. Source groups access the media through different channels, and, therefore, an understanding of this connection is essential to comprehend the power dynamics between journalists and their sources. When these sourcing practices are positioned against the temporal aspect and other resource-related dynamics of online publishing, the input of sources become central to understanding how digital news affects the version of events which audiences receive.

Chapter 6 |
PUBLICATION CYCLES AND SOURCES OF NEWS CONTENT

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This research asks the question: *"How do the practices of online news production influence the sourcing and publication of policy-related news content?"* This topic requires attention to ensure that source material and analysis of the output are not overlooked in research about technological and online developments. Furthermore, the policy aspect remains important to resist a newsroom-centric assessment and allows a consideration of the broader social and democratic implications of contemporary journalistic practices. The following three chapters present the results and a discussion of the data analysis. The first establishes some of the practices of online news production, including temporal dimensions and the origins of source material. The second, Chapter 7, examines the influence of production channels on journalistic output, primarily by analysing how sourcing practices affect what voices we hear. Chapter 8 focuses on journalists' relationship with information subsidies and routine channels of news, contextualised amid health service coverage. The results of the content analysis are presented throughout the three chapters, while further insight comes from interviews and other secondary source material. The theoretical discussions draw the observations and findings together to present an analysis of news production which shows how structures – both internal and external to the journalistic agent – and individual decision-making combine to shape a system in which rules and resourcing patterns are established, normalised and reproduced (Giddens 1984).

This chapter opens with results showing some of the publication routines of news organisations, their daytime activity, and the extent to which variables such as publication, reporter, or story type are influencing factors; of particular concern are the publication times on newspaper-brand websites. This leads on to an exploration about the temporality of online news and perceptions about all-day publication. The origins of source material are then analysed alongside their relationship with authorship and temporal factors[12], and a case study of hospital overcrowding illustrates what some of these results mean for coverage. Discussion about the type of source material used online follows, including the relationship between print

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and online formats; it appears some tensions remain and there is an apparent discrepancy between the results and the managements' public declarations of transitioning to "digital first". The chapter moves on to focus on resourcing and specialisation, and the opportunities provided to journalists, especially younger reporters, who are working on the online output. The discussion concludes with a proposed reconceptualisation of Sigal's (1973) channels of production informed by the qualitative coding process. Publication patterns emerge in this chapter indicating disparity between routine, easily accessible material, and content requiring more original newsgathering. This raises concerns regarding the value editors place on content published during daytime hours, as much of it appears to originate from information subsidies and other easily-repackaged sources. The data used in the results and graphs presented in this chapter is available in Appendix J5, and the journalists referred to throughout Chapters 6, 7, and 8 are listed in Table 6.1. The full list of 1,101 stories from the sample are listed in Appendix K.

JOURNALIST	NEWS ORGANISATION
Journalist A	Irish Daily Mirror/IrishMirror.ie
Journalist B	Irish Independent/Independent.ie
Journalist C	The Irish Times/IrishTimes.com
Journalist D	TheJournal.ie
Journalist E	TheJournal.ie
Journalist F	N/A – Anonymised

Table 6.1: The journalists interviewed for the study

6.1 Daily publishing patterns

Figure 6.1 shows the number of daily stories published on each website, with midweek the most popular: Monday (147); Tuesday (191); Wednesday (200); Thursday (225); Friday (194); Saturday (87); Sunday (57). IrishTimes.com publishes a similar quantity each weekday but declines at the weekend, as is the case with all five titles. Both the IrishMirror.ie and Independent.ie websites include the material used in their Sunday print publications (Sunday Independent and the Irish Sunday Mirror). The Irish Times has no Sunday print edition which is reflected in its low number of Sunday stories (n=3) when compared with Independent.ie (n=29). Across four of the five websites, Sunday has the fewest stories published; the exception is TheJournal.ie, which publishes the fewest on Saturday.
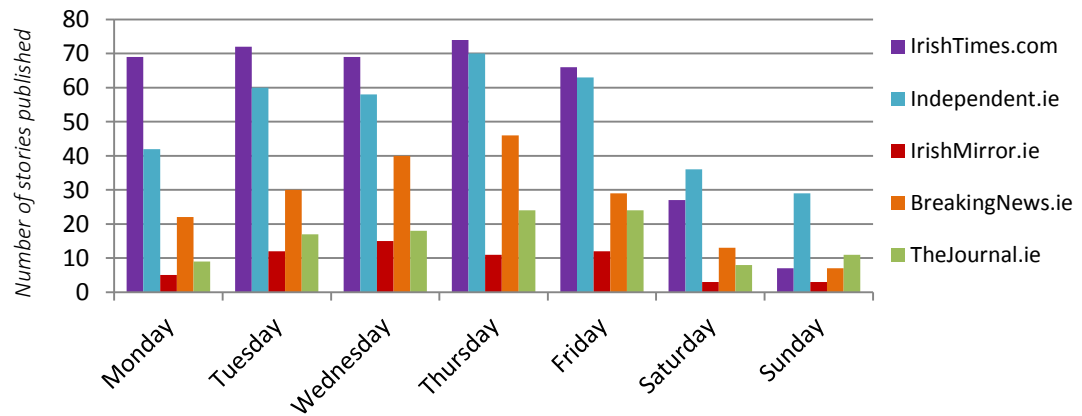
Figure 6.1: The number of stories published on each website on each day of the week

The number of stories published throughout the day divided into six-hour segments is shown in Figure 6.2, revealing how the three newspaper-brand websites have publishing activity between midnight and 6am, which does not exist for the two online-only websites. When this is analysed further into two-hour periods (Figure 6.3), the overnight peaks are clear for Independent.ie and IrishTimes.com, while the IrishMirror.ie peaks at the 6pm-8pm category. The 2:30am spike is most clearly visible for Independent.ie, when 71% of its output is published. While IrishMirror.ie does not have the same overnight/early morning peak as the other titles, it is worth remembering that it publishes much fewer stories overall. The two online-only websites are inactive overnight but begin publishing early in the morning with a clear 6am-8am peak. This diminishes until a lunchtime peak, and the two then diverge later in the day: TheJournal.ie sees another peak in the evening between 6pm-8pm, while BreakingNews.ie tapers off from lunchtime.
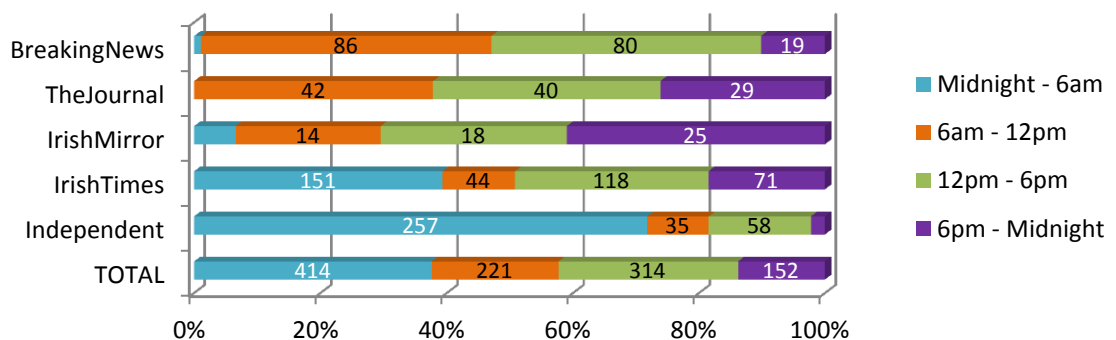
Figure 6.2: The proportion of each websites output categorised into six-hour segments. The figures on the bars indicate the actual number of stories contained in each segment
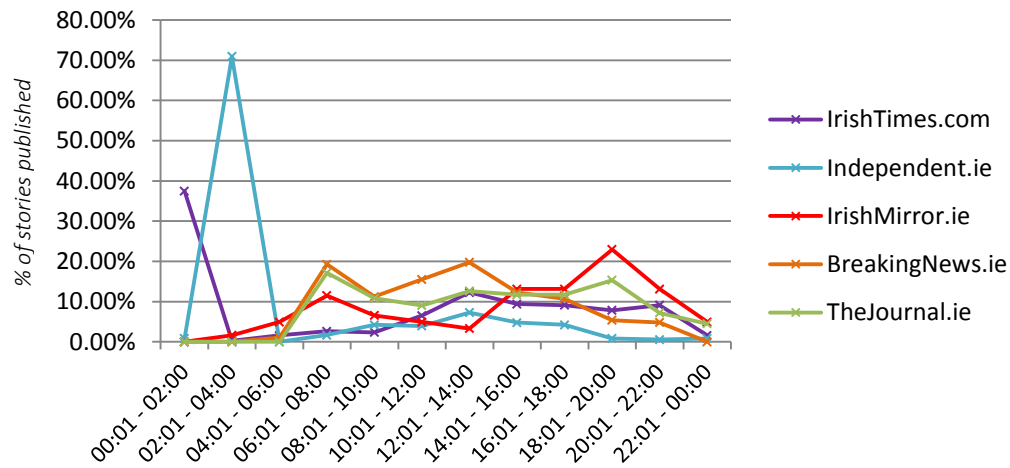
Figure 6.3: The percentage of each publication's content published during each two-hour segment

6.1.1 All-day news?

All five websites are active during the daytime hours ensuring fresh content feeds the "news at work" trend (Boczkowski 2010). In talking about the almost-constant news cycle, Irish Mirror editor John Kierans says of his operation: "There are only about three hours a day that there is nobody in this newsroom feeding the demands of the readers out there" (Sexton 2017b). Without knowledge of the audience analytics, it is not possible to speculate on whether content is uploaded to correlate with peak audience times or without consideration (Cherubini & Nielsen 2016), but the journalists interviewed identify some strategic aspects. In TheJournal.ie, evenings and weekends are deemed the best time for longer reads or features as the audience may have more time, while the Irish Mirror reporter explains:

> On weekends, on a Saturday, if there's sport on or even just a busy shopping day, we will hold back some of our better stories simply because there won't be as many people online at that point. During the week, for the daily [paper], it's less so. You might put up a funny story in the evening or around lunchtime if people are maybe hitting the slump in work.

> (Journalist A)

One reporter in TheJournal.ie (Journalist E) refers to the potential of daytime updates as a liberator, or what Giddens (1984) may refer to as an enabling aspect of the system. This reporter describes a more relaxed approach which is possible when working outside what they see as the constraints of print structures. They say events happening throughout the day would typically be covered for the next day in a newspaper, "[but] when you're in The Journal you do it that day. You have a lot more freedom to get things done when they happen". The same

reporter elaborates, explaining that this immediacy relates to the actual publishing of the story, rather than the writing: "If you need a few days or need time to research a story, that's always done, that's something that's important; that's important to every news organisation." This suggests a resistance to the idea that news outlets, especially online, are somehow enslaved to speed (Bruno 2011) as ideals about due process and verification remain in place.

Such instant online updates are, of course, also possible in newspaper-brand organisations and such publication opportunities are one online aspect with which publishers continue to grapple. Each story that these three newspaper-brand organisations, previously limited to overnight editions, upload during daytime hours is a testament to how the routines and working structures established as part of the online production format act as an enabling force. This enabling potential of structural constraints is something Giddens argues must be considered in any system: "[Structures] serve to open up certain possibilities of action at the same time as they restrict or deny others (1984, p.173)." For newspapers, the internet provides new publishing potentials; at the simplest level, publishing breaking news within minutes was not possible in a print format. However, the perceived pressure to publish and the quality or depth of some of these stories may be a potentially intertwined constraint. A culture of all-day, online publishing contributes to an environment where many hard deadlines may cease to matter (Paulussen 2012), but this also means that the easing of pressure when deadlines pass is also reduced. One young journalist working in The Irish Times refers to the "more intensive working patterns" and demands of 24-hour coverage; he asks for thought to be spared "for new entrants to the industry who must contemplate an entire career in this new era" (D'Arcy 2017)[13]. Another Irish Times journalist (Journalist C) also highlights the poor consequences increased working hours have on news workers' personal lives and general morale.

The desire to fulfil a perceived all-day news gap, therefore, has repercussions on workflows and staffing. The idea of perceived, as opposed to actual, need is useful here as it resonates with Giddens' interpretation of structures, tied to what actors believe to be appropriate behaviour (1984), and what Stones (2005) refers to as the "action-horizon" of a system by which agents are influenced. For online news producers, the apparent need to maintain a presence in audiences' news feeds, to be among the first to break stories, and to maximise temporal possibilities by updating stories and adding new perspectives may be considered a core element of online work. The reporter from the Irish Mirror (Journalist A) refers to this perceived need for speed, saying "there is a kind of a mentality that everything needs to go up

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[13] This is from a column that an Irish Times journalist wrote about the industry. A second, anonymous, Irish Times journalist was interviewed for this study

as quick as possible"; referencing a "mentality" illustrates the journalist's knowledge and reflexivity about their circumstances (Giddens 1984, Ahva 2016). They add: "Even on a story that might not be urgent to put up; you might end up making a mistake because you are in the mindset to get it up as quickly as possible." This captures concerns about how the interpretation of speed may compromise other journalistic values such as verification. It is also a reminder of Schudson's observation (1986) that the focus on speed is often a media-centric, inter-organisational contest, rather than anything publicly motivated. While an emphasis on speed pre-dates online news and is tied to journalism more generally (Deuze 2005), the tools for instant online dissemination facilitate heightened temporal ambition. As Ananny (2016) observes, the perception of, and significant attention granted to, time is intrinsic to how it is utilised in a networked news environment. As such, it may become an internalised structure upon which journalists draw (Stones 2005).

6.2 Print-online dynamics

As the newspaper-brand websites publish a significant proportion of content between midnight and 6am, one of the key variables throughout this study relates to this strategic distinction in publishing time. Content from newspaper-brand websites is categorised as "print first" or "daytime update": print-first are stories uploaded between midnight and 6am, and the daytime updates are between 6am and midnight. Although they appear online overnight, therefore available before physical readers can access them in the print edition, they were categorised as "print-first" to facilitate the distinction between stories published live and those which are delayed. Interviewees from the three newspaper titles confirmed a print-first division within content, and the repeated timestamp is indicative of the practice[14]. The sample of 803 newspaper-website stories is relatively evenly divided between daytime update (n=392) and print-first (n=411) categories, but varies between titles, as shown in Figure 6.4.

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[14] In this sample IrishTimes.com publishes at 1am, the Independent.ie publishes at 2.30am, and IrishMirror.ie publishes at 6am
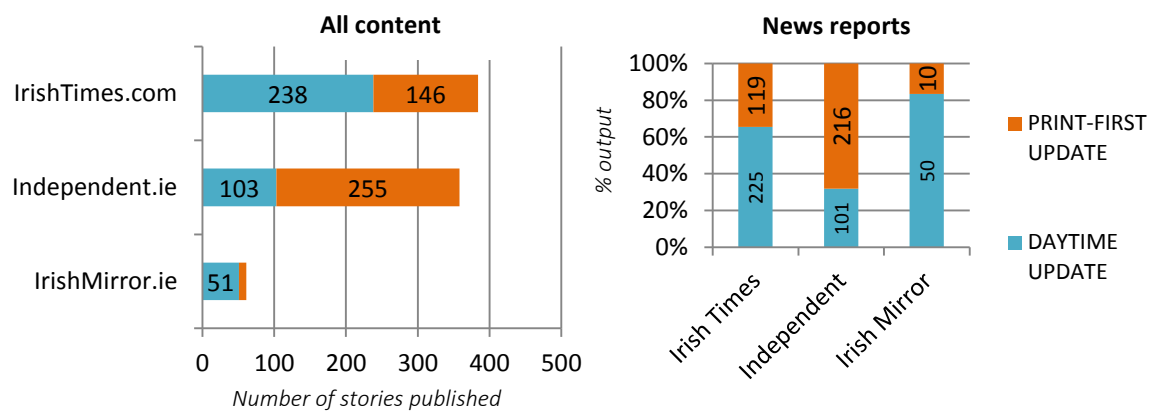
All content

	DAYTIME UPDATE	PRINT-FIRST UPDATE
IrishTimes.com	238	146
Independent.ie	103	255
IrishMirror.ie	51	

Number of stories published

News reports

	DAYTIME UPDATE	PRINT-FIRST UPDATE
Irish Times	225	119
Independent	101	216
Irish Mirror	50	10

% output

Figure 6.4: Left: the total number of all types of content (news, features, opinion/analysis, other) divided into print-first/daytime update. Right: The breakdown of news reports

Of their total output record in this sample, 38% of IrishTimes.com, 71% of Independent.ie, and 20% of IrishMirror.ie is recorded as print-first. Looking at the print-first/daytime-update further, news reports (n=721) are relatively evenly split, varying between titles (Figure 6.4), with Independent.ie news stories heavily skewed (68%) towards appearing overnight. Op-ed columns and analysis articles, texts typically somewhat removed from newsdesk deadlines, also feature. Sometimes written by non-journalist experts such as the head of a maternity hospital, these texts may be specially commissioned or offer space for specialised journalists to provide analysis; these texts ensure original contributions or perspectives which is perhaps not possible to guarantee with some news material, and editors may place a high value on such content. Such content leans towards the print-first category on both Independent.ie (21:1 in favour of print first) and IrishTimes.com (18:10). No opinion or analysis columns are recorded for IrishMirror.ie. Similarly with feature articles, on Independent.ie all 13 features are print-first, while in the IrishTimes.com, two are uploaded during the daytime and eight overnight (no features are recorded on IrishMirror.ie).

6.2.1 Authorship:

A clear division emerges within authorship, especially content written by specialised reporters. IrishTimes.com and Independent.ie are the only titles with specialised reporters whose work is relevant to the study here: primarily health correspondents, political correspondents, social affairs correspondents and industry affairs correspondents. There is a deviation in the time this work is published: specialised correspondents write 434 stories in total, and 277 (64%) are uploaded overnight, suggesting editors associate their content with the print product. By contrast, only 37% of general reporters' output is delayed for the print product. Daytime updates are also associated with stories without a byline (48/68 uploaded during the daytime)

and those from wire agencies (11/13 daytime updates). Figure 6.5 illustrates the difference between Independent.ie and IrishTimes.com approaches. On Independent.ie, just 13% of the 194 texts written by specialised reporters are uploaded during daytime hours. The work of general reporters is more evenly split but still leans toward print-first. The only categories in which daytime updates exceed print-first updates are stories provided by news wires/agencies, and those with no byline attribution. In contrast, the IrishTimes.com results show a preference for more content – regardless of the byline – to appear during the daytime. The only category on IrishTimes.com where print-first exceeds daytime updates, albeit with a much smaller total, is among non-journalist experts, where the split is 5:4 in favour of print-first. On IrishMirror.ie, no specialised reporters or expert (non-journalist) contributions are recorded. Among the sample of general reporters' work, daytime updates dominate (45:10), while wire copy is only present in daytime updates on IrishMirror.ie.
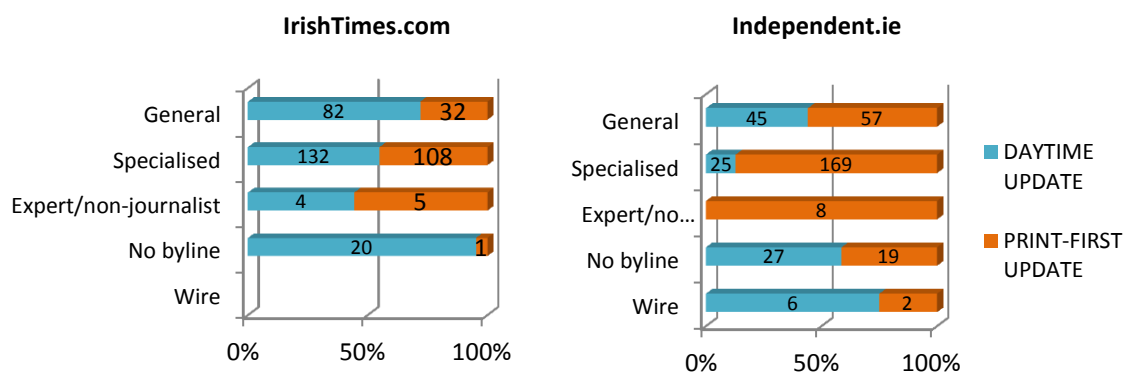
Figure 6.5: The breakdown of daytime/print-first among different byline categories in the Irish Times (left) and Independent. The figures on the bars indicate the actual number of stories contained in each segment

From the results presented thus far, certain temporal trends become clear. To briefly summarise, all five websites are active during the daytime with quieter evenings and weekends rather than a full 24/7 operation. Although they are active throughout the day, IrishTimes.com and Independent.ie maintain a strategy whereby some content is uploaded overnight, also visible on IrishMirror.ie to a lesser extent. This overnight content is more likely to be the work of specialised reporters and non-journalist experts, while the work of general reporters, wire reports and news reporters with no byline are more likely to appear during the daytime. A deeper understanding of the content is needed to consider the implications of these temporal results; this was achieved during the second phase of coding by tracing the origins of the source material.

6.3 Source material and origins of content

The second phase of coding uses a reduced sample of 896 texts, excluding non-news reports (features, opinion and analysis), and court reports. This most-similar approach ensures the focus remains on the sourcing practices for news reports, rather than being skewed by the different parameters of features or analysis columns. Court reports are excluded due to their common origin and complications about voice, as discussed in Chapter 5. The material traced back in this coding phase was categorised into one of 23 categories (generated inductively during the coding process), which were then further refined. Information subsidies form the basis of more than one-third of the content overall, but other PR-related activities (statements and planned events) extend it to more than 50% overall. When content from other media reports is added, it reaches almost 65% (a breakdown of these categories by publication is in Appendix J1). Some of the distinctions of these source types will be elaborated on later in this chapter, such as the different types of reports and information subsidies, but for this stage of the discussion, the categories are subdivided into four overarching groups:

(i) *Original material:* This includes quotes that appear original or exclusive (which may include a reference such as "speaking to Independent.ie"; leaked information (which may include a reference such as "seen by The Irish Times"); material obtained via a freedom of information; first-hand observation, and non-media events.

(ii) *Repackaged material:* This includes information subsidies; other media reports; press statements issued in response to requests for comment; press conferences; planned events, and published reports.

(iii) *Other sources:* This includes material from parliamentary activity; social media; academic research; and background information from websites.

(iv) *Unknown origins:* This was content that could not be traced to its source.

These four categories allow for a clearer consideration of source material used on each website, as presented in Figure 6.6. The repackaged material category is the most significant, contributing 66% of the overall content, ranging from 60% on Independent.ie to 79% on TheJournal.ie. The category with the highest level of fluctuation is the Original category, where the overall contribution is 15%; ranging from 0.5% on BreakingNews.ie to 26% on IrishMirror.ie.
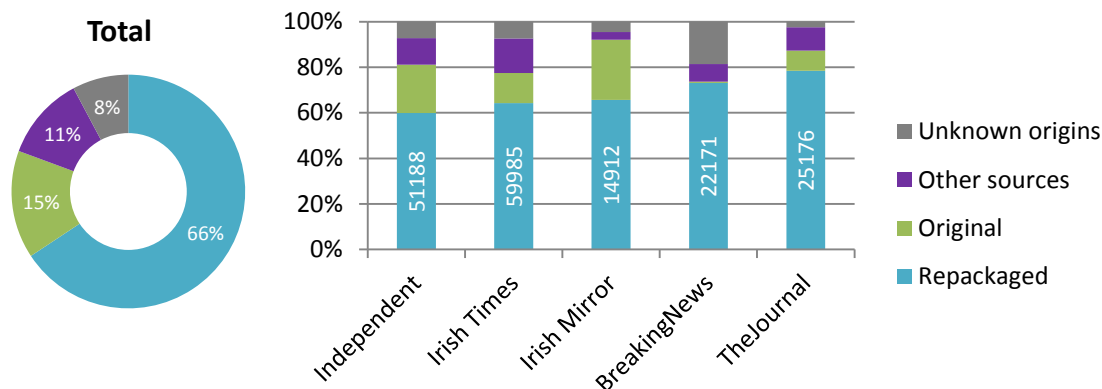
Total

Figure 6.6: The total contribution of each sourcing category, and how it relates to each website. The figures on the bars indicate the coverage (measured by word count) to demonstrate the different levels of coverage between websites.

Figure 6.7 illustrates the dominance of the repackaged category across all author categories, most significantly for wire copy where more than 90% of content is repackaged, albeit based on a much smaller sample. BreakingNews.ie does not use bylines on stories, so it is categorised as a separate entry for any results using byline type. One result worth noting is how original/exclusive material makes up a larger proportion of general reporters' work than specialised reporters', and other sources, primarily Oireachtas proceedings, contribute a larger proportion to specialised reporters' content.
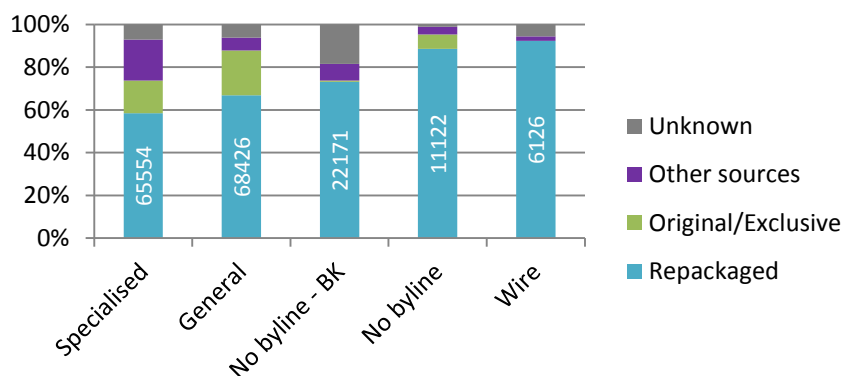
Figure 6.7: The origins of content, broken down as a percentage of each byline's output

6.3.1 Origins of content: print-first versus daytime update
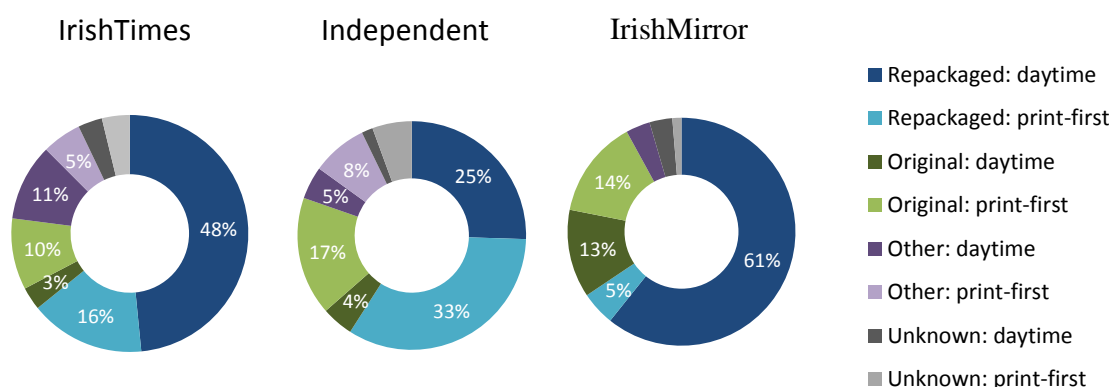
Figure 6.8: The four source categories for the three newspaper websites, subdivided into print-first or daytime update

As in the previous section, a key variable is whether the story is published during daytime hours or overnight. Figure 6.8 refers to the total amount of news coverage derived from each of the four source categories, across both daytime and print-first. Across the three titles, the use of repackaged during daytime updates is the most significant contributor. Repackaged material dominates in daytime updates on both IrishTimes.com (48% of overall source material) and IrishMirror.ie. The balance is reversed on Independent.ie with more in print-first (33% compared with 25% in daytime updates). Independent.ie is the only website where more repackaged content is present in the print-first category: print-first is dominant across all three categories of source material on Independent.ie. Across all three websites, the majority of seemingly originally sourced/exclusive content is not published during the daytime hours; it is relatively close on IrishMirror.ie, but more notable across the other two titles.

6.3.2 Case study 1: Emergency department overcrowding

The data presented above demonstrates the trends across the five websites, but what this means for content, and the distinction between original, repackaged, print-first and daytime updates, can be further illustrated using a case study. One regular topic in Irish news is overcrowding in hospital emergency departments and the case here relates to a news report about a woman, aged 101 (102 in later reports), who had to spend 26 hours on a hospital trolley in a Dublin hospital due to bed shortages. The story's development demonstrates the different publishing approaches towards specialised and general reporters' work, and shows how the print-first stories are tied to original material, while the intervening daytime publishing may be fuelled by

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reaction. The first report was published at 1am on June 5th 2015 on IrishTimes.com, written by the health correspondent. Table 6.2 shows how the story developed over the following 24 hours.

	TIME	WEBSITE	REPORTER	HEADLINE	DETAIL/TRIGGER/ANGLE
A	1:00am	IrishTimes	Health correspondent	Woman (101) spends 26 hours on trolley in Tallaght hospital	Story sourced by reporter
B	7:06am	Independent	No byline	102-year-old woman forced to spend 26 hours on trolley in hospital emergency department	Short report based on Irish Times story. Nothing new added
C	11:52am	IrishMirror	General reporter	Treatment of 102-year-old woman left on hospital trolley slammed as 'human rights abuse'	Doctor who treated the woman appeared on radio news show. Story based on his quotes
D	12:21pm	BreakingNews	No byline	102-yr-old woman on trolley for 26 hours: 'The Minister has made a promise. We need to see it in action'	Statements from advocacy group Age Action
E	1:07pm	IrishTimes	General reporter	102-year-old's 26-hour hospital delay a 'horror story'	Based on doctor's comments
F	1:31pm	Independent	No byline	Tallaght Hospital to meet family of 102-year-old who spent 26 hours on trolley	Comments from hospital representative speaking on radio news show
G	2:38pm	TheJournal	General reporter	Hospital admits it was "unacceptable" that woman (102) spent 26 hours on trolley	Based on comments from hospital representative speaking on radio news show
H	4:01pm	BreakingNews	No byline	Management apologises to elderly woman who spent 26 hours on hospital trolley	Statement issued by hospital
I	5:04pm	IrishTimes	General reporter	Hospital apologises to woman (102) left on trolley for 26 hours	Statement issued by hospital
NEXT DAY					
J	2:30am	Independent	Health correspondent	Rose (102) now faces waiting list after A&E ordeal	Face-to-face meeting with elderly patient

Table 6.2: The development of the story on June 5th/6th 2015

This example offers insight into how sourcing actions and temporal factors affect publication practices. There are two pieces of original reporting which stand out among these 10 stories:

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story A, the first to report on the incident, and story J, which gives the patient a name, photograph, and platform for her/her family to comment (Figure 6.9). Both are based on the patient and her experience, both are written by specialised health correspondents, and both are uploaded after midnight. In the case of story J, the contact with the patient was clearly made the previous day, but there was seemingly no rush to publish, even though it was a live story that maintained momentum across all news outlets during the day.
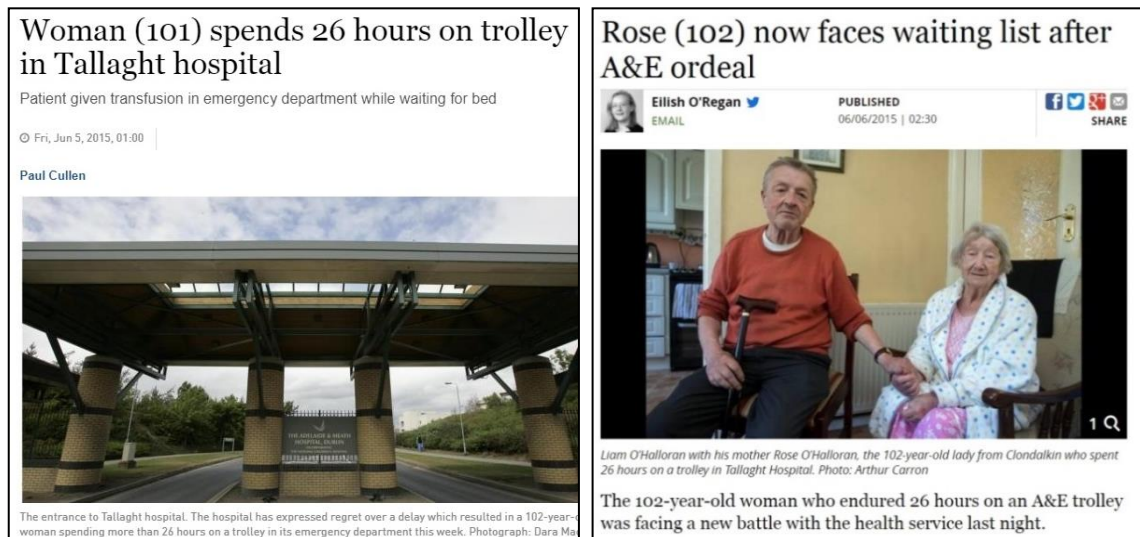
Figure 6.9: Story A (IrishTimes.com) and Story J (Independent.ie) from the coverage. Both display the overnight timestamp

A second point relates to the remaining eight stories, all of which are based on external actors' reactions. While the patient is the focus of the stories A and J bookending the coverage, the other reports mostly shift their focus to the contributions from other stakeholders. Story B is simply a duplication of the original report in a rival news outlet; stories C, E, F and G are based on external actors' appearances on radio shows; story D is based on a statement from an advocacy group; stories H and I are based on the statement issued by the hospital. All these actors gain a sense of legitimacy when they appear in the news, and the case illustrates a certain *dialectic of control* (Giddens 1984, see section 4.1) present among external actors who may be seeking to gain an input, allowing the sources to influence media coverage: they will likely find receptive journalists seeking content to update a story. Rather than simply being included lower down in a news report, the external actors are becoming a trigger, often positioned in the headline/introductory sentences of the follow-on stories. This may be indicative of the competitive definer source model (Carlson 2009), related to what Overholser

refers to as the move in online news towards the "interpretation" of facts, rather than journalists seeking out more original news (in Friend & Singer 2007, p.64), as evidenced in this case. This normalising of a passive newsgathering approach is one of the frustrations felt by Journalist B from Independent.ie:

> My biggest thing with the Independent, especially online … it's all reactionary. Almost the entirety of Independent.ie is reacting to something … rather than pushing something, pushing stories. Everything is a reaction to what's in this paper, and in another paper that day.

This reactive approach also demonstrates how news can act as a rhetorical device for both the journalists and sources: stakeholders' messages make it to the public via the legitimacy of a journalist, who in turn draws on professional values to produce a news report and offer updates to a story (van Dijk 1988). The news organisation, meanwhile, can fulfil narratives about its all-day, digital-first role by using easily accessible source material.

6.4 Journalistic systems: resistance and reproduction

The case study demonstrates the continued influence of the print format on production and sourcing routines. This may be seen as the resilience of an ongoing, and firmly established, news production system (Eide & Sjøvaag 2016), rather than an active resistance to online. Decoupling news production from newspaper production in a highly routinised environment does not occur simply because editorial staff – many of whom spent much of their career in a print workflow[15] – are told this is how it *should* be. For many journalists to invest in practice-related change as sought by their superiors, they must see it as somehow benefiting journalism, rather than simply for market rationale (Ryfe 2016). While the institutional approach often reflects on journalism's durability, Ryfe says it must also capture "how institutions are challenged or repudiated, and new institutions are invented" (2016, p.371). Online journalism has been developing for more than two decades and this data suggests online production has become something of a sub-institution with its own accepted practices, positioned within the broader journalistic system, as news organisations continue to adapt to the new format. Giddens, writing about how an identity can exist within a network of social relations, describes how such an altered identity can be a "category" which has particular rules and sanctions, and such conceptualisation may be applicable to online journalism (Giddens 1984, p.83)

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[15] According to Rafter and Dunne's report, based on the Worlds of Journalism data, one in five journalists (20%) are in the 45-54 age group while a further 12% are over 55.

6.4.1 *"You see a different audience online"*

The production of an online format was a departure with temporal, structural and strategic implications for newspaper-brand organisations. One uncertainty relates to whether the website is just a different format, or if different content is needed to appeal to two audiences (Reddan & Witschge 2010). Journalist B (Independent.ie) supposes that certain stories simply do not perform satisfactorily online, according to their superiors' assessment, such as investigative work or freedom of information reports. They suggest "you see a different audience online" on Independent.ie, and this dual audience may be apparent across the three newspaper brands. In the Irish Mirror, the website is, according to the editor, not a threat to the print edition as they appeal to fundamentally different readers; the average print reader is 42, while its typical online reader is 25-35 (Sexton 2017b). Editor John Kierans pitches this as an opportunity to maximise revenue, but this contrasts with apprehension highlighted by Journalist C in The Irish Times. They say shifting resources away from the print product may have implications for the integrity of the brand and its attitude towards readers. They refer to "concern among some staff" that the print product appeals to one readership – "a loyal, paying, long-term one" – while the online offerings appeal to another "who don't identify with the product or its values and don't necessarily pay for it". Concerns about targeting the latter group chimes with Phillips et al's point (2010) about how established brands risk losing their cultural capital by shifting away from serious, authoritative reporting, earning short-term gains which may have longer-term repercussions. Although the print-first/daytime-update balance is relatively even in quantity of stories on IrishTimes.com, Journalist C identifies a prevailing prestige associated with the print edition: "Reporters, and particularly political reporters, frequently pitch for the front page and getting a story on there is seen as a feather in their cap. I doubt they feel the same way about occupying the top slot on the website." They add that reporters might file "a quick, less polished story" for the website and "improve" it for the paper: "These improved versions did not always replace the web version, and they didn't seem to care if they did. That, to me, clearly indicates a mindset that rates the website lower."

Journalist B from Independent.ie refers to a story based on their original research regarding data from a public body, and describes what happened after it was written:

> [A senior online staff member] loved it, put it online, it did nothing … The paper didn't pick it up next day because it was already online, [so they] didn't care. A month later, the council put out their report and it was everywhere, and the Irish Independent [newspaper] splashed on it. And I said to [senior staff member] 'some things don't work online. Different audience'. We had that story a month before, but … that's when everyone else picked up on it – because someone released something.

This example highlights an apparent acceptance that certain stories do not "work" online; a lack of collaboration between online and print desks; and how the story only gained recognition in the print newsroom when it was part of an official report. Previous research (Phillips 2010a; Vobic & Milojevic 2014; Siegelbaum & Thomas 2016) describes how some journalists want to produce more original work but feel constrained by their online work environment. Journalist B echoes this, suggesting that almost anything outside of breaking news (such as freedom of information stories or features) has to be carried out in their own time. The scope to produce originally sourced news reports clearly stills exist for journalists, but appears tied to their own initiative, rather than being an expected element of daily output. Journalist A from the Irish Mirror highlights this sense of opportunity: "I think if you come in with original story ideas they're very receptive to that. Ultimately, that is what they want you to do, that's your goal as a journalist … the scope is definitely there." Such a comment is indicative of the potential of journalistic agency to exist within such a system. However, it appears not to be assumed that journalists working in such a system will be producing original news, as the journalists says "if" you come up with original ideas. What becomes apparent is the presence of different rules, standards and attitudes towards content for both print and online formats. A work environment that does not expect, normalise, or perhaps even facilitate, original reporting may potentially be one of the most significant aspects when analysing the internet's long-term influence on journalism. Such restrictions may not necessarily be carried out in a direct manner where pursuing such original work is overruled via formal sanctions and domination (Giddens 1984), but may be implemented indirectly by making it the exception, reliant on individual journalists' normative ambitions, rather than a routine, expected action. Such a culture becomes internalised and normalised by participants (Stones 2005), who then draw on what they see as the accepted rules in acting out their own behaviour. Of course, there is no single model for a newsroom producing online content, and the reporters from TheJournal.ie (D and E) make clear that original research is encouraged, especially for weekends which are removed from the higher-frequency weekday publications cycles. However, as the data in Figure 6.6 shows earlier in the chapter, this relatively minor scope does not translate to high levels of original content overall.

One point to remember regarding the low levels of original reporting relates to the critical commentary surrounding much of the contemporary news environment. The idea of harking back to a golden age of journalism is somewhat flawed (Fenton 2010); problems have always been evident, and the enabling/constraining (Giddens 1984) nature of online news adds a new layer to be considered. The dominance of routine channels of news and material from PR sources has been the case long before online publication; Macnamara's (2016) overview of

more than 200 studies over the past 100 years find that between 50-75% of stories contain a PR element. The ahistorical perspective of some observers is raised by Journalist E from TheJournal.ie:

> I don't think there's any worse reporting going on now than there was back then [pre-internet] … People can say very easily 'oh more rewriting of press releases now', but I think stuff like that would've always happened. Not everything before online was five-week long detailed investigations.

They suggest one reason it is such a contemporary concern is that audiences were perhaps previously only exposed to one newspaper a day, but "people are just more aware of that now because they can see it all online". The similarity of online daytime content between the print and net-native brands is worth highlightying at this point. Figure 6.10 illustrates the temporal distribution of original and repackaged content across the three newspaper-brand websites and the two net-native websites. When the initial overnight spike is removed from the print-brand results, the two graphs are broadly similar, with low levels of original content through the daytime and repackaged content dominating. This indicates how, fundamentally, the traditional newspaper brands and the online-only websites are effectively performing similar work during hours, albeit it at a different scale, as coverage is lower on the two online-only publications. It also indicates how valuable the print-first material is for the print-bands in distinguishing their output. Elsewhere, looking at word count, the average length of all TheJournal.ie's published texts (506 words) is the longest of all five websites, and more than double the length BreakingNews.ie (212 words) which highlights disparity between the two net-native approaches. When only news reports are included, the four websites (excluding BreakingNews.ie) are all between 435-495 words, on average (full word count data in Appendix J2). This suggests that dividing news producers between so-called legacy brands and net-natives may not be a particularly useful distinction, as divergence within these two categories is evident, as well as the many similar patterns visible across the two categories.

Print-brand websites

Net-native websites

Coverage (measured by word count)
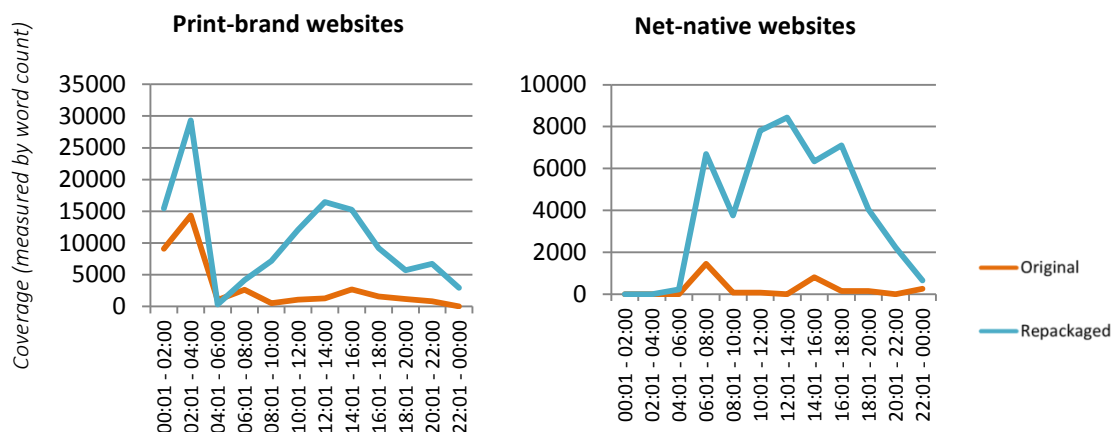
Figure 6.10: The use of original and repackaged material on the three print-brand websites (left) and two net-native websites (right)

6.4.2 Social dynamics of balancing two formats

The three newspaper-brand titles have espoused the merits of a digital-first strategy and it appears to be a symbolic statement of forward thinking. Editor-in-chief of Independent News and Media, Stephen Rae, said in 2013: "Our strategy is now a 'digital-first' one and we will soon unveil plans to make our titles the only true multi-platform media on the island" [16]. UK-based Trinity Mirror, which owns the Irish Daily Mirror, talks of its digital-first strategy rolled out in 2013 across a number of its regional titles. Speaking in 2015, Jim Miley, business-to-consumer director of The Irish Times, refers to the digital-first approach that has "transformed our business", resulting in "significant changes in our day-to-day operations, particularly in how we gather and disseminate our content … we are now publishing stories and articles at a time when our readers most want them." [17] As is the case with the three websites, there is no doubt that "digital-first" publishing is taking place during daytime hours, yet the more pertinent and fundamental question arises about what sort of content is appearing during these daytime hours.

Based on the data, showing more than 70% of Independent.ie content appearing overnight, the dual-product strategy was a key topic during the interview with Journalist B from Independent.ie, who describes a pervasive division between online and print journalists in the newsroom. They refer to a "level of disconnect" between both outputs and the "smugness" associated with the print title: "When I was moved to print, it was expected that I would be happy about it … Even the online people thought it was a step up." This is an example of the apparent hierarchy in newsrooms, indicative of the divisions between the print and online

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[16] http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/raes-appointment-boosts-inm-digital-strategy-29383208.html
[17] http://www.adworld.ie/2015/09/23/a-sign-of-the-times/

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departments that have still not been resolved (Menke et al. 2016; Colson & Heinderyckx 2008). Journalist B's suggestion that, even within the organisation, credibility is not transferable between print and online demonstrates the conjecturally specific circumstances which an agent internalises about the relative value of each format within the newsroom (Stones 2005). Furthermore, a disconnect between ideals and practice may be evident if print is seen as a "step up", potentially symptomatic of normative failure in the online environment (Siegelbaum & Thomas 2016).

The stark division between the level of daytime and print-first content in Independent.ie contrasts with images of converged, centralised newsrooms, and seems particularly at odds with what the company itself portrays. In *Irish Marketing Journal* in early 2015, INM's former managing director of the digital operations describes the "evolution" towards the contemporary newsroom. She says: "Now we are producing content in a platform-agnostic way and we would take a story and decide how will that translate into a print format or how will it translate into an online format, and ultimately a mobile format."[18] However, the results from this study suggest such a deliberative, flexible image, while perhaps strived for among those speaking about the organisation, is not the day-to-day experience for editorial staff. The fact that news reports and analysis from the publication's health correspondent appear almost exclusively overnight (93%: 147/158 stories) suggests a distinction that cannot be explained by the fact that their more specialised content simply translates better to the print format. Journalist B refers to how the online desk is not told what is in the following day's paper, only finding out the following morning. Sometimes, print stories are apparently consciously "kept away" from the online team, and they suggest there is a clear tension – and poor communication – between the two desks. This assessment is more in line with what the content analysis data indicates: that the distinction between the two outputs is stark, with the online, daytime updates not a direct beneficiary of the more original reporting, analysis, and specialised work produced by the Independent's journalists.

In The Irish Times, Journalist C refers to the sizeable print-online split present in the newsroom until some workflow changes were brought in in recent years which somewhat bridged the gap. Prior to this change, breaking-news stories (such as crime, court stories, parliamentary reports: "where the material is 'common property' among other media") would appear during the daytime, but journalists processed the majority of content with the morning's print edition in mind. However, even in 2017, the overnight timestamp remains commonplace on seemingly original material. An apparent contradiction is clear on both IrishTimes.com

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[18] http://www.inm.ie/blog/irish-marketing-journal-interview/

and Independent.ie: the news organisations publically espouse the merits of digital technology and appear to be favouring an evolutionary narrative that hinges on the digital product as being the future. However, a significant proportion of valuable, original and exclusive content is deemed not to have a place on the website during the hours that the audience are active, which raises questions about the worth placed on the website relative to the print product. The purpose of quoting such public claims about the digital-first strategies is not to simply facilitate a critique of how actions are not matching up to claims. Instead, it helps to highlight the distinction between public claims, and actual actions; both may be seen as appropriate or correct behaviour from the actors involved, depending on their roles within the system. The signification rule in structuration facilitates this distinction, factoring in the different values and meaning of work of the news outlet as a commercial entity, compared with journalism's traditional values (Altmeppen 2010). Such public claims about digital-first – which may be appreciated in the commercial departments – may fail to fully resonate with editorial staff if they appear at odds with existing journalistic values and rules, such as an internalised perception that the print product is more worthy. As Ryfe (2016) has highlighted, the often-idealistic nature of journalism means that journalists need to see editorial value to embrace such changes. Otherwise, the "conventional rhythms" of the print format (Schlesinger & Doyle 2015, p.313) will continue to shape patterns, thus furthering the print product's "bite into time and space" (Giddens 1984, p.171).

When asked about the relationship between the two formats in the Irish Mirror, Journalist A said: "At first certainly there was some resistance [to online]" but that the website is now seen, in many ways, as more important." The data suggests the print-first approach is less present in the Irish Mirror newsroom; Journalist A points out how there had been a recent shift in attitude where rather than delaying stories until the morning, "we tend to put them out the night before, maybe 9pm or 10pm … Often it will give us the boost in the figures late at night. So I think that mentality, the print-first mentality, is probably fading". Irish Mirror editor John Kierans also states that no stories are "held back" for the print edition (Sexton 2017b). The Irish Mirror is a relative new entrant; its Irish website was only set up in 2013 (the UK website has been in existence much longer), compared with IrishTimes.com and Independent.ie, establishing websites in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Whether that is a factor in the different approaches is difficult to determine; it may be the case that approaching a new website strategy without two decades of engrained cultures may lead to decision-making that translates more fully into different practices. Alternatively, its tabloid identity may lend itself to different role perceptions online, such as being more public- or audience-focused.

6.5 Other media, attribution and transparency

In their considerations of channels of news production, both Sigal (1973) and Boesman et al (2015) categorise "other media" as distinct to the routine channels. However, this study considers them as something routine, as they are publicly and easily available and require little expertise to assemble; they appear to be part of a passive reporting approach that hinges on basic information-processing rather than active sourcing. Overall one in eight stories are based on other media reports (122/896), and these are mostly written by general reporters (56) or have no byline (56, of which 41 are from BreakingNews.ie). They are also heavily associated with daytime updates, with 47 of the 122 stories categorised as daytime updates on newspaper brand websites, 12 are print-first updates on newspaper-brand websites, and 63 are on online-only websites. The immediate, free, easy access to fresh material may be a reason why other media reports are so dominant and, as Figure 6.11 shows, radio is the media format most heavily used. Journalist B from Independent.ie refers to how the online newsdesk "adore *Liveline*" (the RTÉ phone-in radio programme), and says "I felt [there was] an over-reliance on the radio". Compared with written formats, broadcast is more dependent on physical variations of voice, so there may be a need to source diverse contributions beyond the information subsidy material usable in text-based news. This provides an easily accessible channel on which journalists work in written formats can draw, especially for private citizen contributions, as illustrated in Figure 6.11. This association between different source material and different voices is explored further in Chapter 7.
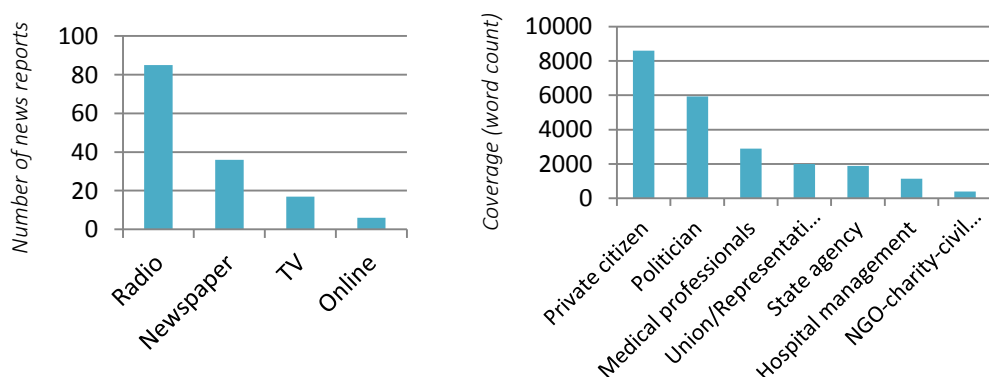
Figure 6.11: The number of stories which used material from each media format (left) and the sources used in content taken from other media reports (right)

The bricolage trend in online journalism is well-established (Deuze 2006), and while cannibalisation of content (Phillips 2010b) is not a new phenomenon, the argument of whether information is public property once published fits in with broader debates about free-flowing information online, content curation and aggregation (Bakker 2012; Turner 2010). There is nothing about the process in NUJ guidelines in Ireland, but Silverman, writing from a US perspective, says the "starting point for ethical aggregation is to practise attribution" (2014). In this study, there is inconsistency in attribution practices when content is repurposed from other media. The reporter from the Irish Mirror highlights a difference in guidelines for online and print outputs:

> The policy is, particularly online, always credit, wherever the story first appeared. So if we're doing a rip of the story from the Irish Independent and quoting one of their sources, we'd say "told the Irish Independent". In print we would avoid taking quotes from other newspapers completely.

The journalist from the Independent says "you are meant to" name the original source, but the attribution's positioning in the text varied: "Depending who it is who might read your copy, it's going to be in the second paragraph or it's going to be buried down in the 12th paragraph." A journalist from TheJournal.ie says content from other outlets is often used, but "we always name them, and always try to link to the website" (Journalist E). They make a distinction between a politician on a radio station giving an interview, saying that is completely separate from a piece of investigative work from another journalist. They suggest that the politicians' comments are being said publicly – so they would use them and credit the original source – but "[original] reporting which someone else has done, that's something we wouldn't take really". The data supports TheJournal.ie's commitment to attribution, as Figure 6.12 shows it mentions the original outlet the most, while Independent.ie attributes the least.
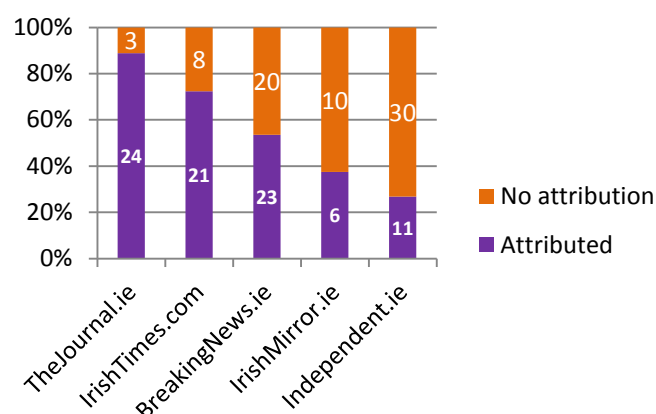
Figure 6.12: The attribution rate of stories that include other media. The figures in the bar show the number of stories.

TheJournal.ie's higher rate of attribution is potentially indicative of how it draws on some of the transparency norms associated with online news (Agarwal & Barthel 2015; O'Sullivan 2012; Karlsson 2010), and Silverman (2014) notes that the "principle and practice of showing our work builds trust and credibility". However, while such transparency may manifest in attribution to other media, or be used to justify why news outlets shift away from detached objectivity (Riordan 2014), it raises questions about transparency towards PR and other information subsidies. One example from the sample is a story about the iodine tablets provided to all households in the Republic of Ireland in 2002, to be taken in the event of a British nuclear emergency. It appeared on TheJournal.ie on a Sunday morning and starts with an introductory sentence "The Department of Health won't be reissuing iodine tablets", written like a news story. It includes quotes from the Department of Health saying the threat of a nuclear emergency has receded and fresh tablets will not be issued. The original source is easily found: a press release on the Department of Health website from 2008, as illustrated in Figure 6.13.
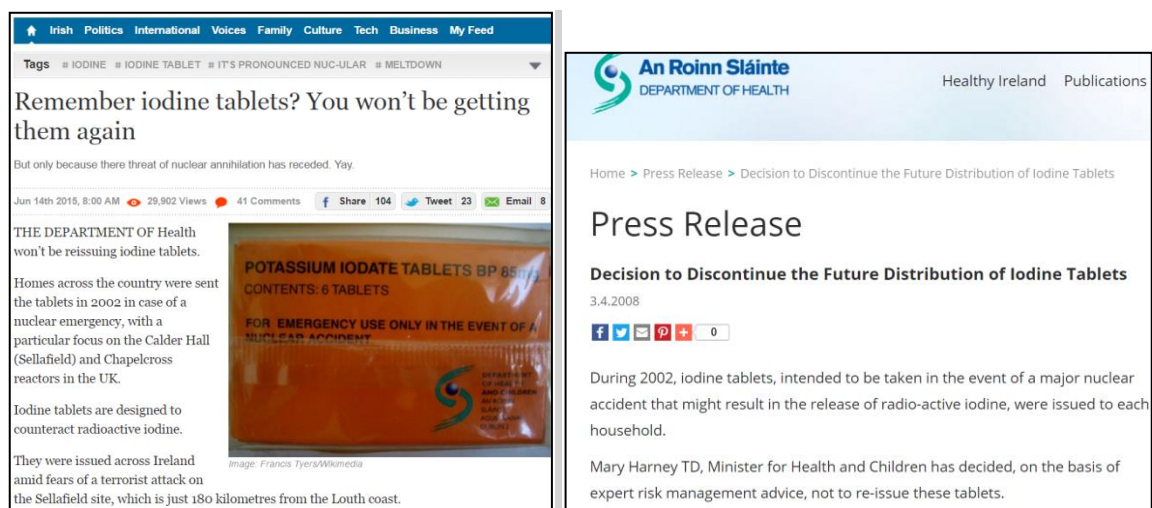
Figure 6.13: The story on TheJournal.ie, and the Department of Health press releases dated April 3rd, 2008

At no point in this text on TheJournal.ie does it mention this decision was made in 2008, nor is there any fresh information included; arguably there is nothing newsworthy (Full text of story and press release in Appendix J3). While the timeframe of this story is an obvious outlier, it highlights something about a lack of transparency that may still exist within journalism practice towards publicly declaring the origins of published content. This is relevant to any story drawing on PR material: some make it clear with references such as "in a statement", or "at a launch", but other times it is much less obvious. Macnamara (2016) finds that both journalism and PR practitioners are dismissive of increased transparency such as source-

disclosure statements on media reports based on PR material or "churnalism" software, instead favouring industry self-regulation. This suggests a lack of consistency in the concept of transparency, raising questions about whether news outlets' intention is actually to inform audiences about the source of material. Alternatively, the transparency concept may be more industry-centric, serving primarily to protect news outlets of accusations of bias and for best-practice attribution among peers.

6.6 Newsroom resources

Giddens refers to two categories of resources constituting the structures of domination: allocative (power over things: raw material, material power sources, instruments of production, technology, and produced goods) and authoritative (power over people: organisation of social time-space, production of the body, chances of self-development and self-expression) (1984, p.258). Both are external structures in a system (Stones 2005), and both have relevance for newsrooms. While access to resources, such as staff numbers, is one consideration, the effective and appropriate use of what resources are present in a newsroom is also worth emphasising (Nielsen 2017). In the Independent newsroom, Journalist B suggests staffing is not necessarily problematic in actual numbers of people, instead identifying a lack of training among the online desk. The desk often feels overstaffed, they claim, arguing that it fails to produce the output that should be possible with that number of people. By contrast, issues of understaffing are highlighted by the journalists in the Irish Mirror and The Irish Times, but appear less of a concern in TheJournal.ie.

A broader issue here relates to what may be a reduced workforce expected to produce more. Rather than simply accepting that as a problematic situation, questions can be asked about whether higher-quality journalism can be achieved by reducing the expected output, thus modifying expectations of what exactly is sought from an online newsroom. Quality over quantity may be a simplification, but the output may be ultimately improved – which could benefit the brand's credibility and reputation – by altering the cycle in which news organisations appear to be engrained. Irish Times editor Paul O'Neill, appointed in 2017, has described his preference for more news reporters, while reducing the number of production staff, particularly subeditors, who are now processing content for two formats (Sexton 2017a). He says: "We want to reduce the back office production overheads and increase the number of people producing stories." The paradox here is that increasing the output from the newsroom places further demands on the production staff, which O'Neill is keen to reduce, but such a rebalancing of staff has ramifications. Journalist C from the Irish Times believes quality control on the website is "lacking": "It's a rare occasion that I scroll through the app and don't

see either mistakes or sloppiness." They said that if people are expected to pay for a product, as The Irish Times paywall seeks, then higher editorial standards must be maintained: "That's just not happening at the moment and the lack of respect, time and resources given to production is the reason why." Reducing production staff while increasing newsroom output is a strategic decision made by management, and is one example of how the allocation of resources impacts on the work environment and demands placed upon journalists within the system. The Irish Times is not alone in this, as the New York Times example in Chapter 3 demonstrates, where staff walked out following cutbacks to copyeditors. The cutbacks are part of a broader trend whereby production staff are being reduced as part of editorial restructuring, despite the distinct values they bring to the publishing process (Vandendaele 2017). [19]

6.6.1 Experience, specialisation and socialisation

Aside from the quantity of news workers, another aspect of human resourcing is the experience and specialisation level of reporters. Although a higher proportion of general reporters' output was in the original category when measured by quantity of coverage (Figure 6.7 in section 6.3), specialised reporters' produce a higher number of stories through original channels (explored in section 6.7) which indicates some of the value they bring to a newsroom. While it was not possible to factor age into the data, specialisation is significant in the time of day stories are uploaded and the source material used. The opportunity to specialise in an area is something for which many young journalists strive (Soloski 1989), and across the five websites, specialised reporters' output is present on IrishTimes.com and Independent.ie. However, one point worth noting is that the news reports on the websites do not display the reporters' title/specialisation that are visible on the print pages (eg "Health Correspondent" as part of their byline), as the web pages display just their name.[20] This suggests that while specialisation is potentially significant to internal newsroom dynamics, it is not seem necessary to project that level of authority to readers. In TheJournal.ie, the entire team of reporters have the opportunity to pursue any topic, which Journalist E considers as a positive:

> If you put your hands up, and you want to do a particular story, there's nobody being precious about a story in a sense that people wouldn't say 'oh that person has been covering that for a little while, let's leave it to them'. You can take ownership of things, which I think works really well.

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[19] The Irish Independent has outsourced much of its subediting work over the past decade, and in 2016 announced further production roles would be outsourced to the Press Association. https://www.irishtimes.com/business/media-and-marketing/inm-plans-to-outsource-newspaper-production-to-pa-1.2773277

[20] The information was present in the short biographical note available on both websites about each reporter, but not on each news report.

A pool of general reporters is also present in the Irish Mirror (apart from its political and crime correspondents). The anonymous, no-bylined nature of all content on BreakingNews.ie suggests little distinction between authors.

One of the attributes associated with specialised reporters is their network of contacts within a sector, whom they traditionally rely on as an informal news channel for tip-offs and off-the-record information (Dindler 2014; Reich 2008). The results indicate low usage of anonymous sources, appearing in just 19 stories, with 60 stories appearing to use some leaked information. However, given the nature of their existence, it is not possible to account for anonymous sources' role in providing background information. One thing is clear from a further analysis: the use of anonymous sources and leaked material is heavily associated with material written by specialised reporters, as illustrated in Figure 6.14.
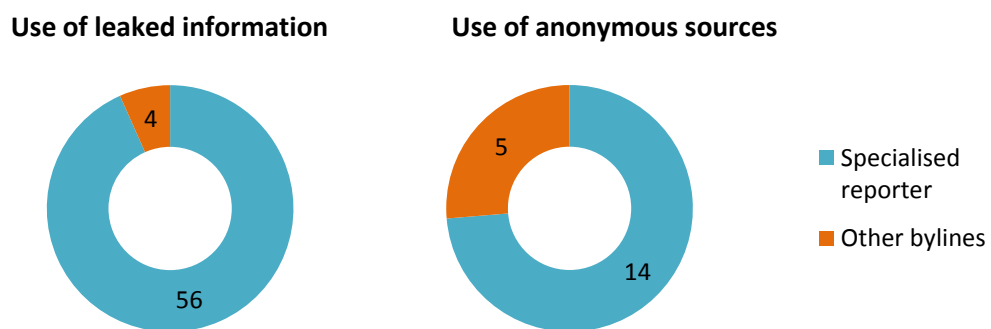
Figure 6.14: The correlation between specialised reporters and the use of leaked information (left) and anonymous sources (right). The graphs shows the number of stories in each category.

Caution needs to be taken regarding anonymous sources; since 2016, the New York Times requires editorial/departmental approval for any story in which anonymous sources are used as part of its efforts to "ensure that use of anonymous sources is not routine, but is always subject to scrutiny and questioning" (Spayd 2016). This rigour also includes trying to avoid anonymous sources as the sole contributor to a story, and the results here show anonymous sources are almost never (n=1) the only sources used in the story. However, the diversity of contributions, and the highlighting of public interest issues which an organisation may not want in the public domain, remain a valuable source to pursue. If these sources are more likely to make themselves known to established journalists whom they trust, then the value of having an established "micro-social system" (Manning 2001) becomes clear. A journalist with a strong network of contacts is not necessarily constrained by being office-bound to the same

level as a junior reporter would be; these senior reporters have a pre-existing pool of resources upon which to draw, regardless of spatial factors.

While there are concerns about specialisation and being immersed in a beat for a long time, such as an over-reliance or loyalty to certain sources (Gans 1979), the experience of a specific beat can also lead to a deeper understanding of its intricacies. Journalist B, a general reporter at Independent.ie, describes attending a press conference for the launch of bereavement support services for women who suffer miscarriages:

> [I was] given no guidance on what to expect, who to speak to, who was going to be there … [among all the crowd of general reporters] I could tell who the health reporter was, because they knew. They had the questions. They knew who to speak to, what to do, 100%. And I'm kind of sitting there, trying to figure a question that hasn't already been asked.

They add that with a press conference like that, there is the "official line" being promoted, and "the next day, that's the line in practically every paper. And then you see the one person who actually understood the report", who was able to critique it from a different angle. Such an example highlights concerns about journalists' ability to fully assess the material they cover, and the value of having those experts who are familiar with the beat. The same journalist makes reference to how this can impact not just on the quality of output, but on the journalists' confidence:

> I know people who have been trapped in that – told to do a story they don't have the experience to do... and just panic. Just got into a tizzy, a panic, and didn't know what to do. Just really seized up. They couldn't confirm something and weren't given the help to confirm it or the support that they needed. [It's like] they should just know what to do.

Such situations may come as a challenge to professional identity, and contribute to broader concerns about journalists' ability to fulfil certain roles, such as acting as a watchdog. In the World of Journalism study (Worlds of Journalism 2016), almost two-thirds of Irish journalists said that "providing analysis of current affairs" was extremely/very important, with a similar number saying the same for "monitoring and scrutinising political leaders". However, to fulfil these ambitions, journalists must have the ability – both knowledge and autonomy – to do so. Former minister for health Leo Varadkar also ties what he sometimes considers weak media coverage to some of the young journalists, and their precarious working environments, something previously highlighted as a concern for journalistic autonomy (Preston 2009). Varadkar says this is one of the things that has changed in the media landscape since he first

ran for election in 1999: "That probably has meant there's more news of less quality, because there's a load of young, hungry journalists without proper contracts and without being paid properly."

In this study, journalists from both the Irish Mirror and the Independent reference the recruitment of recent graduates and their deployment to online desks. It was also touched on by a young Irish Times journalist who says office-bound younger journalists are unable to gain experience. Responding directly to Rafter and Dunne's study highlighting the "hollowing out" of Irish journalism (2016), D'Arcy said it "accurately reflects the reality of the situation in newsrooms" as mature journalists desert the profession. Young journalists are expected to "carry the slack" and readers suffer a "diminished standard of reportage" as many lack the capacity to fully contextualise the news when compared with older colleagues:

> This experience deficit is exacerbated by the fact that young reporters tend to be confined to the office. They are shorn of the opportunity to go out and glean a deeper understanding of the events they are being asked to cover and are, in many instances, expected to simply regurgitate content produced by competitors.

This apparent lack of opportunity can be tied to the authoritative resources granted by those in decision-making positions in editorial contexts. Giddens elaborates on this structural element, referring to the "chances of self-development and self-expression" as part of the authoritative resources (Giddens 1984, p.258) which can be applied to many young journalists, and the failure to fulfil such normative values can lead to frustrations (Siegelbaum & Thomas 2016). Another factor, tied more to the individual journalist, is an apparent trend whereby many graduates are moving from university with a journalism qualification straight into employment in a national news organisation. Journalist B makes the point that their experience garnered in a local newspaper was "astronomical compared to anything from college", and helped on the mental level of "being forced to pick up the phone and engage with people … [but] now there seems to be this focus on just getting on a national [newspaper]". He says lack of regional experience has implications for what younger reporters consider acceptable or appropriate newsgathering, and also has repercussions on their ability to deal with some sources:

> They don't know how to speak to someone who has cancer, or speak to someone whose child has died. You can tell they've never done it before, but you can tell they've never been told how to do it. Because I was never told how to do it. I just had to do it [but] it was on the local level… when I made a mistake it wasn't huge.

This socialisation dimension serves as a useful perspective when trying to analyse the role of younger journalists in news production, especially the online format. If younger journalists are more likely to be working online, it raises questions about whether their lack of broader journalistic experience is more of a concern rather than anything specific to the online format. For younger journalists to gain this experience, the role of the meso-level in the newsroom – particularly editors and those with direct influence and power over reporters – requires attention. These agents oversee and often direct reporters (especially younger reporters) on work, and offer them the scope to specialise or gain experience. If this editorial level shift expectations and insist on certain newsgathering done outside the office, or seek further source perspectives or research before publication, then this expectation may be normalised and become an internalised rule of the system. It contributes to their structures of both broader, general dispositional knowledge, applicable to the general journalistic field, as well as the conjecturally specific knowledge about what is expected in a particular newsroom (Stones 2005). While young journalists can, of course, push themselves to produce their own original work (Phillips 2010a), it may be a somewhat unfair and unrealistic expectation if the experience and opportunities offered to them – and the expectations placed upon them – are seemingly so different to that of older colleagues. The socialisation environment for younger journalists working online appears, in many ways, to be unconducive to original reporting (Ferrucci 2017). Many contemporary newsrooms, especially within legacy media brands, are a hybrid of experienced reporters and younger staff, but with many of the latter group more tied to the digital output. Journalist C from The Irish Times indicates the high level of autonomy that appears to reside with senior journalists:

> The old hands do seem to have a lot more latitude about how much to file and what they cover. They tell newsdesk what they are doing, rather than vice versa … This is less the case with newer recruits. Some of the newer reporters had to do stints on the digital production desk – something I could hardly imagine some of the more august correspondents doing.

This reiterates how it is not reasonable to simply expect younger journalists to produce the same standard of work or operate with the same autonomy as more experienced journalists; some instruction, facilitation or intervention from a superior may be needed. Therefore, accepting that resources, such as a lack of staff, are the dominant reason for problems in achieving normative goals fails to take into account how altering the system, and a reallocation of existing resources, may potentially provide some resolutions. Nielsen refers to this need for discussions about where "journalism might focus its finite and often very limited resources" (2017, p.2), rather than concentrating on apparent failures. Certain actors in a news

organisation at the meso-level have the resource of domination, ensuring they have influence and control over what is expected regarding frequency of publication or source use. It may be the case that the standards set out by this level of editorial staff lay the foundations of what younger journalists believe is expected of them, and young journalists adapt accordingly.

6.7 Channels of production

During the coding process, one of the categories recorded was the channel of production (routine, informal and enterprise) based on Sigal's (1973) work. The dominance of the routine channel became evident but this incorporated a diverse range of content, and the single over-arching "routine" channel failed to capture some of this nuance. Such diversity led to this reconceptualisation of Sigal's channels and the proposal of a new framework presented here, which elaborates on the practices involved in each channel. The framework is an expansion of the work carried out by Boesman et al (2015), who collapsed the informal and enterprise channels into one, designating "other media" as a separate channel. While this proposed model does something similar, it is at a more fragmented and detailed level, recommending eight channels. When coding, the key divide appeared to be between routine and non-routine channels, which become the two overarching categories here, with the latter category combining Sigal's informal and enterprise channels. These two categories are divided into four sub-channels and Figure 6.15 shows how the categorisation of the stories compares between Sigal's three channels, and the proposed new channels.[21] A description and examples of each are in Table 6.3.
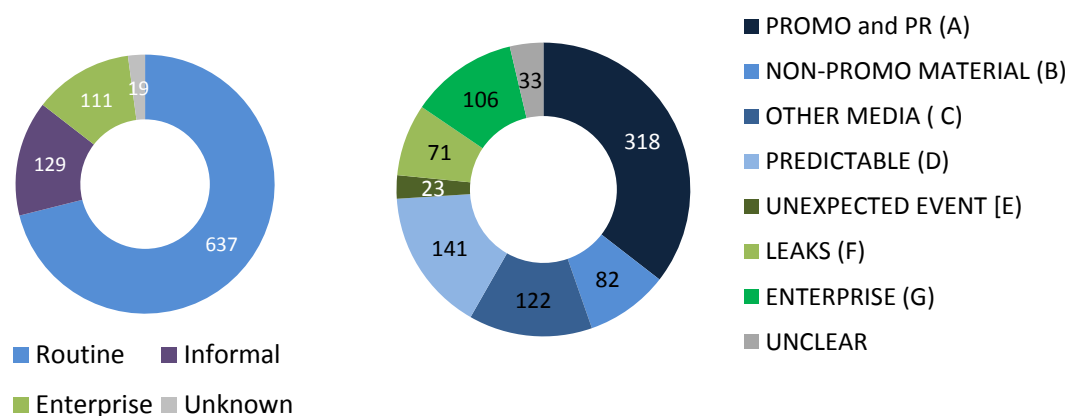
Figure 6.15: The number of stories categorised into Sigal's channels of production (left), and the new channels (right)

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[21] As this categorisation of stories was only applied to news reports, as per the second phase of coding, the Special Reports category (Category H), which would include opinion columns and features, is excluded from the analysis.

ROUTINE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
A: Promotional/ PR releases	Based on material provided by third parties. These information subsidies may be promotional/ positive for them, or be PR material in response to an issue. Typically, it is material in which coverage is sought by external actors	**Headline:** "Women's rights 'violated' by Ireland's abortion laws – Amnesty" *(BreakingNews.ie 09/06/2015)* **Source:** Amnesty "She is not a criminal" report
B: Non-promotional material	Non-promotional material provided by third parties. This may be considered relatively neutral information, such as the release of data, or Hiqa watchdog reports into standards in hospitals/care homes.	**Headline:** "Hospital waiting lists soar as 470,000 people are left waiting for care" *(Independent.ie, 08/06/2015)* **Source:** Release of National Purchase Treatment Fund figures
C: Other media	This is content repurposed from other media reports on rival organisations. This may be another newspaper, or, as was often the case in this research, interviews carried out on radio stations.	**Headline:** Ireland's obesity problem will be worse than cholera or Aids for our health service, professor warns *(Independent.ie, 06/05/2015)* **Source:** Interview with Donal O'Shea based on RTÉ's Morning Ireland radio show
D: Predictable	This content is somewhat predictable, as the event is scheduled (but the exact happenings may be unknown). Yet it still requires processing, and may be interpreted differently depending on the journalist/news outlet. This includes parliamentary activity, courts, conferences, etc.	**Headline:** Minister pledges women and infant health programme *(IrishTimes.com, 27/05/2015)* **Source:** Minister Leo Varadkar speaking in Dáil

NON-ROUTINE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
E: Unexpected events	This is coverage of unplanned events/issues. The specific sources used will vary a lot for unexpected events, depending on what is available in the aftermath of the event.	**Headline:** Investigation after baby dies during birth in Cavan hospital *(IrishTimes.com, 13/05/2015)* **Source:** Confirmation from HSE
F: Leaks	This content is based on information not in public domain. Typically, such information is received via a tip-off from a source.	**Headline:** Critical risks at Portlaoise hospital raised by medics in 2011 *(IrishTimes.com, 19/05/2015)* **Source:** Leaked 2011 report "seen by Irish Times"
G: Enterprise	This is based on original such as investigative work, undercover work, and freedom of information. It also includes the use of one-on-one interviews, such as highlighting of human interest stories.	**Headline**: Son's outrage as patient smokes on Kilkenny hospital ward alongside 82-year-old father who had major surgery *(IrishMirror.ie, 24/10/2015)* **Source:** First-hand interview with man
H: Special reports	This content is typically not a news story, and includes features, opinion/analysis, or any kind of non-textual storytelling such as data analysis.	**Headline:** "Radiology debacle shows good-quality healthcare costs, but poor care costs more" *(Independent.ie, 01/05/2015)* **Source**: Analysis piece written by health policy expert Sara Burke

Table 6.3: The eight channels of production, including a description and example

While the recategorisation presented in Figure 6.15 offers a descriptive basis for examining from where content is originating, Table 6.4 adds a more analytical dimension by capturing some of other factors that may be influential. This is tentative and may not be applicable in every scenario, but draws inspiration from the typifying work of Tuchman (1973), presented in Chapter 3. This assessment, based on an inductive analysis from the coding and analysis process, categorises each factor as either low, medium or high. The first two rows examine the temporal nature of each channel: both the time required to research the story and the urgency of publication. Enterprise (G) reporting and special reports (H), due to their removal from the daily news beat and their relative exclusivity, are deemed not to be in urgent need of publication. This is in contrast to PR material (A) which may need to be published quickly as every news organisation will likely have it, or it may come with an embargo time that acts as a prompt for its release. In contrast, the time needed for research is low for most of the routine channels and higher for channels G and H. The other factors are based on the role of external actors, resources required, and similarity to rivals' versions.

	< ROUTINE CHANNELS >				< NON- ROUTINE CHANNELS >			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	PROMOTIONAL & PR	NON- PROMOTIONAL	OTHER MEDIA	PREDICTABLE	UNEXPECTED EVENTS	LEAKS	ENTERPRISE	SPECIAL REPORTS
TIME								
Time needed to research and assemble	LOW	LOW	LOW	MED	MED	MED	HIGH	HIGH
Urgency of publication	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MED	HIGH	LOW	LOW	LOW
EXTERNAL ACTORS								
Reliance on outside contributions	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MED	LOW	HIGH	LOW	LOW
Need for network of contacts	LOW	LOW	LOW	MED	MED	HIGH	MED	MED
RESOURCES								
Need for specialist knowledge	LOW	LOW	LOW	MED	MED	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Financial investment required	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MED	MED
Possibility to do from desk	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
FINAL PRODUCT								
Similarity to rivals' version	HIGH	MED	MED	MED	HIGH	LOW	LOW	LOW

Table 6.4: The factors associated with each channel, categorised as low, medium or high

Certain categories, particularly F, G and H are adversely affected by time pressure and a lack of specialist knowledge and, overall, it becomes clear how certain factors lead to a reliance on routine channels. When looking at Table 6.4, there is one indicator which appears consistent across all eight channels: the ability to perform the function from the desk. While the desk-bound nature of much journalism now, especially online, is a concern for some (Paulussen 2012; Preston 2009) the issue may be about more than just a journalist's physical positioning. The contemporary networked environment means that extensive and thorough journalism can be performed remotely: live streams of parliament can be watched, FOIs can be submitted, or phone calls can be made from a desk and having an established network of sources make this task easier. Similarly, simply being out of the office is not enough in and of itself: hours spent at press conferences or other heavily mediated settings may not necessarily offer a journalist original material. However, one of the key variables may relate to experience: having the knowledge, familiarity and ability to source the necessary information ensures original work can be completed from most settings. Thus, it appears that the desk or physical location is not the main problem, but the issue instead may lie with the journalist' own experience and work practices. Opportunities provided by superiors – which can be seen as authoritative resources (Giddens 1984) – may shape these practices, and Journalist C from Independent.ie identifies a cultural resistance from some of their superiors which may be influential:

> When I was [working] online, you might cover a protest in town, but they didn't expect to go to the protest. Just cover it from Twitter. I'd say: 'It's across the road, I'll be back in 20 minutes.' It's just that attitude, that you can do everything without leaving.

The demands and requirements of different types of stories may affect editors' attitudes and expectations. Using the channels of production, Table 6.5 shows some of the potential advantages and disadvantages of each channel for news organisations, factoring in considerations such as cost, credibility, prestige and temporality. The content from routine channels may be cheaper, quicker to produce, less of a risk regarding verification/liability, and will provide guaranteed content. In contrast, the non-routine channels offer prestige and credibility but may require more time, resources and specialist knowledge, with no guarantee of content, and with risks.

ROUTINE	ADVANTAGE TO NEWS ORGANISATION	DISADVANTAGE TO NEWS ORGANISATION
A: Promotional/PR releases	- Low cost - Little time required - Information coming from third party may be trustworthy/verified - Can be processed by non-expert journalists	- Risk to credibility - Resistance to using/relying on PR - Similarity to other publications' versions
B: Non-promotional material	- Low cost - Little time required - Seen as neutral information: support objective dissemination of news	- Potentially similar to other publications' versions - May require expertise to find best news angle/contextualise
C: Other media	- Low cost - Little time required - End rivals' exclusivity of a story - Low risk/already published by other organisation, suggesting legitimacy	- Risk to credibility of using/relying on second-hand information - Promoting rivals' brand - Questions over how to attribute original source
D: Predictable	- Easy to plan for - Can provide guaranteed source of material - Open to interpretation/can be used to set agenda/framing	- Similar to other publication version (but not necessarily – open to interpretation) - May require expertise to find best news angle/contextualise

NON-ROUTINE	ADVANTAGE TO NEWS ORGANISATION	DISADVANTAGE TO NEWS ORGANISATION
E: Unexpected events	- Opportunity to show competitiveness/relevance by getting story first	- Need for constant updates - Risks of unverified/inaccurate information - Reliant on external reaction/contributions
F: Leaks	- Prestige/exclusivity - Potential to set agenda	- Requires contacts/well-connected reporters - Needs to be verified
G: Enterprise	- Prestige/exclusivity - Potential to set agenda	- Requires resources – time and expertise - No guarantee of story - Needs to be verfied
H: Special reports	- Prestige/exclusivity - Potential to set agenda	- Requires resources – time and expertise - May be slow to produce

Table 6.5: The potential advantages and disadvantages of each channel of production

The aim in constructing such channels of production is to try to resist generalities when talking about types of news content, instead highlighting how various environmental, structural and resource-related factors can facilitate or strict different types of journalism. Ryfe (2009b, p.675) refers to the "templates" which journalists draw on while assembling news stories, or Ericson et al's "vocabulary of precedents" (1978 in Cottle 2007, p.3), and such images are

useful when looking at these channels in this way, as they offer a framework in which story-gathering can be conceptualised. It also suggests the implications and outcomes for content amid scenarios whereby there are fewer journalists with specialist knowledge, or hyper-temporality is prioritised. Figure 6.16 shows the dominance of routine channels during the daytime hours, illustrating how promotional material provides much of the daytime contributions. Similarly, other media and predictable events such as parliamentary activity also contribute heavily.
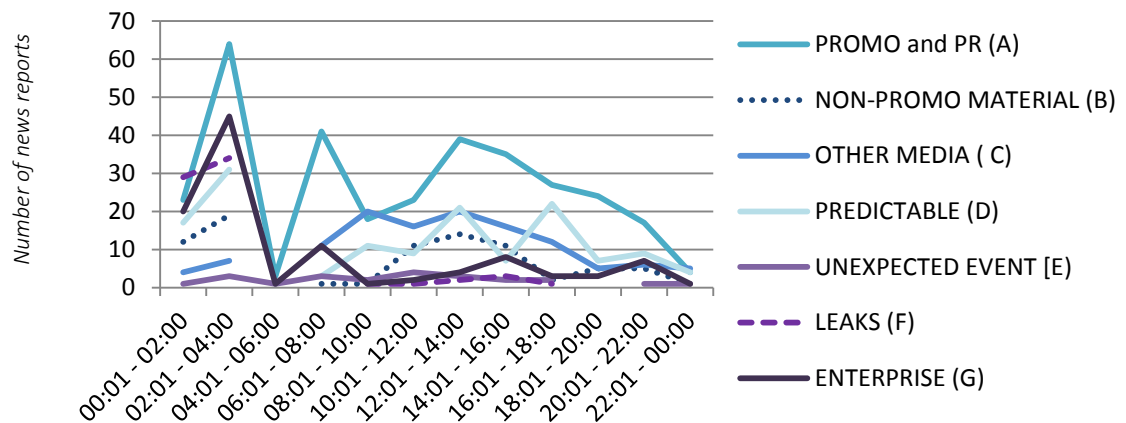
Figure 6.16: The use of routine and non-routine channels for stories throughout the day

While the results presented earlier in this chapter about source categories are based on word count to more accurately capture the quantity of coverage, the channels of production treat each story as a unit, identifying the apparent trigger through which it reached the journalist. This is useful for further explaining some of the results. For example, general reporters produce more content (measured by quantity/word count) of original work than specialised reporters, as shown in earlier in the chapter in Figure 6.7, but specialised reporters source more content through non-routine channels, as Figure 6.17 illustrates.
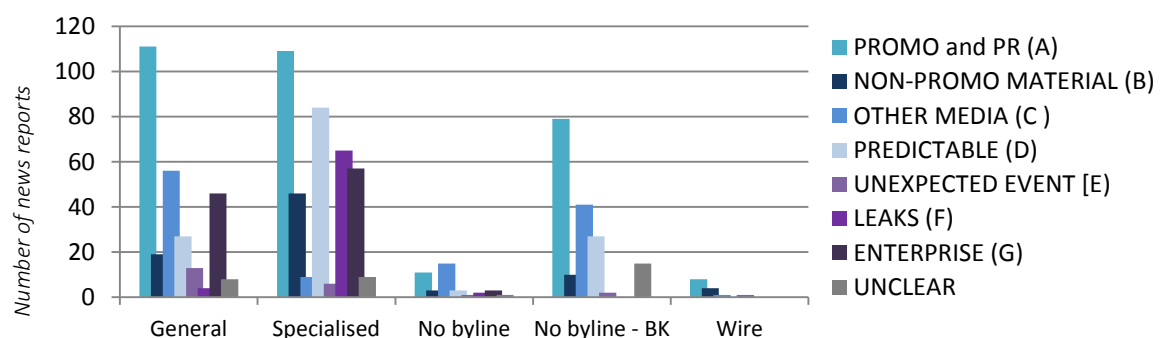
Figure 6.17: The various byline types and how they use different channels of production

The channels of production, which captures some the nuance between each channel, provides a robust framework to bring forward[22]. It is used in the analysis presented in Chapter 7, while further discussion about the importance of distinguishing between Channel A and B, the promotional and non-promotional channels, is also raised in Chapter 8 in the context of coverage of the health service.

6.8 Conclusion:

The results presented in this chapter show that all-day publishing is taking place among the five websites, and routine, repackaged, easily accessible material fuels such activity. While repackaged material is not new or limited to online news (Macnamara 2016), the print-first category benefits from more original and exclusive material. This raises questions about the value placed on the websites, questions which are particularly relevant given the apparent contradiction between outlets' digital-first declarations and what these results demonstrate. While the ongoing influence of the print product is in line with other European countries (Menke et al. 2016), variation among these three newspaper titles also suggests caution is needed when trying to generalise about trends in news organisations. For some, maintaining a print-product distinction, therefore removing some reporters from the instant-update, hyper-temporal culture online, may be important to maintain a type of journalism beyond speed-driven updates. If that dual categorisation of stories which is present in this study – the more routine and formulaic, versus more original content – disappears, then perhaps the potential for further analysis, or stories that take more time to work on, may also be weakened.

The channels of production outlined in the latter part of this chapters offer a reconceptualisation of Sigal's work, and presented a detailed framework upon which to consider why certain channels dominate, and how this may be influenced by newsroom factors. Typifying news in such a manner acts as a reminder that journalists draw on patterns, often somewhat subconsciously but still knowingly, in daily news work. When journalistic behaviour become normalised and accepted, this lays the foundation of a social system and contributes to its ongoing reproduction; each day, actors reinforce the existing system by adhering to their perception of its rules. This may not be deliberate: Giddens makes the point that most day-to-day behaviour is "not directly motivated", and that the routine practices are "prime expression of the duality of structure in respect of the continuity of social life" (1984, p.282). For an institution like journalism (Ryfe 2009b, p.674), such routines become "sticky" and difficult to alter. However, the potential to affect how systems

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[22] The breakdown of channel of production by publication is included in Appendix J5

operate is always present, and the conceptualisation of online journalism as a sub-institution is useful to capture the evolving dynamics which show traditional roles prevail amid some adjustments, as many traditional brands appear to pursue dual approaches to the two outputs. Regarding the potential to influence this sub-institution, the meso-level (management and editorial decision-makers) retains a highly influential role in establishing and altering newsroom cultures. The power over authoritative and allocative resources (Giddens 1984) that resides at this level is one of the factors contributing to what is deemed to be acceptable news content and providing opportunities to younger journalists. Time is often cited as one of the most significant structures facing journalists of any format, but the way in which time is a factor in online news is more fragmented and fluid than traditional print or broadcast deadlines. On one hand, the perception of time may feel accelerated, and news producers may feel a pressure to be always-on, but on the other, there are few – if any – strictly enforced deadlines in online news. This potential fluidity presents a space for those with authoritative power to consider a potential reallocation of resources, which may manifest in a lesser reliance on repackaged, routine information channels.

This chapter draws attention to the link between routine channels of news sourcing and the production of all-day news. However, to analyse this further, there is a need to investigate the implications of such trends and investigate what source groups are benefiting from these production practices. While there is often an association made between official sources and routine channels of news, this may be an oversimplification as online work environments may facilitate a more diverse range of sources, even within this routine channel. Chapter 7 moves the discussion forward to examine the results of the coding for sources, and how this relates to the temporal and channel-based data presented in this chapter.

Chapter 7 | VOICES IN THE NEWS

This chapter examines the actors and voices used in news stories and considers how their presence is affected by different sourcing practices. As Chapter 6 illustrates, the dominance of easily accessible information is apparent, but it is not yet clear how various channels of production affect different source groups: the presence of routine sources does not necessarily mean routine newsgathering (Boesman et al. 2015). The novel content analysis approach used in this research provides the opportunity to explore this complex relationship between sourcing channels, external actors and journalists in a way that goes beyond calculating the quantity of actors' appearances or prevalence of PR material. Instead, the data captures both practices and outputs, two aspects central to the news production system (Stones 2005), neither of which thoroughly explain journalistic trends if taken in isolation. This more rounded approach provides insights on how journalists access different voices, and some of the factors leading to sources' dominance or marginalisation.

This chapter, which uses both content analysis and interview material, begins with an overview of which sources are most prominent, and how this varies by byline type and publication. The dominance of the traditionally elite, official political and state agency voices supports previous studies showing their influence (Ciboh 2017; Rafter 2014; Sigal 1973), but their role is further analysed by examining the channels through which they gain coverage. This analysis is expanded to all sources, indicating the benefits of PR material to organisations like trade unions/representative groups and NGOs, while others, such as medical professionals, rely more on non-routine channels. Related to the use of PR, the role of single-source stories and actors' pronouncements raise concerns about the media's complicity in carrying messages from sectoral groups. In contrast to the traditionally elite voices, two other source categories which may challenge official narratives are then explored: trade unions and private citizens. Historically, trade unions' role in the media has been marginalised (Manning 2001), but this study demonstrates a legitimacy tied to their contributions, while the role of private citizens appears to be one that is more linked with dramatic news values than anything civically or democratically minded. The chapter concludes by examining the gender dimension of the content. The discussion throughout suggests that an altered news production environment, with a rolling deadline, open-ended news hole and diminishing expertise, may provide traditionally marginalised sources with opportunities for access. However, while this scope for more voices

can benefit diversity in a quantitative assessment of sources, it may be problematic if it reflects a passive approach to newsgathering which reinforces the reliance on external, easily available material. Trends such as single-source stories and journalists' lack of critical engagement with a topic may grant external sources the power to benefit from newsrooms' diminishing resources and publishing pressures, calling into question journalists' independent role. All data for the graphs used in this chapter is available in Appendix J6.

7.1 Source occurrence

Recording the frequency of source appearances is a valuable starting point, and Figure 7.1 shows the prevalence of each source category. The first row indicates the total number of stories in which each source is used; the second column shows the number in which they were also the first source used. The dominance of politicians, state agencies, and trade union/representative groups is clear, but it expands beyond a heavy overall presence; they are also the most common first sources. Representative groups[23] are the first source in 73% of the stories in which they appear, higher than any other source category (state agencies: 65%; private citizens: 63%; politicians: 56%). This positioning suggests that these key sources are not simply appearing lower down as a journalistic formality or a right of reply, but have an influential role in how a news event is portrayed. This provides them with a primary definition role within that single story (Hall et al. 1978), or competitive definition to a topic more generally as contesting viewpoints are published (Carlson 2009).
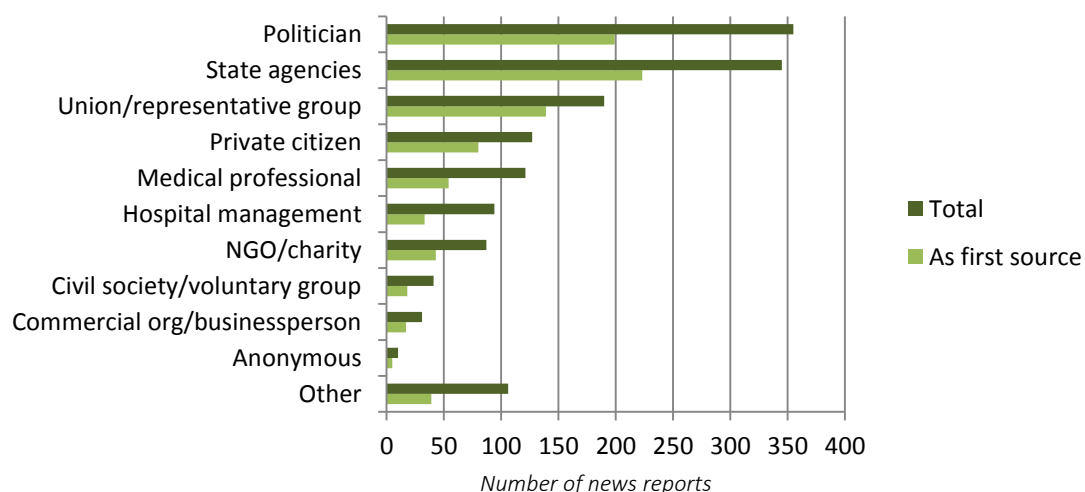
Figure 7.1: The number of stories in which different sources appear and are the first source used. The "Other" category includes journalists, academics, and solicitors/judges

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[23] The term "**representative** groups" is used as not all these groups hold trade union status

The use of different source groups by different journalists was calculated by cross-tabulating the data from both stages of coding, which provides rich insights into how sourcing practices relate to voice. Specialised reporters are more likely than general reporters to use politicians and state agencies as sources, as Figure 7.2 shows, while a high level of private citizen contributions are found in stories with no byline which relates to the citizen voices from other media, such as radio interviews, being repackaged. This indicates how higher levels of private citizen or non-official voices do not necessarily suggest more original work. The role of specialisation in newsrooms also appears complex: while the value of specialised reporters' experience, expertise and network of sources is highlighted in Chapter 6, they are more likely than general reporters to use single-source stories, as discussed in section 7.3. Furthermore, elite voices are dominant not solely due to desk-bound, passive work by inexperienced journalists: specialised reporters, who generally have more autonomy and experience, are the category of reporter most likely to use such sources. A diversity of reporters may, therefore, be valuable to a newsroom; even if they do not carry expertise in a specific beat, general reporters can bring fresh perspectives and contribute to a diversity of voices.
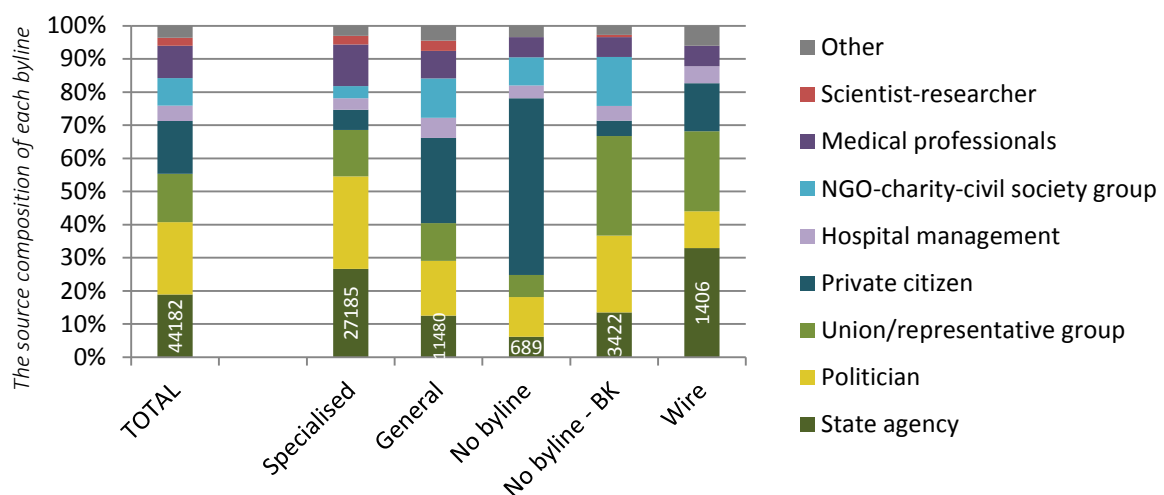
Figure 7.2: The use of different sources presented by byline category. This figure in the bottom bar shows the number of words coded to each source to indicate the varying quantities of each byline's output

When these source categories are linked to publications, it is clear that all five websites rely, broadly, on the same key source groups, but some variation is visible as Figure 7.3 shows. IrishMirror.ie includes a high level of private citizens, especially relative to politicians, which is likely associated with its tabloid identity. Elsewhere, two-thirds of the voices used in IrishTimes.com and BreakingNews.ie are either state agencies, politicians or trade union/representative groups, both considerably higher than in the overall sample.
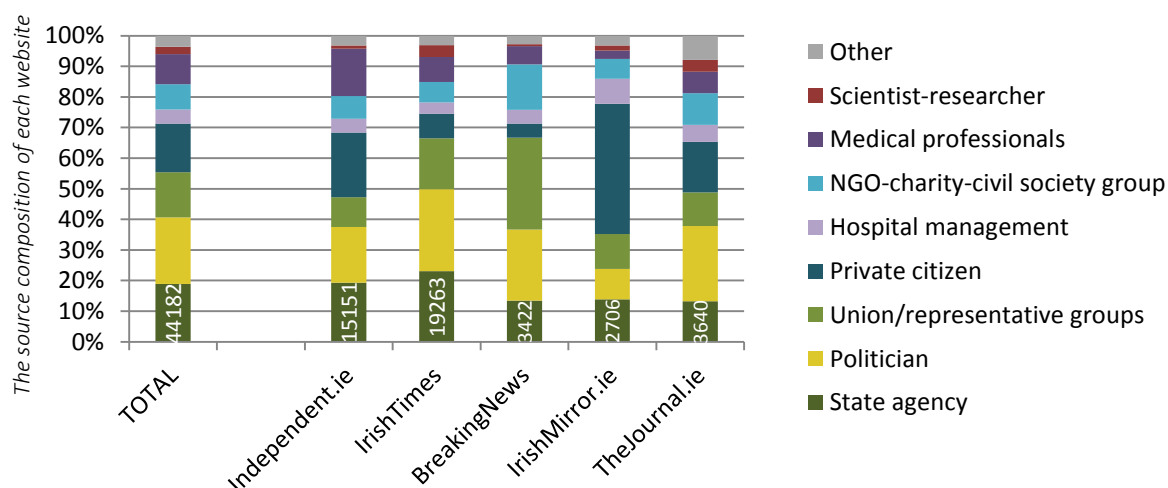
Figure 7.3: The use of different sources by publication

The results thus far indicate a dominant role for politicians and state agencies, the traditional "official" voices, and Table 7.1 shows the 11 individuals who appear in 10 stories or more, with Leo Varadkar, the minister for health in 2015, appearing in one in six stories. There is a sizeable gap between Varadkar and the next individual: chief executive of the Health Service Executive Tony O'Brien appears in one in every 25 stories. The taoiseach/prime minister at the time, Enda Kenny, appears in almost the same number of stories as Liam Doran, general secretary of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation. Overall, The Health Service Executive is the most dominant non-human source, appearing in almost one in five stories, as shown in Table 7.2.

INDIVIDUAL	ROLE	# STORIES
Leo Varadkar	Minister for Health in 2015	183
Tony O'Brien	Chief executive of Health Service Executive	43
Enda Kenny	Taoiseach/leader of Fine Gael in 2015	27
Liam Doran	General secretary Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (trade union)	26
Kathleen Lynch	Junior minister at Department of Health in 2015	22
Billy Kelleher	Opposition (Fianna Fáil) spokesperson on health	18
Dr James Gray	Medical professional	17
Ray Walley	Chairman of Irish Medical Organisation	14
Yvonne Williams	Representative from National Association of General Practitioners	12
Lorraine Monaghan	Representative from INMO	12
Dr Sam Coulter-Smith	Medical professional	10

Table 7.1: The most commonly used human sources

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ORGANISATION	ROLE	# STORIES
Health Service Executive (HSE)	State's health administrative body	202
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO)	Organisation representing nurses and midwives	68
Health Information and Quality Authority (Hiqa)	Health and social care state watchdog	65
Department of Health	Government department	41
Irish Medical Organisation (IMO)	Organisation representing doctors	30
National Association of General Practitioners (NAGP)	Organisation representing GPs	20

Table 7.2: The most commonly used non-human sources

While "official voices" are sometimes grouped together, politicians and state agencies are in fact accessed through different channels, as Figure 7.4 illustrates using the channels of production described in Chapter 6. To recap, these channels include two overarching channels comprising four sub-channels each: routine (promotional material, non-promotional material, other media, and predictable events), and non-routine (unexpected events, leaks, original work and special reports). While the proportions are similar for promotional material (Channel A), state agencies are more tied to non-promotional material (Channel B). This is arguably relatively neutral information, typically watchdog reports (such as Hiqa reports), or the release of official figures (Central Statistics Office or National Purchase Treatment Fund). Politicians' contributions to other media formats are more likely than state agencies' to be recycled by other media, and politicians contribute heavily through the "predictable" channel (primarily Oireachtas work: Dáil and Seanad sittings, and committees). There are fewer non-routine contributions from politicians, with State agencies more likely to contribute through leaks and original reporting. The role of state agencies is further explored in Chapter 8, focusing on some of the specifics of the health service.
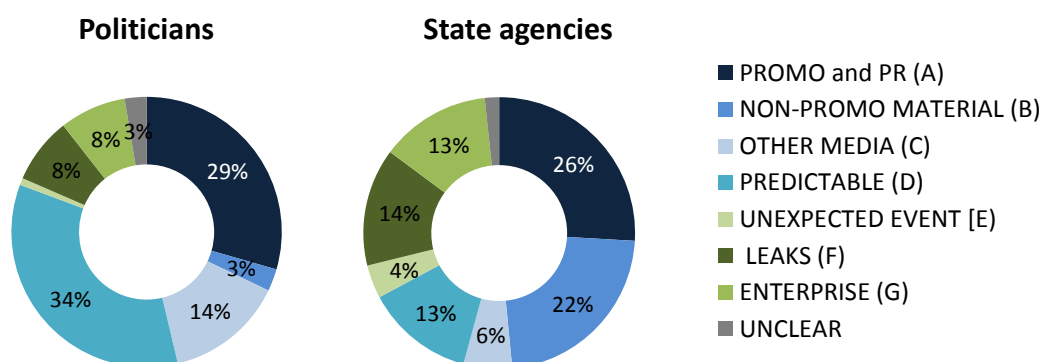
Figure 7.4: The channels of production for the coverage of both politicians and state agencies

When politicians' voices are examined in more depth, there is a clear division favouring politicians from government parties (TDs and Senators from Fine Gael and Labour, the coalition in power in 2015). The gap is most stark among specialised correspondents, and less apparent on TheJournal.ie and IrishMirror.ie, the latter of which is the only publication or authorship category in which opposition politicians receive more coverage (Figure 7.5). The overwhelming dominance of government politicians may challenge any assumption that coverage of policy is based around the internal political "process" – winning and losing, and personal battles in the political arena (Jackson 2014). To fulfil a sense of balance and the watchdog function, the results suggest that opposition to government actions may come from those outside the parliamentary sphere, rather than partisan tension.
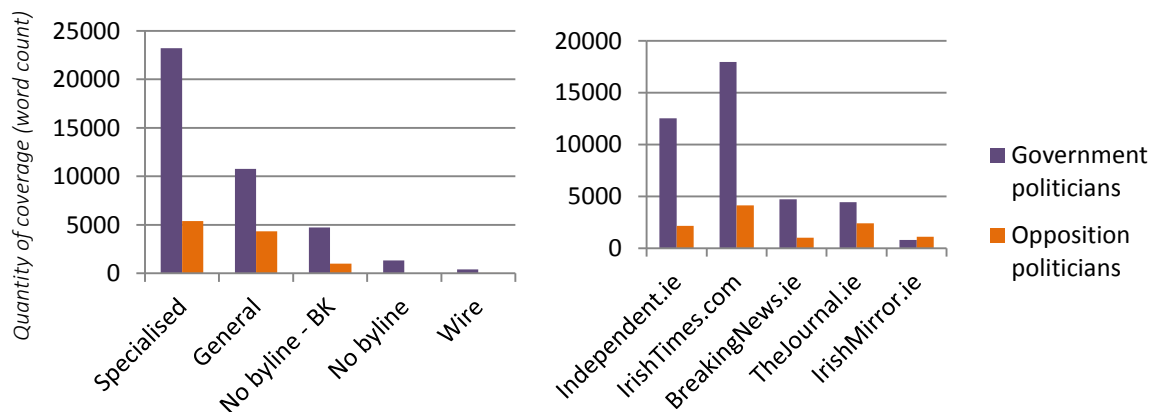
Figure 7.5: The use of government politicians and opposition politicians categorised by different author categories (left) and publication (right), measured using word count

Overall, the dominance of official voices – politicians and state agencies – reinforces how journalists see society's power structures as the "natural" place to find news (Soloski 1989, p.55), as discussed in Chapter 4. Such perception will likely benefit those sources with a high existing status, and Journalist A (Irish Mirror) captures this inherent acceptance of such contributions: "The stories you are working on you'll tend to get a lot of press releases from politicians, and so if they have something relevant to say, you certainly include it." The presumed importance of politicians' contributions, combined with ease of access the material offers journalist, provides them with a media platform more easily than what others may achieve. Phillips captures such a privileged position in her summary of primary definers, "[they are] the sources whose voices are always listened to" (2015, p.41). As raised in Chapter 4, the primary definer model has been contested (Manning 2001; Schlesinger & Tumber 1994),

and Carlson (2009) has argued for the need to more thoroughly understand how different source groups are gaining media attention, which is discussed in the following section.

7.2 Source groups and channels of production

Figure 7.6 shows how approximately one-third of the appearances of both politicians and state agencies are tied to promotional activities (A), but this is closer to two-thirds for trade union/representative groups. NGOs and other advocacy groups are also heavily tied to this promotional channel. Journalists also draw on state agencies through routine, non-promotional activities (B) as mentioned earlier in this chapter, such as the release of official figures. The use of private citizens is frequently associated with their appearance in other media outlets (C), as raised in Chapter 6, which is also an important channel for hospital management. Politicians are often included based on their role in predictable events (D), primarily parliamentary activity. Among the non-routine channels, medical professionals are frequently heard through stories based on leaks (F) or more original reporting (G), which is also an important channel for private citizens and anonymous sources.
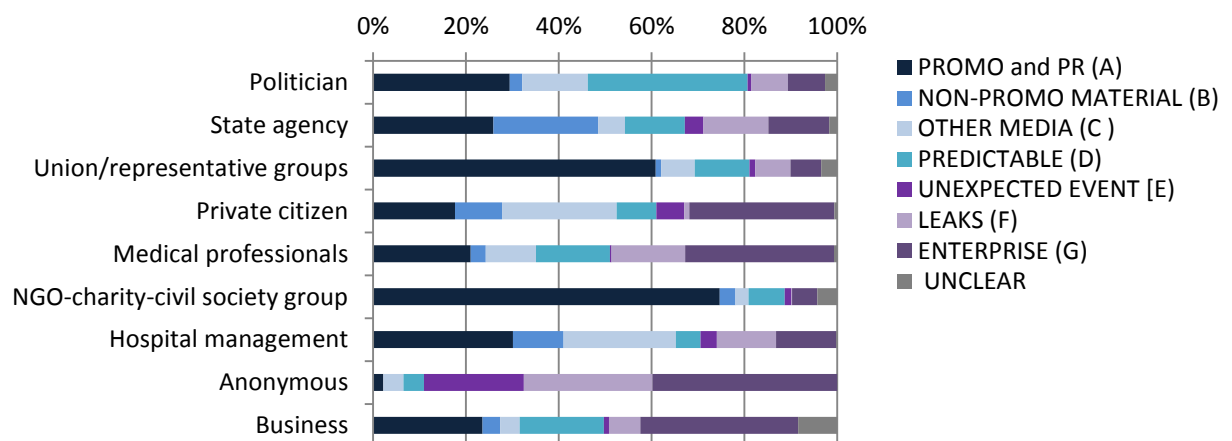
Figure 7.6: The source groups and channels of production through which journalists access their contributions

The non-routine channels, which may require more time and expertise, lend themselves to the inclusion of business, medical professionals and anonymous sources, but the low level of non-routine work ensures a low presence overall. When this data visualisation is reversed (Figure 7.7), and using a graph that captures the high frequency of routine channel work, it is possible to get a clearer picture of how the main source groups benefit from different channels; they become so dominant because of the prevalence of the routine channels, in particular promotional Channel A.
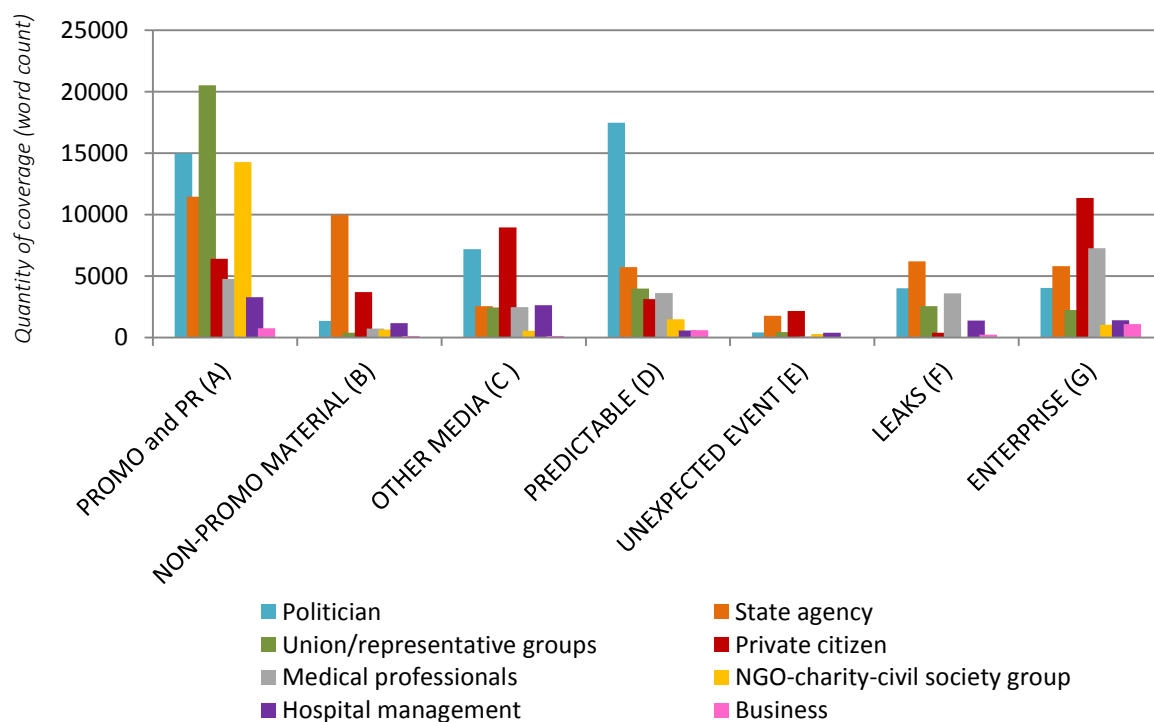
Figure 7.7: The use of different source groups within each channel of production, measured using word count

This PR-heavy approach and mediatisation of the political sphere is well established (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Mancini 1999), tied to actors engaging in media logic (Altheide 2004). Esser links this media logic directly to production practices in newsrooms "where political statements are translated into stories" (2013, p.161): a process that can be seen as the moment of structuration in a news production system. The evolution of professionalised public affairs has faced criticism on a meta-analysis level among journalists (Jackson 2014; McNair 2004), but the findings presented here reinforce journalists' reliance on such information subsidies to fill the perceived news hole. However, the media-friendly trend is expanding beyond politicians and state agencies, as other actors – such as NGOs and trade union/representative groups – embrace a media logic to which journalists appear receptive. Journalists' attitudes towards PR, and its role in the health sector – which may provide extra complexity – are discussed in Chapter 8.

7.3 Range of sources

The number of sources in a story is one way of assessing diversity of voices, and average used per story was 1.92 sources: TheJournal.ie uses the highest average number of sources (2.08), while BreakingNews.ie uses the lowest (1.49); general reporters (2.16) use slightly more than specialised reporters (1.96), while stories with no byline use the fewest (1.49 on

BreakingNews.ie, 1.79 on other no-byline texts) (Full data in Appendix J6). The number of sources per story affects the layers of voice in a text, and may have implications for whether a contributor's claim is contested. The results of average sources indicate that the journalistic commitment to providing two sides to a story remains strong. However, further analysis reveals the prevalence of single-source stories, which is perhaps more insightful and concerning. More than half (58%) of BreakingNews.ie stories rely on a single source, compared with just 17% on TheJournal.ie, signifying clear divergence between the two net-native websites, and the results from the TheJournal.ie may challenge some of the disparaging assumptions about the quality of online news relative to traditional brands. The three print-brand websites are similar to each other (36%-41%). A higher percentage of specialised reporters' work (41%) uses a single source when compared with general reporters' (34%); stories with no byline are the highest category for single-source (58% on BreakingNews.ie, 55% on no-bylined stories on other websites). (Full data in Appendix J6.)

The reliance on single-source stories can be problematic, suggesting journalists as accomplices to sources, and such a trend may indicate a failure to thoroughly probe or contextualise information (O'Neill & O'Connor 2008; Franklin et al. 2010; Schwitzer 2004). As seen in Chapter 4, journalists often use multiple sources to critique an original claim, but such critique may not be widespread here. This is particularly concerning for public relations material given its intention to "persuade more than inform, to win hearts and minds rather than hold the ring in a rational, pluralistic debate" (Franklin et al. 2010, p.219). Figure 7.8 shows how half the promotional stories (Channel A) use single sources, while the non-routine channels (E, F and G) are less reliant; in particular, unexpected events – although small in number – are most likely to include multiple perspectives, which could be linked to uncertainty and increased efforts for verification. Alternatively, it may suggest stakeholders issue responses to the events, which journalists incorporate.
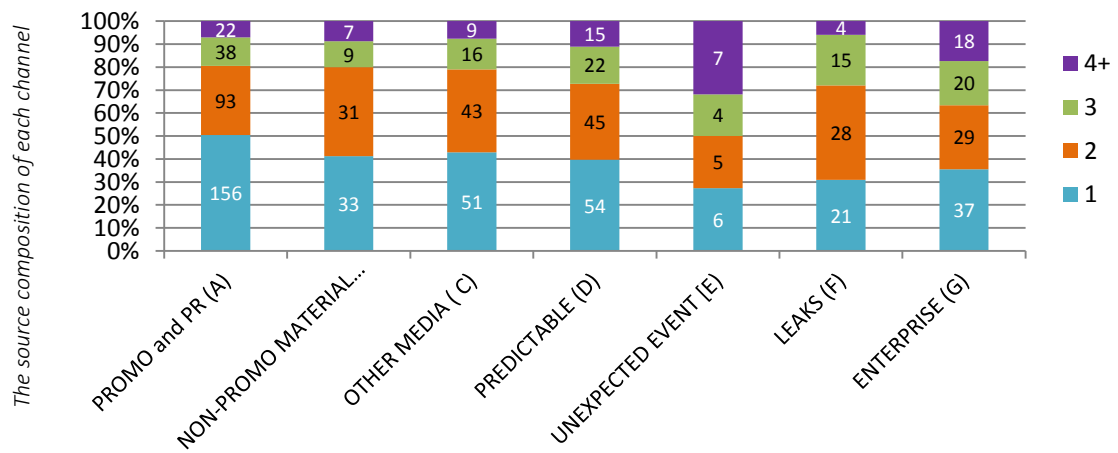
Figure 7.8: The number of stories with 1, 2, 3 or 4+ sources used, categorised by channel of production. For example, 40% of stories accessed through the Predictable channel (n=54) are based on a single source.

When the number of sources per story is paired with source group (Figure 7.9), we can see the proportion of stories in which certains source categories were present as the only voice, or with others. Trade union and representative groups are the source category most likely to appear as the sole source, while anonymous sources are the least likely (1/19) which is unsurprising given the typical need to further verify their contribution (Spayd 2016). The results for medical professionals, state agencies, politicians and private citizens are broadly similar, appearing as the only source in approximately one in every three stories in which they are used. Private citizens are more likely to be included in stories with three or more sources, suggesting their contributions are more diluted; journalists may perceive the need for further perspectives to present a legitimate news story.
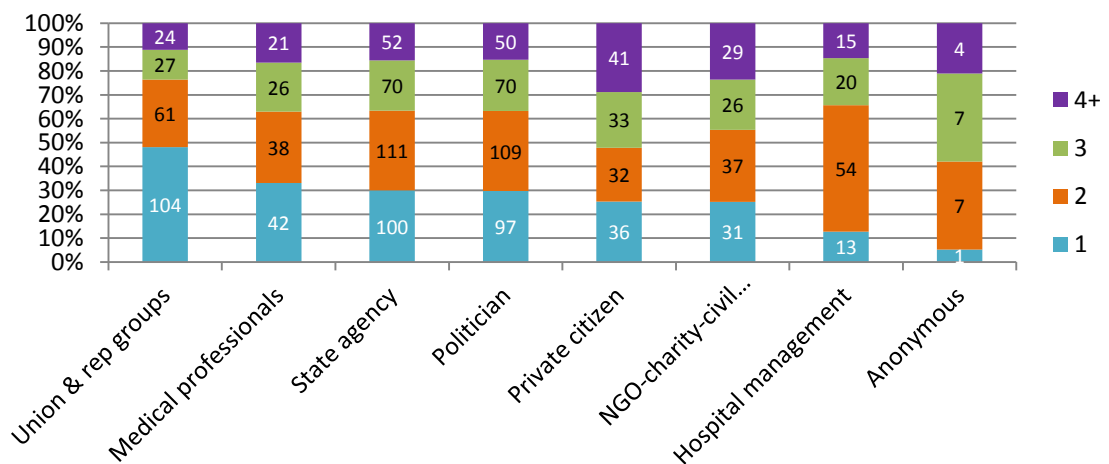
Figure 7.9: The number of stories in which each source group is present as the only source, or alongside other sources. For example, State agencies are the only source used in 30% of the stories in which they appear (n=100)

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7.3.1 Pronunciamento

The use of quotations as a basis for stories draws on the concept of pronunciamento, described as the "direct transferral of information, ideas and accusations" from interest groups (Paletz and Henry in Gandy 1980, p.105) and discussed in Chapter 4. In this sample, 258/896 of the news reports are based around a claim made by somebody or by an organisation. The headline and introductory sentence were used to record a pronouncement, with examples including:

- The Health Minister Leo Varadkar has said it is indefensible that any patient should spend more than 24 hours on a trolley in the Emergency Department.
- A lack of investment in palliative care services means many people are being "disempowered" at the point of death, according to a cancer specialist who is also a Senator.
- A leading consultant in emergency medicine has said he "totally understands" why nurses are threatening industrial action.
- A Government TD has accused the HSE of a "systematic intentional cover-up" over maternity services at the Midland Regional Hospital in Portlaoise.
- A leading food writer has criticised the HSE's advice on food, warning that out-of-date advice against natural fats was causing untold damage.

Figure 7.10 shows whose pronouncements form the basis of a news report, and present a slightly different distribution than the previous graphs on overall source use. Aside from the trade union/representative groups, this measure is driven by individuals: there is a much-reduced role for state agencies, while private citizens and medical professionals gain a platform; both categories which are, generally, more critical of state services and government. Furthermore, they may use more provocative language than official institutions.
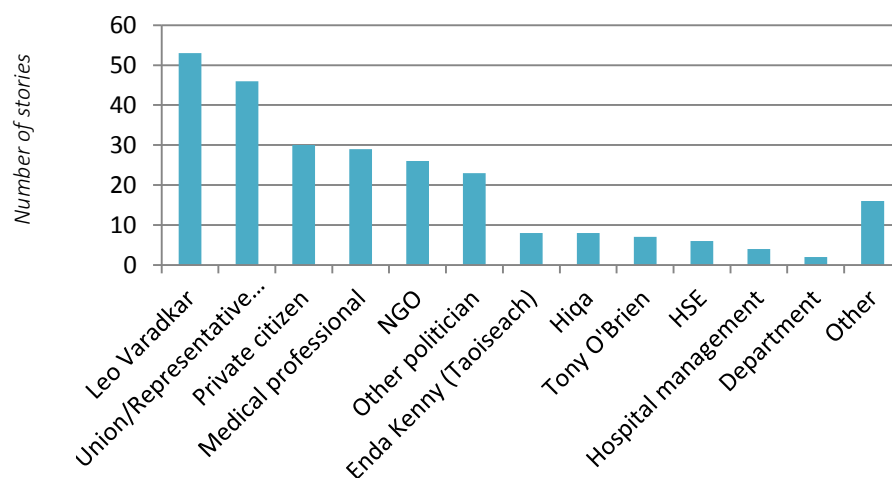
Figure 7.10: The actors who appear in pronunciamento-style news angles

Reports based upon pronouncements capture some of the rhetorical power of news content and illustrate how it serves a purpose for both journalists and stakeholders. Recalling Kuypers and King's definition of rhetoric as "the strategic use of communication, oral or written, to achieve specifiable goals" (2009, p.7), it becomes clear that news content offers external actors legitimacy and dissemination for their arguments. Such allegations, claims, criticisms or demands are used by journalists to produce seemingly newsworthy content, thus fulfilling their own professional goals. They also facilitate a reactive approach to newsgathering which, by its nature, grants a platform to those who have a response or interpretation to offer.

7.4 Challenging official voices: Trade unions and private citizens

When media coverage is strongly tied to the contemporary politico-economic system, this contributes to a hegemonic culture, making it difficult for alternative viewpoints to gain the same legitimacy. Blumler and Cushion refer to the challenges surrounding the inclusion of non-elite sources, saying the challenge for media is to ensure "the situations, experiences and claims of other less powerful and knowledgeable groups are presented sufficiently often in their own terms" (2014, p.269). The following section explores two source groups which may challenge official versions of events: trade union/representative groups, and private citizens.

7.4.1 Trade unions and representative groups

The influence of trade unions and representative groups is clear from the results presented thus far, in stark contrast to previous research suggesting trade unions have been marginalised in mainstream news content (Rafter 2014; Lewis et al. 2008a; Manning 2001; Philo 1990). This study finds a significant level of media attention granted to such groups, in particular through PR, in line with predictions about their ability to garner coverage through media-friendly, "accommodative" approaches (Manning 2001). The INMO, representing nurses and midwives, is particularly dominant, as Figure 7.11 shows, appearing in more than 70 news reports.

Quantifying the benefits of such coverage may be difficult, especially if garnering public support is a goal (Manning 2001), but one set of figures highlights the benefit to the organisation. The INMO's media relations officer Ann Keating[24], writing in the March 2016 issue of a monthly magazine for members, describes how 2015 was "by far the best year for the INMO in terms of media coverage" (Keating 2016). She says that, based on the advertising value equivalent (AVE) measurement, the coverage the INMO received in 2015 was worth €24m.

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[24] Anne Keating was asked to participate in an interview for this research but did not respond. A representative from the NAGP was also contacted but did not respond
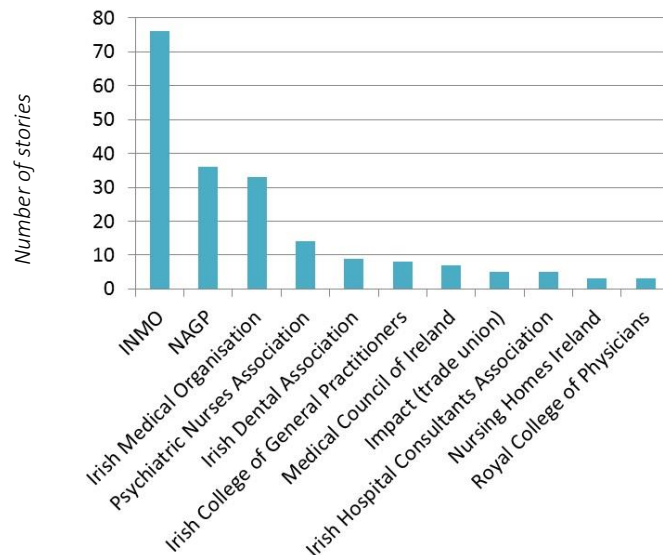
Figure 7.11: The representative groups that appeared in three or more stories

The union appeared in the news an average of 24 times a day, double the rate of appearances in 2014, according to the INMO's report. Appearances by INMO general secretary Liam Doran were valued at €6m, while the "trolley watch" figures – showing how many patients are without appropriate hospital beds – provided another €6m. The organisation's analysis found the website that provided the most coverage was IrishTimes.com, while the Irish Examiner provided the most coverage in print. The overall figure of €24m is a 400% increase from the 2010 figure of €6m.

A crucial result from the data analysis in this research was presented earlier in this chapter in Figure 7.9. It shows that in almost half of stories in which they appear, a union or representative group is the only source – the highest proportion across all the source categories. These results indicate they have a level of legitimacy not shared by any other group, thus suggesting journalists have internalised an acceptance of representative groups' arguments. It also aligns with Couldry's distinction of source types, and the "source actors" considered reliable enough to use without further investigation (2010a). However, there is a contradiction present when the heavy use of sources is positioned alongside journalists' apparent scepticism. When asked whether they trust different institutions, just 15.7% of Irish journalists said they "completely" trust, or "have a great deal of trust" in trade unions (Worlds of Journalism 2016). That uncertainty was apparent among some of the journalists interviewed in this study, yet the results indicate a tacit acceptance of their fundamental arguments. One said: "Personally, I probably wouldn't trust them as far as I can throw them, and I'm left-wing" (Journalist B), while another said: "Like any source, you have to look critically. You must be aware that they

have their own agenda" (Journalist A). Another added that their positioning gives them a clearly authoritative role: "I think the general sense is they know what they are on about because they are on the front line of service" (Journalist F).

Jacky Jones, a former HSE regional manager who writes a weekly healthcare column in The Irish Times and is often critical of media coverage and the Irish system, was interviewed for the study. She believes the authority that representative groups have in news coverage is something that has evolved over the past 10 years, referring specifically to the INMO and its general secretary Liam Doran:

> I really think the journalists who are talking to him on the news, and on the radio, and newspapers – I think they should be giving him a lot less credibility than he actually gets… I don't know where that started, but I think he's a very good example of how they give him a lot of time but they don't ever analyse what he's actually saying.

This concern can be applied to many areas of what is deemed to be objective, detached reportage, extending far beyond union representatives; reproducing what somebody in a position of power says is seen as an acceptable basis for news stories, as the pronunciamento discussion showed earlier. In this context of union groups, another normative consideration may be the desire to appear detached from, and critical of, government to fulfil a watchdog role. Some of those interviewed agreed that unions provide an anti-government narrative to which journalists are drawn. One journalist says one of the reasons such groups are so pervasive in media coverage is "because they are seen as legitimate": "They're seen as official informant … but they're not the government, or they're not the Department [of Health]" (Journalist E). The use of the term "legitimate" echoes Giddens' rule of legitimation as a structural factor. If it is seen as acceptable to do something, such as regularly include contributions from particular actors, that becomes engrained in the daily routine, especially if these actors come with familiarity and their own sense of credibility. Weber's definition of legitimacy as "belief in the validity of an order" is founded on validity being anything defined by members of a given group (Giddens 1977 in Cassell 1993 p.320). Therefore, journalists offering such legitimacy to any other social group – whether elite or non-elite sources – will likely contribute to perceptions about such groups' value and credibility.

While Jones had some concerns with the unions' messages, regarding what she sees as their ongoing negativity, her frustration appears to lie with the journalists who facilitate the dissemination of the unions' message without critique, and Leo Varadkar also touched on this. In May 2015, Varadkar said it was "disappointing and disheartening" that within hours of a

problem being highlighted in healthcare, "a trade union representative is on the radio claiming we need additional resources". He added: "It isn't always down to resources, and I think when people don't know the facts of the case and default to resources as an excuse, they're actually doing patient safety a disservice" (Irish Independent, May 13th 2015.) When asked about this quote in the interview for this study, and whether his frustration lay with the unions or the journalists, Varadkar says it is "as much, or more" to do with the media than any specific representative group. He elaborates, suggesting that the emphasis on resources is rarely questioned by journalists:

> A union or NGO gets a free ride any time they say that resources is the problem, particularly when it comes to patient safety, if resources is the excuse. Because it can always be an excuse. You can always have one more nurse, or an extra whatever. I thought that was harmful to the health service, this idea that you could blame everything on the lack of resources, and irresponsible. It was always frustrating that the media didn't challenge that.

The mixed attitude towards trade unions' presence in news coverage is evident. The groups have seemingly legitimate arguments about overcrowding and staffing, which can be supported by first-hand observations of hospitals, individual experiences, and data, yet these concerns exist in a sector which has systemic structural issues, as highlighted in Chapter 1 (Kinsella 2017; Staines 2017; Burke 2009). These various tiers of problems are mirrored by the contradictory perspectives of actors who contest where the problem lies, depending on their own roles, goals, and experiences. Journalists, while having some level of scepticism, typically report a good relationship with unions and their broad acceptance of their arguments is clear from the results of this study. However, the counterargument comes from the two interviewees who have worked within the health service/Department of Health, who instead see a complicit media as unions push their agendas. This sense of conflict indicates the importance of multiple layers of voice and reinforces how journalists must have an active role in weighing up actors' claims to present an accurate portrayal, rather than simply acting as a carrier of each sides' claims (Blumler & Cushion 2014). One journalist speculates on why the representative groups are facilitated, connecting it with journalists' desire to take more worker-focused angles:

> I think news organisations might say, 'right I'm actually helping the actual workers here by saying what the union are wanting me to say', and in that sense they're probably ticking a couple of boxes, and that's why they tend to get covered.
>
> (Journalist E – TheJournal.ie)

Rafter & Dunne (2016) find Irish journalists are slightly left of centre, and one journalist (F) highlights the circumstances nurses face: "I think it's hard to disagree with people who work in the health service that it's not a really, really difficult job and they are undervalued." When this sentiment is coupled with public attitudes about the extensive problems within the health service, it is perhaps unsurprising that organisations articulating such frustrations find a media environment responsive to their argument. Another journalist points out that those unions involved in the health sector are "always particularly active" (Journalist E), but suggests this was not the case across all sectors, such as transport, where they said media relations were more disorganised. This potential variation among workers' groups raises an important point about this study's limitations. The role of GPs, other doctors, and nurses is relatively privileged, both in terms of status and/or public sentiment and levels of trust (van der Schee et al. 2007). The typically positive perception – with nurses seen as part of the "backbone" of a society – can affect media relations between journalists and unions (Philo & Hewitt 1976, p.16). Such a role may be a factor in the nursing union's dominant role in this study: "Nobody is going to go out and bash nurses the way they would bash the HSE or the Government" (Journalist F).

Case study 2: GPs and Under 6s

In their influential study of source material, Lewis et al find how it is "rare" for PR from a trade union to shape the news angle of a story: "Where trade union material was present in reports it typically provided an oppositional voice" (2008a, p.13). However, that lack of media influence is challenged in this study, and the following case study presents an example of how such groups can steer coverage. In Ireland, GP doctors operate as private practitioners who negotiate terms with the State for various welfare and drug scheme contracts. Most GPs have a mixture of patients: those with medical cards which entitle them to free GP visits (those on a low income or with serious medical conditions), and the majority of the population who pay approximately €60 for a consultation. The move to offer free GP visit cards (different to a full medical card, which also covers medication/prescription charges) to under 6s, introduced in April 2015, was supported by one of the medical trade unions, the IMO, which was involved in the negotiations with the government. The NAGP was not involved in talks and opposed the under-6s scheme[25]. The following three samples of coverage focus on a three-week period in October 2015.

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[25] The NAGP was established in 2013 and did not have a negotiating licence. In late 2014 it acquired a negotiating licence via an agreement with the Independent Workers Union of Ireland. In 2016 it acquired an independent negotiating licence

A) Budget announcing expansion of scheme to Under 12s

On October 13th, the annual Budget for 2016 included a proposal to expand the free GPs for under-6s scheme to under-12s subject to negotiations with doctors. The IMO (which supported the initial Under 6s scheme), announced its response in a statement, warning that "there can be no question of an extension of the free GP scheme until current services are resourced appropriately". Headlines in news reports include: "No extension of free GP care to under 12s without talks, doctors warn" (Independent.ie); "GPs warn they will not agree to proposed extension of free care (IrishTimes.com)"; and "Free GP care extended to more kids, but not everyone's happy about it" (TheJournal.ie), using the IMO response as the reaction to the announcement. One of these stories, on TheJournal.ie, also includes information from an NAGP press release.

B) Survey about waiting times at GPs

One of the NAGP's concerns about the under-12s scheme was an anticipated increased demand on GP services. On October 26th, 13 days after the budget announcement, the NAGP released a press release based on a survey it commissioned regarding waiting times in GPs' surgeries. Four of the five news organisations in the sample published stories based solely on the survey/press releases (Figure 7.12).
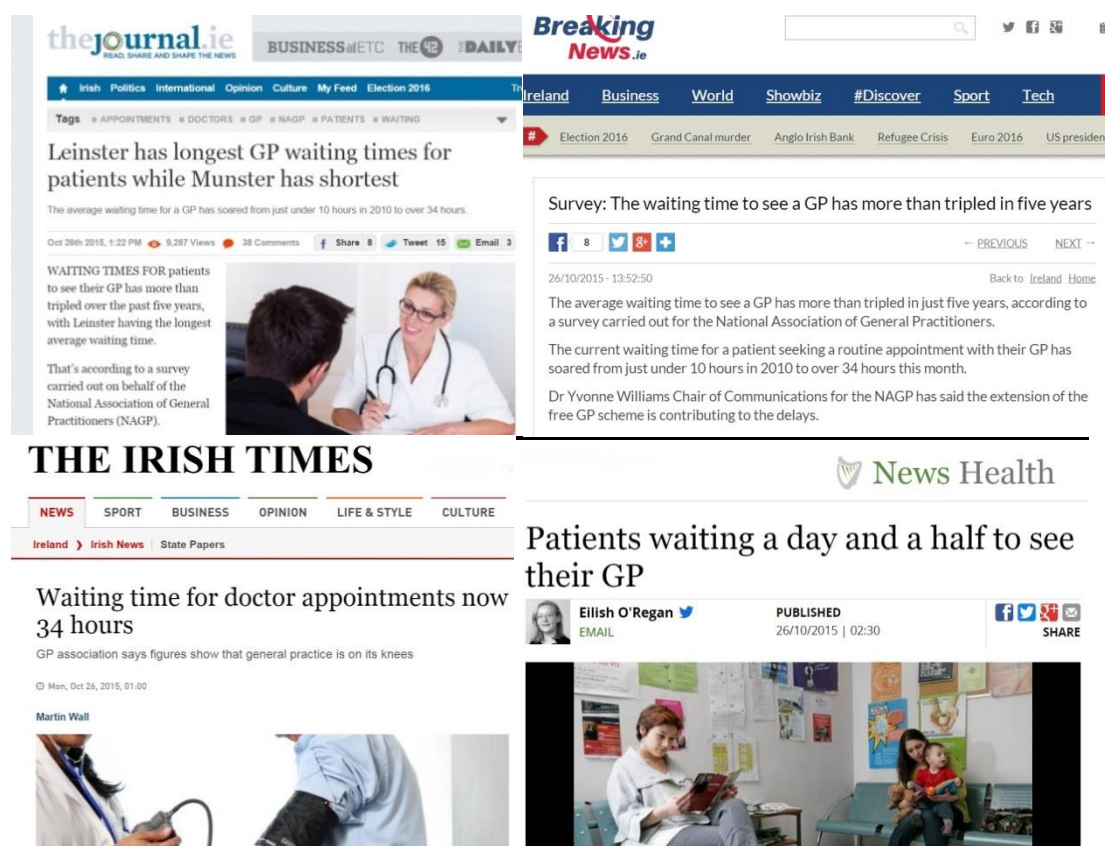
Figure 7.12: The four stories based on the NAGP survey about waiting times

C) IMO: No extension until new contract completed

On October 30th, the IMO issued a press release reasserting that there would need to be negotiations before the under-12s scheme was introduced, headlined: "IMO tells Minister there can be no extension of free GP care to under-12s until new GP contract completed". Three stories were published following this press release, with the headlines: "Free GP care for under-12s faces delays" (Irish Independent); "Plan for free GP care for children under 12 faces potential delays" (Irish Times); and "Doctors union has said there can be no extension of free GP care to under 12s until the new GP contract is completed" (BreakingNews.ie), all based on the IMO press release.

These three examples illustrate most of the instances that the GP scheme was covered during this three-week post-budget period, and there are just two stories in this period not triggered by representative group press releases. The budget is naturally a time for policy changes, but the issue was controlled by the trade union angle. The scheme for under-6s was introduced in April 2015, and across the two sample periods covered in this research, the under-6s/under-12s GP scheme was the subject of 45 stories. Coverage was tied to the output and actions of trade unions: their contributions dominate coverage; politicians also have a lesser presence, while private citizens are absent.

This is unsurprising when both the signification (the meaning of work) and legitimation (efforts to act professionally) aspect of structuration theory are considered: journalists are drawn towards a sense of conflict (Harcup & O'Neill 2001), and to actors who pose some opposition to government and have legitimacy. However, in the case of the GP scheme, that was arguably insufficient, as other stakeholders are omitted. This exclusion is not just relevant for parents, who would benefit from the free GP care, but also other citizens who may agree or disagree with the principle of free access for all children regardless of a family's ability to pay. Such debate is absent, and instead, coverage pitches this as a government-versus-union issue. Sigal makes the point the media "in amplifying some voices and muting others... affects the nature of opposition and hence of governance" (1986 in Hansen 1991, p.474). The debate between unions, politicians and state agencies was seemingly the sole narrative. Cawley (2012), examining news coverage during Ireland's economic crisis, says news constructed in a binary manner like this can create a "vacuum" for the arguments in between. Alternative viewpoints and critical engagement from journalists are needed when offering platforms to any stakeholder: one example (Figure 7.13) was posted on Twitter the day the NAGP released its survey about waiting times (Story B). A user referred to the survey, but pointed out a critique absent from any coverage: how GPs oppose pharmacists treating minor ailments which could help to reduce the demand on GP appointments.

Figure 7.13: The tweet highlighting GPs' reluctance towards pharmacies treating customers

This is one minor example but it suggests a lack of critical engagement with a subject before publication, which could be linked to the pressure of rolling deadlines and an open-ended news hole, or a lack of specialist knowledge. In this case, it may also be indicative of other sectoral groups' inability to capitalise on a media environment open to PR contributions. Radical pluralism is one of Davis's (2000) three evolving accounts of public relations, and he talks about how non-official sources can use PR to acquire legitimacy. Official sources, when locked in conflict, can lose this legitimacy, Davis says, adding: "When combined, non-official sources can gain substantial levels of access" (ibid., p.40). Such access is clearly visible here among some of the representative groups and, when positioned alongside the role of politicians and state agencies, it pushes some of the dominant representative groups into a seemingly elite role. The use of the term elite here is due to the privileged position which some of the groups have in media coverage and their role as source actors (Couldry 2010a), rather than suggesting particular workers like nurses are societal elites. This distinction between the nurses as workers, and the union as an organisation, goes to the heart of media representations, voice and power (Couldry 2010b; Lewis et al. 2005). While the trade unions represent workers in the literal sense, there is a difference between such a role and media portrayals of workers. In a similar way that politicians can represent citizen concerns in media (Bosch 2013), that does not overrule or discredit calls for more individuals to be directly heard (Kunelius & Renvall 2010; Lewis et al. 2005), as both union groups and politicians may have interests and goals that extend beyond their representative role. Furthermore, public perception of these groups is worth remembering. An Irish Medical Council (2015) surveys finds 91% of the public trust doctors, compared with 44% for trade union officials and 12% for TDs. Therefore, alternative contributions may be more beneficial for highlighting individuals' concerns and gaining public support.

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7.4.2 Private citizens

While trade unions provide a collective, formalised representative voice to oppose official perspectives, the role of the individual citizen also makes a sizeable contribution to this research. As highlighted in section 7.1, private citizen perspectives appear in 115/896 news texts. They are the first source in 71/115 (62%) of those stories, and the only source present in 26% of these. IrishTimes.com (8%) and BreakingNews.ie (4.5%) use the lowest proportion of citizen contributions, while IrishMirror.ie (42.5%) uses the most (Independent.ie: 21%; TheJournal.ie: 16.5%). The stories on IrishMirror.ie are often built around the narrative of an individual's experience. Journalist A explains how this "man on the street" approach remains a characteristic of tabloid journalism, where "people stories" are very important:

> If you can get an interview from someone who has been badly affected by an issue, then you'd almost lead off a story with that, and then more technical aspects that come later in the copy.

The order of sources is tied to the idea of definition, and whose version of events is presented to the public, thus providing that source with a sense of legitimacy (Kolmer 2008; Hall et al. 1978). It appears that providing citizens with such legitimacy may not be a priority for specialised reporters, who use private citizens much less than general reporters (28/385 – 7.5% compared with 65/284 - 23%, see Figure 7.2 earlier in this chapter). Using the channels of production categories, two channels dominate: other media (Channel C) and enterprise (Channel G), suggesting private citizens are benefiting from both the more passive and active newsgathering practices.
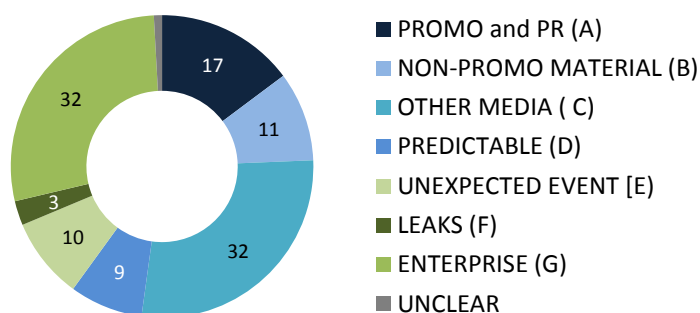
Figure 7.14: The use of private citizen voices broken down by channel of production

A further 15% of the private citizen contributions come from reports; this applies to both reports such as Hiqa's, which may contain private citizen perspectives as part of their official

findings, and also NGO reports. Activist groups include case studies in their reports which typically provide human interest angles which journalists often use in news reports. Examples from this study include features such as "Lupe's experience" in Amnesty's *She is not a Criminal* report about abortion legislation, or the stories of Malawian and Filipino migrant workers suffering poor working conditions in the home-care sector (in material issued by the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland).

Private citizens and recycled media

As mentioned in Chapter 6 and earlier in this chapter (section 7.2), other media reports, especially radio, are an important channel through which private citizen voices are being sourced. One example includes a man who found confidential hospital records on the street in Co Louth and rang up the local radio station LMFM, appearing on their morning show which is broadcast between 9am-11am. This story was picked up by all five news organisations, with timestamps ranging from 10.55am on Independent.ie to 7.45pm on TheJournal.ie. All five stories include quotes from Andrew (and all referenced the LMFM show). TheJournal.ie adds a local TD, but the others just included the LMFM quotes and a statement from hospital management. Local radio is a common source: other stations that provided source material were Midlands Radio, KFM and Shannonside. Another example relates to coverage of contaminated chemotherapy drug. In the early afternoon of October 16th 2015, the daily phone-in show on RTÉ, *Liveline,* included a call from a man, Michael, whose wife had received potentially contaminated chemotherapy treatment. It followed a story that morning published on Independent.ie about an alert issued for contaminated chemotherapy. Following the appearance on *Liveline*, the citizen voices used also went beyond the radio show. Firstly, quotes from Michael appeared in an updated version of the Independent.ie story, and also on TheJournal.ie later that day. Later in the *Liveline* programme a woman, Mary Murphy, contributed with her story: she was given the potentially contaminated drug despite the HSE being aware of its risks. The following day, Independent.ie had a story based on Murphy's experience – it included a photograph of her at her home, and new quotes from her (not from the *Liveline* interview). It was published at 2.30am, and while it referred to Michael's appearance on *Liveline*, it did not mention that Murphy also appeared on the radio show, which highlights some of the concerns raised in Chapter 6 about best practice and attribution. Furthermore, such recycling of content presents a difficulty when trying to assess the trend from a journalistic practice perspective. On one hand, it presents a platform and opportunity for wider dissemination of a story, which may be in the public interest. On the other, it contributes to the passive culture of news reporting, and a bricolage approach (Deuze 2006) of

creating content from pre-existing materials, which may be problematic if it comes at the expense of other journalistic work.

How are private citizens being presented?

One of the democratic concerns regarding citizen voices extends beyond the quantity of their appearances, and relates to the role they fulfil in the news report (Meijer 2001; Robinson 2009). Table 7.3 shows that in 109/115 stories, the private citizen was present because of their direct experiences. This is subdivided into whether they are used as a case study to illustrate an ongoing story (36), whether they are present as part of a process, such as a Hiqa report (32); or whether their experience forms the basis of the story (31), indicated here as "setting agenda". The use of private citizens as detached observers or commentators, typically in a vox pop or similar, was very low.

PRIVATE CITIZEN AS:	n=115
Someone with direct experience	**109**
Case study	*36*
Part of official process	*32*
Set agenda	*31*
General commentator	**6**

Table 7.3: How private citizens are used in the news

While highlighting individuals' concerns offers them a voice, a heavy emphasis on individuals with direct experience may be problematic. In many cases this can be linked with a citizen taking on a victimised, powerless role, whether suffering at the hands of a medical condition or public services, or often both, in contrast to a role as an informed, empowered contributor to civic debate (Lewis et al. 2005). Another concern relates to highlighting an individual's story in such a manner. The exemplification effects theory (Zillman 2008) is based on potential concerns that, in media reports, "a comparatively small number of experiences thus served as the basis for the perception of a larger body of like occurrences" (ibid., p.20). However, for journalists it provides an opportunity to personalise a story: one journalist refers to the relatability or relevancy which presenting an exemplar in a story offers:

> People are so used to hearing there is, 500 people on trolleys, but if you've spoken to a person down on the trolley, it's much more relatable. 'It's like, oh my God, she's just like my granny'. We always try to incorporate the personal story if we can.

> (Journalist D)

The trolley example was also drawn on by Jacky Jones in her criticism of what she believes is overly negative media coverage. She said there are so few citizen voices being heard, "unless

it's somebody that's left in a trolley for three days, and then it's a bad story". This subject is raised again in Chapter 8, where the role of individuals in health service stories, and the tone of coverage, is further explored.

Bosch (2013) differentiates between those who appear in the news because of their direct, often dramatic, experiences, as highlighted above, and those who appear because of their apparent ordinariness. The latter group, typically appearing in vox pops, is almost absent in this study, apart from in a small number of stories in which social media content demonstrates a "voice from the public" perspective. While there may be concerns about the representativeness of vox pops (Kleemans et al. 2017), the knowledge of those included, or the expectations laid on participants (Myers 2000), it is a space where legitimacy is granted to those asked to comment (Lewis et al. 2005). The elimination of such a space may be concerning if it leads to further public detachment, contributing to individuals feeling like "powerless spectators" as elites debate the issues (Kuypers & King 2009, p.9). This raises broader normative questions about whether private citizens are being used primarily for their dramatic stories, or to fulfil a more democratic, civic role by offering them a platform upon which to express their view (Christians et al. 2009). Journalist E from TheJournal.ie mentions how audience analytics indicate that stories built around human interest cases "perform" well online. They say that before the 2016 general election there was a strong emphasis on getting citizen voices on the website to counter some of the dominance of established, official voices. They add that stories about specific health conditions also benefit from citizen voices:

> They perform much better when people hear directly from somebody affected by something, and so it's definitely something that's encouraged both because it looks better, and because it's what people want to read more.

This appreciation of stories' "performance" may be indicative of the internalising of market forces (Klinenberg 2005), but also captures the audience's heightened influence, as well as a suggestion that a story's value or worth is tied to its popularity. Journalist D added: "The personal story always sells better and it's a way of getting people interested and to care." This desire for popularity, and engaging the public about a serious issue, indicates how journalists' ambition might combine both market values and professional ideals (Pihl-Thingvad 2015). The journalist adds that personal voices might be used more in weekend or longer features, saying "in the day-to-day news cycle you're doing whatever the news story is. It's not always possible to talk to somebody affected". These constraints of the daytime production and publication routines identified by Journalist E will influence sourcing practices, as information that is

easily available, and perhaps the people who have existing, perceived legitimacy, are further amplified.

Social media

Social media can offer journalists easier access to private citizen contributions without the requirement to leave the office (Beckers & Harder 2016), but Journalist E from TheJournal.ie believes there is a "misconception" that those who work online simply sit and browse Twitter or Facebook:

> I think a lot of stories are sourced that way in the sense of that's where you hear of something, but that's only getting something that's happening, or someone is giving you an idea to go after something… That's only ever the jumping-off point. It's like as if you heard something in a pub… People who can be really snobbish about [social media] and think that's not how journalism works but I think by ignoring it, you're ignoring a broad source of interesting stuff.

This is echoed by Journalist A in the Irish Mirror who says that some social media hype is overblown, but "very often you do get genuine stories that are first known [there]". They said that it can be useful to find "somebody posting something about an experience they had", or activists using social media to highlight a cause. However, they are also critical of the "lazy" use of social media by journalists to capture public perception. Journalist E adds that social media is "definitely not a legitimate source to hang your story on, but it's definitely an excellent place where you can hear where stories are happening". Another (B) said: "It's great for seeing stuff you might miss – you don't have eyes everywhere".

Previous research suggests that online sourcing techniques, while accepted into daily routines, have not led to more public-centred way of reporting the news (Lecheler & Kruikemeier 2016), and that social media content may be used in more soft news stories than hard news (Broersma & Graham 2013). This study supports the somewhat muted influence of social media as a source: only two stories including private citizen voices appeared to be triggered by social media. The first, headlined "Women are tweeting Enda Kenny about their periods in a bid to highlight abortion rights in Ireland" (IrishMirror.ie, November 4th 2015) was based around a trending Twitter hashtag (#repealthe8th, a reference to the Eighth Amendment of the Irish Constitution, which protects the life of the unborn). The second, headlined "Second 100-year-old woman left on a hospital trolley for 25 hours" (IrishTimes.com, June 8th 2015) was based on a Facebook post by the relative of a patient. Other posts not based around private citizens but based on social media included one triggered by a tweet from a politician ("This Labour minister's tweet about abortion has kicked up a bit of a row" – TheJournal.ie, October 8th 2015), and another from a model who shared a photo from a hospital ("Model tells of A&E

trolley hell" – Independent.ie, Nov 2nd 2015). Although there was a low level of stories associated with a social media trigger, it was not possible to account for reports in which social media was perhaps the starting point but was not referenced or traceable.

7.5 Gendered voices: male and female sources

The breakdown of sources favours men by 2:1[26], broadly line with similar studies[27]. However, this disparity is somewhat skewed given the two most heavily cited sources are male: minister for health Leo Varadkar and Tony O'Brien, chief executive of the HSE. Nevertheless, despite the disproportionate number of official positions being occupied by men, there are other factors to consider as the manner in which women appear also deserves attention. In the initial coding process, the stories were divided into broad topics and this categorisation highlights a trend. While the dominance of male voices is apparent, two categories contain more female voices: reproductive issues and coverage of services and funding (Figure 7.15).
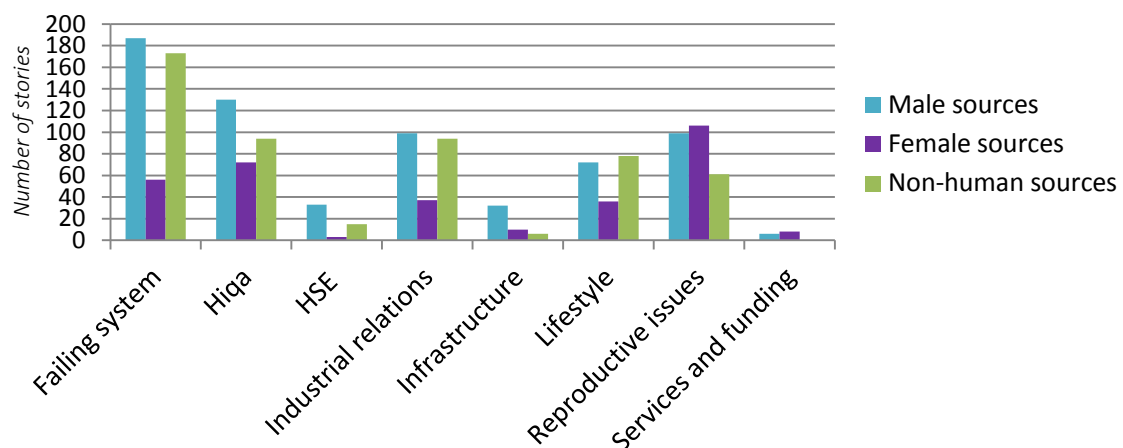
Figure 7.15: The use of male and female sources in different topics

A further breakdown of the reproductive issues category highlights a concern regarding gendered roles in the news as three sub-issues appear in the coverage: (i) abortion protests/activism; (ii) other abortion coverage such as parliamentary proceedings; and (iii) maternity issues, such as problems in maternity hospitals. The male/female divide within these

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[26] This is measured by number of stories in which they appear, rather than quantity/word count of coverage
[27] Women on Air study in Ireland found 33% of voices used were women; the Global Media Monitoring project 2015 found 24% of sources used were women; and a recent study by Loughborough University into coverage of the UK 2017 general election found 37% third of sources were women (http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2017/june/a-presidential-media-campaign-with-a-male-voice/).

three categories is shown in Figure 7.16. Contributions to content about reproductive rights activism (typically marches/protests and other campaigns) include an overwhelming use of female voices. That falls for coverage of other abortion issues (such as reports about the existing legislation), and drops further for other maternity issues (primarily maternity care in hospital). Both these latter categories are tied to the legislative and policy arenas more than on-the-ground activism, and a decline of female contributions in this more official setting becomes apparent. This can be linked to the male-dominated political environment – in 2015 15.5% of TDs were female – and contrasts with what are potentially more liberated public spaces.
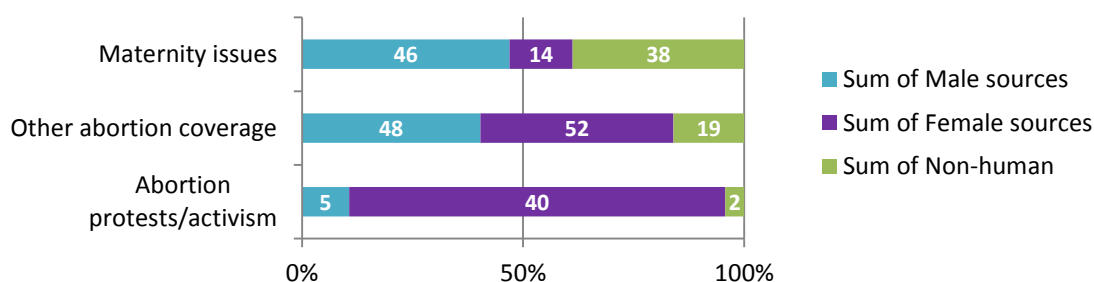
Figure 7.16: The male/female divide within the subcategories of the reproductive topic. The chart includes the figures showing the number of stories applicable to each category

Female voices also dominate "services and funding". While this category is much smaller overall, the relatively heightened role of female voices is worth noting. Although the entire sample finds a 2:1 ratio of male:female sources, among the private citizen voices the figure is reversed with 67% of identifiable contributions coming from women (103/51). Many of these contributions are from concerned relatives, such as a mother or daughter talking emotively about a family member, rather than women occupying roles associated with positions of authority or expertise. Examples include:

- "Furious mum reveals hospitalised son went hungry for 24 hours because of staff shortages" (IrishMirror.ie, November 1st 2015);
- Desperate mother begs Health Minister for life-changing spinal surgery for daughter (13) (Independent.ie, April 20th 2015);
- "Like something from a Frankenstein novel' – bereaved mother describes Portlaoise Hospital's morgue" (TheJournal.ie, May 12th 2015)

Maternity issues are a key topic in this sample, with many women vocalising their pregnancy-related experiences. It is clear that in talking about direct healthcare-related experiences

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affecting them or their families, as well as reproductive issues, women are portrayed in heavily gendered ways as carers and homemakers (Van Zoonen 1988; Tuchman et al. 1978). In these personalised, domestic settings, describing what are typically negative experiences, women are often positioned as a victim. This chimes with the concern in feminist literature about the "relative invisibility of women in news and their ghettoisation to certain topics" (McQuail 2010, p.121), suffering what can simultaneously be seen as both a marginal presence, as well as stereotyping (Byerly & Ross 2006).

During her interview for this study, Jacky Jones makes the point that getting women into positions of authority, such as 50:50 membership quotas on public boards, is one of the only ways to ensure a higher presence of women in media reports. This comment can be tied to the association that exists between journalism and those in power. A simple example of this can be seen with the INMO; 2013 figures from the Central Statistics Office show 92% of nurses in Ireland are female[28], yet their concerns are frequently articulated to the public through a male voice who garners significant media attention.[29] While the results regarding the deficit of women as sources resonate with existing research, one caveat is that this shortfall would be reversed if the minister for health were female, and that would further be the case if the chief executive of the HSE were female, and the general secretary of the INMO. This demonstrates the need to look beyond numbers and consider representations. Furthermore, the association between journalism and power, and the attraction to covering those in power, appears to be the driving factor in male-dominated coverage (Sjøvaag 2017). This imbalance is therefore unlikely to change until the gender make-up of those in power alters, or the close association between journalism and the attention given to those in authority weakens. However, Ross and Carter (2011) suggest journalists' reliance on male sources comes despite women's presence across all levels of the labour market, suggesting media coverage is in many ways out of sync with their position as autonomous and important actors within the economic, social and political stage. Even where women do hold positions of power they are overlooked for male experts, they suggest, adding that, "disappointingly", this comes despite women's increasing presence in newsrooms (ibid., p.1161)

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[28] http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2013/healthlist/health/

[29] Although there were a number of contributions from high-ranking women in the INMO, Liam Doran was the dominant speaker

7.5.1 Male and female authorship

The 2015 Global Media Monitoring Programme finds 37% of stories are reported by women, but in this study, among texts attributable to either male or female authors (n=830), the ratio of male to female is almost equal, at 52:48. Figure 7.17 illustrates this, showing all byline types.
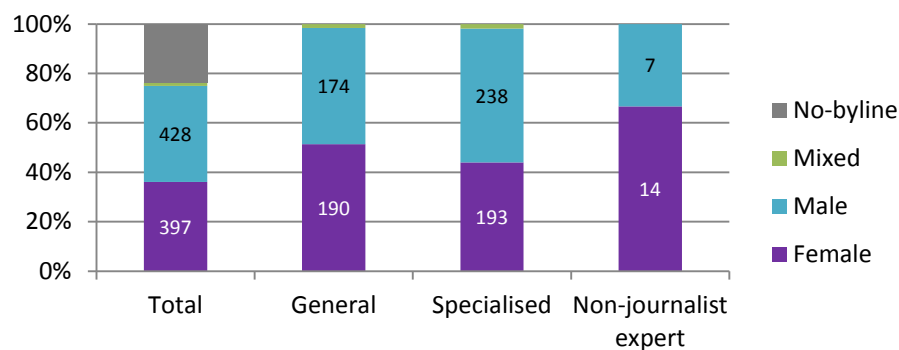
Figure 7.17: The male/female breakdown of different byline categories

The split is also relatively even among general reporters in each publication, with more specialised reports being written by men. Both the Irish Times' health correspondent and industry correspondent are male, which accounts for the high level of male authorship among its specialist reporters and its output overall. Conversely, the health correspondent of the Irish Independent is female. The non-journalist experts who contributed as authors, while small in number overall, are twice as likely to be female (14:7). This relatively high contribution of female experts is in contrast to much of the research into this area, particularly in broadcasting (Walsh et al. 2015). One factor which may explain the divergent result in this study is that for women there may be more opportunities, or perhaps more willingness, to contribute written pieces rather than participating in broadcast content. Previous research has found that a reluctance from some women to take part in broadcasting means that producers may favour male participants who are seen as easier to source (Howell & Singer 2016).

Whether female journalists are more likely to include female sources is contentious and sometimes seen as a simplification of the news production process (Van Zoonen 1988). There is often an argument that the socialisation process in news production supports an inherent bias towards seeing current affairs and social life through a male lens, even in newsrooms with high numbers of women (Ross & Carter 2011; Lobo et al. 2017). The results in Figure 7.18 suggest that while female reporters are more likely than male reporters to include female sources, female reporters' work remains dominated by male and non-human (institutional/organisational) sources.
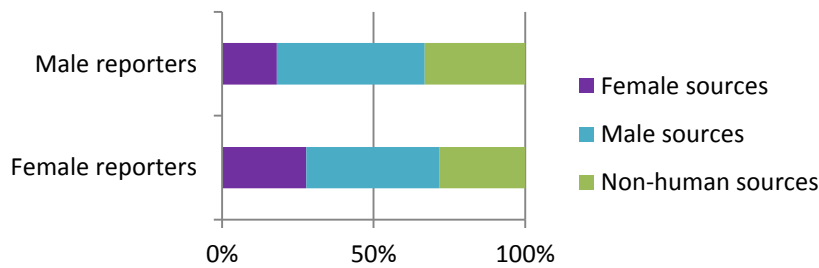
Figure 7.18: The use of male and female sources by male and female reporters

This may be tied to the finding that specialised reporters rely more on official and elite sources in their reporting (Figure 7.2 in section 7.1) which results in more male coverage so long as these positions of power are dominated by men. When seeking diversity of sources, gender is just one factor; other factors – such as diversity of ethnicity, class, political ideology – should all be considered valuable, but remain inherently linked to who holds positions of power. As was discussed in the context of elite voices and maintaining the status quo, the nature of news production – and what is often a short-term focus on getting a news report finished – does not necessarily lend itself to self-awareness about broader trends. A story which includes two official male sources, responding to the case of a mother with a distressing story to tell, may appear legitimate and newsworthy, but such familiar narratives accumulate in troublesome ways.

7.6 Conclusion

The dominance of politicians, state agencies and trade unions/representative groups is clear from this chapter: not only as overall sources, but often as the first source used, granting these contributors a level of legitimacy. While official voices have long had media influence, the trade union/representative groups are a new addition to this category, as they appear to have garnered a privileged role as a source actor, although this may be an exception within health sector coverage. The emerging challenge for journalism identified in this discussion involves striving for diversity in voices, while ensuring more original reporting and expertise in newsrooms. Specialised reporters are more likely to use the trio of dominant sources and single-source stories, but also provide more non-routine stories. Meanwhile, PR is beneficial for some source groups like NGOs, as is repackaged content from other media, which contribute to diversity of voices. However, this reliance on routine channels appears to support a simplified level of coverage without factoring in counter-arguments, thus facilitating the goals of PR releases (Franklin et al. 2010). This contributes to a newsroom culture where it is

accepted that news reports can be based on single sources, and information subsidies remain firmly established in day-to-day reporting, possibly gaining increased influence amid the open-ended publishing cycle.

Alongside the dominance of established voices, the chapter also raises concerns about the portrayal of private citizen and stereotypical gender roles. These trends in representations and authoritative voices can be related to the internalised rules about what makes legitimate, objective, newsworthy content, rather than any conscious ideological agenda (Soloski 1989, Hall et al. 1978). Gans describes how "eager sources eventually become regular ones, appearing in the news over and over again" (1979, p.118), and this is a key concern in this study. What appears suitable and legitimate for one story – such as reporting on those in positions of power – may have broader ramifications when repeated. Giddens (1984) refers to this as the *unintended consequences of action*, which contributes tacit support to the status quo. If the same voices are continually heard, or excluded, questions remain over how news content aligns with some of its democratic ideals about debate and multiple perspectives (Christians et al. 2009), especially if the power for supplying information to journalists often lies with established, influential sources. Such sources' *dialectic of control* (Giddens 1984) allows those seeking coverage to establish a certain power over journalists, many of whom appear to be operating in a temporally driven environment, where there is an expectation for a continued stream of content to facilitate all-day publishing. Much of that content appears to be driven by a rhetorical reaction or interpretation of events, which presents stakeholders with an opportunity to gain an influence. This suggests that the nature of online news production, which appears to favour quantity, supports the competitive definer model (Carlson 2009). This may lead to a number of single-source stories about an event scattered throughout the day, rather than a more unified interpretation from the journalist.

In Stones' quadripartite model of structuration outlined in Chapter 2, the fourth element is "outcomes", which in this context can be seen as the dominance of established voices and the reliance on routine channels of news, both of which provide much of the content for newsrooms' all-day publishing cycles. It may be tempting to leave the discussion hinging on well-established – and often well-grounded – beliefs about information subsidies and PR being negative, or that more private citizens would be a positive. However, the health sector provides an arena in which such assumptions may be open to question. This is explored in Chapter 8, which examines some of the challenges in policy-related news coverage and how these may shape public perception of a sector.

Chapter 8 |
JOURNALISTS AND ROUTINE NEWS: PR, OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATING HEALTH POLICY

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The findings presented in Chapters 6 and 7 illustrate the ubiquity of public relations material and basic information-processing, while the channels of production and origins of content indicate how different source groups benefit from such coverage. However, assessing how these trends influence the media's societal role and the implications for journalism's function more generally requires a more extensive problematising of these findings. This chapter is built around two themes: the first focuses on PR and information subsidies, and the latter shifts to coverage of healthcare. It opens with a discussion about the use of PR material, with suggestions from some journalists that a resilient, gatekeeping role remains strong, yet it is unclear how this reconciles with the heavy use of repackaged material. Some theoretical concepts from structuration, such as the *rationalisation of action* and *reflexivity* (Ahva 2016; Stones 2005; Giddens 1984), are used to elaborate on this dissonance, which can help to explain the heavy use of information subsidies.

While the focus remains on passive newsgathering processes, the discussion begins to tie in some of the complexity present in coverage of a public service area, where the media may have a civic duty to inform the public (Christians et al. 2009; Peterson 1956). In healthcare, that may involve engaging with PR material which promotes health programmes and campaigns (Johnson Avery et al. 2009; Randolph & Viswanath 2004). Furthermore, the content analysis has illustrated that not all information subsidies can be considered promotional, and material such as patient and hospital data and reports available from state bodies fulfil a valuable civic role. The HSE's interactions with the media is then discussed, with a clear tension evident between journalists and the state agency. A third case study explores how official reports do not necessarily equate with official voices, drawing on coverage of the state health watchdog report into baby deaths in the Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise, which demonstrates how members of the public seek accountability through the media. This is elaborated on by focusing on some of the complexities that come with offering a platform to individuals to share their personal stories. The potentially problematic link between healthcare and politics is also examined, as well as the claim that there is an overly negative tone to news coverage. A clear clash between journalists and non-journalists becomes apparent: news values will tend to lean towards the immediate and dramatic, yet non-journalists see the problems as more long-term, abstract and complex. This disparity also highlights how the factual accuracy of a news report

is just one consideration when assessing the media's contribution to an informed society. The chapter does not present much new content analysis data but builds on the results with interview and secondary-source material, which helps to contextualise the coding results. This allows for the discursive aspect, so central to structuration, to be further incorporated (Jensen 2002b).

8.1 PR and information processing: journalists' resistance and facilitation

As Chapter 6 demonstrated, material triggered by information subsidies (both promotional material [Channel A] and non-promotional [Channel B]) account for 44% of news stories. This extends to 55% of the total coverage when the journalist uses a PR element anywhere in the story. Patterns are clear, but the practice approach outlined in Chapter 2 reminds us that each appearance of PR material is the result of a decision and action carried out by the reporter or editor, making clear how high levels of power still reside in the newsroom. Turning source material into a news report is the moment of structuration about which Giddens (1984) talks, positioned in the third aspect of Stones' quadripartite model (Stones 2005, p.85). This action is the result of the internal and external structures, and the rules and resources drawn on, and available to, the journalistic actor. One journalist interviewed refers to how, after getting hundreds of press releases a day, it is the job of the news editors to use their own judgment; they "go through them and decide what is relevant, what warrants a story and what can be cast aside" (Journalist A – IrishMirror.ie). Another says: "If I don't see something that's worthwhile I'm not going to use it" (Journalist E – TheJournal.ie). These comments suggest the independent and active gatekeeping role remains in place (Bro & Wallberg 2015; White 1950), highlighting journalists' control over what becomes news. In structuration terms, they posess a *transformative capacity* which can be "employed as power in the routine course of social interaction" (Giddens 1979, p.92). However, concern about the prevalence of PR is also apparent, linked to the pressures of the work environment: "I think it's a fair criticism that we're too reliant on [PR] stuff like that, especially online" (Journalist B – Independent.ie). They explain why this situation continues to exist, despite concerns: "We're so reliant because stuff like that does so well because it's quick and easy. And I think that's a lot of the problem with online, [it's] just filling content."

In articulating the problems with PR in such a way, this quote is indicative of a *reflexive monitoring of action*; how actors "routinely monitor aspects, social and physical, of the contexts in which they move" (Giddens 1984, p.5). Much of the literature suggests something of a paradox within journalists' attitudes, pointing towards a combined acceptance of, and resistance to, public relations (Macnamara 2016; Moloney et al. 2013; McNair 2004). While

there is scepticism visible in the interview extracts above, there is also a defensiveness present, especially when PR material goes beyond the promotional content. One journalist suggests that if the information provided is important, it warrants publication:

> If somebody does rewrite a press release and doesn't add much to it, there is valid criticism there. But even then, if it's about numbers of hospital beds, that kind of thing, I don't see why you criticise information like that.
>
> (Journalist E – TheJournal.ie)

Another journalist refers to Garda police force media releases about a missing person as an acceptable use of a single PR source story: "You have to rely on that; you're not going to get another source for it" (Journalist A – IrishMirror.ie). Another insists: "I think if something is newsworthy it's newsworthy. Whether it's good or bad news, it's newsworthy" (Journalist D – TheJournal.ie). They elaborate, suggesting rivalry with other outlets may lead to such material's inclusion: referring to employment figures or house-price monitors, the journalist says these are "regular stories… you won't be annoyed using them because you know everybody else is going to use it". Such comments and justification about PR material suggest a *rationalisation of action*, which Giddens defines as "the capability actors have of keeping in touch with the grounds of what they do, such that if asked by others, they can supply reasons for their activities" (1984, p.376). Offering explanations for such behaviour in the news organisation may minimise a sense of cognitive dissonance between journalists' ideals and practice (Donsbach 2004), providing reassurance that the journalist maintains control. The comment "everybody else is going to use it" appears as a straightforward, instinctive response regarding the need not to be outdone by competitors, yet captures a fundamental element of the inter-media/external actor dynamic. By accepting the inclusion of information provided by a third party, often official sources, as normal or "regular", this grants that third party a level of power, authority, and legitimacy, thus reinforcing the sources' influential role. Such an attitude contributes to the dominance of official political and state voices, as discussed in Chapter 7. Furthermore, the journalist links its normalisation to the fact that other news outlets will use the material, which contributes to a homogenisation of content and the repetition of source messages, raising questions about whether the time put into processing and publishing such common property could be used more beneficially, through a reallocation of resources (Giddens 1984).

An example of a story based on a single press release was raised during the interview with Journalist A from the Irish Mirror. They said the story could have benefited from a second source, but explains how it was most likely a short news-in-brief-style piece on the top of a

newspaper page. Such texts often simply reproduce press releases, and are then published online:

> [These stories] are not given the same attention that a full-page lead story would be given. Generally, they are done as quickly as possible … Sometimes there's a tendency to think them as less important stories, and that's how you end up with single-source press release stories… When it goes online, you don't realise it's a story like that – when it appears in the newspaper, you realise that's not as important from the way it is laid out, but if it's online, it's harder to differentiate.

Their comments offer insights on two fronts. The first is practice-based, relating to the clear distinction between "a page lead" (the newspaper production term referring to the main story on a page) and the shorter news-in-brief stories typically published on the top of a newspaper page or in side columns. The often-unweighted nature of content online, compared with visual cues offered in newspaper design (Ames 1989), ensure the value (or lack of) that a reporter or editor put on a story does not necessarily translate to an online reader in the same way as it would in print. This is especially true when audiences are accessing news stories via social media, search engines or links within other stories; readers may bypass the design-based cues for weighting stories present on a website's homepage (Knox 2007). Consequently, while the rationalisation the journalist puts forward may apply to newspaper production, it indicates a disconnect to the online output and offers an example of how editorial standards appear to be altered online.

The second point from Journalist A's comments is theoretical; their explanation of how such a story appears is indicative of the *rationalisation of action* highlighted earlier in the chapter, and the ability to explain when asked, the reasoning for specific actions (Giddens 1984). Furthermore, articulating the reasoning demonstrates a level of *discursive consciousness:* "The ability of the agent to give verbal expression to their knowledge about the social conditions of their action" (Stones 2005, p.28). This self-awareness and consideration of some of the constraints, or reasoning, behind practices is what Giddens calls reflexiveness, and is central to the very concept of structuration and practice theory (Ahva 2016). Such awareness indicates that, although such deliberations may not be taking place in newsrooms, the logic and rationale has been ascribed as part of the socialisation process, which can be characterised as an internal structure in Stones' quadripartite model.

'People are definitely very quick to criticise'

The argument that much contemporary journalism is about managing streams of information accepts that churnalism and PR are intertwined into the news sourcing process (Van Hout & Van Leuven 2017). Journalist E from TheJournal.ie acknowledges that, while some of the disapproval is justified, engaging with PR is simply part of the job: "There's valid criticism of people in every industry who could perhaps do something a little bit better. People are definitely very quick to criticise." They offer a further defence, suggesting the most valuable thing about PR is how it provides access to different people, a comment which echoes a normative desire for diversity. An emphasis of the negatives about PR also fails to factor in some of the nuances that Macnamara (2016) suggests are needed. PR has opened up opportunities for non-official sources to participate in media coverage (Edwards 2017) and this was visible among some of the alternative voices present in this study. Groups such as the Carer's Association and Age Action gain significant coverage through PR strategies, indicative of the potential evolution towards a radical pluralism model of public relations (Davis 2000). Furthermore, the contemporary political environment is one in which interaction with the media is typically heavily controlled. Many organisations rely on PR and communications specialists; this is the context in which journalists must often engage to obtain further information. The case study in Chapter 6 about the 102-year-old patient without a hospital bed illustrates this, as the hospital issued a statement the following day, while the original report included a comment from the hospital. This example demonstrates how elements of professionalised communication are incorporated into the cycle of many news events, both those based on more original work as well as those based solely on the passive processing of information subsidies. Specifically, offering a spokesperson the opportunity to respond is typically seen as best practice and may have legal implications. It is, therefore, difficult to be critical of the mere presence of spokespeople or statements released in response to issues; the problem is arguably more concerning where they dominate or are the sole voice. When a single source's account is the only version included, regardless of whom or what the source is, it may raise questions about the total omission of alternative perspectives or rationales (Phillips 2015; Franklin et al. 2010).

8.1.1 PR & health: A complex relationship

A further layer of complexity about passive reporting approaches becomes apparent when talking about the health sector. Policy and public services include various stakeholders, and it is here where a grey area emerges in which PR may have a valuable civic role. Public health campaigns, such as the country's first national sexual health strategy *("Here's how the government is going to help people have safer sex" October 29th, 2015, TheJournal.ie)* and

organ donation awareness *("Varadkar marks 30th anniversary of first heart transplant in Ireland", May 22nd, 2015, IrishTimes.com)* are fundamental to public health, linked to the media's public service function (Deuze 2005) as highlighted in Chapter 3. From the government perspective, this promotional work typically requires participation in media-driven activities, such as photo shoots. The former minister for health Leo Varadkar embraced this tier of PR-driven work during his tenure, saying: "I'm always happy to do it … They're important, and you actually would get a bit of coverage for them, thankfully." He describes how attempts were regularly made within the Department of Health to "showcase and make [people] aware of some of the good things that were happening". However, the merits of these "good things" may deviate from the more straightforward public awareness campaigns and it is here that the more agenda-driven concerns arise. Varadkar specifically refers to the free GP care scheme for under-6s and over-70s, and the progression of the new children's hospital building as such positive stories, both topics covered in this sample. However, both issues faced some opposition and cannot be considered straightforward public awareness issues[30]; they were on the minister's political agenda, so his desire for exposure is predictable, yet does not translate to something that necessarily *should* garner soft coverage.

Away from partisan policy, another multifaceted concern relates to public awareness of seemingly worthwhile causes versus stakeholder gain, for example, an NGO seeking coverage about a specific cause. For example, highlighting the financial difficulties of cancer patients may be important (which appeared in this study based on information subsidies from the Irish Cancer Society), but it raises questions about hierarchies of illnesses, and the motivation of any group seeking coverage warrants attention. In his article focusing on the health lobby in the US in the 1970s, Gandy refers to competition between diseases for investment: "cancer against heart disease, multiple sclerosis against Sickle Cell. Much of the struggle on behalf of these diseases is fought in the mass media" (1980, pp.109–110). A number of groups in this research pursue prominent campaigns, such as the Irish Cancer Society, Irish Heart Foundation, Amnesty International (regarding abortion rights), and the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland. Contributions and reaction are also included from a host of others: some focus on illnesses (Multiple Sclerosis Ireland, Irish Skin Foundation, Diabetes Ireland, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland, Dublin Aids Alliance), while others are based on specific demographics (Age Action Ireland, Children's Rights Alliance, National Women's Council, Patient Focus, Migrant's Rights Centre; Disability Federation of Ireland, Nursing Homes Ireland). Given the nature of what

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[30] The chosen site location of the children's hospital was contested, and the principle of free GP care for all young children regardless of family income, at a time of economic fragility, was also questioned by some who felt the resources could be better used

these groups represent – typically those suffering from illnesses or care-related issues – their concerns arguably warrant broad dissemination, and contribute to the democratic discussion about what the state funds, and standards of care within the health service. From a journalistic practice perspective, however, the frequent reprocessing of material from any third-party and a reliance on a single source contributes to a passive culture. In this passive, facilitative environment, counter-arguments are scarce, and stakeholders' messages and frames may be easily reproduced (Park & Reber 2010).

8.2 Beyond PR: non-promotional material

Aside from the promotional party political and specific interest groups associated with Channel A, official information and figures form the basis of much coverage of the health sector. Information on waiting lists for medical procedures provided through the National Purchase Treatment Fund is an example of such relatively neutral information: its website offers monthly data on the total number of patients waiting for outpatient appointments across each hospital. Similarly, the inspection reports on hospital and care homes are available from the health service watchdog Hiqa, typically provided without press releases. However, while this material may not come with a specific agenda, the state organisations may still seek validation through media coverage. Furthermore, the public still receive the "official" version. Regardless of its raw value, the journalist arguably enacts a passive role if they simply reproduce the material which is publicly available rather than searching for any further perspectives or deeper explanation. Each news report on its own is arguably not problematic and may have merit, yet its publication contributes to the broader acceptance that such basic information processing serves as a legitimate source of news, which becomes ingrained and normalised. Such a trend serves as a useful consideration when trying to evaluate the different implications in reproducing and disseminating raw information, compared with the more promotional or agenda-driven PR material. It is an unhelpful generalisation to suggest that PR material is a negative in the news, but non-promotional information reproduced without further journalistic work is a positive. The growth and acceptance of the latter can contribute to a passive culture and mentality whereby no further follow-up is needed. There will likely be times where the line is unclear about whether something is promotional, and such distinctions blurred. One example of this was referenced in Chapter 7 regarding the use of "trolley watch" figures supplied by the INMO, which the INMO says provided it with the advertising equivalent of €6m in 2015 (Keating 2016).

While the facts about trolley figures provided are true, the repetitive nature of their use, as well as the omission of a deeper probing of the structural causes behind the hospital trolley figures,

ensure the public receive familiar, repeated narratives (Kinsella 2017). There are few new perspectives to challenge such narratives, apart from the addition of different exemplars personalising the story. Leo Varadkar refers to the "many moving parts and factors" contributing to overcrowding in emergency departments, saying some people, including other politicians, believe "if there's roughly 300 trolleys every day, surely all we need is 300 more beds". He adds: "I'm sure if it was that simple, it probably would have been solved. There's so many moving parts that it's not [just the number of beds] at all." Among the media's normative goals, included in Appendix A, are ideals such as "enlightening the public to make it capable of self-government" in *Four Theories* (Peterson 1956), "offer analysis" (Schudson 2008) and "provide interpretation of complex problems" (Gil de Zúñiga & Hinsley 2013). However, failing to explain some of the complexities of a problem such as hospital overcrowding, in favour of the short-term, immediate update to a story – which online publishing seemingly favours – can disempower citizens and their ability to comprehend the problems, furthering the gap between the public and the elites. This may be an example of a problematic situation whereby "experts debate these issues while the citizenry watches on", as highlighted by Kuypers and King (2009, p.9).

8.3 HSE and media relations

The HSE Communications Division outlines how its news and media team gains positive coverage for the health services "as well as expertly handling negative stories"[31]. However, while that may be strived for on the basis of good media management, the journalists in this study find dealing with the HSE challenging, with comments including:

- "I will say eight times out of 10, nightmare. Two times out of 10, fantastic. It all depends on the person." (Journalist B – Independent.ie);
- "[The health sector] can be very frustrating to write about, and part of the reason for that is the HSE do not engage well with journalists. They more or less attempt to silence you. They prefer to say nothing at all rather than respond to any story, which makes it very difficult." (Journalist A – IrishMirror.ie);
- "A lot of the times I would email and I wouldn't hear back or I would hear back a couple of days later or after deadline." (Journalist F).

A sense of apprehension towards the media is apparent within the HSE. In its current media guidelines (Health Service Executive 2017), it suggests that "for many staff, it can be an

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[31] This claim appears in a presentation by the division, available at:
https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/communications/introprez.pptx

unnerving experience to receive a call from a journalist", with the cautionary reminder: "Staff should remember that anything they do say to a journalist can be used and quoted". It advises staff to try to accommodate journalists' deadlines as a prompt reply "maximises the input" that the HSE or hospital group may have. The guidelines acknowledge how "media is now a 24/7 cycle and deadlines can vary from a couple of minutes for an online/social media to a couple of days". Yet one of the journalists (F) describes how a rigid approach is still evident and the agency is not necessarily engaging with a more fluid news production environment. They describe once ringing at approximately 7pm, and getting a response suggesting it was "a bit late", and a "tone" questioning whether it was, in fact, urgent:

> And it wasn't necessarily an emergency but it was a story that we were going to run and we needed to try to get a comment. It wasn't midnight, and so, in the end, I didn't get anything. Maybe they shouldn't have an out-of-office unless it's very clear. They do say it has to be an emergency, but then, what is an emergency? And should you not run anything by the HSE in those hours?
>
> (Journalist F)

This can be contrasted with many of the trade unions' media strategies which, as the content analysis suggests, are highly effective for gaining coverage. Taking a more collegiate, accommodative approach to the media has been part of labour groups' evolution, Manning argues, and leads to "a noticeable improvement in the effectiveness of union media work as assessed from a journalist's point of view" (2001, p.176). Some of the journalists in this study acknowledge that the representative groups have an agenda, but they also have the awareness of what journalists are seeking. One says: "They're often a lot easier to deal with and more proactive than other sources because they have a message that they want to get out there" (Journalist F), while another adds:

> They play ball, they understand the game, for lack of a better word … If I speak to them, and the HSE won't speak, who's going to come across better in the story? They will. Who's going to get the momentum in the story? They will.
>
> (Journalist B – Independent.ie)

Journalist B (Independent.ie) adds that "ringing the doctors, the hospitals themselves, is far more useful, than ringing the HSE" due to the agency's common response of not commenting on individual cases. Another journalist (A) speculates that the HSE might think its lack of contribution discredits the story. However, an imbalance in coverage can appear if officials

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resist offering side of the story: "They prefer to say nothing at all rather than respond to any story, which makes it very difficult. You can't get a rounded picture" (Journalist A – Irish Mirror). McChesney (2013) describes how a public sphere is dependent on citizens being intellectually enriched by exposure to a variety of perspectives, voices, and ideas, which contribute to this "rounded picture". However, the degree to which an issue can be thoroughly assessed by the public will be curtailed if there is a lack of engagement from a key actor.

8.4 Case Study 3: Official procedures and finding a voice

The Hiqa watchdog report into baby deaths in the Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise was the single news event from the sample which garnered the most coverage (n=120). In May 2015, Hiqa published its report detailing the circumstances of five newborn deaths in Portlaoise; it found no congenital problems and it was "other factors" that led to the babies' deaths. The report cited problems with resourcing in the HSE and poor management and risk assessment in the hospital. Parents who contributed to the report also highlighted negative personal experiences and communication; there were revelations of grieving mothers being told not to cry in public, babies' bodies squeezed into metal boxes that were too small, and parents told of their baby's death in a hospital corridor. Hiqa also highlighted the alleged cover-up of the deaths and criticised hospital management. In contrast to the overall sample, private citizens were the group whose perspective and input gained the most coverage in the stories about Portlaoise, making up 34% of the perspectives, compared with 16% in the overall sample. This news event illustrates how private citizens can gain substantial coverage, even when part of an official process, and makes clear the limitation of any assumption that official proceedings or source material equate solely with official voices. Headlines from the sample include:

- "I never got to hear my baby son Joshua cry" - Grief stricken mother tells her story to Leo Varadkar (Independent, May 17th, 2015);
- "Doctors told me my foetus would not survive but I gave birth to healthy twins," Mum reveals her horrific ordeal at Portlaoise (Irish Mirror, May 12th, 2015);
- Portlaoise baby deaths: Woman describes baby's body being brought to her in tin box (BreakingNews.ie, May 12th, 2015).

The graphic, emotive nature of the parents' testimony presented clear angles on which newsrooms could focus, and the information from the original report, the press conferences, and other media interviews were also easily accessible which facilitated, or enabled, the extensive coverage.

One key facet of the Portlaoise story is how the media provided the channel for action; the Hiqa report acknowledges that the investigation began following a broadcast on RTÉ's *Prime Time* exposing some of the cases. Some parents involved spoke on the programme; among them was Mark Molloy, whose son died shortly after birth (an inquest found he died from medical misadventure). The Molloy parents were initially told that their son was stillborn, only finding out later that he had a heartbeat at birth, and they pursued the HSE to investigate the death. Mark Molloy gave a radio interview to Newstalk Lunchtime on May 8th 2015[32], the day of the Hiqa report's publication:

> After all we had been saying for two years, at that point we said 'we're going to have to give this to the media'. We had seen the reaction and the attention in the aftermath of Savita's death from the HSE and the Department of Health, obviously via the media[33]. So we said this is the only thing we can do. It's a shocking indictment to think that's what you've got to do, despite all these policies, procedures, departments in place, a fully manned and functional quality and patient safety department within the HSE. That parents have to expose their family to national publicity to get to this report where we are today.

He later told an Oireachtas hearing that he and his wife Roisin felt going to the media was "the only option if any meaningful intervention and/or change were to occur" (Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children 2015). Throughout the coverage of the Portlaoise hospital story, the idea of voice was raised a number of times. Sheila O'Connor from advocacy group Patient Focus told the Oireachtas committee that, in an area such as healthcare, the damage and hurt from patients' negative experiences can last a lifetime and "it is very important that people find their voice". In a similar vein, Roisin Molloy told the same committee that "the voice of parents is a good indicator of how well services are operating. Patients must be listened to and viewed as equal partners". When things go wrong, parents should be able to "speak up and have what they say acknowledged", and highlighting the need for one's voice to be heard resonates with Couldry's argument (2010b). Voice, he says, must have an inherent duality to be effective: there is the process of "speaking", combined with the value it generates, and speakers must feel validated. Leo Varadkar, referring to the Portlaoise story, said it was hugely worrying that the events only came to light via *Prime Time*:

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[32] http://www.newstalk.com/hse-our-children-didnt-matter-says-mother
[33] Savita Halapannavar died after suffering a miscarriage and developing septicaemia in a Galway hospital in 2013. The inquest into her death found she died of medical misadventure. Much coverage was given to her death, in particular her requests for the pregnancy to be terminated while the miscarriage was taking place; a request which was denied due to the presence of the foetal heartbeat. To terminate the pregnancy in such a scenario would have been in breach of Ireland's abortion laws.

> That's where you have to give credit to very good journalism. The fact that those kind of investigations, even though sometimes they're sensationalised, at least when they're not, they shine a light into things and force the system to respond.

A similar point was visible, on a much smaller scale, in the case of the potentially contaminated chemotherapy and the appearance of a caller on RTÉ's *Liveline*, referred to in Chapter 7. "Michael's" call to *Liveline* was seemingly a trigger for the HSE to acknowledge the issue publically. During the radio show, host Joe Duffy asked: "Why did it take a *Liveline* caller on Friday to get the HSE to eventually release some information that was available to them on Monday?" The segment indicates the power of individuals to act as a catalyst for action, or in the case of the chemotherapy contamination, some level of engagement from the HSE, and *Liveline* is well-known for its advocacy role (Byrne 2011; Burke 2009). On the show, Michael refers to a sense of powerlessness because of the poor communication from the HSE:

> We checked the internet, we checked the news, and there was nothing anywhere, there was no mention of this anywhere. That's why I looked into this. It's too big of an issue to be kept quiet like that … I just thought maybe this is something that should be made public. It's a public health issue.

> (*Liveline*, October 16[th,] 2015)

The Portlaoise story was initially triggered by the report on RTÉ's *Prime Time*, before entering more official channels via the Hiqa report. The chemotherapy story acted as a trigger for the HSE to publicly acknowledge the problem, and for all the other media outlets who picked up and ran the story, this is also classified as a routine channel. Criticising the recycling of content from these routine channels is difficult due to the story's significance and evocative nature, yet it illustrates how important it is that individuals' stories like this continue to be uncovered and disseminated. As Channel 4's Jon Snow says in Chapter 1, those "pathways" to reach journalists are essential, but such pathways must remain plentiful. Those involved in Portlaoise felt the media was the route to take and were vindicated in that decision, by "forcing the system to respond", as Varadkar puts it, which aligns with the watchdog, accountability function of the media. Such scenarios also reinforce the power and social responsibility that still reside with professional journalists and their democratic role in selecting who and what is deemed worthy of a broader platform.

Human interest stories and healthcare

Chapter 7 elaborated on the use of private citizens, finding they generally appear because of their dramatic personal experiences rather than as general commentators. While one advantage of this is the highlighting of an individual's circumstances, it may also have implications for where resources are allocated, or public understanding of the rationalising of funds. This emphasis on the individual story is highlighted by Tony O'Brien, chief executive of the HSE, who believes the public must understand that "individual tragic cases will always exist and gain considerable prominence in the health care environment" (O'Brien 2017). He acknowledges families' grief and distress, saying lessons must be learned from such cases, but "we should not, however, develop policy and the future of world-class services based on these cases". When asked about the familiar narrative of human interest stories, Varadkar explains that it puts those in authority in difficult positions:

> Definitely dealing with individual cases was the hardest thing to do, because they're human, they're real… [The public] can see this person, they could think this person could be somebody I know, or it could be somebody's sister. That made it really hard.

The traditional adversarial vision might suggest that anything that presents a difficult situation for politicians means the media are fulfilling a watchdog role, but journalism's obligation to society will often need to extend beyond the individual case. Aside from the personalised and often emotive nature of cases being presented in such a manner, Varadkar suggests "very often it wasn't the full story", but any official is limited in what counter-position they can present:

> While an individual could go on the media with their case, you could never go back [and give the facts]… First of all, you'd be violating all sorts of privacy and data protection issues if you did, and secondly, even if you did, you'd probably lose anyway, because you'd be attacking the person who's in tears.

This inability to comment on specific cases contributes to the lack of engagement from the HSE mentioned earlier, yet multifaceted factors may be built into any individual's story, even if that depth is often not present in media reports.

Another concern regarding the dissemination of individual's experiences is the social responsibility of providing media coverage which may have dangerous public health repercussions, as evidenced in the 1990s with the MMR vaccine (Smith et al. 2008). The HPV vaccine, offered to all teenage girls in Ireland ot help prevent cervical cancer, was the topic of four stories in the sample, all highlighting concerns about the vaccine's alleged effects,

although most scientific and medical experts do not support concerns about the vaccine. Consequently, the presence of such oppositional parents voices in news coverage (three stories included one group, Regret: Reaction and Effects of Gardasil Resulting in Extreme Trauma) raises questions about whether it is civically responsible for such voices and personal experiences, regardless of how passionate their convictions, to be shared. There is a correlation between the growing public concerns about the HPV vaccine and a decline in its take-up in Ireland: in the 2014-2015 school year, the take-up rate was 87%, dropping to 72% in 2015-2016, and by 2017 it was down to 50%.[34][35] Such a potentially controversial subject also offers avenues through which professional journalists may distinguish and reassert themselves, providing coherence and authority over controversial claims which can flourish in an online sphere.

Jacky Jones suggested more nuance and critical thinking is needed from journalists in their reporting, as discussed in Chapter 6, but this often requires a level of expertise and familiarity with a subject which may be beyond the reporters' control. She also suggests that a stronger message should come from the HSE to present the counter-argument in, for example, a story about a drug not being funded, where the emphasis is built on emotive narratives. She argues that, in an ideal world, there is an unlimited budget, but that is not the situation: "This kind of populism … 'that you can't put a price on a human's life'. I'm sorry, but the manager in the agency who is dealing with the drug budget – they have to put a price on a human life." Journalist A (Irish Mirror) acknowledges some of this complexity; referencing the funding of certain drugs, they say that people are clearly suffering and there may be something available to help so "in that sense there is something valuable in highlighting these stories":

> But you do have to consider the other side of the coin: that the government can't possibly fund all these treatments. It's not feasible, it's not realistic. I think when you're doing a story like this it's important to think, "well, is it truly fair to say that the government should be funding this? … Is it realistic to say it's a disgrace?"

This captures the journalist's *reflexive monitoring of actions* (Giddens 1984) and exemplifies how news values may clash with the need for a more rationalised debate. It also suggests the journalists' social responsibility applies not just to potential injustices of individuals' stories,

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[34] http://www.medicalindependent.ie/98899/defending_and_extending_vaccines
[35] In August 2017 the HPV Vaccination Alliance, a coalition of more than 30 advocacy groups including the Irish Cancer Society, National Women's Council of Ireland and the Irish Medical Organisation, launched a campaign to restore vaccination rates. They want to combat what they refer to as the "misinformation about the vaccine spreading on social media".

but that it may extend to seeking out and weighing up competing arguments, focusing more on a more socially utilitarian perspective. This appears not to be common, given the attraction to the dramatic, individual events, as coverage is steered by newsroom-centric news values, rather than broader societal normative goals. Given the temporal pressures in online publishing, these two journalistic forces may be further diverging.

8.5 Policy decisions and political pressure from the media

The criticism towards the HSE's approach to communications, discussed earlier, is not limited to journalists. Varadkar notes the HSE tends to be "defensive legally and defensive in terms of PR". He said he often became the "spokesperson and chief apologist for the health service, which [the minister] shouldn't have to be. Most organisations will have somebody who will go out [and engage with the media] … and the health service doesn't have that." The HSE is under the remit of the Department of Health of which Varadkar was the minister, so his role extends beyond a neutral observer. Nevertheless, the comments raise a point regarding the politicisation of the health service and its association with individual ministers; tying the system to individual party-political figures may become problematic if accountability lies primarily with them. In 2017, a cross-party group in the Irish parliament proposed a 10-year strategy for healthcare, with many referring to the need to "take the politics out of health"[36]. However, as the results demonstrate in Figure 8.1, politicians' daytime activity becomes the dominant source of news about healthcare in the daytime/afternoon hours. Such usage can be tied to the easily accessible information they provide, both through official parliamentary proceedings and information subsidies, and their inherently legitimate status, as discussed in Chapter 7.
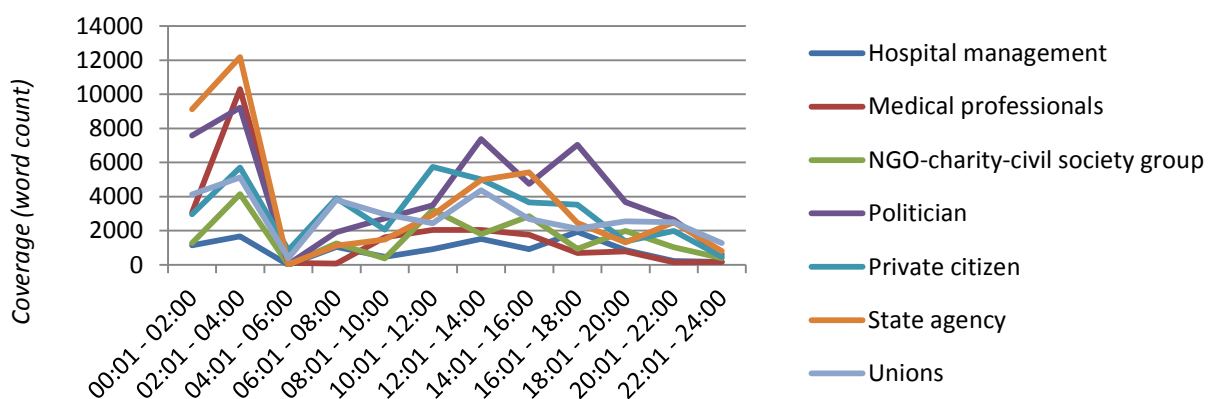
Figure 8.1: The use of different sources throughout the day

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[36] Labour TD Alan Kelly:
http://beta.oireachtas.ie/ga/debates/debate/committee_on_the_future_of_healthcare/2017-03-22/2/

Such sourcing patterns ensure that political narratives become central to coverage, which often places politicians in a defining, credible role. In a column in The Irish Times in August 2017, political correspondent Harry McGee elaborates on how the political system "with its cyclical nature and all its uncertainties", does not lend itself to long-term planning. He refers specifically to the health service and the change in ministers, with three in place since 2011:

> [Simon] Harris [appointed in 2016] has been there for a year and has at most another 18 months in the job. Without disparaging his efforts, Harris will leave the health service more or less as he found it, preserved in aspic as it has been for a generation. The quick turnaround of ministers in such vital areas highlights an irreconcilable clash between our myopic political culture and the longer-term interests of societal reform.

> (McGee 2017)

Any defeatist suggestion that politicians do not have the ability to bring about change fails to fully acknowledge the power that does reside in their role: the restructuring of the health system and the establishment of HSE took place under the remit of then minister for health (Micheál Martin, currently leader of Fianna Fáil) in 2005. Furthermore, Tony O'Brien, chief executive of the HSE, suggests the "hard decisions" which are needed to bring about reform require a "political courage that is not often apparent", which he suggests is due to the localised nature of Irish politics. However, if the myopic political culture about which McGee talks is accurate, it is seemingly mirrored – and thus unchallenged – by much of the reaction-driven content that fills news coverage and upon which newsdesks are so focused. If journalists are complicit in such a culture, it calls into question their ability to function as detached observers, and instead reinforces the symbiotic relationship between the two institutions. While this co-dependency is well-established, the online dimension, with an emphasis towards reaction and routine sources of news and diminishing expertise, arguably further restricts the scope for considering longer-term trends. However, for journalists, there is the undeniable fact that many of the news events covered are worthy of highlighting and are accurate. The facts are true, and this can act as a clear counter-argument, or provide a credible *rationalisation of action* (Giddens 1984).

Following the publication of the report into Portlaoise referenced earlier, Varadkar says his priority was how the problems in the report's findings would be dealt with. This is a reference to the downgrading of certain hospital services, which, Varadkar adds, "wasn't what the people in the region wanted to hear"; this leads the discussion on to the relationship between how policy decisions translate into media coverage. Jacky Jones refers to the high expectations that the public has about what services they can expect in their region, and ties it to the role of

politicians seeking to capitalise on this. Referring to the services available at regional hospitals, she says:

> People like, especially in the local newspapers, they love to see their politician, the guy is able to speak up on their behalf. And they just won't listen when you say to them: "This hospital doesn't have the expertise you need, and you need to go 50 miles down the road to the centre of excellence." In a country like Ireland, you might have 10 of those and that's enough. You can't have them [everywhere].

Varadkar elaborates on this by pointing out the concerns around media attention that brings focus to a specific issue, meaning it gets attention and "resources may be devoted towards that particular drug, that particular condition, that particular waiting list, that particular place in the country or region". Such media coverage can sometimes make situations worse, he claims, as resources can be deployed "to respond to negative publicity or political demands rather than what makes sense objectively".

In a similarly critical vein, Tony O'Brien, chief executive of the HSE, suggests the media must be more resistant to some of the arguments put forward by vested interests that "we see so readily carried by much of our media and politicians because they tend to make good provocative headlines" (O'Brien 2017). Varadkar echoes this, suggesting that the media should not go easier on the minister as that accountability is imperative, but that they should be "more critical of the demands and claims" of sectoral groups. The reference to stakeholder arguments' inclusion in news ties in with the rhetorical function of the news and its use as a forum for competing voices. For a more full, rounded debate, competing claims may need to be weighed up by the journalists who take a more active role, rather than simply reproducing the claims of any individual or group, which are scattered, stand-alone in single-source stories, throughout the day to fill the perceived news gap in online publishing. Such an approach may come as a challenge to the traditional detached, objective role, but it is needed to present the public with a more comprehensive picture. Jacky Jones tied a weak level of inquiry to some of the demands of online coverage:

> You're not getting a proper analysis. You're getting the sound bites, you're getting the Tweets, you're getting the short pieces… [It's like] what's quick? What's the story, How are we going to grab them today?

She suggests this is something which has changed in recent decades compared with more in depth coverage, while Journalist B (Independent.ie) ties a lack of ability to critique government "spin" (McNair 2004) with the lack of training and hyper-temporality of working online. From

a practice perspective, this example again highlights some of the time and capability constraints (Giddens 1984) present in the online dynamic. While specialisation within journalism is one issue, Jacky Jones is critical of this, saying that even among the specialists, "most of them are journalists" and do not have direct experience or extensive familiarity with operations within the HSE. The apparent lack of expert knowledge is also identified by Varadkar who believes much media coverage failed to fully grasp this: "What's missing, what's unfortunate, is that the number of health journalists who actually understand health or have a knowledge of health is small." He claims that media reports are, typically, "oversimplified, but I wouldn't think that's particular to health", instead focusing on short-term negativity, especially within mainstream coverage.

8.6 Negativity bias and news values

As well as concerns about short-termism in both political culture and media coverage, another clash appears to exist regarding the tone of content, and whether such "negative" coverage fairly represents what is happening. This is the negativity bias in the news which Soroka highlights (2016), whereby the distribution of information in media content is "systematically more negative than reality". The idea of representativeness is difficult to capture in the news context given the attraction to the unusual or dramatic: events happen, and using individuals' stories in such a way draws attention to some of the most problematic aspects of the Irish health system. Such incidents are not one-off and often reoccur yet, of course, do not fully reflect the experience of the majority of patients, as is the case with most news. Varadkar touches on this apparent gap between coverage and patients' experiences more generally:

> While the vast majority of negative stories about the health service are true – not all true but the vast majority of them are true – it does create an overall worse impression of the health service than it really is … I think the overall negativity has undermined public confidence in the public health service and also created a certain degree of fatalism in politics that this thing can never be fixed, and that is a real shame.

This can also be linked with the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman 1974) in which public awareness can be shaped by exposure to recent events, rather than any baseline knowledge of data, a theory often associated with perceptions of crime (O'Connell 1999). Varadkar suggests it is worrying that many members of the public expect the health services to be much worse than it actually is, becoming problematic when, he says, people are "terrified" of going into hospital. This was echoed by Dr Sharon Sheehan, the Master of the Coombe maternity hospital in Dublin. She has concerns about the pessimistic coverage of maternity

issues in Ireland: "Almost every day, another media headline grabs the front pages and serves to terrify the expectant mothers and their families and also to terrify the staff who work in our maternity services" (Reilly 2016). Dr Sheehan suggests that the hospitals and the media could work together" to bring balance to reporting. However, such collaboration may not easily align with the desire for independence which journalists typically seek. Furthermore, the obvious counterargument from the journalist perspective to claims of overly negative coverage is articulated by Journalist F, who says: "Obviously conflict or lack of resources is something that is going to be covered more so than 'everything's fine' ... it's highlighting flaws in the system when it's important to do that." They add that it is not a case of journalists showing up for work every day with the intention of producing another "negative government story", but "it's just unfortunate that the health system is often in disarray". This echoes Giddens' *credibility criteria* (Giddens 1984), used by agents to "provide reasons for what they do", which can be so influential in shaping journalists' behaviour.

A closing point to consider is whether there is a realistic alternative for journalists committed to a watchdog role. Arianna Huffington, founder of the Huffington Post, has suggested that audiences prefer sharing more positive stories: "If we don't cover positive stories with the same relentlessness and resources that we cover the negative stories, then we are giving readers a very jaundiced view of human nature" (Dyer 2015). The idea of positivity aligns with models such as sunshine journalism which may be problematic (Louw 2005; Kuper & Kuper 2001), but "constructive journalism", or "solutions journalism" offers a potential compromise which journalists may identify with more comfortably (McIntyre & Sobel 2017). Dyer points out how this approach is "not a call for feel-good stories", but instead stems from the publics' desensitising towards problems and negativity. One journalist in this study, identifying such a concern, suggests an ongoing pessimism in coverage was leading towards higher levels of public apathy:

> I worry that people are becoming fatigued with news. I think people are finding it more difficult to care about stuff when you're bombarded with one negative story after the other. It's like "this is a disgrace, this is a crisis." It's hard to care about everything all the time.
>
> (Journalist A – IrishMirror.ie)

Dyer refers to the case of the Solutions Journalism Network in the *Seattle Times* which "flipped the script" on education reporting because of the lack of impact from lengthy negative exposes, as they rarely provided alternative approaches. They suggest the move was not motivated by too many negative stories, but "because we thought there were too many negative

conversations. People had become too polarised" (Dyer 2015). Whether polarised or apathetic, the potential lack of explanation from the media about the structural cause or potential solutions to many of the problems in the health sector may lead to further public disengagement or mistrust in the state or politics. Furthermore, the fact that individuals are appearing in the media primarily as victims talking about their own circumstances, rather than contributors commenting on general policy decisions, may also lead to a further disempowering. A shift towards including some sort of constructive journalism pursuits would require those with allocative and authoritative resources in a newsroom to seek such changes. This could be problematic not just ideologically, but it may also challenge expectations surrounding online news demands, which appear to be less accommodating towards non-routine channels of reportage, as discussed in Chapter 6.

8.7 Conclusion

While the discussion presented in this chapter focuses on the health sector, it also shines a light on more general newsroom behaviours. Communicating policy decisions may initially appear somewhat removed from the day-to-day online production practices, but clear links are evident. These include the need to source content throughout the day, stakeholders seeking to influence coverage, journalists' receptiveness towards information subsidies and official voices, and their specialist knowledge – or lack of – in assessing both the newsworthiness of an issue and its relevance to broader policy problems. When asked what has changed in the 20 years since he first ran for election, one of the observations Leo Varadkar points to was the "more immediate, quicker" responses which are expected. In the online context, the heightened temporality and the perceived need for ongoing daytime publication appear to contribute to a lack of complexity in news reports, whereby voices are amplified with little analysis of their arguments. This acts as both an enabler and a constraint (Giddens 1984) for journalists trying to fulfil normative roles: easily repackaged material provides content, but may have broader implications in both diversity of content and the media portrayal of a policy area. However, as this chapter demonstrates, the dissemination of PR material and information-processing of seemingly neutral data and reports can play an important civic role in knowledge about healthcare which may not be the case in the other more commercially driven sectors such as business, property or entertainment, or more partisan subjects focused on parliamentary politics.

The journalists in this study appear to have mixed views about the use of PR but present the impression that journalists maintain the gatekeeping role in spite of newsroom pressures. However, this assessment appears somewhat out of sync with what the content analysis

suggests, where there is a heavy contribution of the promotional channel (B), and single-source stories are common. One of the important points expanded on in this chapter is how the use of routine channels of news does not equate solely with the use of official voices. The Portlaoise report demonstrates how private citizens, who are part of an official process, become the focus and take on a defining role in the coverage. Instead, routine news appears to equate with easily accessible sources: whether that is a trade union or NGO with professionalised communication strategies, or private citizens contributing to radio outlets to share their experiences, journalists are clearly open to these alternatives. In particular, when these voices challenge official narratives, this appears to fulfil a normative role of accountability or the watchdog function, at least on the surface level of providing criticism of the government and state services. However, diversity and deeper analysis, and the weighting of all sources' agendas, motivations, and vested interests are important. This space is where the role of professional journalists is needed: to weigh up claims, provide diversity or perspective, and ultimately provide enough verified information to thoroughly educate the public. To facilitate self-governance through an informed public is among journalism's key goals (Christians et al. 2009), but to fulfil this, journalists must act as more than inert vehicles that carry rhetorical claims and fail to contextualise events and perspectives. However, to garner such knowledge and space, journalists must be provided with the opportunity, autonomy and a work environment in which this is the goal. Active agency can only exist when the other factors in a system offer support and an appropriate allocation of resources (Giddens 1984). This aspiration of informative, high-quality journalism may need to supersede the perceived demand for continuous streams of fresh content to publish, as such as work dynamic ensures much power resides with external sources. Furthermore, the defence that information is factually accurate and its inclusion being based on an alignment with journalistic news values may ultimately be leading to a normative failure if the goal is for the media to supply information and analysis to educate and empower a public.

Chapter 9 | CONCLUSION

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> *Followers of the news these days must often feel as if they have been
> exposed to events after events, to statistics after statistics, to claims and
> counter-claims after claims and counter-claims. But what policy sense,
> what appreciation of the policy alternatives available on major issues, can
> the average news consumer derive from such a welter of material about so
> many situations?*
>
> (Blumler & Cushion 2014, p.269)

Online news platforms have provided seemingly infinite space and a competitive environment
with which both journalists and external actors are trying to grapple. Sources have always had
a strong influence, and the tug-of-war with journalists (Gans 1979) has transitioned online,
ensuring source power remains as strong, if not stronger, than ever. The balancing dynamic
between journalists' independence and their reliance on sources exists as part of the fluid,
open-ended structure of news website content rather than the more rigid time and space
boundaries in print and broadcast formats. This context facilitates an environment in which a
perceived demand for news content during the daytime hours flourishes, appearing to act as
both an enabler and a constraint (Giddens 1984) on journalists. Following the results and
discussion presented in the previous three chapters, it is useful to recapitulate the primary
findings:

- Chapter 6 demonstrated how the five websites are actively publishing all day, but a
  heavy reliance on routine, repackaged information facilitates such a practice. Among
  the two main newspaper brands in particular, there appears to be some caution. Much
  of the more original content is not deemed to be worth first publishing on the website
  during daytime hours, which may be indicative of broader attitudes towards the online
  output. The chapter also proposed the new channels of production typology which
  helps to capture the nuance between different types of stories and is an effort to ensure
  appropriate distinctions are made when referencing news content.

- Chapter 7 moved the discussion on to how these channels of news production, and the
  reliance on repackaged material, affects various source groups' access to the media.
  Unsurprisingly, the traditional elite official sources of politicians and state agencies,
  dominated but clear space for contesting definers (Carlson 2009) is also present: in this
  subject area, trade unions, in particular, have gained much legitimacy, while NGOs and
  individuals are also finding coverage through the routine channels which dominate

daytime coverage. The results suggested this can be linked to journalists' perceived need for easily accessible information, as well as increased PR and communications strategies from well-resourced groups. The use of actors' pronouncements was a common angle taken by journalists, which emphasised the rhetorical function of the news and drew further attention to the power of sources to garner media attention. Questions were also raised about the representations of private citizens in reports – presented primarily for their dramatic experiences rather than as citizens commenting on policy or current affairs – along with concerns about imbalanced gender representations.

- Chapter 8 focused on journalists' mixed attitudes towards PR and, in the context of the content analysis data, this presented something of a paradox between their facilitation and resistance of its use. The chapter also explored some of the specifics of covering the healthcare area, with a clear schism evident between journalists' news values and commitment to shining a light on failings, versus the counter-argument about sensationalist, negative, temporally driven news that fails to grasp and cover some of the larger, more fundamental structural problems within the health service.

Throughout the three chapters, it becomes apparent how online news production practices are intertwined with what version of an event or issue the public receives, and ultimately who appears in the news. This leads to a number of concluding points from all stages of the news production system which warrant attention.

The first relates to the relationship between digital and print journalism. Various narratives surrounding the digital changes in journalism permeate both academic commentary and mainstream industry discussion. However, many of the academic interpretations are somewhat more cautious about what, and how much, online publishing has changed journalism (Ahva & Steensen 2016). Conversely, many in the media industry are embracing more revolutionary language when speaking publicly, yet in the Irish context highlighted here, this is at odds with practice, which is indicative of reservations and reluctance evident elsewhere about how the standardised working routines, and neutral or negative opinions about changes (Spyridou et al. 2013). While all-day publishing is taking place, this research shows clear disparity as much of the more original work remains outside of these all-day publishing activities. This detachment between the two formats may, potentially, act as a positive in some scenarios – by providing a space for coverage that is not temporally driven – but concern remains about the value being placed on the online output. This becomes pertinent as online audiences grow and print audiences continue to diminish: attempting to cater for shifting audience dynamics, while there is internal resistance and an ongoing attachment to the print output within news organisations,

may lead to an ineffective allocation of resources (Giddens 1984) in which both formats suffer. As discussed later in this concluding chapter, it appears that online-only news websites have taken their cues from the print-brand titles, and the two categories of publication are not offering fundamentally different content, especially during active daytime hours.

The second area involves the role of specialisation among news reporters. The data supports previous studies suggesting that general reporters and specialised reporters assert different roles and sourcing practices in a newsroom (Leask et al. 2010; Schwitzer 2008; Williams 1999), but, arguably, it is not simply the case that these specialised reporters within these mainstream news organisations provide sufficient breadth of coverage on their own. Specialised reporters' reliance on elite voices is somewhat countered by the diversity provided by general reporters, even if this human-interest focus can also be problematic (Rachul & Caulfield 2015). Elsewhere, the specialised reporters within the news organisations sampled here remain distinct to those who work specifically on niche health-related publications, and operate within the potential constraints of a mainstream, general-interest news desk. Furthermore, while a mainstream reporter working a beat may build up networks of sources, it does not necessarily link with expertise knowledge and experience of the policy dimensions of a sector. This reinforces how there are different tiers of knowledge, perspectives and professional values at play when a particular sector is being covered, and each tier brings varying attributes to their coverage.

In considering the dynamics of source and journalistic relations, the crux of the discussion hinges on influence, and where the balance of power lies. This is a long-discussed issue in journalism studies (Carlson 2009), with the consensus that sources typically lead, but renewed attention is needed to examine whether the online element has enabled or further constrained journalists. The research finds that the use of sources cannot be detached from the perceived requirements of online news production: easily accessible information is seemingly needed to fuel all-day publishing, thus further strengthening the reliance on sources who are seeking media coverage. This may be done formally by journalists drawing on PR activity, but also other environments where the reaction and activities of those recognisable, or legitimate, actors are provided with media coverage. One example is apparent in the heavy use of politicians' contributions to parliamentary proceedings, and ties into the discussion surrounding news's rhetorical nature and the pronunciamento-style stories, which support a mediatised, soundbite culture.

This leads on to a final point regarding the implications for news coverage of health policy. As has been demonstrated throughout, the perceived requirements of online news publication can

be associated with a reliance on easily accessible information. This information often stems from those who appear to have an inherent legitimacy (politicians and other official voices, as well as trade union groups), or those private citizens with emotive or dramatic stories to tell. The constructive, rhetorical nature of news ensures that journalists have a power in whom or what they choose to highlight. However, while that ultimate power continues, journalists appear to be compensating for a lack of resources or professional experience by drawing on easily accessible, seemingly credible, legitimate sources and routine channels. Crucially, and what may, therefore, ensure the continuation of such a trend, is that the reflexiveness and rationalisation of action ensures the journalists are providing apparent self-justification for their actions. The concerns that researchers see with the system is not necessarily mirrored by industry concerns, as images of active gatekeeping and autonomy prevail. The implications of any decline in non-routine work are paramount, going to heart of the normative elements that steer journalists, as true accountability and watchdog functions cannot be fulfilled unless time, space and expertise are offered to those journalistic pursuits which focus on investigative work and are more open to informal sourcing channels.

For a policy area, especially something as pertinent as healthcare, the trends illustrated in this study show how the media provide a platform for those often with the loudest voice, the highest profile, the most professional communication resources or the most emotive story to tell. In such coverage, the complexities or nuances of policy debate may be overlooked as short-term publication goals, informed by news values and a heightened temporal environment, prevail. When journalists draw on norms such as objectivity, this may result in polarising coverage where two sides of a story manifest in, for example, a token right of reply from the HSE in which they say they cannot comment on individual cases, rather than, for example, a journalist-led discussion about rationalisation of healthcare funds. Given the association between media coverage and knowledge of policy (Barabas & Jerit 2009), the nature of news content is central to public understanding, and therefore, the ability for citizens to make informed decisions when exerting their democratic power.

This concluding chapter revisits the research question and draws on Stones' (2005) quadripartite nature of structuration model; the four elements function as a framework upon which to capture how a news production system is shaped by structures – internal and external to the agent – and leads to particular outcomes. It then gives an overview of some of the variance among the five websites, before presenting some of the study's contributions to the area of source use in online news. The discussion moves on to some of the study's limitations and areas for future research before closing with recommendations for journalism practitioners.

9.1 Revisiting the research question

The study asked: *How do the practices of online news production influence the sourcing and publication of health policy-related news content?* The findings suggest that the daily practices appear to normalise, thus reinforcing and sustaining, a system in which quantity of content and frequency of publication appear to take precedence over the diversity of voices, critical evaluation of sources, and more original reporting work. An apparent need to find content to fill a perceived open-ended news hole appears to exist, but much of this content is routinely sourced, reactive and gives substantial levels of control to external actors. Journalists typically source stories through routine channels; often this is promotional material, but not always, as covering a policy area will lead to the use of official statistics and information as part of a dissemination function. However, the distinction between promotional and non-promotional material becomes somewhat redundant as they both contribute to the passive sourcing process (O'Neill & O'Connor 2008). Reporting official figures or reports has obvious civic value but this does not overrule a need for further critique and context, and the need to offer alternative perspectives about what data or reports' findings *actually* mean for people. Whether that is more "bottom-up" news as Gans sought (1979), providing a space for voice to be validated (Couldry 2010b), or ensuring the "fears, prejudices and aspirations" of citizens are heard (Kuypers and King 2009, p.10), media providers must ensure the platform they provide is open to those without elite, seemingly legitimate statuses. Furthermore, the unquestioning acceptance of seemingly credible official information further legitimises the authoritative, defining role of those providing the information. This easily accessible, passive, routine approach to sourcing is ostensibly needed to fuel the daytime publishing schedules of news organisations, given the demands on resources in newsrooms. Of course, such trends did not arrive with online news, nor are they limited to the digital platform; what is noteworthy is how the online system has incorporated such practices and reinforced the use of such material as the basis for much of its content, thus questioning the revolutionary or democratic potential of the internet as a communication and journalistic platform. Such an assessment aligns with the shift towards the more moderate interpretations of what the internet offers the public from an information and news perspective (Steensen & Ahva 2015). The answer to the research question can be explored further by returning to the quadripartite model of structuration as outlined in Chapter 2. The summaries of the four aspects below explain how a variety of factors, both internal and external to the agent, contribute to an online news production system and, ultimately, the published content which audiences receive.

9.2 The quadripartite nature of a news production system

Structuration theory was used due to the duality at its core which provides an appropriate approach for an analysis of journalism given the structure and agency elements discussed throughout this research. However, to overcome some of the limitations of Giddens' original work, strong structuration facilitates a more solid base for empirical study into the establishment and reproduction of an online news production system. Figure 9.1 presents Stones' quadripartite nature of structuration model, modified to include some of the concepts from this study relevant to each aspect. Further discussion of the four aspects follows.
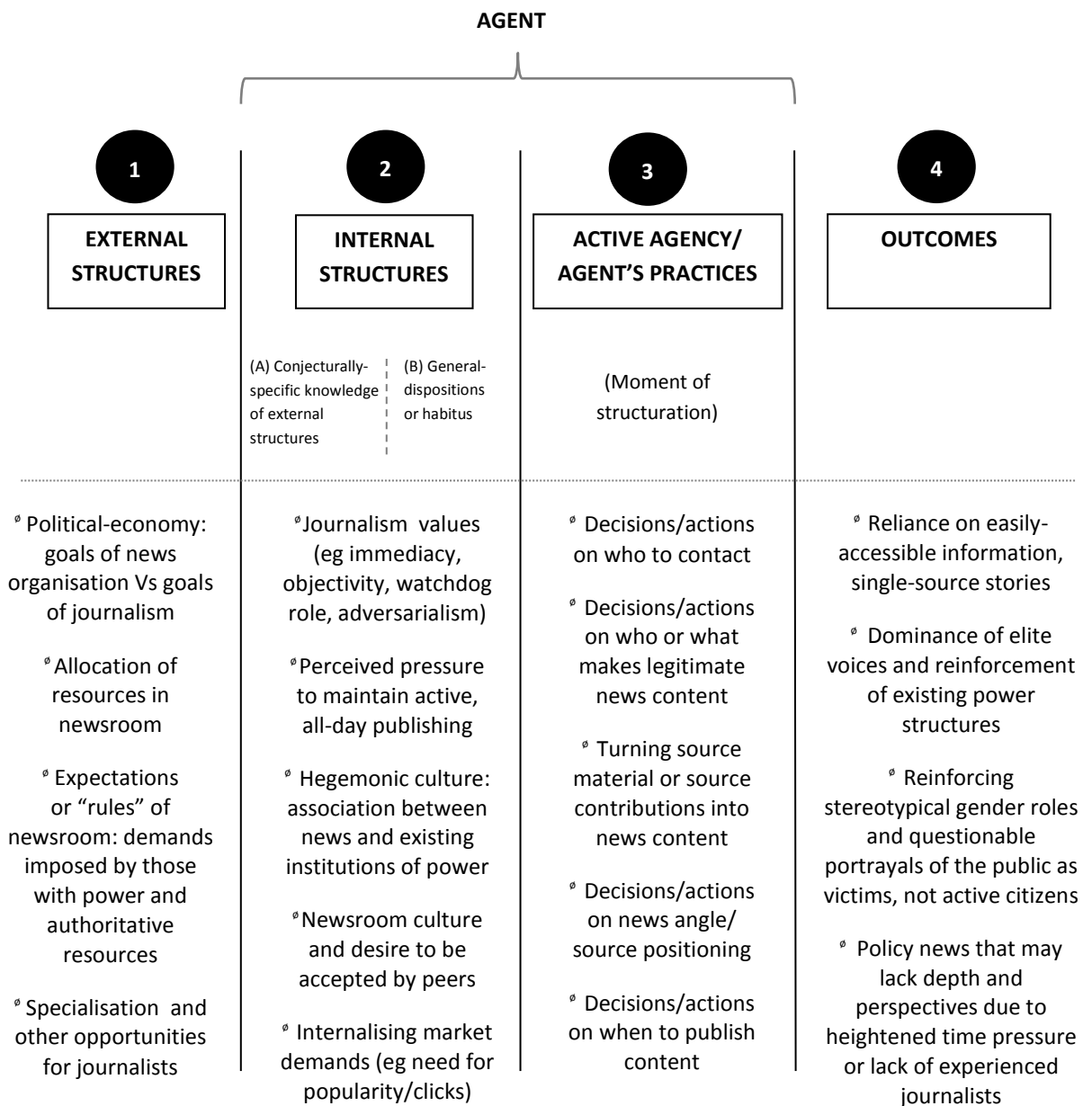
Figure 9.1: The quadripartite nature of structuration (from Stones 2005, p.85), modified to include how the four aspects are relevant to the study of sourcing and news production

(1) External structures: factors beyond a journalist's control

While the political economy perspective is not the dominant lens through which this research is examined, resource-related considerations – as well as the profit-driven goals of the commercial organisations – contribute to the context in which newsrooms operate. Financial resources and the staffing numbers in a newsroom, whether that is the number of reporters or production staff, also shape the work environment. Timeliness, and providing daytime updates, may also form part of the credibility criteria and interpretive schemes which agents – in this case journalists – may draw on in their day-to-day work to justify actions (Giddens 1984). Giddens talks about domination as a resource comprising authoritative and allocative resources. As discussed throughout, the allocation of existing journalistic resources – and making the most effective use of what is available (Nielsen 2017) – should be a key consideration for those with that power. Elsewhere, the power derived from those with authoritative resources (control over persons) is also applicable: if editors or management are expecting journalists to produce a certain number of stories in a certain time, then this cannot be overlooked as a contributing factor in daily routines and newsroom culture. Accepting hyper-temporality alongside an open-ended news gap, at a time of falling resources, means that compromises of some sort will likely have to be made to sustain all-day publishing. Such compromises may come in the power that shifts away from journalists towards those outside the newsroom seeking to influence coverage.

Related to this is the discussion in Chapter 6 about specialisation and socialisation opportunities offered to young journalists in particular – which can be considered *capability constraints* (Giddens 1984) – and how this has implications for building source networks. While many of the traditional news organisations still have many more experienced journalists from a pre-internet era working, this may be masking forthcoming challenges. One journalist (B) refers to their fear for the future coverage of healthcare as the specialist reporter is approaching retirement and there appears to be nobody trained to take over the subject. The implications and repercussions of a lack of opportunity for young journalists may, therefore, not be immediately felt; it may be exposed only when a dearth of knowledge and experience becomes more obvious. Such a scenario has implications not just for the newsroom's credibility, but also for journalists' ability to find relevant information and translate it for the public. Such translation may require expertise; this is especially pertinent amid calls for journalists to have expert knowledge to distinguish and reassert themselves from those challenging their professionalism (Blumler & Cushion 2014; Donsbach 2014).

(2) Internal structures: Sub-conscious factors in the production of news

The structures internal to the agent are, according to Stones (2005), split into two categories: the conjecturally-specific, and general dispositions. The conjecturally-specific in this study is visible through some of the trends specific to each publication, such as the commitment to private citizen contributions in the Irish Mirror, or resistance to using other outlets' original reporting on TheJournal.ie. It is this position in the system where the culture of specific organisations become internalised, and this becomes particularly important when, as raised in Chapter 6, young journalists are making the transition from education to the workforce. Because of the routinised nature of news sourcing and assembling stories, what journalists see as an acceptable basis for a story lays the foundation of what familiar patterns or "templates" (Ryfe 2009b) they draw upon; the recursive nature of the system in action. This can be linked to the potential role of those who have domination over journalists, such as those in editorial or management roles, who are in positions to establish the rules about what should constitute worthwhile content, and instill perceptions about speed and temporality (Ananny 2016). Newsroom policies, which may be unspoken but accepted, about the inclusion of certain actors, anonymous sources, single-source stories become influential. Those actors with domination are also in a position to issue sanctions (Giddens 1984) when content does not comply with expected rules, thus reinforcing to journalists how they should behave.

The second internal structure that Stones identifies relates to general dispositions, which in journalism studies is associated with the normative goals which have, broadly, remained in place since the professionalisation period. A commitment to a watchdog role and fourth estate journalism, focused on the political and state institutions, appears to remain the ongoing priority. Such an approach manifests in content that strives for detached, objective approaches, and leads towards the hegemonic culture whereby official actors and proceedings are the natural places to source news (Soloski 1989). All these internalised beliefs about professional identity and what a journalist's role should be, and what news content should look like, contribute to the system and may be just as strong a force as the external structures. This can be seen in how journalists use sources to appear objective (Carlson 2016; Williams 1999), and can rationalise their action (Giddens 1984) with reference to professionalism. Furthermore, the use of different sources, scattered singularly throughout the day or compiled in a binary fashion, can contribute to an appearance of diversity or objectivity, even if journalists are not thoroughly deconstructing such contributions.

(3) Active agency/agent's practices: when structure and decision-making meet

The third aspect of Stones' quadripartite model is the moment of structuration in which the first two stages culminate into action. Here, the sociological debate between structure and

agency as the dominant force becomes imperative, as structuration supposes that the two interconnect to lead to practices. As was suggested in Chapter 2, such a model may not effectively capture all aspects of social life, but the constructed nature of journalism – and factors influencing journalists' behaviour – ensure that such a balancing of forces is an appropriate conceptualisation. In particular, the area of sourcing is one in which journalists make decisions and act out a practice: contacting a source or accepting material from a source, assessing its worth, and ultimately including or dismissing it is an action over which the journalist has control. Structures from the previous two stages contribute to such behaviour, and facilitate actors' *rationalisation of action* and, crucially, what happens at this stage can never be removed from the broader structural context (Stones 2005). These ties to structure become vital when assessing why journalists produce content in the way they do; time pressure, expectations and opportunities for specialist knowledge and source networks may all be factors that contribute to the logic behind the actions. The notion of *capability constraints* (Giddens 1984) is also relevant to both stages 2 and 3; journalists can only draw on the skills, knowledge and contacts that they have acquired, and the building up of such assets must be facilitated by news organisations. As the interviews suggest, the journalists typically see themselves as independent fact-checkers who weigh up PR material based on its value: the traditional gatekeeping ideal in action. However, the content analysis suggests that those gates are open to many of those who make seemingly credible information available due to the combination of these first three stages of the quadripartite model. Decisions around publishing strategies are also relevant to this aspect, such as the decision to try to maximise audience engagement by publishing at certain times, or decisions around the protection or prioritisation of the print format. This latter issue may also be affected by structural considerations, such as revenue streams or perceived prestige.

(4) Outcomes: final news texts and reinforcing existing structures

The fourth aspect in Stones' model is the outcome, which in a news production system can be seen as the published news content. As much of the discussion in Chapter 7 about dominant sources demonstrates, the ramifications of outcomes are apparent only when the analysis extends beyond each news text, as the broader trends warrant examination. These can be seen as the *unintended consequences of action* (Giddens 1984): when routine, familiar practices and decision-making lead to the dominance and marginalisation of certain voices, even though each news text appears legitimate on its own. Three decades ago, Brown et al summarised their findings into source use: "Newspapers relinquish control of news to routine channels with male government executives as typical sources" (1987, p.45). Such an assessment echoes much of the findings presented in this study, but many other intricacies are contributing to the dynamics

of the contemporary news environment. The content analysis presents a scenario whereby well-resourced external sources find their voice amplified via a media which appears to be in a subordinate position, in desperate need of content to fulfil the perceived demands of all-day publication. Gans' deduction about how influential sources do not bully their way into the news but "use their power to create suitable news" (1979, p.119) underpins this *dialectic of control* which grants power to external sources (Giddens 1984). The high level of material present in this study provided by third-party organisations is indicative of how those seeking favourable coverage can influence news content, even if they are not the ones who ultimately determine what becomes news. However, it is not just the traditionally influential official sources who can gain coverage, as routine channels also facilitate representative groups, private citizens and NGOs.

One paramount consideration regarding source use is that the assessment of such content needs to expand beyond whether it is factually correct. Truth or accuracy is not enough on its own if the goal of news content is to inform the public about broader policy. As was explored with the use of politicians, trade unions and private citizens in Chapters 7 and 8, any one stakeholder's interpretation of an issue can usually be counter-argued by another's, and both are, generally, based on truth. The dualism or polarisation of issues – as if somehow two actors accurately capture an issue or event – may also be problematic, as was evident in the case of the free GP care scheme where inter-elite debate dominated. In an information age, journalists have easily accesible tools to engage with multiple perspectives or provide base-rate information, rather than act simply as carriers of other actors' messages. However, this potential for multiple layers appears to be curbed by the daily practices which appear to prioritise updates, reaction and quantity – rather than depth – of content. This rhetorical function of news, and the complicity of journalists in carrying unquestioned messages from stakeholders, is a cause for concern when considering journalistic autonomy and journalism's role in providing the material to facilitate effective self-governance, as was identified as a well-established goal in Chapter 3.

The recursive nature of news production, captured in the quadripartite model, lends itself to familiar patterns upon which news content is built, and this can result in on ongoing, cyclical narratives. Throughout this research, one frequent topic is the overcrowding in A&E departments, and this presents an example of a crucial healthcare problem that has failed to be resolved despite its repeated appearance in the news. Irish economist Stephen Kinsella captures the potentially futile relationship between the formulaic assembling of reportage, compared with the levels of actual change in the context of A&E overcrowding coverage, suggesting –

with an apparent hint of irony regarding frequent demands for resources – that the repeated claims are having little impact:

> There are no beds. The sick and the dying are left outside while stressed-out healthcare professionals work round the clock to help them. Elective procedures are cancelled, previously closed beds are reopened. It is a surprise. The ensuing media storm assures us the situation is unacceptable. The doctors' representative, the nurses' representative, the union representative, the patients' representative, the minister and the technocrats who run the system are all over the airwaves, because the situation is unacceptable. The solution is more money. Much more money. Money and time. Because change will take place, but only over a number of years. And change must happen. Because this is unacceptable.

> (Kinsella 2017)

Kinsella, who was writing about structural problems in the system and the need for capital investment, refers to narratives evident for decades in Irish news coverage about hospital beds and overcrowding, adding: "You might as well get 2018's copy ready now. Same exact story, often with identikit quotes from many of the same people, each one gravely shaking their head and earnestly committing to solving the problem." The cyclical nature of news content to which Kinsella refers is a consequence, arguably unintended, of the cyclical nature of news production, and the familiar rules and resources by which it is shaped.

The continual coverage of stories such as A&E overcrowding, or waiting list scandals, and the various other "sins of omission and commission" in Irish healthcare to which Prof Staines refers in Chapter 1 indicate that journalism clearly has not lost its connection with the state in terms of maintaining pressure on government and politicians. Such troublesome stories are important and warrant media attention, but problems arise if they are decontextualised or rely on surface-level contributions from politicians or anyone with vested interests; immediate, reactionary coverage may not necessarily equate to something more civic-minded or democratic in the more literal sense which McChesney (2013) identifies. There is no shortage of coverage of current affairs, but the emphasis on *current* distracts somewhat from the broader social and democratic function of journalism. The focus on news values such as immediacy, conflict and human interest stories appears to present tension with normative values and goals of social responsibility and providing the public with the information and analysis needed for self-governance. For example, perceptions about funding of drugs may be skewed by emotive human interest narratives if a discussion of rationalisation of healthcare funds is also not given space, as discussed in Chapter 8. Furthermore, the public's role as contributors to news appears not to be a particularly influential one despite oft-cited narratives about their inclusion as active participants; in this study, private citizens are primarily used for their direct experiences, rather than as contributors to public debate. This result supports the finding that, despite the

social networks and online tools available, the internet has not led to a more public-focused approach towards the news (Lecheler & Kruikemeier 2016). A focus on immediacy will often be tied to stakeholders' interpretation of events rather than original newsgathering or analysis, providing increased platforms for external actors to stake a claim. It is, of course, too simplistic to suggest that social elites are the sole beneficiaries of this working environment. Opportunities abound for alternative sources to establish a platform, but they may need media-friendly approaches and skills to gain sought-after legitimacy.

9.2.1 Online journalism as a sub-institution

The quadripartite model and the study's findings present journalism as a relatively robust system, which has proven to be resilient to change with many fundamental values in place, indicative of its institutional traits (Eide & Sjøvaag 2016; Ryfe 2006). However, writing about journalism as an institution, Ryfe (2016) suggests such conceptualisation must include not only the resilience of values and practices but also how such a system is challenged and new institutions formed. The online news system includes new production formats and some variation; however, it appears to have evolved out of modifications on the existing journalistic system rather than taking any wholly novel approach. The story of journalism in an online age is one of both continuity and change. What has been altered is extensive: a weakened advertising model which propped up newspapers for centuries; precarious employment; convergence culture within newsrooms; further concentration of ownership; a trend towards more desk-bound work and despecialisation; the use of social networks; the growth of PR influence; information about audience analytics, and a perception, made via public declarations, of the need for a digital-first strategy. Yet what appears to be enduring, and is intrinsically tied to these changes, is the endurance of the institution of news, and the normative values with which it is associated. Traditional conceptualisation of journalism and its societal role have, broadly, made the transition from analogue to digital media, alongside well-established hierarchical professional identities and news values. Furthermore, a reluctance to modify these roles has ensured that print cycles continue to be influential for many news outlets. In some organisations, extensive exploration of digital tools is resisted, whether consciously or for more pragmatic reasons of a lack of knowledge, time, or resources.

Such continuity and change suggest online journalism may be more identifiable as a sub-institution of journalism, where offshoot practices and rules are accepted and normalised in the online setting. To fulfil the perceived requirements of online news production, compromises which may not have been as prevalent in print production gain a foothold and are normalised. For example, the "improved" versions of stories published in the print edition of The Irish Times; the low value of single-source PR stories in the print edition of the Irish Mirror but a

more "anything-goes" approach online; or the lack of specialised journalists' titles being visible in online news reports on Independent.ie or IrishTimes.com. Elsewhere, online journalism workers may also need to adapt to an environment where there may be fewer opportunities to work outside of the office or gain specialisation experience. One example of the adaptation to the online system related to the use of private citizen contributions. Journalists' news values may ensure that human interest stories maintain an important role in highlighting state failings; while opportunities to source such stories first-hand may be scarce, the repurposing of radio content is one adjustment which is being made within the online journalistic system to retain diversity of voice. Although the institutionalist perspective provides an effective basis for a broad conceptualisation of contemporary professional journalism, there was variation among titles which makes clear that no system is rigid and any news websites output is influenced and shaped by the strategies and actions of those operating within the organisation. Some of these differences are outlined below.

Variation among websites

While this research examined the general trends in online news content, the distinction between news outlets was made throughout: findings often varied between publications, thus highlighting the role of each organisational level and the contextual knowledge of those working in different outlets. The print-online division appears to be most stark in the Independent.ie newsroom, with the daytime updates on the website typically not the beneficiary of much of the original reportage or analysis. The website appears heavily reliant on other media for daytime content, yet in most instances recorded, it does not attribute the other media used. IrishTimes.com appears to take a more integrated approach between its two outputs but, crucially, the delayed publication of original content becomes clear and raises questions over the fundamental attitudes towards the online output. IrishMirror.ie, given its size, is unsurprisingly an outlier among the newspaper-brand titles when measuring the quantity of coverage, and a lesser division between its print and online output has been referenced throughout. There are also other minor findings worth noting, such as the Irish Mirror's high level of originally sourced private citizen contributions and the fact it is the only organisation to publish more opposition than government politician material, suggesting it has maintained its distinct tabloid identity. These variations reassert the role of the conjecturally specific structures in any system: what Stones' summarises as "the very particular routines, procedures, characters, resources and spatial and other forms of organisations of one's workplace" (2005, p.91). In a journalistic context is also aligns with the "organisation" level of the hierarchy of influences (Shoemaker & Reese 1996) which contributes to varied trends and reporting approaches.

While both TheJournal.ie and BreakingNews.ie are net-native publications, the results indicate how unhelpful an umbrella term like this can be when trying to make summations about content, as there was clear divergence in the findings. For example, BreakingNews.ie produces the shortest stories out of the five websites, with the lowest number of average sources, while TheJournal.ie produces the longest daytime stories with the highest average source use. They are the two websites most heavily reliant on information subsidies, PR activity and other media reports, but TheJournal.ie produces fewer than half the number of stories of BreakingNews.ie. Furthermore, BreakingNews.ie uses unattributed bylines on stories and does not facilitate comments, while TheJournal.ie's reporters are identifiable, contactable and audiences can post comments under stories, suggesting a more open, engaged approach with readers. These observations are all indicative of the different practices in place in both newsrooms, similar to the distinctions made between the newspaper brands.

TheJournal.ie's approach warrants further attention given the finding in the 2017 Reuters Digital News Report as the most popular news website in Ireland, used by one in three of those surveyed. While their heavy use of routine channels is not unique, concern may arise about the relatively low quantity of stories it publishes about the health sector: if TheJournal.ie is anyone's dominant source of news, then coverage of the health sector is limited, with little or no analysis to complement news reports. This is not a critique of the scale of the organisation, or a suggestion that it is failing to compete with the bigger news organisations. However, it returns to the concept of the allocation of resources; although TheJournal.ie does not follow the beat to the same extent if measuring quantity of coverage, it is not doing anything markedly different than the others. It is giving the health sector less coverage, but the published coverage is within the familiar parameters and narratives of event-driven, short-term focused news, and tied to the detached model of reporting so familiar to the newspaper brands. Writing about US net-native organisations such as Vox and Quartz, Riordain (2014) identifies how they have taken on a distinct "voice" that challenges the traditional detached model, manifested through taking a stance, and facilitating "analysis that is facts-driven rather than opinionative". However, there is little to suggest that either of the net-native websites in this study are drawing on that approach, and they instead appear to be committed to a role alongside the existing established organisations. One journalist from TheJournal.ie (D) refers to this, saying that they did not believe it was constructive to draw on differences between traditional brands or net-native, saying that any argument about the distinction is "redundant", as "it's the same product really". Therefore, remaining committed to this model will likely ensure that the commitment to official sources and routine channels of news remains firmly in place. It also reinforces Cawley's finding that (2012) new types of

media in the Irish setting have been absorbed into the prevailing news ecology rather than taking up a more distinctive position.

9.3 Contribution to studying sources and online news

As well as the findings and analysis which answered the research question, this study offers four key contributions – methodological, theoretical, analytical, and contextual – to research about online news production and journalistic-source dynamics, outlined below:

(i)   Despite previous suggestions that content analysis is not an appropriate method to examine journalistic practices (Boesman et al. 2015; Reich 2006), this research demonstrates that such reservations can be overcome. It requires moving beyond the text to examine source material, yet such an approach arguably allows for a more thorough content analysis that can more fully contextualise content. It also allows the capturing of sourcing practices which may not be visible through ethnographic studies or surveys. Although much of the content analysis coding results were quantified for analysis, the process of garnering these results required a more qualitative approach that is often excluded from traditional quantitative content analyses. Consequently, this approach overcomes some of the limitations of purely quantitative content analyses by providing a deeper contextualisation of journalistic output.

(ii)   Structuration theory has been used as a framework for journalism studies and changing technology, but Stones' work on strong structuration has not been used in such as manner, as far as it can be determined. This study, therefore, provides an original approach to conceptualising journalism practice and source use, and the intertwined link between structure, agency and outcome.

(iii)   The reconceptualisation of Sigal's (1973) channels of production has provided a novel framework in which to create distinctions between content, especially among the routine channels of news. This typology can be used in future content analysis studies as a way to further deconstruct news organisations' output. Using such a framework has also facilitated a thorough examination of how different voices and actors are associated with different sourcing channels, and elaborated on some of the nuance required when talking about routine news.

(iv)   The research contributes to the body of academic literature examining the online Irish journalism environment, which has been scarce in recent years. Furthermore, this study is, as far as it can be determined, the first time some of the news websites have been studied in such a manner. Researchers frequently include the dominant Irish Times and

Irish Independent, but the other websites have a growing relevance and a heavy online presence which warrants attention.

9.4 Limitations and future research

Examining the health sector and health policy area has brought focus to this research but presents one of its major limitations, raising questions about generalisability. Two examples of this include (i) the influence of trade union and representative groups, and (ii) the prevalence of routine channels. Firstly, as highlighted in Chapter 7, the role of trade union and representative groups has played a significant part in this study, with the results contradicting some previous research that suggests such groups are marginalised in the media (Manning 2001). However, the caveat is that the workers being represented are nurses and doctors, and thus may have a role in society that typically lends itself to high levels of public support (van der Schee et al. 2007). For that reason, further research is needed to see if the roles of unions representing other sectors have also evolved, and whether they are also benefiting or are still marginalised. In Ireland in recent years the case of transport drivers (tram and bus drivers have both engaged in strike action) would make a potential basis for comparison. The second subject-related concern regarding PR material and passive information-processing was examined in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. In a policy area, such passive information processing maybe seen as an essential part of dissemination of information with high civic value (Phillips 2015), such as organ donation or vaccines. Furthermore, the role of NGOs and civil society, who may find journalists responsive to PR material, are typically highlighting potential injustices and underfunding which may have serious repercussion for patient safety and wellbeing. For that reason, it is difficult to critique its presence in the same way as can be done with more corporate or party-political material. One direction for future research would be to expand the sample and methodological approach to other subject areas, such as education or housing, and compare the results about source material and dominant voices.

Another limitation is the study's synchronic nature: the research presented here is a snapshot in time, capturing what online news offered over 14 weeks in 2015. Caution has been taken throughout the analysis to ensure that any sense of causality is limited; to claim an impact of online suggests temporal comparison with a pre-internet era. Such a comparison was not the intention of this research, but it is difficult to resist when trying to capture the ways in which online production has altered practices. This potentially comparative dimension opens up the scope to explore what is different in news content today compared with news in the past. One possible direction to pursue would be to use the health sample and methodological framework

as a basis to analyse snapshots from previous decades, and compare source use with those from 2015. This would also be a novel approach as it would look beyond simply the technological changes, considering the impact from a content perspective which can often be overlooked in techno-centrist considerations of digital media. However, the emphasis would need to remain on actors included, rather than source material, due to the difficulty in accessing source material in a pre-internet era (Hansen 1991).

The interview contributions from journalists, while rich in value, are low in number. A higher number of interviewees would have been needed if their responses were to form the basis of a more distinct analysis, however, in this study the intention was only to complement and elaborate on the content analysis data which is the primary focus, and to gain insight from each of the newsrooms which was achieved in four out of five cases. Aside from journalists, further contributions from other non-media actors would have provided fresh perspectives but limitations on time, as well as a lack of engagement from those contacted, meant this was not possible. Secondary source material was included in an effort to try to overcome this and maximise perspectives in the discussion chapters. However, this does not act as a sufficient replacement for what can be gained through original interviews.

A fourth limitation to raise is the broad assumption made throughout the discussion that the messages encoded in information subsidies by the original source is reproduced with their message still, broadly, intact. While this was explored to some degree with the case studies, such analysis was not carried out systematically. Further investigation could consider the influence of these information subsidies on how a story is framed to the public, to examine whether the frames translate directly between information subsidy and news report. Discourse analysis could add similar insight about the use of languages across the information subsidy and the news report, specifically the reproduction or modification of certain terms and expressions. As the need for diversity of perspectives is identified throughout, one theoretical direction not explored in this research is the concept of polyphony, and layers of voice within a text. While Bakhtin's work is typically associated with literature, it has been applied to journalism studies (Zou 2017) and may provide scope for further exploration of the use of multiple inputs in shaping narratives.

As highlighted above, potential future work could involve:

- Expanding the methodology to other policy areas, such as education or housing, to examine whether sourcing patterns are consistent with those found in the health sample
- Conducting a historical analysis of coverage of health policy to see whether sourcing trends had evolved

- Conducting a framing analysis or discourse analysis to investigate links between the language used in PR material and news reports

Elsewhere, pursuing the potential distinction between the work of specialised reporters within mainstream, general-interest news organisations and those from niche publications would be useful to further inform the level of expertise in general newsrooms. It could also help to further consider how daily publication cycles are affecting content, compared with, for example, a weekly niche publication.

At the newsroom level, further investigation of the varying value placed on the print and online outputs could be pursued by comparing how a sample of stories are published in both formats. This could include, for example, the number of photographs/graphics used, whether the online version is enhanced with digital elements (interactivity, hyperlinks, etc), which could give insight into the publishing practices used for both outputs.

9.5 Recommendations for practitioners

Throughout the study, one area of potential reform has been repeatedly identified: the need for the meso-level in a newsroom to use their domination resource to engage with a more reflexive understanding about the content being produced. This level of journalist and decision-maker can shape the culture and "rules" of what is expected a newsroom, setting parameters about what it deemed appropriate, worthwhile content. The following recommendations demonstrate how this power can be used in newsrooms:

- Ensuring opportunities are offered to younger journalists to gain experience both out of the office and within specific beats. This socialisation process will ensure an ongoing level of expertise and source networks. That is not to romanticise the role of beat reporting – as this study shows, they are more reliance on the traditionally elite voices. Yet specialised reporters' work has an important distinction and presents opportunities, such as specialised reporters being more capable of critiquing PR material and events, and building up trusted contacts which can lead to off-the-record information.
- Striving to ensure diversity of sources and voices. This is applicable not just in the overall quantity of who is appearing, but efforts are needed to ensure that a sizeable portion of stories have a depth of voice and multiple perspectives. The use of single-source stories or those with a token response from, for example, the HSE, can contribute to a simplified, sometimes skewed version of events. This also applies to

consideration about how familiar sources are repeatedly used, as well as the portrayal of female sources.

- This can also be linked to the binary, polarised conceptualisation of objectivity, and the manner in which it is used to present multiple, detached stories from various stakeholders which are often scattered throughout the day. It may be useful to strive to produce more evaluative content and to create a more distinct voice for the news organisations.

This final point touches on another of the key arguments made throughout this research: that there is a need for a more appropriate allocation of existing resources within a newsroom. Newsrooms still have a host of experienced journalists typically motivated by ideals and striving to fulfil such goals. However, benefiting fully from this pool of resources may require a tactical decision to reduce the quantity of stories, in favour of focusing on content which requires more time to produce. After two decades the digital environment remains an ongoing "critical juncture" (Ryfe 2006) for news organisations. However, its unresolved nature suggests solutions can still be sought to ensure the continued production of quality journalism that informs the public not just about events and reaction, but also about broader trends and policy information. Capturing deeper, more systemic problems is often more challenging for journalists, but this space also provides the opportunity for journalists to reassert their professional value and demonstrate their indispensable social role.

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Appendix A: Normative models

Source	Duties/Roles
Hutchins Report *Summary taken from Cramer (2009)*	1. Supplying a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; 2. Offering a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism; 3. Projecting a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society; 4. Presenting and clarifying of the goals and values of the society; 5. Offering full access to the day's intelligence
Peterson (1956): Four Theories/ Social responsibility **& McQuail (2010) on social responsibility**	1. Service political system by providing information and debate on public affairs; 2. Enlighten the public to make it capable of self-government; 3. Act as watchdog against government; 4. Servicing the economic system through advertising; 5. Provide entertainment; 6. Maintain its own financial self-sufficiency to ensure freedom from pressures of special interests. McQuail adds: being truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant, that the media should be free but self-regulated, and that it should follow codes of ethics and professional conduct
Christians et al (2009)	1. Observing and informing the public; 2. Participating in public life as an independent actor through critical comment, advice, advocacy and opinion; 3. Providing a channel, forum, or platform for extra-media voices or sources to reach the public
Kovach and Rosenstiel – The Elements of Journalism (2013)	1. Journalism' first obligation is to the truth. 2. Its first loyalty is to citizens. 3. Its essence is a discipline of verification. 4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover. 5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power. 6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise. 7. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant. 8. It must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion. 9. Its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience. 10. Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news.
McChensey (2013)	1. Holding powerful interests to account 2. Serving the information needs of all members of society 3. Adhering to a ruthless discipline of verification to sort truth from falsity 4. Ensuring a robust, deliberative public sphere where citizens can be intellectually enriched by exposure to a variety of perspectives, voices, and ideas
O'Malley (in Harcup 2009)	1. Inform the public about issues 2. Articulate public opinion 3. Act as check on government
Gil de Zuniga & Hinsley (2013)	1. Being objective 2. Covering stories that should be covered 3. Helping people 4. Getting information to the public quickly 5. Providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems Verifying facts 6. Giving ordinary people a chance to express their views 7. Being a watchdog for the public

McNair (2003)	1. Inform citizens: surveillance/monitoring
	2. Educate – give meaning and significance to the facts
	3. Provide platform for public political discourse, including expression of dissent
	4. Publicity to governmental and political institutions, make available for scrutiny
	5. Channel for advocacy of political viewpoints
Schultz (1998) Fourth Estate journalists:	1. To be necessarily critical of politicians (adversarial)
	2. To champion citizens rights against the abuse of state power
	3. To provide a platform for debate
Schudson (2008) "Six or Seven Things Journalism Can Do for Democracy" *(Summary taken from Nielsen 2017)*	1. Inform the public of what political authorities, other powerful actors, as well as people at home and abroad, are up to.
	2. Serve in an investigative or "watchdog" function.
	3. Offer analysis.
	4. Encourage social empathy.
	5. Provide a public forum for debate.
	6. Serve as an advocate for various policies and points of view.
Deuze (2005)	1. Public service: journalists provide a public service (as watchdogs or 'news-hounds', active collectors and disseminators of information);
	2. Objectivity: journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible;
	3. Autonomy: journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work;
	4. Immediacy: journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed (inherent in the concept of 'news');
	5. Ethics: journalists have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy.
Roles used in Worlds of Journalism study	1. Be detached observer
	2. Report things the way they are
	3. Provide analysis of current affairs
	4. Monitor and scrutinize political leaders
	5. Monitor and scrutinize business
	6. Set the political agenda
	7. Influence public opinion
	8. Journalistic Roles: Advocate for social change
	9. Journalistic Roles: Be an adversary of the government
	10. Journalistic Roles: Support national development
	11. Convey a positive image of political leadership
	12. Support government policy
	13. Provide entertainment and relaxation
	14. Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience
	15. Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life
	16. Provide information people need to make political decisions
	17. Motivate people to participate in political activity
	18. Let people express their views
	19. Educate the audience
	20. Tell stories about the world
	21. Promote tolerance and cultural diversity

Appendix B: Newspaper circulations

Title: Sunday newspapers	Jan - June 2016	Jan - June 2009
Sunday World	162,938	277,504
Sunday Independent	199,210	272,174
News of the World/Sun on Sunday*	58,176	134,461
The Irish Mail on Sunday	83,414	122,991
The Sunday Times	77,395	116,541
The Sunday Business Post	31,364	57,783
Irish Sunday Mirror	26,551	40,224
Irish Farmers Journal	66,041	71,084

Title: Daily newspapers	Jan - June 2016	Jan - June 2009
Irish Independent	102,537	152,204
The Irish Times	72,011	114,488
Irish Daily Star	53,945	102,884
The Irish Sun	60,689	96,725
The Herald	44,085	71,187
Irish Daily Mirror	38,294	64,194
The Irish Daily Mail	46,578	52,144
Irish Examiner	30,964	50,346

Appendix C: News websites in Ireland

Most popular news websites in Ireland – relative to other news websites – and their social media following, as of April 2015

Selected for sample		Other Irish news	UK/international news	
Overall Alexa Ireland Ranking	**Irish News Website Ranking**	**Website**	**Facebook likes**	**Twitter followers**
15	**1**	**Independent.ie**	**274,000**	**184,000**
17	**2**	**RTE.ie**	**65,300 (RTE News)**	**290,000 (RTE News)**
20	**3**	**IrishTimes.com**	**248,600**	**140,000**
31		DailyMail.co.uk [UK]		
41		BBC.co.uk [UK]		
42		TheGuardian.co.uk [UK]		
43	**4**	**SundayWorld.com**	**363,200**	**14,500**
53	**5**	**TheJournal.ie**	**280,000**	**270,000**
78		Telegraph.co.uk [UK]		
81		Vice.com [US/UK]		
87	**6**	**Mirror.co.uk (.ie?)**	**281,400 (Irish Mirror)**	**24,500 (Irish Mirror)**
92	**7**	**IrishExaminer.com**	**130,300**	**81,000**
101	**8**	**BreakingNews.ie**	**194,500**	**29,000**
107		Buzzfeed.com [Lifestyle/Entertainment]		
130		NYTimes.com [US]		
214		Independent.co.uk [UK]		
217		FT.com [US/UK]		
250	**9**	**TV3.com [Broadcast]**	**148,000 (network)**	**23,000 (TV3 News)**
274	**10**	**SiliconRepublic.com**	**6,000**	**42,700**
279	**11**	**Newstalk.com [Broadcast]**	**57,500**	**100,000**
295	**12**	**Broadsheet.ie [News/Satire/Lifestyle]**		
384	13	Herald.ie	40,700	6,300
(no data)	(no data)	Sun.ie	24,400	5,200
(no data)	(no data)	Star.ie	3,728	4,400

Appendix D: Phase 1 coding sheet

1.	**Story ID**	
2.	**Phase**	Phase 1 [ ] Phase 2 [ ]
3.	**Headline**	
4.	**Publication**	BreakingNews.ie [ ] Independent.ie [ ] IrishMirror.ie [ ] IrishTimes.com [ ] TheJournal.ie [ ]
5.	**Date**	
6.	**Day of the week**	Monday [ ] Tuesday [ ] Wednesday [ ] Thursday [ ] Friday [ ] Saturday [ ] Sunday [ ]
7.	**Timestamp of publication**	
8.	**Time category**	00:01 - 12:00 [ ] 12:01 - 04:00 [ ] 04:01 - 06:00 [ ] 06:01 - 08:00 [ ] 08:01 - 10:00 [ ] 12:01 - 14:00 [ ] 14:01 - 16:00 [ ] 16:01 - 18:00 [ ] 18:01 - 20:00 [ ] 20:01 - 22:00 [ ] 22:01 - 00:00 [ ] 10:01 - 12:00 [ ]
9.	**Category of update**	Newspaper brand daytime update [ ] Newspaper brand overnight update [ ] Online-only publication daytime update [ ] Online-only publication overnight update [ ]
10.	**Byline**	
11.	**Gender of byline**	Male [ ] Female [ ] Mixed [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A [ ]
12.	**Category of byline**	General reporter [ ] Specialised correspondent [ ] Wires [ ] Non-journalist expert [ ] Other [ ] No byline [ ]
13.	**Category of story**	News report [ ] Feature [ ] Opinion/Analysis [ ] Other [ ]
14.	**Word Count**	
15.	**General theme of story**	Court [ ] Failing system [ ] Hiqa [ ] HSE/government admin [ ] Industrial relations [ ] Infrastructure [ ] Lifestyle [ ] Reproductive issues [ ]

	Services and funding [ ]
16. Sub-category of story (letter code used for spreadsheet)	A – GPs & Under 6s scheme [ ] B – Union and strikes [ ] Bi – Other industrial relations [ ] C – Court report [ ] Ci – Other legal issues [ ] D – WHO/Obesity report [ ] Di – Other lifestyle/consumer issues [ ] E – Abortion protest [ ] F – Portlaoise hospital [ ] G – Other Hiqa report/issues [ ] H – Budget [ ] I – Trolleys [ ] J – "Chemical cosh" [ ] K – Chemotherapy error [ ] L – Dental procedures [ ] M – Hospital records in bin [ ] N – Health Insurance [ ] O – Waiting lists [ ] P – Ambulance in Dundalk [ ] Q – Other abortion issues [ ] R – Other maternity issues [ ] S – Scans recalled [ ] T – Hospital infrastructure [ ] U – Drugs [ ] V – Tony O'Brien in Spain [ ] W – Cervical cancer vaccine [ ] X – St Vincent's/HSE row [ ] Y – Cost of cancer [ ]
17. How many sources are referred to?	
18. Who or what is the first source referred to?	Academic [ ] Anonymous [ ] Civil society group/voluntary organisation [ ] Commercial organisation/Businessperson [ ] Government politician [ ] Hospital management [ ] Journalist [ ] Judge/Solicitor [ ] Media Report [ ] Medical professional [ ] NGO/Charity [ ] No source [ ] Opposition politician [ ] Other [ ] Other politician (eg local councillor) [ ] Private citizen [ ] Research study [ ] State agency [ ] Union/lobby group [ ]
19. What other sources are referred to?	Academic [ ] Anonymous [ ] Civil society group/voluntary organisation [ ] Commercial organisation/Businessperson [ ] Government politician [ ] Hospital management [ ] Journalist [ ] Judge/Solicitor [ ] Media Report [ ] Medical professional [ ] NGO/Charity [ ] No source [ ] Opposition politician [ ] Other [ ]

	Other politician (eg local councillor) [ ] Private citizen [ ] Research study [ ] State agency [ ] Union/lobby group [ ]
20. Name of sources used?	
21. Number of male sources used	
22. Number of female sources used	
23. Number of non-human sources used	
24. Number of anonymous sources used	
25. Comments/observations	

Appendix E: Nvivo perspectives and source codes

Politician   [Parent code]

- Leo Varadkar
- Kathleen Lynch
- Billy Kelleher FF
- Fergus O'Dowd
- Gerry Adams
- Tommy Broughan
- Ind Cllr Ann Norton
- Colm Keaveney
- Leo Varadkar spokesperson
- Enda Kenny
- Jerry Buttimer
- Ruth Coppinger
- Michael McGrath
- Brendan Howlin
- Dara Calleary
- Pearse Doherty
- John Perry
- Jack Chambers
- John Gilroy
- Micheal Martin
- John Whelan
- Charlier Flanagan
- Simon Coveney
- Anne Ferris
- John Halligan
- Michael Fitzmaurice
- Lucinda Creighton
- Richard Bruton
- Sinn Fein
- Colm Burke
- James Reilly
- John Crown
- Paul Bradford
- Jillian van Turnhout
- Local councillor
- Catherine Byrne
- Caoimhghin OCaolain
- Fianna Fail
- Aodhan O Riordain
- Clare Daly
- Joan Burton
- Labour
- Regina Doherty
- Paul Murphy
- FG
- Ann Phelan
- Finian McGrath
- Eamon Ryan
- Jan O'Sullivan
- Marian Harkin
- Denis Naughton
- Independent
- Michael Noonan

Unions/Representative Groups   [Parent code]

- Medical Council of Ireland
- Faculty of Radiologists
- Irish College of General Practitioners
- IMO
- INMO
- NAGP
- Registered Nurse Intellectual Disability
- Psychiatric Nurses Assoc
- Irish Association of Plastic Surgeons
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Irish Dental Association
- Emergency consultant group
- Nursing Homes Ireland
- ICTU Youth
- Impact
- Irish Association for Emergency Medicine
- College of Psychiatrists
- Union of Students in Ireland
- ASTI
- Institute of Obstetricians
- Irish Hospital Consultants Association
- National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
- Inclusion Ireland
- Irish Farmers Association
- Royal College of Physicians
- Chief Fire Officers Association
- TUI
- Unite

Medical professionals [Parent code]

GPs
Nurses
Dr James Gray
Prof Donal O'Shea
Dr Sam Coulter-Smith
Dr Rhona Mahony
Other medical professional

Other media
From info subsidy
Leak
Statement in reply
Social media content
From website
Media interview or press conference
Report
    Academic research
    Hiqa
    Published neutral
    Report - Leak
    Report - Promo
    Report - Promo B
    Report - Published negative
Planned event
Unknown origin of quotes
Niche medical media
Speaking in Oireachtas
Clearly original quotes
Use of online
Freedom of Information
Recycled quote
Quotes look original but unclear
Original work
Non-media event

Appendix F: Examples of coding in NVivo

>The original published story (right)
>How it was coded in NVivo (bottom)
>The attributes assigned to the story in Nvivo (below)

Attributes
Phase: A
Publication: IrishTimes.com
Date: 01/05/2015
Day of the week: Friday
Narrower time: 00:01 - 02:00
Time: 01:00
Category of update: Newspaper print-first
By-line: Aine McMahon
Gender of byline: Female
Category of byline: General
What type of story: News Report
Code for story: F
General theme: Hiqa
How many sources are referred to: 1
Who or what is the first source referred to: Government politician
What other sources are referred to: Unassigned
Male sources: 1
Female sources: Unassigned
Non-human: Unassigned
Anonymous: Unassigned
Story ID: IT015
Time of publication: Midnight - 6am
SpecialistGeneral Reporter: General reporter
Words (formula): #NAME?
Words Evernote: 346
Information subsidy: Story based on information subsidy
Type of info subsidy: Unassigned
Info subsidy found: Unassigned
Use of website: Unassigned
Original work: Unassigned
Other media: Unassigned
Topic: Hospitals/Standards of care
Is this a breaking news story: No
Is this headlineintro based on something somebody said: No
Broad channel: Routine
New channel: PROMO and PR (A)
Triggered by: Press release
Type of info subsidy used (Main): Press release
Details on info subsidies used: Press release from Dept Health
If routine, what kind: Press release
Person in intro: Unassigned
Based on pronunciamento: No
Web features used: Unassigned
Other media used: No other media
Type of other media used: Unassigned

THE IRISH TIMES

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Mothers whose babies died in Portlaoise hospital on advice panel

Shauna Keyes and Roisín Molloy are on the 28-member group set up by Leo Varadka

Fri, May 1, 2015, 01:00

Aine McMahon

Minister for Health Leo Varadkar said "a number of high-profile cases in recent years have given rise to public concern about the safety and quality of maternity services." Photograph: Cyril Byrne

The mothers of two babies who died in the maternity unit at the Midland Regional Hospital in Portlaoise have been named as members of the steering group set up to advise on the development of a national maternity strategy.

Shauna Keyes, whose baby Joshua Keyes-Cornally died at the unit in 2009, i one of 28 members of the steering group announced by Minister for Health

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Reference 5 - 0.02% Coverage

The mothers of two babies who died in the maternity unit at the Midland Regional Hospital in Portlaoise have been named as members of the steering group set up to advise on the development of a national maternity strategy.
Shauna Keyes, whose baby Joshua Keyes-Cornally died at the unit in 2009, is one of 28 members of the steering group announced by Minister for Health Leo Varadkar.
So too is Róisín Molloy, whose son Mark died in the hospital shortly after his birth there in January 2012.
Mr Varadkar said a number of high-profile cases in recent years had given rise to public concern about the safety and quality of maternity services.
"In Ireland, we have very good maternity care, which is reflected in the fact that perinatal and maternal mortality rates are on a par with our international peers.
"Nonetheless, a number of high-profile cases in recent years have given rise to public concern about the safety and quality of maternity services," he said.
The maternity strategy is being developed in response to safety concerns highlighted by the death of Savita Halappanavar at Galway University Hospital in 2012, as well as other serious obstetric incidents.
Mr Varadkar said the strategy would put the needs of mothers, babies and families at its centre.
"The focus will be on maximising patient safety, quality of care, clinical outcomes, as well as the desirability of greater patient choice, the move towards more services in the community and a renewed focus on prevention and wellbeing," he said.
Other high-profile members of the review group include Prof Michael Turner, UCD professor of obstetrics at the Coombe hospital; Prof Cecily Begley, chair of nursing and midwifery at TCD; Mary Brosnan, director of midwifery at the National Maternity Hospital; Prof Declan Devane, professor of midwifery at NUI Galway; Dr Sharon Sheehan, master of the Coombe hospital; and Dr Meabh Ní Bhuinneain, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Mayo General.

Politician | Leo Varadkar | From info subsidy | B - Repackaged node | Government politician node

theJournal.ie — READ, SHARE AND SHAPE THE NEWS — FÓRA THE42 THE DAILYEDGE

Around 200 patients contacted as HSE recalls chemo drugs

The HSE said it was recalling the drugs as a "precautionary" measure.

Oct 16th 2015, 10:38 PM 👁 20,536 Views 💬 22 Comments

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AROUND 200 PATIENTS have been contacted after the HSE recalled a number of batches of chemotherapy drugs earlier this week.

The recall was ordered after the company that manufactures the drugs, Fannin Compounding in Dublin, detected a "potential sterility issue" during routine quality assurance tests.

The HSE said there is no indication from the company that any drug has been affected.

Image: Shutterstock/Brian A Jackson

AROUND 200 PATIENTS have been contacted after the HSE recalled a number of batches of chemotherapy drugs earlier this week.
The recall was ordered after the company that manufactures the drugs, Fannin Compounding in Dublin, detected a "potential sterility issue" during routine quality assurance tests.
The HSE said there is no indication from the company that any drug has been affected.
However, it was decided as a "precautionary" measure that any patient who received the potentially contaminated drugs "should be contacted by their treating hospitals, made aware of the situation and offered appointments to meet with their clinical teams to discuss any possible concerns".
The HSE apologised for any distress caused by the recall and advised patients experiencing "any unexpected symptoms differing from what they normally experience after treatment" to contact their hospital.
The husband of a woman treated with one of the potentially contaminated drugs at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda told RTE's Liveline earlier today of his shock at the news.
Michael said he wanted to know why the company had provided potentially implicated treatments to hospital before checks were carried out.
"Why were those swabs not tested before the batches were sent out to hospitals?" he asked.
The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA), the body charged with overseeing drug recalls, said it was continuing to investigate the incident and evaluate the manufacturer's facilities.
The HPRA said a test product used by the company had detected the potential presence of contamination on 12 October.
As a potentially implicated product must be incubated for 14 days, all units manufactured from 29 September have now been recalled, a spokesperson said.
The HPRA said the incubation period for the test product ended today and that no contamination had been detected.
The Irish Cancer Society said anyone experiencing anxiety as a result of the recall can contact its free cancer nurseline on 1800 200 700 for information and support.

Females treated like 'child-bearing vessels', claims report

09/06/2015 - 15:29:57

The human rights of pregnant women and girls are being violated on a daily basis by Ireland's abortion laws, Amnesty International has claimed.

The country's law on abortion, which allows terminations only if the life of the mother-to-be is at risk, is one of the most restrictive in the world, according to a new report from the campaign group.

SHE IS NOT A CRIMINAL: THE IMPACT OF IRELAND'S ABORTION LAW

The human rights of pregnant women and girls are being violated on a daily basis by Ireland's abortion laws, Amnesty International has claimed.
The country's law on abortion, which allows terminations only if the life of the mother-to-be is at risk, is one of the most restrictive in the world, according to a new report from the campaign group.
The 112 page report She Is Not A Criminal: The Impact Of Ireland's Abortion Law outlined a series of case studies which, Amnesty says, demonstrates how women and girls are denied healthcare in order to protect the life of the foetus.

The human rights group called for a change to the law as set out in the constitution.
It said the current law forced at least 4,000 women and girls to travel outside the country for an abortion every year at considerable mental, financial and physical cost.
Amnesty said women and girls who cannot travel are left without access to necessary health treatment, or risk criminal penalties if they undergo illegal abortions at home.
Amnesty International's Secretary General Salil Shetty contrasted the recent vote to legalise gay marriage in Ireland with the law on abortion.
"The recent Marriage Equality referendum showed a country that prides itself on being an open and inclusive society, but all is not well in the Republic of Ireland," said Mr Shetty.
"The human rights of women and girls are violated on a daily basis because of a constitution that treats them like child-bearing vessels.
"Women and girls who need abortions are treated like criminals, stigmatised and forced to travel abroad, taking a serious toll on their mental and physical health. The Irish state can no longer ignore this reality, and the appalling impact it is having on thousands of people every year."
Amnesty said along with Andorra, Malta and San Marino, Ireland was one of the few countries in Europe that banned women from getting abortions even in cases of rape, severe or fatal foetal impairment or a risk to their health – an option the group insisted was a right under international law.
The group said the law should be changed so that women and girls can have abortions in those cases at the very least.
But pro-life group the Life Institute accused Amnesty of having an "obsession" with abortion.
It claimed Amnesty was damaging its own "founding mission".
Spokeswoman Niamh Ui Bhriain said: "Amnesty was founded to highlight human rights abuses, especially in regard to political prisoners and those suffering under unjust regimes. But now it seems to spend most of its time attacking the rights of the most vulnerable person of all – the unborn child.
"I've lost count of the number of people who have contacted us to tell us they will never support Amnesty again because of their stance on abortion."
Ms Ui Bhriain also disputed Amnesty's claim around international law.
"There is no treaty or convention acknowledging a supposed 'right' to abortion, yet the right to life of every person is widely recognised in international law," she said.

News Health

Model tells of A&E trolley hell

Kerri Nicole Blanc after surgery yesterday Photo: Instagram @KerriNicoleBlanc

Independent.ie Newsdesk
November 2 2015 2:30 AM

Model Kerri Nicole Blanc spent more than 24 hours on a trolley in a hospital corridor while waiting to have her appendix removed this weekend.

The Kildare native shared the photo yesterday morning after she had waited for the appendectomy operation.

"After 28 hours left on a trolley in the hospital corridors, as they had no bed, I finally had my appendix out at midnight before it exploded," she wrote.

"Doing great, thanks for all the messages," she continued.

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kerrinicoleblanc Follow

98 likes 42w

kerrinicoleblanc Thanks for all the well wishes! After 28hours left on a trolly in the hospital corridors,as they had no bed I finally had my appendix out doing great thanks for all the messages!

ciaraoc14

missflavin Still looking gorgeous ! Hope ur well x

derekdanielsfp Get well soon x

thespoiltbitchclub Hope you ok xxxxx

mynutritionireland

kerrinicoleblanc Thanks guys!

dolledupie Get well soon xxx

aislingoloughlin Poor darling! Hope you feel better v soon. Sending you lots of love! xx

orla_damilola Lots of love xx feel better soon!!!

katiecarolan10 Hope you feel better

Log in to like or comment.

Model Kerri Nicole Blanc spent more than 24 hours on a trolley in a hospital corridor while waiting to have her appendix removed this weekend.

The Kildare native shared the photo yesterday morning after she had waited for the appendectomy operation.
"After 28 hours left on a trolley in the hospital corridors, as they had no bed, I finally had my appendix out at midnight before it exploded," she wrote.
"Doing great, thanks for all the messages," she continued.
It comes days after a HSE performance report revealed that 3,330 patients waited more than 24 hours to be seen in accident and emergency departments in August.

Celebrity
Social media content
Master code for perspective
C - Other sources node

'I was kept in the dark for days over suspect chemo treatment'
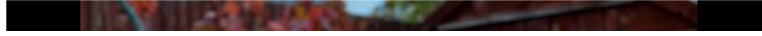
A grandmother battling breast cancer has told of her shock after discovering she may have received a contaminated chemotherapy treatment - days after it should have been recalled.

Mary Murphy (68) of Kilcullen, Co Kildare, is one of 200 patients who fear a potentially life-threatening infection from the infusion of chemotherapy they were administered in public and private hospitals.

She said last night: "I was told the chemotherapy I received in St James's Hospital on Wednesday could have been contaminated.

"I was contacted on Thursday and asked if I had any symptoms. It was a shock."

The alert was raised after internal testing discovered chemotherapy units mixed at Fannin Compounding in Sandyford in Dublin were made in an isolator which was contaminated with bacillius cereus.

The bacteria is mostly linked to food poisoning - but it can also lead to potentially fatal infections, which can be particularly severe for cancer patients whose immune systems are low.

The company which makes the product insisted last night that it alerted the medicines' watchdog the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) "first thing" on Monday morning last about the need to recall all batches of the product made since September 29.

Hospitals were also notified and told to contact any patient who may have received suspect product to determine if they were suffering any adverse symptoms.

A spokesman for the HPRA said around 100 patients who would have been administered 120 of the 297 units under suspicion had yet to get the all clear.

Although most of the suspect products involved in this recall were for chemotherapy treatments, one was for an anti-viral unit.

The HPRA said that the treatment Ms Murphy received may have pre-dated the scare, but it could not confirm this.

It also emerged that this is the third recall of potentially contaminated products from Fannin in the last six months. However, the previous recalls were precautionary and there was no contamination found.

"While there is no evidence at this point to suggest an issue with any of the medicines recalled, the patients who have received the potentially implicated products have been contacted by their hospitals as a precautionary measure," said the spokesman.

The issue was identified by the manufacturer when carrying out its daily assessments of the manufacturing process using a test product.

This test product contains a substance which is used to aid in the detection of the potential presence of contamination. It said: "This test product is not a medicine and is not given to patients. On Monday October 12, a contamination was noted with the test product for a day on which 37 units of medicine were filled and, of which, 15 have been recovered unused during the recall.

"A contaminated test product does not automatically mean that the medicines produced are affected.

"The HPRA is overseeing the recall and is continuing to investigate this incident and evaluate the manufacturer's onsite processes. The equipment used in the manufacture of these products has been taken out of use pending completion of the investigation."

However, some patients complained of a lack of clear information.

One man, whose wife is undergoing treatment in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda, felt he had no option but to ring RTE's 'Liveline 'programme to find out what was wrong.

The company wrote to all doctors yesterday informing them about the tests which confirmed the kind of contamination involved.

It said that the problem only relates to one of its isolator machines which is part of its production equipment - and no issues were identified with any other machines it subjects to a daily test.

A spokeswoman for the HSE said all patients were made aware of the situation and offered appointments to meet with their clinical teams to discuss any possible concerns.

"All patients involved have now been contacted and offered an appointment.

"However, if in the interim, any of these patients experiences any unexpected symptoms differing from what they normally experience after treatment, they are being advised to attend at or contact their treating hospital," she said.

"The HSE would like to apologise to our patients for any anxiety they may experience as a result of this issue."

The medicines watchdog said this kind of contamination of equipment is relatively rare.
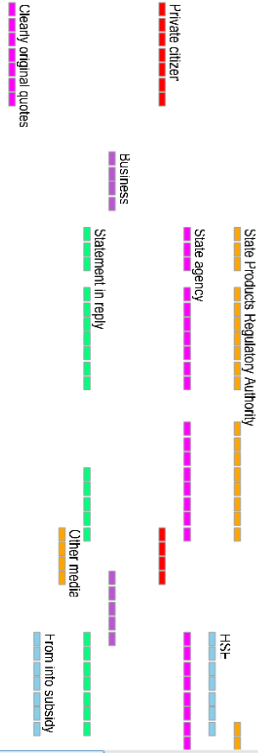
Son's outrage as patient smokes on Kilkenny hospital ward alongside 82-year-old father who had major surgery

A senior ward staff member said he was allowed to smoke due to 'exceptional circumstances' on what is supposed to be a smoke-free campus

SHARE   COMMENTS   BY ADELINA CAMPOS
07:00, 24 OCT 2015

NEWS

A furious man has told of his disgust after a patient was allowed to smoke in the same ward as his seriously ill father.
Jim Hayes confronted management at St Luke's Hospital in Kilkenny, who told him the patient had been given permission to light up because of "exceptional circumstances".
The 46-year-old told the Irish Daily Mirror: "They were putting my father's and other patients' health in jeopardy.
"It's meant to be a smoke-free campus since January last year, and yet a patient was allowed to smoke on a surgical ward.
"It just baffles me how something like this was allowed to happen."
Jim's father, an 82-year-old pensioner, has been staying at St Luke's for several weeks having had extensive surgery to remove tumours from his colon.
Jim was visiting him on Monday when he noticed a "strong smell of cigarette smoke" as he walked into the surgical ward.
He immediately complained to staff and asked for his dad to be moved.
He added: "The nursing staff there are brilliant, they were exceptionally courteous and they agreed it was a problem.
"But I was told by a member of staff there was nowhere for this patient to go and smoke."
The Kilkenny man was referred to a senior ward staff member who explained due to "exceptional circumstances", the patient was allowed to smoke on the ward.
He was also told that this was "not the first complaint" about a patient having a ciggie.
The following day, Jim spoke to management, pointing out it was "a public ward, in a public building" and they were breaking the law.
He said: "The issue I have is not with the staff, they are amazing, they work very hard.
"What I would like to know is who sanctioned smoking to be allowed in the hospital?
"Did they realise they were breaking the law? There's a health and safety issue there for the patients and the staff, and there's also a fire regulation issue.
"Did they carry out a risk assessment when they allowed that patient to smoke? And why wasn't the smoke detected by a smoke detector?
"I want management to be questioned and held accountable for this."
When contacted by the Irish Daily Mirror, the Ireland East Hospital Group spokesman said: "St Luke's General Hospital does not comment on specific patient cases.
"However, on behalf of St. Luke's General Hospital I would like to sincerely apologise to any patient who has been exposed to smoking in our hospital.
"Management at the hospital have been made aware of an incident which is currently being addressed by the patient's clinical team and hospital management.
"This is an isolated incident. There is a no-smoking policy in place within the hospital which is adhered to by patients, staff and visitors at all times.
"All breaches of policies and procedures are taken seriously and are handled on a case-by-case basis.
"We have trained smoking cessation officers at St Luke's who are available to patients and staff to help them to quit smoking and work to ensure that they are aware at all times that smoking is not permitted within hospital grounds."
This comes just months after a family demanded answers after elderly man 'was left sitting in soiled nappy' in public hospital.

News Health

'Suicide risk hasn't opened the floodgates'

Master of Rotunda: Fears over surge of terminations wrong

The law allowing for termination of pregnancy where a woman is at risk of suicide has not "opened the floodgates" despite predictions, the Master of the Rotunda Hospital, Dr Sam Coulter-Smith, has revealed.
Dr Coulter-Smith said he was among those who feared the inclusion of suicide risk in the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act would lead to a rise in requests for terminations.
"I over-estimated that people would use the mental health clause," said Dr Coulter-Smith in wide-ranging interview before stepping down as Master of the Rotunda in December.
In the first year of its operation, his hospital has seen no change in the number of pregnancies which needed to be ended to save the life of the mother where she was at risk.
While he declined to give the reasons for terminations, he said there were somewhere between four and eight over the course of a year, a number broadly in line with figures before the legislation.
The law, which was passed in July 2013, allows for a termination where a woman's life is at risk due to physical complications or threat of suicide.
Nationally, 26 pregnancies were terminated in 2014. Of those, 23 were ended due to the risk to the life of the mother from physical illness, with nine of these done in an emergency.
Three pregnancies were terminated as the pregnant woman was at risk of suicide.
Dr Coulter-Smith said he was glad to see the term 'abortion' was not used in the legislation.
"Where a mother's life is at risk and pregnancy is terminated, to use the term 'abortion' is not correct," he said.
"There are appropriate guidelines to assist and they are mostly pretty clear," he continued.
"The whole area of risk of suicide is still difficult and controversial. There is no universal agreement among all psychiatrists. That is still be difficult one. The floodgates have not opened in that particular area.
"There is still an issue around gestational age. The law does not mention gestational age.
"That can create a challenge - not in an emergency situation where a woman is going to die or where she becomes unwell due to some other complication. But if there is a situation where someone at risk due to suicidal ideation - if she is 24 weeks pregnant, what do you do in that situation?
"If you are going to terminate that pregnancy you can't intentionally destroy the life of the child. Is it right to deliver a 24-week-old baby because someone has suicidal ideation? The baby could die or survive or have serious issues like cerebral palsy.
Who is responsible for that child? They are complex issues and the legislation does not help that situation."
Asked about the repeal of the 8th Amendment, Dr Coulter-Smith said as an obstetrician he would like to be able to offer support to a pregnant woman who is carrying a baby with a fatal foetal abnormality.
"We would like to be in a situation to provide care for women regardless of circumstances - if a woman is carrying a baby that has a life-limiting foetal abnormality and she chooses termination and we can support and mind her and not make her travel abroad," he continued.
"By the same token if she carried on with the pregnancy we need to provide a standard of care and have the appropriate infrastructure to do that.

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Appendix G: Phase 2 coding sheet

Story ID	
Headline	
Publication	BreakingNews.ie [ ] Independent.ie [ ] IrishMirror.ie [ ] IrishTimes.com [ ] TheJournal.ie [ ]
Information subsidy?	Story based on information subsidy [ ] Information subsidy used but not based on [ ] Information subsidy likely used [ ] Information subsidy likely not used [ ] No information subsidy used [ ] Unclear [ ] Only as a statement in response [ ] Info from website [ ] Press conference/media interviews [ ] Based on report [ ]
Information subsidy found (main)	Yes [ ] No [ ] Partially [ ] Based on speech [ ]
Story based:	Entirely on info subsidies/reports/other media with nothing else [ ] Nosed on info subsidies/reports/other media but includes other material [ ] Only includes info subsidies/reports/other media lower down in story [ ] No info subsidies/reports/other media with nothing else [ ]
Triggered by	Press release [ ] Press conference [ ] Other media report [ ] Something someone said [ ] Unexpected event [ ] Planned event [ ] Original research by journalist [ ] Interview [ ] Leak [ ] Social media [ ] Publication of report [ ] Parliamentary proceedings [ ] Other:
Type of info subsidy used (Main)	Story based on information subsidy [ ] Information subsidy used but not based on [ ] Information subsidy likely used [ ] Information subsidy likely not used [ ] No information subsidy used [ ] Unclear [ ] Only as a statement in response [ ] Info from website [ ] Press conference/media interviews [ ] Based on report [ ]
Channel of production	Routine (PR/scheduled events) [ ] Informal (background briefings, leaks, reports) [ ] Enterprise (one-on-one interviews, unprecedented events, first-hand observations, original research) [ ]
If routine, what kind?	PR event [ ] Dail/Oireachtas proceedings [ ] Court [ ] Press release [ ]
Other media used	Based on other media [ ] Includes other media [ ] Looks likely but not found [ ] No other media [ ]

Type of other media used	Radio [ ] Television brand [ ] Newspaper brand [ ] Website [ ] Social media [ ]
Does this look like original work?	Yes, mostly based on original work [ ] Looks like a leak [ ] Little original work [ ] No original work [ ] Unclear but looks original [ ] Unclear but looks not original [ ]
Web features used?	
Other observations	
Added later:	
New channel of production	A Promotional [ ] B Non-promotional [ ] C Other media [ ] D Predictable [ ] E Unpredictable [ ] F Leak [ ] G Original work [ ] H Special project [ ]
Based on pronunciamento	Yes [ ] Partial [ ] No [ ]
Person in intro	
Report	

Appendix H: Interview material

H1: Research Ethics Committee approval

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

DCU

Dawn Wheatley
School of Communications

24 October 2016

REC Reference:	DCUREC/2016/168
Proposal Title:	News, sources and public policy: media coverage of the Irish health service in an online era
Applicant(s):	Dawn Wheatley and Dr. John O'Sullivan
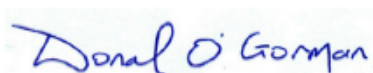
Dear Dawn,

This research proposal qualifies under our Notification Procedure, as a low risk social research project. Therefore, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this project.

Materials used to recruit participants should state that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

Donal O'Gorman

Dr Dónal O'Gorman
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU
Research & Innovation

Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Baile Átha Cliath, Éire

Research & Innovation Support
Dublin City University,
Dublin 9, Ireland

T +353 1 700 8000
F +353 1 700 8002
E research@dcu.ie
www.dcu.ie

Plain language statement for interviewees

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

The information obtained from these interviews will be used as part of a PhD study which has the working title "*News, sources and public policy: media coverage of the Irish health service in an online era*". This is being carried out by Dawn Wheatley, a PhD student in the School of Communications in Dublin City University (dawn.wheatley2@mail.dcu.ie), under the supervision of Dr John O'Sullivan (john.osullivan@dcu.ie). The research looks at the influence of sources on news coverage, with the Irish health service used as a case study. The aim of the interviews is to complement and add further perspective to a content analysis of news coverage which was completed earlier this year. The primary purpose of the interviews is for the researcher's PhD thesis but, as part of the dissemination process, this may also include related presentations and publications. Ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Involvement in the study requires recorded interviews which should last no longer than 45 minutes. If participants would prefer that interviews were not recorded, then notes will be taken. The interview questions will relate to the interviewees' professional role and will seek their opinion on particular news events, as well as on broader issues regarding the media and health sector in Ireland. Any recording which is taken for academic purposes will not be broadcast or published on public media, unless with the further consent of the interviewee who will be contacted again to obtain that consent.

There is no direct benefit for being involved in the study. The personal risks to participants are minimal but they may be asked to discuss aspects of their jobs, if they feel comfortable doing so. Participants will be granted anonymity for their interviews, or any parts of the interview which they request. This will be discussed in advance, but will also be applied retrospectively if the participant later requests remarks to be anonymised. The interviews will be transcribed and excerpts used in the research project and related work. Given the relatively small nature of the sector under study, there can be no guarantee that participants will not be identifiable. Furthermore, there are legal limitations to confidentiality, for example in cases where information obtained falls under mandatory reporting rules. Given the professional nature of the topics under discussion, it is unlikely that personal information would come under discussion.

The interview recordings or notes, as well as transcripts, will be kept on file as part of the research study's database. Participants can contact Dawn Wheatley (dawn.wheatley2@mail.dcu.ie, 085-7063508) at any stage to find out what has happened with the research.

Participants may withdraw from the research study at any point.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:
The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Informed consent form for interviewees

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I. Research study title and information
The information obtained from this interview will be used as part of a PhD study which has the working title "News, sources and public policy: media coverage of the Irish health service in an online era". This is being carried out by Dawn Wheatley, a PhD student in the School of Communications in Dublin City University (dawn.wheatley2@mail.dcu.ie), under the supervision of Dr John O'Sullivan (john.osullivan@dcu.ie).

II. Clarification of the purpose of the research
The research looks at the influence of sources on news coverage, with the Irish health service used as a case study. The aim of the interviews is to complement and add further perspective to a content analysis of news coverage completed earlier this year. The purpose of the interviews is for the researcher's PhD thesis but, as part of the dissemination process, this may also include related presentations and publications.

III. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)
I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)   *Yes/No*
I understand the information provided   *Yes/No*
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study   *Yes/No*
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions   *Yes/No*
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped   *Yes/No*

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

I acknowledge that I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.   *Yes/No*

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations
I acknowledge that I will be granted anonymity for my interviews, or any parts of my interview which I request. This will be discussed in advance, but will also be applied retrospectively if I later request remarks to be anonymised. However, given the relatively small nature of the sector under study, I am aware that there can be no guarantee that I will not be identifiable. I also recognise that there are legal limitations to confidentiality.

VII.Signature:
I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

H2: Topic guide for interviews with journalists

- Background of work with XXXXX - how long you've been there/what roles performed
- Outline of a typical day's work

- Dealing/interactions with the HSE/Department of Health
- Use of official voices in the news
- Use of trade unions as a source
- Use of citizen/ordinary voices into stories

- Source use discussed in newsroom?

- Significance of user comments
- Social media is a source for stories

- Public criticism of PR
- Use of PR part of landscape

- Attribution when stories taken from other outlets

- Timeliness and breaking news, and the accelerated news cycle
- Fixation with speed?

- Factors that influence the time of day a story is uploaded - stories held back, etc
- Awareness of audience figures/data analytics

- Scope for journalists to pursue the stories they want to work on

- Internet positive/negative effect on journalism

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Journalist A	Journalist with Irish Mirror	Nov 21st 2016	In person - cafe (Dublin 9)	37 mins
Journalist B	Independent.ie	Nov 23rd 2016	In person – cafe (Dublin 7)	112 mins
Journalist C	IrishTimes.com	April 3rd 2017	Via email	N/A (~1700 words)
Journalist D	TheJournal.ie	March 14th 2017	In person - cafe (Dublin 2)	35 mins
Journalist E	TheJournal.ie	Nov 22nd 2016	In person - cafe (Dublin 1)	39 mins
Jacky Jones	Former regional health officer with HSE and columnist with Irish Times	Nov 17th 2016	Via phone	35 mins
Leo Varadkar	(Former) Minister for Health/current Minister for Social Protection	April 13th 2017	In person - Leinster House, Dublin2	37 mins

Appendix I: Secondary source material

- Interview with Paul O'Neill, editor of Irish Times, in Sunday Business Post (Sexton 2017a)
- Interview with John Kierans, editor of Irish Mirror, in Sunday Business Post (Sexton 2017b)
- Column written by chief executive of HSE Tony O'Brien in Sunday Business Post, p23, June 23 2017 (O'Brien 2017)
- Feature by Stephen Kinsella, Sunday Business Post - Why can't we fix healthcare? (Kinsella 2017)
- Harry McGee – Irish Times column (McGee 2017)

- HIQA Investigation into Midland Regional Hospital, Portlaoise: Parents and Patient Advocates: http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/committeetakes/HEJ2015051900002
- Catherine Reilly – Medical Independent: Media is 'terrifying' maternity patients – Coombe Master (Reilly 2016)
- "Record media coverage for INMO" (Keating 2016)
- HSE media guidelines (Health Service Executive 2017)

- Interview with Jim Miley, business-to-consumer director of the Irish Times, http://www.adworld.ie/2015/09/23/a-sign-of-the-times/
- Details of the Independent News and Media newsroom "Eye" http://www.independent.ie/business/media/inm-unveils-ambitious-plans-for-online-and-print-content-centre-30953491.html
- Comments from Stephen Rae, INM, following his appointment: http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/raes-appointment-boosts-inm-digital-strategy-29383208.html
- INM blog about mobile: http://www.inm.ie/blog/using-data-to-empower-mobile-experience/
- Interview with Fiona O'Carroll, managing director of INM digital operations: http://www.inm.ie/blog/irish-marketing-journal-interview/
- Details of Trinity Mirror's digital-first strategy: https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2014/mar/25/trinity-mirror-digital-media
http://www.trinitymirror.com/pressrelease/trinity-mirror-north-east-unveils-plans-for-digitally-led-news-operation/2044

Appendix J: Results and data

Chapter 6 data

J1: Origins of content categorised into main sources, and what comprises each category
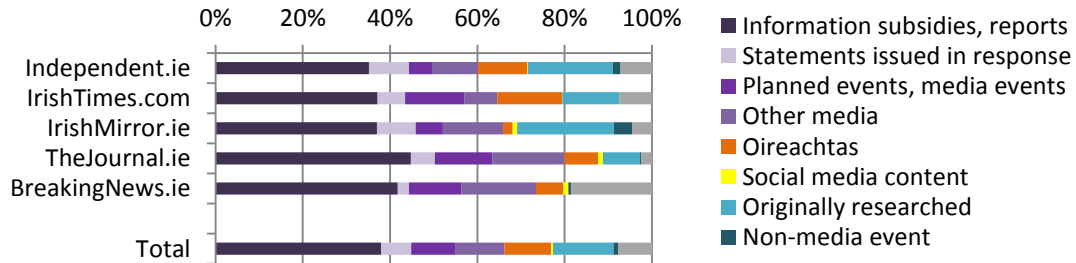
	Independent	IrishTimes	BreakingNews	IrishMirror	TheJournal
Original work	**16660**	**12259**	**0**	**5018**	**2734**
Clearly original quotes	12125	4313	0	4067	1922
Freedom of Information	375	1278	0	0	0
Leak	4062	6258	0	0	812
Report - Leak	98	0	0	0	0
Original work	0	410	0	951	0
Information subsidies, reports	**30130**	**34692**	**12668**	**8389**	**14348**
From info subsidy	12281	11776	7579	4050	8383
Report - Promo	8875	9818	2118	930	1716
Report - Promo B	1234	1584	835	494	0
Report - Published negative	512	1234	91	0	1009
Recycled quote	679	506	56	93	347
From website	222	23	104	59	0
Published neutral	1650	3619	0	0	283
Academic research	0	271	0	0	481
Hiqa	4677	5861	1885	2763	2129
Statement in reply	**7822**	**5841**	**765**	**2000**	**1775**
Other media	**9052**	**6978**	**5210**	**3130**	**5313**
Niche medical media	157	0	0	0	0
Other media	8895	6978	5210	3130	5313
Social media content	**121**	**76**	**370**	**232**	**349**
Unknown	**6138**	**6926**	**5625**	**1025**	**793**
Unknown origin of quotes	5940	6496	5625	1025	793
Quotes look original but unclear	198	430	0	0	0
Non-media event	**1531**	**0**	**176**	**961**	**77**
Speaking in Oireachtas	**9660**	**13808**	**1877**	**486**	**2467**
Planned events, media events	**4563**	**12768**	**3632**	**1419**	**4221**
Planned event	3793	10630	3150	260	3751
Media interview or press conference	770	2138	482	1159	470

J2: Word counts of stories

	OVERALL AVERAGE	NEWS REPORT	FEATURE	OPINION/ ANALYSIS	OTHER
TheJournal.ie	506	438	1232	885	686
IrishTimes.com	488	449	1138	694	928
Newspaper daytime update	475	455	735	793	1035
Newspaper print-first	509	438	1239	639	822
Independent.ie	473	438	909	765	255
Newspaper daytime update	491	492	--	908	25
Newspaper print-first	466	414	909	757	312
IrishMirror.ie	452	457	--	--	168
Newspaper daytime update	437	443	--	--	168
Newspaper print-first	526	525	--	--	
BreakingNews.ie	212	212	--	--	--

J3: Story on TheJournal.ie re: iodine tablets, and original Department of Health press release

TheJournal.ie: http://www.thejournal.ie/iodine-tablets-wont-be-sent-out-again-2157770-Jun2015/

Remember iodine tablets? You won't be getting them again
But only because there threat of nuclear annihilation has receded. Yay.

Jun 14th 2015, 8:00 AM 31,313 Views 41 Comments

THE DEPARTMENT OF Health won't be reissuing iodine tablets.
Homes across the country were sent the tablets in 2002 in case of a nuclear emergency, with a particular focus on the Calder Hall (Sellafield) and Chapelcross reactors in the UK.
Iodine tablets are designed to counteract radioactive iodine.
They were issued across Ireland amid fears of a terrorist attack on the Sellafield site, which is just 180 kilometres from the Louth coast.
The 2002 batch – 14.2million tablets at a cost of €630,000 – expired in 2005.
They will not be getting replaced, the Department says, because the threat of a nuclear meltdown has receded and taking them wouldn't do anything, anyway.
The threat of an accident at a nuclear facility abroad involving the release of a large quantity of radio-iodine has very much receded in recent years.
The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) carried out a detailed analysis of different accident scenarios and concluded that, even in a worst case scenario, the use of iodine tablets would not be justified in Ireland. Given the above the Department does not propose to reissue iodine tablets.
The RPPI report found that at the Wylfa plant in Wales, the closest active plant to Ireland, only residents closer that three kilometres were given the tablets. It is 114km from Ireland.
So if not consuming a decade-expired tablet, what should you do? The EPA says you should go indoors, stay there and turn on your TV or radio to be kept informed.
Staying indoors if advised and avoiding contaminated foodstuffs after the emergency has subsidised, are by far the most effective ways of reducing your radiation dose from all radioactive materials.
Which is handy to know.

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http://health.gov.ie/blog/press-release/decision-to-discontinue-the-future-distribution-of-iodine-tablets/

Press Release: Decision to Discontinue the Future Distribution of Iodine Tablets
3.4.2008

During 2002, iodine tablets, intended to be taken in the event of a major nuclear accident that might result in the release of radio-active iodine, were issued to each household.

Mary Harney TD, Minister for Health and Children has decided, on the basis of expert risk management advice, not to re-issue these tablets.

In 2002, Ireland was the only country to issue iodine tablets to each household and it is now recognised that the risks which may have existed then have now been substantially reduced. In particular, there was concern at the time about the vulnerability of the Calder Hall reactors on the Sellafield site: however, these reactors are no longer operational.

The decision not to re-issue iodine tablets has been taken on the basis of the low risk of a radio-active iodine release and in the context of best international practice which does not recommend general household distribution other than in the immediate vicinity of a nuclear reactor.

Use of iodine tablets following an accident at a nuclear facility.

A serious accident at a nuclear power plant may involve the release of a number of radioactive elements into the atmosphere – including radioactive iodine (also known as radio-iodine). When inhaled or ingested, radio-iodine tends to concentrate in the thyroid gland giving rise to high concentrations in this organ. High concentrations of radio-iodine in the thyroid gland increase a person's risk of developing thyroid cancer. Iodine prophylaxis, or the administration of stable iodine (usually in the form of iodine tablets), reduces or prevents the uptake of radio-iodine by the thyroid gland.

Iodine tablets are effective in reducing the radiation dose from radio-iodine following a nuclear accident – they do not reduce the radiation dose from other radioactive elements. Staying indoors and controlling the consumption of contaminated foodstuffs are effective methods of reducing the radiation dose from all radioactive elements – including radio-iodine.

The International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organisation have published guidance on the level of radiation dose that would indicate the need for stable iodine as an intervention measure. The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) uses this guidance in its assessment of potential protective actions for any future nuclear accident.

How likely is it that an accident at a nuclear facility abroad will require the use of iodine tablets in Ireland?

The threat of an accident at a nuclear facility abroad involving the release of a large quantity of radio-iodine has very much receded in recent years with the closure of two of the oldest and most vulnerable nuclear reactors in the UK, namely Calder Hall and Chaplecross. Sellafield does not pose a threat with regard to radio-iodine as the activities carried out there do not generate radio-iodine isotopes.

The closest nuclear power station to Ireland is the Wylfa Nuclear Power Plant in North Wales which is 114 km from the Irish coastline. As part of the RPII's remit to provide advice and information to the Government on nuclear safety issues, the RPII visited the Wylfa Plant in late 2006. One of the key areas examined during the visit was the potential impact on Ireland of an accident or incident at Wylfa. Using the information made available to it, the RPII carried out a detailed analysis of different accident scenarios and concluded that, even in a worst case scenario, the use of iodine tablets would not be justified in Ireland following such an accident at Wylfa.

What are other countries doing?

Information from a number of countries indicates that Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden and Switzerland have pre-distributed iodine in the vicinity of nuclear reactors – the area covered has ranged from 4 km to 20 km radius of the nuclear reactors. In the UK, the decision to pre-distribute rests with the local authority and it has only occurred in a limited number of cases and a 3 km radius has tended to be used.

What should householders do with their iodine tablets?

They should dispose of the tablets as normal household waste but they should not remove the tablets from the packaging material.

J4: The channels of production divided by publication
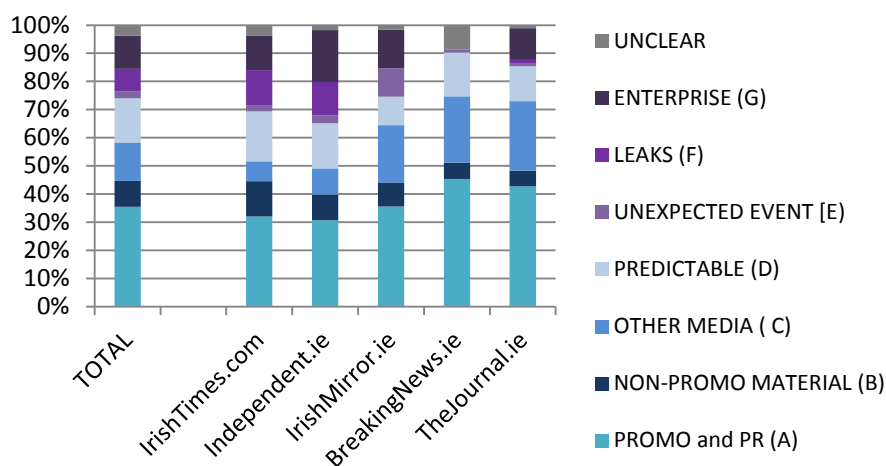
	TOTAL	IrishTimes	Ind.ie	Irish Mirror	Breaking News	TheJournal
PROMO and PR (A)	318	92	88	21	79	#
NON-PROMO MATERIAL (B)	82	36	26	5	10	5
OTHER MEDIA (C)	122	20	27	12	41	#
PREDICTABLE (D)	141	51	46	6	27	#
UNEXPECTED EVENT [E]	23	6	8	6	2	1
LEAKS (F)	71	36	34			1
ENTERPRISE (G)	106	35	53	8		#
UNCLEAR	33	11	5	1	15	1

Fig 6.1: *The number of stories published on each website on each day of the week [Number of stories]*

	BreakingNews	Independent	IrishMirror	IrishTimes	TheJournal	Total
Monday	22	42	5	69	9	*147*
Tuesday	30	60	12	72	17	*191*
Wednesday	40	58	15	69	18	*200*
Thursday	46	70	11	74	24	*225*
Friday	29	63	12	66	24	*194*
Saturday	13	36	3	27	8	*87*
Sunday	7	29	3	7	11	*57*
Total	*187*	*358*	*61*	*384*	*111*	*1101*

Figure 6.2: *The number of stories proportion of each websites output published by each website categorised into six-hour segments*

Figure 6.3: *The percentage of each publication's content published during eachin each two-hour segment [Number of stories]*

	TOTAL	Independent	IrishTimes	IrishMirror	TheJournal	BreakingNews
Midnight - 6am	**414**	**257**	**151**	**4**	**0**	**2**
00:01 - 02:00	*147*	*3*	*144*	*0*	*0*	*0*
02:01 - 04:00	*256*	*254*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
04:01 - 06:00	*11*		*6*	*3*	*0*	*2*
6am - 12pm	**221**	**35**	**44**	**14**	**42**	**86**
06:01 - 08:00	*78*	*6*	*10*	*7*	*19*	*36*
08:01 - 10:00	*61*	*15*	*9*	*4*	*12*	*21*
10:01 - 12:00	*82*	*14*	*25*	*3*	*11*	*29*
12pm - 6pm	**314**	**58**	**118**	**18**	**40**	**80**
12:01 - 14:00	*126*	*26*	*47*	*2*	*14*	*37*
14:01 - 16:00	*97*	*17*	*36*	*8*	*13*	*23*
16:01 - 18:00	*91*	*15*	*35*	*8*	*13*	*20*
6pm - Midnight	**152**	**8**	**71**	**25**	**29**	**19**
18:01 - 20:00	*74*	*3*	*30*	*14*	*17*	*10*
20:01 - 22:00	*62*	*2*	*35*	*8*	*8*	*9*
22:01 - 00:00	*16*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*4*	*0*
TOTAL	**1101**	**358**	**384**	**61**	**111**	**187**

Figure 6.4: *Left: the total number of all types of content (news, features, opinion/analysis, other) divided into print-first/daytime update. Right: The breakdown of news reports [Number of stories]*

	TOTAL #	DAYTIME UPDATE	PRINT-FIRST UPDATE
TOTAL	**1101**	**392**	**411**
Independent.ie	358	103	255
IrishMirror.ie	61	51	10
IrishTimes.com	384	238	146
TheJournal.ie	111		
BreakingNews.ie	187		
CATEGORY OF TEXT			
NEWS REPORT	**1005**	**376**	**345**
Independent.ie	317	101	216
IrishMirror.ie	60	50	10
IrishTimes.com	344	225	119
TheJournal.ie	97		
BreakingNews.ie	187		
FEATURE ARTICLES	**28**	**2**	**21**
Independent.ie	13	0	13
IrishMirror.ie	0	0	0
IrishTimes.com	10	2	8
TheJournal.ie	5		
BreakingNews.ie	0		
OPINION/ANALYSIS	**57**	**11**	**39**
Independent.ie	22	1	21
IrishMirror.ie	0	0	0
IrishTimes.com	28	10	18
TheJournal.ie	7		
BreakingNews.ie	0		
OTHER	**11**	**3**	**6**
Independent.ie	6	1	5
IrishMirror.ie	1	1	0
IrishTimes.com	2	1	1
TheJournal.ie	2		
BreakingNews.ie	0		

*No BreakingNews.ie story had a byline. For that reason, in all other analysis of byline BreakingNews.ie is recorded separately so as not to skew the other websites' content with no byline

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Figure 6.5: *The breakdown of daytime/print-first among different byline categories in the Irish Times (left) and Independent [Number of stories]*

BYLINE			
General reporter	**371**	**172**	**99**
Independent.ie	102	45	57
IrishMirror.ie	55	45	10
IrishTimes.com	114	82	32
TheJournal.ie	100		
BreakingNews.ie	0		
Specialised	**439**	**157**	**277**
Independent.ie	194	25	169
IrishTimes.com	240	132	108
IrishMirror	0	0	0
TheJournal.ie	5		
BreakingNews.ie	0		
Expert/non-journalist	**21**	**4**	**13**
Independent.ie	8		8
IrishTimes.com	9	4	5
Irish Mirror	0	0	0
TheJournal.ie	4		
BreakingNews.ie	0		
No byline	**69**	**48**	**20**
Independent.ie	46	27	19
IrishMirror.ie	1	1	
IrishTimes.com	21	20	1
TheJournal.ie	1		
*BreakingNews.ie	187		
Wire	**14**	**11**	**2**
Independent.ie	8	6	2
IrishTimes.com	0	0	0
IrishMirror.ie	5	5	0
TheJournal.ie	1		
BreakingNews.ie	0		

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Figure 6.6: The total contribution of each sourcing category, and how it relates to each website [Word count]

	Independent	IrishTimes	Irish Mirror	TheJournal	BKNews
Originally researched	**16660**	**12259**	**5018**	**2734**	**0**
Information subsidies, reports	**30130**	**34692**	**8389**	**14348**	**12668**
Statements issued in response	7822	5841	2000	1775	765
Planned events, media events	4563	12768	1419	4221	3632
Other media	9052	6978	3130	5313	5210
Social media content	121	76	232	349	370
Oireachtas	9660	13808	486	2467	1877
Non-media event	1531	0	961	77	176
Unknown	6138	6926	1025	793	5625

Figure 6.6: The total contribution of each sourcing category, and how it relates to each website [Word count]

	Total	Independent	IrishTimes	IrishMirror	BreakingNews	TheJournal
Original	*39,416 (15%)*	*18,191 (21%)*	*12,259 (13%)*	*5,979 (26.5%)*	*176 (0.5%)*	*2,811 (8.5%)*
Repackaged material	*173,433 (65.5%)*	*51,188 (60%)*	*59,985 (64%)*	***14913** (65.5%)*	*22,171 (73%)*	*25,176 (79%)*
Other sources	*30,606 (12%)*	*10,003 (12%)*	*14,178 (15%)*	*777 (3.5%)*	*2,351 (7.5%)*	*3,297 (10%)*
Unknown origins	*20,507 (7.5%)*	*6,138 (7%)*	*6,926 (8%)*	*1,025 (4.5%)*	*5,625 (19%)*	*793 (2.5%)*
TOTAL	*263,928*	85,520	93,348	22,660	30,323	32,077

Figure 6.7: The origins of content, broken down as a percentage of each byline's output [Word count]

	Specialised	General	No byline - BK	No byline	Wire
Repackaged	65554	68426	22171	11122	6126
Original/Exclusive	17017	21383	176	840	0
Other sources	21541	6136	2351	445	133
Unknown	7957	6404	5625	146	375

Figure 6.8: *The four source categories for the three newspaper websites, subdivided into print-first or daytime update [word count]*

	TOTAL	DAYTIME UPDATE	PRINT FIRST
ALL TITLES			
Total	**201562 (100%)**	**110346 (54.75%)**	**91216 (45.25%)**
Original/exclusive material	*36429 (18%)*	*9907 (5%)*	*26522 (13%)*
Repackaged material	*126086 (62.5%)*	*80746 (40%)*	*45340 (22.5%)*
Other sources	*24958 (12.5%)*	*14197 (7%)*	*10761 (5.5%)*
Unknown origins	*14089 (7%)*	*5496 (2.75%)*	*8593 (4.25%)*
IRISHTIMES.COM			
Total	**93348 (100%)**	**61225 (65.5%)**	**32123 (34.5%)**
Original/exclusive material	*12259 (13%)*	*3237 (3.5%)*	*9022 (9.5%)*
Repackaged material	*59,985 (64.25%)*	*45021 (48.25%)*	*14964 (16%)*
Other sources	*14178 (15.25%)*	*9561 (10.25%)*	*4617 (5%)*
Unknown origins	*6926 (7.5%)*	*3406 (3.5%)*	*3520 (4%)*
IRISHMIRROR.IE			
Total	**22694 (100%)**	**18156 (80%)**	**4538 (20%)**
Original/exclusive material	*5979 (26.5%)*	*2827 (12.5%)*	*3152 (14%)*
Repackaged material	*14913 (65.5%)*	*13819 (61%)*	*1094 (4.5%)*
Other sources	*777 (3.5%)*	*777 (3.5%)*	*0*
Unknown origins	*1025 (4.5%)*	*733 (3%)*	*292 (1.5%)*
INDEPENDENT.IE			
Total	**85,520 (100%)**	**30965 (36%)**	**54555 (64%)**
Original/exclusive material	18,191 (21%)	3843 (4.5%)	14348 (16.5%)
Repackaged material	51,188 (60%)	21906 (25.5%)	29282 (34.5%)
Other sources	10,003 (12%)	3859 (4.5%)	6144 (7.5%)
Unknown origins	6,138 (7%)	1357 (1.5%)	4781 (5.5%)

Figure 6.11: *The number of stories which used material from each media format (left) and the sources used in content taken from other media reports (right) [word count]*

	Other media
Private citizen	8595
Politician	5939
Medical professionals	2899
Union/Representative group	1991
State agency	1893
Hospital management	1132
NGO-charity-civil society group	392

Figure 6.12: *The attribution rate of stories that include other media [number of stories]*

	TheJournal.ie	IrishTimes.com	BreakingNews.ie	IrishMirror.ie	Independent.ie
No attribution	3	8	20	10	30
Attributed	24	21	23	6	11

Figure 6.15: *The number of stories categorised into Sigal's channels of production (left), and the new channels (right)*
[This table includes (in brackets) the court reports (Predictable channel) and analysis/opinion columns (special reports) [number of stories]

Sigal's channels	# stories	Proposed new channels	# stories
Routine	637	*Routine*	
Enterprise	111	A) Promo and PR	318
Informal	129	B) Non-promo material	82
Unknown/unclear	19	C) Remediated content	122
		D) Predictable	141 (+113)
		Non-routine	
		E) Unexpected event	23
		F) Leaks	71
		G) Enterprise	106
		H) Special reports	(+84)
		Unclear	33

Figure 6.16: *The use of routine and non-routine channels for stories throughout the day [number of stories]*

	00:01 - 02:00	02:01 - 04:00	04:01 - 06:00	06:01 - 08:00	08:01 - 10:00	10:01 - 12:00	12:01 - 14:00	14:01 - 16:00	16:01 - 18:00	18:01 - 20:00	20:01 - 22:00	22:01 - 00:00
PROMO and PR (A)	23	64	3	41	18	23	39	35	27	24	17	4
NON-PROMO MATERIAL (B)	12	19		1	1	11	14	11	2	5	5	1
OTHER MEDIA (C)	4	7		11	20	16	20	16	12	5	6	5
PREDICTABLE (D)	17	31		3	11	9	21	7	22	7	9	4
UNEXPECTED EVENT [E]	1	3	1	3	2	4	3	2	2		1	1
LEAKS (F)	29	34			1	1	2	3	1			
ENTERPRISE (G)	20	45	1	11	1	2	4	8	3	3	7	1
UNCLEAR	8	4		2	3	2	2	2		9	1	

Figure 6.17: *The various byline types and how they use different channels of production [number of stories]*

Row Labels	General	Specialised	No byline	No byline - BK	Wire
PROMO and PR (A)	111	109	11	79	8
NON-PROMO MATERIAL (B)	19	46	3	10	4
OTHER MEDIA (C)	56	9	15	41	1
PREDICTABLE (D)	27	84	3	27	
UNEXPECTED EVENT [E]	13	6	1	2	1
LEAKS (F)	4	65	2		
ENTERPRISE (G)	46	57	3		
UNCLEAR	8	9	1	15	

Chapter 7 data

J6: Average number of sources used, by publication (left) and byline type

[number of stories]

WEBSITE	N=	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SOURCES	NUMBER WITH SINGLE SOURCE
OVERALL	896	1.92 (SD-1.16)	377 (42%)
BreakingNews.ie	172	1.49 (SD=1.05)	99 (58%)
TheJournal.ie	179	2.08 (SD=1.32)	31 (17%)
Independent.ie	284	2.07 (SD=1.2)	109 (38%)
IrishTimes.com	286	1.96 (SD=1.06)	117 (41%)
IrishMirror.ie	59	2.06 (SD=1.15)	21 (36%)

BYLINE	N=	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SOURCES	NUMBER WITH SINGLE SOURCE
General	282	2.16 (SD=1.23)	96 (34%)
Specialised	383	1.96 (SD=1.12)	157 (41%)
No byline	38	1.78 (SD=1.04)	21 (55%)
No byline BK	172	1.49 (SD=1.05)	99 (58%)
Wire	14	2 (SD=.96)	4 (29%)

Figure 7.1: The number of stories in which different sources appear and are the first source used.
The "Other" category includes journalists, academics, and solicitors/judges
[number of stories]

SOURCES USED	AS FIRST SOURCE	ANYWHERE ELSE IN TEXT	TOTAL # STORIES	% AS FIRST SOURCE
Other	39	67	106	58%
Anonymous	5	5	10	50%
Media report	20	11	31	65%
Commercial org/businessperson	17	14	31	55%
Research study	33	3	36	92%
Civil society/voluntary group	18	23	41	44%
NGO/charity	43	44	87	49%
Hosp management	33	61	94	35%
Medical professional	54	67	121	45%
Private citizen	80	47	127	63%
Union/lobby group	139	51	190	73%
State agencies	223	122	345	65%
Politician	199	156	355	56%

Figure 7.2: The use of different sources presented by byline category. This figure in the bottom bar shows the number of words coded to each source to indicate the varying quantities of each byline's output [word count]

BYLINE AND PERSPECTIVES	TOTAL	SPECIALISED	GENERAL	NO BYLINE	NO BY - BK	WIRE
State agency	44182	27185	11480	689	3422	1406
Private citizen	37285	6136	23440	5915	1173	621
Politician	51097	28430	14998	1331	5863	475
NGO-charity-civil society	19286	3731	10853	942	3760	0
Hospital management	10874	3578	5523	428	1126	219
Unions	34163	14352	10426	741	7611	1033
Medical professionals	22838	12858	7523	682	1509	266
Scientist-researcher	5634	2620	2852	0	162	0
Other	8545	3110	4099	377	703	256

Figure 7.3: *The use of different sources by publication [word count]*

	TOTAL	INDEPENDENT	IRISHTIMES	BKNEWS	IRISHMIRROR	THEJOURNAL
State agency	*44182*	15151	19263	3422	2706	3640
Politician	*51097*	14239	22273	5863	1929	6793
Unions	*34353*	7674	13834	7611	2227	3007
Private citizen	*37285*	16566	6714	1173	8268	4564
Hospital management	*10874*	3537	3110	1126	1585	1516
NGO-charity-civil society group	*19286*	5820	5573	3760	1270	2863
Medical professionals	*22838*	12134	6719	1509	530	1946
Scientist-researcher	*5634*	811	3287	162	330	1044
Other	*8545*	2491	2547	703	617	2187

Figure 7.4: *The channels of production for the coverage of both politicians and state agencies*
Figure 7.6: *The source groups and channels of production*
Figure 7.7: *The use of different source groups within each channel of production, measured using word count*
[word count]

	PROMO and PR (A)	NON-PROMO (B)	OTHER MEDIA (C)	PREDICTABLE (D)	UNEXPECTED EVENT [E]	LEAKS (F)	ENTERPRISE (G)	UNCLEAR
Politician	14967	1351	7191	17473	423	4020	4047	1323
State agency	11462	9974	2559	5717	1761	6199	5802	759
Private citizen	6394	3694	8962	3117	2171	398	11351	225
Unions	20524	385	2445	3977	432	2549	2227	1159
Medical professionals	4760	737	2463	3609	77	3601	7267	151
NGO-charity-civil soc group	14276	643	549	1487	271	29	1047	811
Hospital management	3279	1180	2636	576	386	1388	1411	18
Anonymous	26	0	53	54	261	337	483	0
Business	763	123	137	588	35	219	1102	273

Figure 7.5: *The use of government politicians and opposition politicians categorised by different author categories (left) and publication (right), measured using word count* [word count]

	Government politicians	Opposition politicians	Other politicians
Specialised	23222	5393	250
General	10770	4344	386
No byline - BK	4715	1009	0
No byline	1331	0	0
Wire	389	45	0

[number of stories]

	Government politicians	Opposition politicians	Other politicians
Independent.ie	92	22	0
IrishTimes.com	104	37	3
BreakingNews.ie	41	12	0
IrishMirror.ie	8	8	1
TheJournal.ie	38	15	1

Figure 7.8: *The number of stories with 1, 2, 3 or 4+ sources used, categorised by channel of production [number of stories]*

Row Labels	1	2	3	4+
PROMO and PR (A)	156	93	38	22
NON-PROMO MATERIAL (B)	33	31	9	7
OTHER MEDIA (C)	51	43	16	9
PREDICTABLE (D)	54	45	22	15
UNEXPECTED EVENT [E]	6	5	4	7
LEAKS (F)	21	28	15	4
ENTERPRISE (G)	37	29	20	18

Figure 7.9: *The number of stories in which each source group is present as the only source, or alongside other sources [number of stories]*

Number of sources/number of stories	1	2	3	4+
Union & rep groups	104	61	27	24
Medical professionals	42	38	26	21
State agency	100	111	70	52
Politician	97	109	70	50
Private citizen	36	32	33	41
NGO-charity-civil society group	31	37	26	29
Hospital management	13	54	20	15
Anonymous	1	7	7	4

Figure 7.10: *The actors who appear in pronunciamento-style news angles [number of stories]*

	# STORIES
Leo Varadkar	53
Union/Representative group	46
Private citizen	30
Medical professional	29
NGO	26
Other politician	23
Enda Kenny (Taoiseach)	8
Hiqa	8
Tony O'Brien	7
HSE	6
Hospital management	4
Department	2
Other	16

Figure 7.15: *The use of male and female sources in different topics [number of stories]*

	Male sources	Female sources	Non-human sources
Failing system	187	56	173
Hiqa	130	72	94
HSE	33	3	15
Industrial relations	99	37	94
Infrastructure	32	10	6
Lifestyle	72	36	78
Reproduction	99	106	61
Services and funding	6	8	0

Figure 7.17: *The male/female breakdown of different byline categories [number of stories]*

	Male	Female	Mixed	No-byline
Total	428	397	15	261
General	174	190	6	
Specialised	238	193	8	
Non-journalist expert	7	14		

Figure 7.18: *The use of male and female sources by male and female reporters*

	# Female	# Male	# Non-human
Female	**176**	**278**	**180**
General	113	123	85
Specialised	63	155	95
Male	**106**	**286**	**194**
General	*61*	*90*	*72*
Specialised	*42*	*188*	*118*
Wire (named)	3	6	3
N/A	**72**	**166**	**123**
General	8	11	4
No byline	11	24	24
No byline - BK	49	117	87
Specialised	2	8	4
Wire	2	6	4

Appendix K: All stories used in sample

Headline	Publication	Date	Byline
Irish politicians won't be clamping down on alcohol abuse…	TheJournal.ie	28/04/2015	General
European Court of Justice rules lifetime ban of gay men giving blood "may be justified"	TheJournal.ie	29/04/2015	General
Here's what you need to know about the health insurance changes	TheJournal.ie	29/04/2015	General
'800 per cent' surge in traffic – as people rush to get health insurance before deadline	TheJournal.ie	30/04/2015	General
Labour is about to face ANOTHER headache over abortion	TheJournal.ie	30/04/2015	Specialised
This is what the new Children's Hospital will look like	TheJournal.ie	30/04/2015	General
'It is a real tragedy for us': X-ray mistake led to delayed cancer diagnosis	TheJournal.ie	30/04/2015	General
Irish women can now buy the most effective morning-after pill without a prescription	TheJournal.ie	01/05/2015	General
Hundreds more patients recalled over fears scans were misread	TheJournal.ie	01/05/2015	General
'Devastating': 74-year-old woman loses symphysiotomy case	TheJournal.ie	01/05/2015	General
The workplace smoking ban didn't stop people smoking and the Celtic Tiger is to blame	TheJournal.ie	03/05/2015	General
Leo stands over remark in abortion debate	TheJournal.ie	03/05/2015	General
State accused of covering up cost of nursing homes	TheJournal.ie	04/05/2015	General
Mass recalls of colonoscopy patients reveals further cancer risk with patients	TheJournal.ie	05/05/2015	General
Alarming WHO report: Nearly ALL Irish adults likely to be overweight by 2030	TheJournal.ie	06/05/2015	Wire
Why is Ireland so fat? Here's what an expert thinks	TheJournal.ie	06/05/2015	Expert
Baby's remains squeezed into tiny box and given to parents	TheJournal.ie	08/05/2015	General
'The Dáil is full of men who will never need an abortion, we don't know what it's like'	TheJournal.ie	08/05/2015	General
"To err is human, to cover up is inexcusable" – eight babies died at Portlaoise Hospital	TheJournal.ie	09/05/2015	General
"Like something from a Frankenstein novel" – bereaved mother describes Portlaoise Hospital's morgue	TheJournal.ie	12/05/2015	General
JR036: 74 TDs have just voted down another abortion bill	TheJournal.ie	12/05/2015	Specialised
Investigation after another newborn baby dies at Cavan Hospital	TheJournal.ie	13/05/2015	General
The health insurance deadline? 2,500 people signed up for insurance EVERY DAY in April…	TheJournal.ie	14/05/2015	General
'I can't unhear the stories I heard last night': Grief-stricken parents tell Health Minister about Portlaoise Hospital	TheJournal.ie	14/05/2015	General
Parents of terminally ill kids in Donegal have been given a huge boost	TheJournal.ie	15/05/2015	General
Lucinda: 'If Portlaoise babies got the care I did, they'd still be alive'	TheJournal.ie	15/05/2015	General
Most of us don't realise severe obesity is as dangerous as smoking	TheJournal.ie	15/05/2015	General
'They were lied to': Health Minister speaks out over baby deaths	TheJournal.ie	17/05/2015	General
HSE to provide heroin users with antidote drug to prevent overdoses	TheJournal.ie	20/05/2015	General
Resistance to antibiotics could be causing unnessary deaths in Ireland	TheJournal.ie	20/05/2015	General
'A shambles': Hospital being charged €6,000 a week for x-ray reading by consultants	TheJournal.ie	22/05/2015	General
The HSE is about to buy up half a million condoms	TheJournal.ie	22/05/2015	General
'Ireland's maternity units are facing chronic and dangerous understaffing'	TheJournal.ie	24/05/2015	Expert
After 36 assaults, staff at Galway psychiatric unit start industrial action	TheJournal.ie	26/05/2015	General
Dispute over figures on how many GPs have signed up for under 6s contract	TheJournal.ie	29/05/2015	General
HIV is on the rise in Dublin	TheJournal.ie	29/05/2015	General
New risk to drug used by soldiers not mentioned on watchdog website	TheJournal.ie	03/06/2015	General
The Central Mental Hospital is being closed down	TheJournal.ie	03/06/2015	General
Portlaoise Hospital is no longer allowed to carry out complex surgery	TheJournal.ie	03/06/2015	General
Lucinda would welcome a referendum on the 8th Amendment	TheJournal.ie	04/06/2015	Specialised
A new specialist centre hopes to pin down tough to diagnose rare diseases	TheJournal.ie	04/06/2015	General
Complaints of 'failing to treat patients with dignity' against doctors have doubled	TheJournal.ie	04/06/2015	General
Investigations into death of elderly woman after incident at Dublin hospital	TheJournal.ie	04/06/2015	General
Forget about it: Doctors next group to turn down public sector pay deal	TheJournal.ie	05/06/2015	General
Hospital admits it was 'unacceptable' that woman (102) spent 26 hours on trolley	TheJournal.ie	05/06/2015	General
The new Minister for Drugs is planning a crackdown on 'benzos'	TheJournal.ie	06/06/2015	General
Have the human rights of symphysiotomy survivors been abused?	TheJournal.ie	07/06/2015	General
Test claiming to solve Irish health problems through saliva swab under scrutiny	TheJournal.ie	08/06/2015	General
What's life like as a young carer? Jamie has cared for his mother since the age of six	TheJournal.ie	08/06/2015	No byline
Elderly man has just been given a bed after 82 hours on trolley	TheJournal.ie	08/06/2015	General
International eyes are going to be on Irish abortion laws today	TheJournal.ie	09/06/2015	General
Woman gives birth to baby that doctors told her had been dead for	TheJournal.ie	09/06/2015	General

weeks			
177,000 women have left Ireland for abortions since 1971	TheJournal.ie	09/06/2015	General
UN asks Ireland why government has not organised a referendum on abortion	TheJournal.ie	09/06/2015	General
'A carer, what is that?' I am a weight lifter. I am a nurse. I am a specialist. I am exhausted	TheJournal.ie	10/06/2015	Expert
Care centre resident drugged 13 times by staff as form of 'chemical restraint'	TheJournal.ie	11/06/2015	General
Care assistant accused of sexually assaulting hospital patient goes on trial	TheJournal.ie	11/06/2015	General
There were nearly 70 cases of death or incapacitation in Irish maternity hospitals last year	TheJournal.ie	12/06/2015	General
Six Áras Attracta staff have been charged with assault	TheJournal.ie	12/06/2015	General
Residents at disability centre locked in unit because of staff shortages	TheJournal.ie	12/06/2015	General
Dublin hospital has highest number of patients on trolleys	TheJournal.ie	12/06/2015	General
The pro-life case for a referendum on the 8th Amendment	TheJournal.ie	13/06/2015	General
Remember iodine tablets? You won't be getting them again	TheJournal.ie	14/06/2015	General
Varadkar rules out intervention in case of Irish girl in UK psychiatric hospital	TheJournal.ie	14/06/2015	General
Bereaved parents: 'It needs to stop now, enough pain and enough hurt has been caused'	TheJournal.ie	08/07/2015	General
Care workers for elderly subject to harassment, racism and discrimination	TheJournal.ie	22/09/2015	General
A multi-storey car park at a Galway hospital will result in fewer parking spaces	TheJournal.ie	23/09/2015	General
Mother who says her daughter was injured during "muddled" delivery loses case	TheJournal.ie	24/09/2015	General
'There is no public demand to repeal the 8th and politicians know that'	TheJournal.ie	26/09/2015	General
'It's time for political parties to stop procrastinating. Abortion regulation does not belong in our constitution'	TheJournal.ie	26/09/2015	General
'Women must decide their fate': Thousands attend pro-choice march	TheJournal.ie	26/09/2015	General
'I'm losing my sight, hearing, AND my place in Irish society'	TheJournal.ie	27/09/2015	General
Kilkenny surgeon accused of removing women's wombs 'inappropriately' says he made the 'right decisions'	TheJournal.ie	28/09/2015	General
Leo Varadkar is being accused of leaking his own email	TheJournal.ie	29/09/2015	General
Drogheda hospital criticised after confidential patient records found 'strewn on the street'	TheJournal.ie	29/09/2015	General
Mother: 'I would rather my daughter dies at home than give her insulin'	TheJournal.ie	02/10/2015	General
Leo announces plans to get rid of HSE within five years	TheJournal.ie	03/10/2015	General
Nurses threaten strike action as Galway mental health staff refuse to work over safety concerns	TheJournal.ie	07/10/2015	General
Appeal by couple convicted of letting MS sufferer die with 'maggots in her infection	TheJournal.ie	07/10/2015	General
This Labour minister's tweet about abortion has kicked up a bit of a row	TheJournal.ie	08/10/2015	General
Crisis point? Nurses will refuse to do office work or answer phones in protest	TheJournal.ie	08/10/2015	General
386 'significant incidents' in care centre that housed five children	TheJournal.ie	09/10/2015	General
We need to create a solution to abortion. Children as young as 8 need to get sex education in school	TheJournal.ie	11/10/2015	Expert
Does raising tax on cigarettes actually work?	TheJournal.ie	11/10/2015	General
There are just two weight management clinics in Ireland. This is a problem, say doctors	TheJournal.ie	12/10/2015	General
Sorry Leo, fizzy drinks won't be taxed	TheJournal.ie	13/10/2015	General
Free GP care extended to more kids, but not everyone's happy about it	TheJournal.ie	13/10/2015	General
Varadkar dismisses claims 10,000 Irish children have teeth extracted in hospital each year	TheJournal.ie	15/10/2015	General
Life-saving drugs can now be given by trained members of the public	TheJournal.ie	15/10/2015	General
Mother of 7-year-old girl with cerebral palsy says apology from hospital 'too little too late'	TheJournal.ie	15/10/2015	General
Around 200 patients contacted as HSE recalls chemo drugs	TheJournal.ie	16/10/2015	General
'In Ireland, Helen would go to jail': Graham Linehan speaks of wife's abortion after fatal foetal diagnosis	TheJournal.ie	19/10/2015	General
The stark truth about the 'breast cancer gap' between rich and poor in Ireland	TheJournal.ie	20/10/2015	General
Staff failed to recognise signs of foetal distress in baby who died at 22 minutes old	TheJournal.ie	22/10/2015	General
Union wants Beaumont Hospital to go off call as 41 people are on trolleys	TheJournal.ie	22/10/2015	General
Pro-choice activists to take 'abortion pill bus' across the country	TheJournal.ie	23/10/2015	General
'We'll do whatever it takes to change this' – Abortion pill bus arrives in Dublin	TheJournal.ie	24/10/2015	General
Leinster has longest GP waiting times for patients while Munster has shortest	TheJournal.ie	26/10/2015	General
Is Fianna Fáil really completely opposed to abortion?	TheJournal.ie	27/10/2015	Specialised
Doctor accused of 'inappropriate' womb removals breaks down during testimony	TheJournal.ie	29/10/2015	General
Here's how the government is going to help people have safer sex	TheJournal.ie	29/10/2015	General
It's going to take six years to extend the breast cancer screening programme	TheJournal.ie	01/11/2015	General
In adult hospital wards, children with mental health issues face 'extreme distress'	TheJournal.ie	02/11/2015	General
Leo Varadkar has a plan to put calorie counts on beer bottles	TheJournal.ie	03/11/2015	General

'Ms Y' to seek damages over treatment during abortion controversy	TheJournal.ie	04/11/2015	General
This is the letter a doctor wrote after a couple in their 90s spent hours on a trolley	TheJournal.ie	04/11/2015	General
Tallaght Hospital to probe how information on 91-year-old patient was given to media	TheJournal.ie	04/11/2015	General
'He died in my kitchen': Man bled to death waiting for ambulance	TheJournal.ie	05/11/2015	General
Tallaght situation "indefensible" – Varadkar	TheJournal.ie	05/11/2015	General
'What you'd expect from the Tea Party': Leo's radical plan for hospitals is being lashed	TheJournal.ie	06/11/2015	Specialised
New hospital scandal: 93-year-old woman spends 29 hours on trolley at Beaumont	TheJournal.ie	06/11/2015	General
Irish patients 'dying while waiting' for Hepatitis C drugs	IrishTimes.com	27/04/2015	General
Health insurance Q&A: All about Lifetime Community Rating	IrishTimes.com	27/04/2015	Specialised
State wants tobacco packaging challenge referred to EU court	IrishTimes.com	27/04/2015	General
HSE publishes under-6s free GP care contract	IrishTimes.com	28/04/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise families complain of delay with Hiqa report	IrishTimes.com	29/04/2015	Specialised
European court rules ban on gay men giving blood 'may be justified'	IrishTimes.com	29/04/2015	No byline
European court upholds ban on gay blood donations	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Varadkar's stance on gay blood donations will be closely watched	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Analysis: Scale of latest controversy in health service is shocking	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Hospitals recall hundreds in connection with X-ray errors	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
In pictures: design for new Children's Hospital unveiled	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Kenny 'concerned' at hospital recalls after X-ray errors	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
One in five trainee doctors 'may need mental health support'	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Boy injured during birth at Cavan General settles action for €2.1m	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Health insurers report surge as age deadline looms	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Cost forcing patients to delay GP visits, study finds	IrishTimes.com	30/04/2015	Specialised
Mothers whose babies died in Portlaoise hospital on advice panel	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	General
Reviews of X-rays and scans to take place at other hospitals where locums worked	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	Specialised
Hundreds more recalled to hospitals over scans scare	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	Specialised
Forensic auditors to review St Vincent's Healthcare Group	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	Specialised
Judge rejects woman's claim symphysiotomy was unjustified	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	Specialised
Locum at centre of X-ray recall not qualified to work as specialist in Irish health service	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	Specialised
High standards 'cannot compensate' for radiologist shortage	IrishTimes.com	01/05/2015	Specialised
Army officers insured on the double to avoid health levies	IrishTimes.com	03/05/2015	Specialised
Aging GPs and emigration threatens future of practice, warns ICGP	IrishTimes.com	04/05/2015	General
Coombe sought indemnity before taking control of Portlaoise maternity unit	IrishTimes.com	04/05/2015	Specialised
Ombudsman to be able to investigate private nursing homes	IrishTimes.com	04/05/2015	Specialised
Medical matters: Under-sixes deal has divided GPs, who face uncertainty	IrishTimes.com	04/05/2015	Expert
Debates on assisted reproduction should begin in the classroom	IrishTimes.com	04/05/2015	Expert
Health Service Executive deficit doubles to €56m in February	IrishTimes.com	05/05/2015	Specialised
At least five recalled by Wexford General suspected of cancer	IrishTimes.com	05/05/2015	Specialised
Family of Joe Duane says court hearing is end of long road	IrishTimes.com	05/05/2015	General
Boys of 14 now much fatter than in 1948	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	General
A medical record: abysmal senior management in the HSE	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Expert
Obesity in Ireland 'worse than HIV/AIDS in the 1980s'	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	General
HSE says it did not get funds to meet €24.5m in pay rises	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Specialised
Nurses seek shorter working week and pay rise	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Specialised
Impact says staff will not entertain more changes to terms	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Specialised
Ireland's label as future 'fat-man' of Europe comes as shock	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Specialised
Ruth Coppinger calls on Labour to support abortion bill	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Specialised
Teenager paralysed after spine surgery secures €1.67m	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	No byline
HSE exceeded January and February budget by €60 million	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	General
IT053: Waiting list for outpatient appointments hits record high	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	Specialised
Ireland set to be most obese country in Europe, WHO says	IrishTimes.com	06/05/2015	General
Hiqa plans review of patient nutrition	IrishTimes.com	07/05/2015	Specialised
Varadkar says he would prefer more staff to fewer earning more	IrishTimes.com	07/05/2015	Specialised
INMO members hail shelving of graduate nursing scheme	IrishTimes.com	07/05/2015	Specialised
Nurses demand review of Hiqa impact on care standards	IrishTimes.com	07/05/2015	Specialised
Pledge from pharmacist after dispensing error led to fatality	IrishTimes.com	07/05/2015	General
Varadkar to announce campaign to bring Irish nurses home	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised
Hiqa condemns HSE over Portlaoise hospital hazards	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised
State could face €500m bill for nursing home upgrades	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised
Health services in 'unprecedented meltdown', Prof John Crown tells	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised

Seanad

HSE failed to act on Portlaoise patient safety risks, Hiqa says	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised
Abortion amendment removal bid is for next Dáil - Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised
Parents recount seeing dead babies squeezed into metal box	IrishTimes.com	08/05/2015	Specialised
HSE satisfied current maternity services at Portlaoise 'very safe'	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	General
'What's in it is no news to us,' say parents of Portlaoise baby	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise report prompts action from Leo Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	Specialised
The midland babies: 'I can't let the feckers get away with it'	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	Specialised
Analysis: Another damning report, but will anything change?	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise Hospital report: Safety service needed within year	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise Hospital report: Safety service needed within year	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	Specialised
Leo Varadkar says Portlaoise 'allowed to drift for decades'	IrishTimes.com	09/05/2015	General
Portlaoise may lose some surgery and intensive care unit	IrishTimes.com	10/05/2015	General
Patient criticises decision to clear doctor of poor performance	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	Specialised
Opinion: Hiqa findings on Portlaoise highlight national problems	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	Specialised
Analysis: Document reveals extra funding sought by HSE	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	Specialised
Confidential report shows HSE sought extra €1.4bn in funding	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	Specialised
HSE devoid of system to analyse risks to patients	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	Specialised
Charges may follow Áras Attracta investigation	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	General
Inquest hears woman (86) had to bang on table to call nurses	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	Specialised
Consultants warn of underfunding threat to acute care	IrishTimes.com	11/05/2015	General
Callous two-tier system cannot help student in alcohol crisis	IrishTimes.com	12/05/2015	Expert
Country 'cannot sustain' 29 hospital emergency departments	IrishTimes.com	12/05/2015	General
Taoiseach critical of HSE's attitude to patient safety	IrishTimes.com	12/05/2015	Specialised
Taoiseach sharply criticises HSE on patient safety	IrishTimes.com	12/05/2015	Specialised
Baby developed cerebral palsy, Medical Council inquiry told	IrishTimes.com	12/05/2015	General
Number of adverse birth incidents reported increased last year	IrishTimes.com	12/05/2015	No byline
Mother of baby who died at Portlaoise to meet Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	13/05/2015	General
Four Portlaoise hospital staff face disciplinary action	IrishTimes.com	13/05/2015	Specialised
Paediatrician tells inquiry he was 'delighted' at baby's improvements	IrishTimes.com	13/05/2015	General
Cavan hospital maternity services monitored, Kenny tells Dáil	IrishTimes.com	13/05/2015	Specialised
Nurse alleged to have locked dementia sufferer in toilet	IrishTimes.com	13/05/2015	General
Investigation after baby dies during birth in Cavan hospital	IrishTimes.com	13/05/2015	Specialised
IT093: Hiqa urges Varadkar to support Portlaoise hospital proposals	IrishTimes.com	14/05/2015	Specialised
Beaumont's emergency department 'like a warzone'	IrishTimes.com	14/05/2015	General
Varadkar 'ashamed' of how patients were treated at Portlaoise	IrishTimes.com	14/05/2015	General
Conference told smaller maternity units 'safe'	IrishTimes.com	14/05/2015	Specialised
Health insurance deadline: 74,000 buy policies in April	IrishTimes.com	14/05/2015	Specialised
Cavan hospital still investigating deaths of three babies from up to three years ago	IrishTimes.com	14/05/2015	Specialised
Leo Varadkar 'ashamed' at inhumane treatment of Portlaoise patients	IrishTimes.com	15/05/2015	General
Prime/Balfour Beatty chosen for first healthcare PPP project	IrishTimes.com	15/05/2015	Specialised
Lucinda Creighton calls on HSE director general to resign	IrishTimes.com	16/05/2015	Specialised
Only 25% of GPs sign under-6s contract ahead of deadline	IrishTimes.com	17/05/2015	General
Varadkar: Parents of babies who died 'were not dealt with honestly'	IrishTimes.com	17/05/2015	General
Patients 'disempowered' at point of death, says Senator John Crown	IrishTimes.com	18/05/2015	General
Original plan for HSE patient safety body abandoned	IrishTimes.com	18/05/2015	Specialised
Hospital waiting list target breached by 50,000	IrishTimes.com	18/05/2015	Specialised
Johann Hari: Heroin injection centres could save State money	IrishTimes.com	18/05/2015	General
'Brain drain' of medical staff blamed on bad work conditions	IrishTimes.com	18/05/2015	Specialised
Critical risks at Portlaoise hospital raised by medics in 2011	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Specialised
Paul Cullen: Playing blame game over Portlaoise not helping situation	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Specialised
Second Opinion: Stop stigmatising obesity and start attacking the causes	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Expert
Ireland ill-prepared to address needs of those with Down syndrome and dementia	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Expert
HSE management "clearly incapable", say Portlaoise parents	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Specialised
Resident at centre for disabled had to 'purchase' staff	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	General
Online profile of HSE's Tony O'Brien changed ahead of committee appearance	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Specialised
Carers' Association criticises Department of Jobs	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	General
Tony O'Brien to meet RTÉ boss over HSE allegations	IrishTimes.com	19/05/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise hospital cases should be investigated, TD says	IrishTimes.com	20/05/2015	General
Boy receives €8.5 million settlement over birth injuries	IrishTimes.com	20/05/2015	Specialised
HSE was denied funds for Portlaoise hospital, says director	IrishTimes.com	21/05/2015	Specialised

Beaumont nurses plan work-to-rule due to overcrowding	IrishTimes.com	21/05/2015	General
HPV vaccine support group concerned at side-effects	IrishTimes.com	22/05/2015	General
Varadkar marks 30th anniversary of first heart transplant in Ireland	IrishTimes.com	22/05/2015	Specialised
Nurses reject LRC proposals over psychiatric unit at Cork Hospital	IrishTimes.com	22/05/2015	No byline
GPs warned over sharing intentions on under-six contract	IrishTimes.com	23/05/2015	Specialised
Obstetricians query inclusion of mothers in group	IrishTimes.com	23/05/2015	Specialised
Experts warn of dementia a 'time bomb' in the next 25 years	IrishTimes.com	23/05/2015	General
Report highlights 'startling' shortage of nurses	IrishTimes.com	25/05/2015	Specialised
Institute of Obstetricians withdraws Portlaoise letter	IrishTimes.com	25/05/2015	Specialised
Doctors given until June 5th to commit to free GP care	IrishTimes.com	25/05/2015	Specialised
Repeal of the Eighth Amendment is 'very do-able'	IrishTimes.com	25/05/2015	General
Psychiatric nurses to begin industrial action at UCHG	IrishTimes.com	26/05/2015	No byline
Rules on patient consent should be clarified, hearing told	IrishTimes.com	26/05/2015	Specialised
Taoiseach rules out abortion referendum	IrishTimes.com	27/05/2015	Specialised
Minister pledges women and infant health programme	IrishTimes.com	27/05/2015	Specialised
Plans for new €150m national maternity hospital on hold	IrishTimes.com	27/05/2015	Specialised
Patients 'afraid to complain' about care for fear of repercussions	IrishTimes.com	27/05/2015	Specialised
Doctor's action against free GP care for under-6s adjourned	IrishTimes.com	27/05/2015	General
Youth group praises 'positive outcome' from controversial drinking campaign	IrishTimes.com	27/05/2015	General
Row between HSE and St Vincent's Group reaches new levels	IrishTimes.com	28/05/2015	Specialised
Inis Óirr and Inishturk secure permanent nursing cover	IrishTimes.com	28/05/2015	General
St Vincent's group row with HSE hurts health service, says Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	28/05/2015	Specialised
Three things could make Irish maternity services better	IrishTimes.com	29/05/2015	General
Grove House unsuitable to meet residents' needs	IrishTimes.com	29/05/2015	No byline
Returning to Ireland - Healthcare	IrishTimes.com	29/05/2015	General
Irish smoking rates falling fastest in EU, says survey	IrishTimes.com	29/05/2015	Specialised
Hepatitis C patients to finally start life-saving treatment	IrishTimes.com	01/06/2015	Specialised
Elderly care home patients given 'chemical cosh' drugs	IrishTimes.com	01/06/2015	General
Old and overmedicated: the drug problem in our nursing homes	IrishTimes.com	01/06/2015	General
Jacky Jones: A whiff of 1950s Ireland about the Portlaoise hospital report	IrishTimes.com	01/06/2015	Expert
Chemical restraint of intellectually disabled common in residential centres, study finds	IrishTimes.com	02/06/2015	General
Disability centres challenged over use of antipsychotic drugs	IrishTimes.com	02/06/2015	General
St Vincent's group threatens 'legal battle' with HSE	IrishTimes.com	02/06/2015	Specialised
Lynch: Oversight needed on use of psychotropic drugs	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Clare nursing home criticised over missing drugs	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Complex surgery services to be moved Portlaoise hospital	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Planning granted for facility replacing Central Mental Hospital	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Problems go beyond maternity unit and beyond Portlaoise, says Hiqa	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Psychiatrists criticise delay in introduction of Capacity Bill	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Mammography screening cuts breast cancer deaths by 40%	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	Specialised
Varadkar insists Portlaoise hospital is not being downgraded	IrishTimes.com	03/06/2015	General
Plight of mothers with intellectual disabilities raised	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	General
National Rare Diseases Office opens in Dublin	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	General
No changes will be made to GP scheme for under-sixes , says Leo Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	Specialised
More doctor disciplinary hearings being heard in private	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	Specialised
Part of Cork University Hospital ceiling collapses	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	General
Out-of-hours closure at Portlaoise 'not a done deal'	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	Specialised
Cerebral palsy sufferer who claimed birth injury secures €2.1m	IrishTimes.com	04/06/2015	Specialised
Woman (102) spends 26 hours on trolley in Tallaght hospital	IrishTimes.com	05/06/2015	Specialised
Hospital apologises to woman (101) left on trolley for 26 hours	IrishTimes.com	05/06/2015	General
Doctors asked to fund fight against free GP care plan	IrishTimes.com	06/06/2015	Specialised
A prescription to reboot our hospital emergency departments	IrishTimes.com	06/06/2015	Expert
HSE forecast only 37 public nursing homes would meet Hiqa standards	IrishTimes.com	08/06/2015	Specialised
Language of medical profession a difficult obstacle for carers	IrishTimes.com	08/06/2015	General
Second 101-year-old spends 25 hours on hospital trolley	IrishTimes.com	08/06/2015	General
Hospital waiting lists rise again to record levels	IrishTimes.com	08/06/2015	Specialised
Failure to meet standards for nursing homes causing anxiety	IrishTimes.com	08/06/2015	Specialised
Increase in number of Irish travelling to UK for abortions	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	General
Second opinion - We are encouraged to complain to the HSE, but we need patience to pursue it	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	Expert
Woman says Ireland's abortion laws put her life in danger	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	General
Rhona Mahony warns of legal risk to doctors in abortion cases	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	General

Irish teenager appeals for permission to return to State	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	Specialised
Hiqa denies responsibility for investigating long trolley waits	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	Specialised
Ireland's abortion regime 'violates human rights', says Amnesty	IrishTimes.com	09/06/2015	Specialised
UN says Ireland must have vote on abortion	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
Cavan maternity unit review begins after four baby deaths	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
Clipping of both fallopian tubes 'in patient's best interests'	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
Nurses union urges members to back new public pay deal	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
18-year-old detained in UK psychiatric facility makes poetic appeal	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
IMO urges doctors not to pay new Medical Council fee	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
Parents can sign up for free under-6s GP care from Monday	IrishTimes.com	10/06/2015	Specialised
Court approves €6.5m for boy brain damaged at birth	IrishTimes.com	11/06/2015	No byline
HIQA concern at use of chemical restraints at Cregg House	IrishTimes.com	11/06/2015	General
St James's Hospital chief criticises objectors to children's hospital	IrishTimes.com	11/06/2015	General
Husband sues over late wife's undiagnosed breast cancer	IrishTimes.com	11/06/2015	No byline
Physiotherapists at University Hospital Galway may be displaced for extra beds	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	General
Investigation reveals 'extreme' maternity incident reports	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	General
Care assistant accused of sexual assault on patient	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	No byline
Vulnerable 18-year-old urges judge to let her return to Ireland	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	Specialised
Six in court for alleged assault of Áras Attracta patients	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	General
Fifth of child mental health admissions to adult units	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	Specialised
Residents in Louth disability centre locked in unsupervised	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	General
Hospital settles case after failing to diagnose breast cancer	IrishTimes.com	12/06/2015	No byline
Complaints over health service increase by over 50%	IrishTimes.com	13/06/2015	Specialised
Men urged to visit doctor more regularly	IrishTimes.com	21/09/2015	General
HSE defends handling of home birth midwife investigation	IrishTimes.com	21/09/2015	Specialised
Family 'consumed' over how daughter's condition addressed	IrishTimes.com	21/09/2015	General
Inquest opens into pregnant woman taken off life support	IrishTimes.com	22/09/2015	Specialised
Tax on sugary drinks supported by three in four people, says poll	IrishTimes.com	22/09/2015	Specialised
Irish people paying €600m more in health bills than in 2007	IrishTimes.com	22/09/2015	Specialised
Varadkar gives stout defence of record as health minister	IrishTimes.com	22/09/2015	Specialised
Child turned blue before respiratory arrest, inquest hears	IrishTimes.com	22/09/2015	General
Campaigners will not support ban on alcohol sponsorship	IrishTimes.com	23/09/2015	General
Back wheels fall off ambulance carrying patient, Dáil hears	IrishTimes.com	23/09/2015	Specialised
Tax junk food, increase packet of cigarettes by €1, says IMO	IrishTimes.com	23/09/2015	Specialised
Aibhe Conroy inquest: Key blood tests not performed	IrishTimes.com	23/09/2015	General
Only one-third of men take bowel cancer test	IrishTimes.com	23/09/2015	Specialised
'Sensationalist' reporting frightening prospective mothers	IrishTimes.com	24/09/2015	Specialised
HSE has 'no expectation' of receiving extra €2bn in Budget	IrishTimes.com	24/09/2015	Specialised
Mother loses claim for injury to baby during delivery	IrishTimes.com	24/09/2015	No byline
HSE €270m over-budget at end of July, says report	IrishTimes.com	24/09/2015	Specialised
Two months before new North Dublin ambulance base open	IrishTimes.com	24/09/2015	General
Budget 2016: Health spending is priority for voters	IrishTimes.com	25/09/2015	Specialised
State paid out €330m to settle claims against health services	IrishTimes.com	25/09/2015	Specialised
Pay dispute suspended at centres for people with intellectual disabilities	IrishTimes.com	25/09/2015	Specialised
St Vincent's denies undercounting trolley figures	IrishTimes.com	25/09/2015	Specialised
Thousands expected to take part in March for Choice	IrishTimes.com	26/09/2015	General
Surgeons from Scotland to help pancreas transplants restart	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	Specialised
Rural doctors: The GP who goes to work on a currach	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	Specialised
Students need incentives to work as rural GPs, says report	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	Specialised
Case study: teacher on list for kidney and pancreas transplant	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	General
Funding for hospital waiting plan falls short by 75%	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	Specialised
Methadone maintenance: 'I'd love to get this out of my system'	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	General
Plan to provide alternative to methadone for heroin addicts	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	General
Higher numbers of women over 44 seek pregnancy counselling	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	General
Gynaecologist defends care of four hysterectomy patients	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	General
Leo Varadkar carries out U-turn on sacking promise	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	Specialised
Labour TDs back Burton's pledge on Eighth Amendment vote	IrishTimes.com	28/09/2015	Specialised
Varadkar warns of sacking if trolley crisis continues	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	Specialised
Varadkar's time in health could be defined by way he tackles overcrowding	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	Specialised
Doctor denies telling patient he threw womb into bucket	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	General
Health insurers owe nearly €300m to publicly-funded hospitals	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	Specialised

Hospital records found 'strewn across road' in Drogheda	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	General
We need to change our primary thinking about health and wellness	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	General
Kenny backs Varadkar's warning on sacking over trolley crisis	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	Specialised
Government to spend €3 billion on hospitals and health projects	IrishTimes.com	29/09/2015	Specialised
Taoiseach backs Varadkar's warning of sackings in trolley crisis	IrishTimes.com	30/09/2015	Specialised
Leo Varadkar promises free GP care for all under-18s by 2017	IrishTimes.com	30/09/2015	Specialised
GP service for diabetes patients to 'free up' hospital resources	IrishTimes.com	30/09/2015	Specialised
Maternity services governance 'not sustainable', HSE told	IrishTimes.com	30/09/2015	Specialised
Small maternity units should share staff, facilities, say reports	IrishTimes.com	30/09/2015	Specialised
Leading obstetrician criticises way surgery organised	IrishTimes.com	01/10/2015	General
Ex-Gilmore adviser to take up civil service post	IrishTimes.com	01/10/2015	Specialised
Reports call for major changes in maternity services	IrishTimes.com	01/10/2015	Specialised
Patient safety at 'serious risk' in Drogheda hospital - Hiqa	IrishTimes.com	01/10/2015	Specialised
'Not where we need to be' on A&E overcrowding, O'Brien says	IrishTimes.com	01/10/2015	General
Politicians ignored problems maternity sector for years, TDs told	IrishTimes.com	01/10/2015	Specialised
Diabetic girl must be given insulin despite mother's stance	IrishTimes.com	02/10/2015	General
Emily's story: An illegal abortion in Ireland	IrishTimes.com	03/10/2015	Specialised
Obstetricians driven from private practice, says consultants group	IrishTimes.com	03/10/2015	Specialised
Patients face worse trolley crisis this winter, consultant warns	IrishTimes.com	03/10/2015	Specialised
HSE will be abolished over next five years, says Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	03/10/2015	Specialised
A&E risks could be cut 'if HIQA findings implemented'	IrishTimes.com	03/10/2015	Specialised
Tallaght Hospital course gives adults second chance at health education	IrishTimes.com	03/10/2015	General
Varadkar's private practice proposals would be major shift	IrishTimes.com	04/10/2015	Specialised
Tenfold increase in excessive prescribing of multiple drugs	IrishTimes.com	05/10/2015	Specialised
Impact of cancer leaves sufferers 'in financial crisis'	IrishTimes.com	05/10/2015	Specialised
Nurse strike threat remains after Varadkar meeting	IrishTimes.com	05/10/2015	Specialised
Accused care workers challenge use of video film	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	No byline
Plan to move disabled out of institutions will take decades	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	General
One-third of GP trainees plan to work here, report finds	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	Specialised
Nurses to vote on industrial action in A&E units	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	Specialised
HSE aims for 440 extra hospital beds for winter	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	Specialised
Couple found guilty of killing MS sufferer by neglect seek appeal	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	No byline
Woman sues Cork hospital over partner's 'awful' death	IrishTimes.com	06/10/2015	No byline
Obesity peaks, smoking below 20% but binge drinking rife	IrishTimes.com	07/10/2015	Specialised
HSE-run centre for the elderly 'does not have enough toilets'	IrishTimes.com	07/10/2015	General
Men drink and smoke more than women, health survey finds	IrishTimes.com	07/10/2015	Specialised
Nation's health: Study shows Ireland moving in right direction	IrishTimes.com	08/10/2015	Specialised
Nurses at St Vincent's hospital vote for industrial action	IrishTimes.com	08/10/2015	General
Letterkenny hospital Hiqa inspection finds patients at risk	IrishTimes.com	08/10/2015	Specialised
HSE €325m over budget for first nine months of 2015	IrishTimes.com	08/10/2015	Specialised
Kathleen Lynch 'hopeful' of €35m for mental health services	IrishTimes.com	08/10/2015	General
Inpatient, daycase waiting lists soar 11,710 per cent	IrishTimes.com	09/10/2015	General
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital back on call for emergencies	IrishTimes.com	09/10/2015	General
Scope to cut prices on specific medications, states report	IrishTimes.com	09/10/2015	General
Call for specialist weight-management centres to aid obese	IrishTimes.com	12/10/2015	Specialised
HSE squares up to Lloyds Pharmacy in row over MyMed dispensing fees	IrishTimes.com	12/10/2015	Specialised
HSE stops payments to Lloyds Pharmacy in fees row	IrishTimes.com	12/10/2015	Specialised
Hospitals face fines of €5.8m for failing to meet targets to reduce waiting lists	IrishTimes.com	12/10/2015	Specialised
Health watchdog lifts closure threat against Co Meath care centre	IrishTimes.com	12/10/2015	Specialised
Man paralysed after being stabbed in hospital by patient	IrishTimes.com	12/10/2015	No byline
Emergency department nurses work to rule at St Vincent's	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
Hospitals fined for breaching 18-month waiting lists	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
GPs warn they will not agree to proposed extension of free care	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
Work-to-rule at St Vincent's Hospital causing difficulties	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
INMO 'blocking' deployment of nurses to St Vincent's hospital	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
Health: Varadkar disputes Howlin's claims about size of budget	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
Aibhe Conroy inquest: 'medical misadventure' verdict returned	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	General
Majority referred to childhood obesity services 'refuse to attend'	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	General
Judge to decide on damages in 2010 Cork Mercy Hospital death	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	No byline
Budget 2016: Hard task making extra health funds go round	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised
Budget 2016: Hard task making extra health funds go round	IrishTimes.com	13/10/2015	Specialised

Bertie Ahern's Budget criticism 'total tripe', says Varadkar	IrishTimes.com	14/10/2015	General
Hiqa finds 66 high risk issues at Dublin disability centre	IrishTimes.com	14/10/2015	Specialised
Patients need empowerment in palliative care, conference hears	IrishTimes.com	14/10/2015	General
Public to be allowed administer more emergency medicines	IrishTimes.com	15/10/2015	Specialised
Children waiting 'up to a year' for dental extractions in hospital	IrishTimes.com	15/10/2015	Specialised
Number of doctors registered hits record high, says report	IrishTimes.com	15/10/2015	Specialised
Girl with cerebral palsy settles action against HSE for €6.7m	IrishTimes.com	15/10/2015	General
New pay rates for health managers seen as 'problematic'	IrishTimes.com	16/10/2015	Specialised
Hospital bosses to receive significantly reduced salaries	IrishTimes.com	16/10/2015	Specialised
Politicians know higher pay in health is a 'toxic' issue	IrishTimes.com	16/10/2015	Specialised
State agency's handling of injury claims under review	IrishTimes.com	16/10/2015	Specialised
More than 18,200 children waiting for orthodontic treatment	IrishTimes.com	16/10/2015	Specialised
Cancer patients warned over contaminated chemotherapy treatment	IrishTimes.com	16/10/2015	Specialised
Baby cannot go home as Cork hospital has no beds	IrishTimes.com	17/10/2015	Specialised
Irish Lives: The end of a 23-year wait for a Mayo Roscommon Hospice	IrishTimes.com	17/10/2015	General
Women from deprived areas more likely to die of breast cancer	IrishTimes.com	19/10/2015	Specialised
Further wait for patients in chemotherapy scare	IrishTimes.com	20/10/2015	Specialised
Maternity units report 75 'extreme incidents' in 2014	IrishTimes.com	20/10/2015	Specialised
Man left disabled by brain tumour accepts €1m further payment	IrishTimes.com	20/10/2015	No byline
Archbishop contacted Kenny during abortion Bill controversy	IrishTimes.com	21/10/2015	Specialised
Maternity services: 80% increase in claims in four years	IrishTimes.com	21/10/2015	Specialised
Claims and incidents vary widely in maternity units	IrishTimes.com	21/10/2015	Specialised
Medical Council inquiry ruling into consultant gynaecologist expected	IrishTimes.com	21/10/2015	General
People with MS spending €17,000 a year on doctors and hospital visits	IrishTimes.com	21/10/2015	Specialised
Peter Van Geene: a lengthy inquiry with many strange moments	IrishTimes.com	21/10/2015	General
Woman suing HSE for damages says she told doctor: 'I am going to die'	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	No byline
Van Geene case reveals unwieldy medical complaints system	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
HSE report into death of baby Mark Molloy published	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
HSE's €22.4m tax settlement 'has not' affected services	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
Government will have to provide extra money for HSE tax bill	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
Boy makes €2m settlement with HSE in brain damage case	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
HSE head criticised for having conference expenses paid	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
HSE owed €290m for the use of public facilities	IrishTimes.com	22/10/2015	Specialised
Consultant surgeon earns €736,000 from HSE	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	Specialised
Shortage of nurses major cause of hospital trolley crisis, Sinn Féin claims	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	Specialised
Overcrowding at Beaumont sees 41 patients waiting for beds - INMO	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	General
Abortion pill bus sets off on two day tour across Ireland	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	General
IMO urges action on 'unacceptable' overcrowding at Beaumont	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	Specialised
No reports of bad reactions in chemo scare, says authority	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	Specialised
Obese Ireland: Renewed urgency on question of junk food tax	IrishTimes.com	23/10/2015	General
Abortion pill bus greeted with 'abortion is murder' placards in Cork	IrishTimes.com	25/10/2015	Specialised
Waiting time for doctor appointments now 34 hours	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	Specialised
HSE to look at introducing hospital theatre assistants	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	Specialised
Medical brain drain leading to 'dumbing down', says Rotunda master	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	Specialised
HSE staff plan delayed due to concerns over pay expectations	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	Specialised
Rotunda Hospital master criticises abortion legislation	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	Specialised
New €2.3 million cystic fibrosis ward at Cork hospital welcomed	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	General
HSE to review link between red meat and cancer	IrishTimes.com	26/10/2015	Specialised
'Live today for today': the heart of preparing for death	IrishTimes.com	27/10/2015	General
Downgrade of day care service 'targets elderly', say doctors	IrishTimes.com	27/10/2015	General
EU court ruling may impact health identifier plans	IrishTimes.com	27/10/2015	General
Court unable to intervene in treatment of vulnerable woman	IrishTimes.com	28/10/2015	Specialised
Hiqa orders unit for people with disabilities to cease admissions	IrishTimes.com	28/10/2015	General
Nurses suspend work-to-rule at St Vincent's hospital	IrishTimes.com	29/10/2015	General
Sexual health strategy aims to combat rising STI levels	IrishTimes.com	29/10/2015	General
Plan for free GP care for children under 12 faces potential delays	IrishTimes.com	30/10/2015	Specialised
Trolley crisis worsens as HSE records deficit of €322m in August	IrishTimes.com	30/10/2015	Specialised
Drug supply issues cause chemo delays for cancer patients	IrishTimes.com	30/10/2015	Specialised
Woman who had ovary removed settles case against HSE	IrishTimes.com	30/10/2015	No byline
Judge increases compensation for woman over hep C infection	IrishTimes.com	30/10/2015	No byline
Savita Halappanavar medical negligence case to proceed	IrishTimes.com	31/10/2015	General
HSE takes steps to minimise chemotherapy delays	IrishTimes.com	31/10/2015	Specialised

IMO rejects call to draft in surgeons for emergency work	IrishTimes.com	02/11/2015	Specialised
Women with concerns over deliveries to meet maternity experts	IrishTimes.com	02/11/2015	Specialised
HSE to spend €38m on new health initiatives	IrishTimes.com	02/11/2015	Specialised
Hospital consultants to seek increase in pay	IrishTimes.com	02/11/2015	Specialised
State should pay to replace health workers it recruits – Robinson	IrishTimes.com	03/11/2015	Specialised
Dying with dignity and in peace away from a busy hospital ward	IrishTimes.com	03/11/2015	General
'Ms Y' settles court challenge to stop HSE inquiry into her care	IrishTimes.com	03/11/2015	No byline
Hospital apologises to bar manager blinded by surgery	IrishTimes.com	03/11/2015	Specialised
Tallaght hospital patient left 'festering' on trolley for 59 hours	IrishTimes.com	04/11/2015	Specialised
Kenny criticises 'shocking' hospital treatment of man (91)	IrishTimes.com	04/11/2015	Specialised
Doctor bonuses could lead to knock-on claims	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	Specialised
Miriam Lord: Kenny's decisiveness is winter's first casualty	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	Specialised
Similar attitudes towards abortion in North and Republic	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	General
Grieving family of father criticise ambulance response time	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	General
Ruling means higher damages for victims of catastropic injuries	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	Specialised
Shortage of ambulances on night Dundalk man bled to death	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	Specialised
Ambulance staff absent on 'short notice' on night Dundalk man bled to death	IrishTimes.com	05/11/2015	Specialised
Man (91) who spent 29 hours on trolley was 'caught in crossfire'	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	Specialised
Flood of support for Tallaght whistleblower	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	Specialised
Private companies could take over public hospitals	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	Specialised
Tallaght hospital trying to silence doctors, group claims	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	Specialised
Tallaght hospital trying to gag me, says whistleblower	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	Specialised
Outpatient waiting lists rise for fourth month in a row	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	Specialised
Medical negligence law firm gets €7m from State	IrishTimes.com	06/11/2015	General
Doctor says he was asked to drop inquest evidence	IrishTimes.com	07/11/2015	Specialised
Use of private-sector health mangers 'could hit salaries'	IrishTimes.com	08/11/2015	Specialised
Father of bride dies at wedding from suspected heart attack hours after walking daughter up the aisle	IrishMirror.ie	27/04/2015	General
Man who collapsed and died at daughter's wedding was victim of HSE waiting list, son claims	IrishMirror.ie	29/04/2015	General
Rural areas will lose cover as ageing GPs quit	IrishMirror.ie	03/05/2015	General
Women in Ireland nearly three times as likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth as those in Norway	IrishMirror.ie	05/05/2015	General
Ireland at forefront of 'enormous' obesity crisis that will hit Europe by 2030	IrishMirror.ie	05/05/2015	General
Portlaoise Hospital: Shock report claims dead baby was squeezed into metal box and given to parents	IrishMirror.ie	08/05/2015	Wire
You're not allowed to be seen, you have to go out the back door with your baby'	IrishMirror.ie	09/05/2015	General
Doctor at Portlaoise Hospital told mum losing her baby was a good thing	IrishMirror.ie	11/05/2015	General
Five care home staff facing assault charges after shock RTE footage revealed abuse	IrishMirror.ie	12/05/2015	General
"Doctors told me my foetus would not survive but I gave birth to healthy twins." Mum reveals her horrific ordeal at Portlaoise	IrishMirror.ie	12/05/2015	General
Mum tells of horror treatment at Portlaoise: Hospital left my dead baby in box at side of my bed	IrishMirror.ie	13/05/2015	General
Cavan Hospital baby death: Probe launched after fourth tot dies in space of three years	IrishMirror.ie	13/05/2015	General
Minister Leo Varadkar: I'm "ashamed" at how mums who lost babies were treated by hospital	IrishMirror.ie	14/05/2015	General
GPs snub free care for kids plan as only 2% sign up to new scheme	IrishMirror.ie	18/05/2015	General
Parents of babies who died in Portlaoise Hospital beg Leo Varadkar for full probe	IrishMirror.ie	19/05/2015	General
Carpenter says life has changed after he gets first treatment following miracle cure u-turn	IrishMirror.ie	19/05/2015	General
Beaumont Hospital: TD claims life-saving operations being cancelled due to consultant shortage	IrishMirror.ie	20/05/2015	General
Ireland's youngest ever heart transplant recipient thanks heroic doctors who saved his life	IrishMirror.ie	21/05/2015	General
Galway University Hospital: Psychiatric nurses take industrial action over safety fears at unit	IrishMirror.ie	26/05/2015	General
Disadvantaged women five times more likely to smoke, new study reveals	IrishMirror.ie	29/05/2015	General
TD blasts 'ludicrous' health service after thousands of x-rays and scans found to be wrong	IrishMirror.ie	30/05/2015	General
Portlaoise Hospital to stop complex surgery procedures and reduce emergency department hours	IrishMirror.ie	03/06/2015	General
Elderly Alzheimer's sufferer waiting on nursing home bed savagely attacked by male patient and died two days later	IrishMirror.ie	04/06/2015	General
Alzheimer's charity calls for increase in number of specialist beds to deal with patients with the disease	IrishMirror.ie	04/06/2015	General
Tallaght Hospital apologises after 102-year-old woman is left on trolley for over 24 hours	IrishMirror.ie	05/06/2015	General
Treatment of 101-year-old woman left on hospital trolley slammed as 'human rights abuse'	IrishMirror.ie	05/06/2015	General
GPs divided on free care to children under six	IrishMirror.ie	05/06/2015	General
Heart attack woman's 16 hour A&E hell: 'I was moved between chairs for hours - there wasn't even a trolley'	IrishMirror.ie	08/06/2015	General

Title	Source	Date	Category
Aimee Nolan: Woman gives birth to baby doctor said was dead	IrishMirror.ie	09/06/2015	General
Multiple Sclerosis sufferer blasts 'cruel' HSE for refusing to make wonder drug Fampyra free	IrishMirror.ie	10/06/2015	General
Dad who waited 80-hours on hospital trolley warns public: 'Don't get sick'	IrishMirror.ie	10/06/2015	General
Hospital nearly operated on wrong woman's spine after name mix-up, watchdog reveals	IrishMirror.ie	10/06/2015	Wire
Frantic mum forced to drive 110kms with bleeding son to get treatment after being told of 10 hour wait at Kerry General	IrishMirror.ie	10/06/2015	General
Resident at care home for disabled people restrained with sedative-type drug 13 times in few months, inspectors warns	IrishMirror.ie	11/06/2015	Wire
Melissa Hamilton: Doctors missed young mum's breast cancer twice, court hears	IrishMirror.ie	11/06/2015	General
Aras Attracta: Six staff members charged with assault on patients	IrishMirror	12/06/2015	No byline
Residents in Louth care home locked up on their own and undernourished, Hiqa finds	IrishMirror.ie	12/06/2015	Wire
Tax on sugary drinks urged to solve child obesity as over half of Irish public 'would happily pay it'	IrishMirror.ie	22/09/2015	General
Almost 1,000 Irish women in boob job horror as Brazilian-made implants banned	IrishMirror.ie	25/09/2015	General
Thousands of cancer sufferers to receive more personal care in new pioneering project (by Sarah Slater)	IrishMirror.ie	27/09/2015	General
Probes launched after confidential medical files discovered in overflowing public bin (by Adelina Campos)	IrishMirror.ie	29/09/2015	General
Hiqa report outlines 'serious risks' to patients at Our Lady Of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda, Co Louth	IrishMirror.ie	01/10/2015	General
"Massive effort" needed to avoid nurses' strike, says INMO	IrishMirror.ie	05/10/2015	General
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in crisis after emergency department crowding causes A&E to shut	IrishMirror.ie	09/10/2015	General
Up to 10,000 kids end up in hospital every year as "direct result of cuts to free dental care"	IrishMirror.ie	14/10/2015	Wire
Mum of nut-allergy teen Emma Sloan praised for her campaign to change the law	IrishMirror.ie	15/10/2015	General
Chemotherapy medication for Irish cancer patients recalled after contamination discovered	IrishMirror.ie	16/10/2015	General
Damning report into death of baby Mark Molloy released by HSE	IrishMirror.ie	22/10/2015	General
Ruth Coppinger TD condemned for her support of abortion pill bus by pro-life campaigners	IrishMirror.ie	22/10/2015	General
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation calls on Beaumont Hospital to go OFF CALL to ease overcrowding	IrishMirror.ie	22/10/2015	General
Leo Varadkar slammed as 'arrogant' as hospital trolley crisis continues	IrishMirror.ie	23/10/2015	General
Son's outrage as patient smokes on Kilkenny hospital ward alongside 82-year-old father who had major surgery	IrishMirror.ie	24/10/2015	General
No need to panic' over processed meat cancer risk, says Department of Health (by Pat Flanagan)	IrishMirror.ie	27/10/2015	General
Furious mum reveals hospitalised son went hungry for over 24 hours because of staff shortages	IrishMirror.ie	01/11/2015	General
Irish Nurses and Midwives' Organisation to ballot members on issue of overcrowding in hospitals	IrishMirror.ie	03/11/2015	General
Patient in his 90s left 'to fester' on A&E trolley for 29 hours as wife spent over seven hours waiting for bed	IrishMirror.ie	04/11/2015	General
Pregnant girlfriend of Louth man who bled to death waiting on ambulance speaks of moment he died in kitchen	IrishMirror.ie	04/11/2015	General
Family's fury after young dad bled to death at home waiting on ambulance after glass door accident	IrishMirror.ie	04/11/2015	General
Women are tweeting Enda Kenny about their periods in a bid to highlight abortion rights in Ireland	IrishMirror.ie	04/11/2015	General
Explainer: Why is there no A&E department in Louth County Hospital	IrishMirror.ie	04/11/2015	General
Family's fury after 93-year-old left on trolley for 29 hours in Beaumont Hospital as conditions slammed as 'shambles'	IrishMirror.ie	06/11/2015	General
Budget 2016: The pensioner	Independent.ie	12/10/2014	General
Some equipment in Irish hospitals not large enough to take proper scans of obese	Independent.ie	12/10/2014	Specialised
The critical tests were not performed' - Verdict of medical misadventure returned at inquest into death of little Aibhe Conroy (6)	Independent.ie	12/10/2014	General
GPs to get under-sixes contracts this week	Independent.ie	27/04/2015	Specialised
Half-a-stone weight loss could help save thousands of lives	Independent.ie	28/04/2015	Specialised
Many GPs still undecided about free visits for children under six	Independent.ie	29/04/2015	Specialised
Hundreds of patients recalled after x-ray errors found	Independent.ie	30/04/2015	No byline
Psychiatric nurses in Galway could hold strike action within weeks after HSE talks break down	Independent.ie	30/04/2015	General
Son of man who died at daughter's wedding said his father had heart by-pass operation cancelled last year	Independent.ie	30/04/2015	General
Two in three delaying GP visits due to cost	Independent.ie	30/04/2015	General
Desperate mother begs Health Minister for life-changing spinal surgery for daughter (13)	Independent.ie	30/04/2015	General
Plans for new national children's hospital unveiled	Independent.ie	30/04/2015	Specialised
Hospitals disclosed names of women who had abortions	Independent.ie	01/05/2015	Specialised
Radiology debacle shows good-quality healthcare costs, but poor care costs more	Independent.ie	01/05/2015	Expert
Agonising wait for patients as X-ray probe is extended	Independent.ie	01/05/2015	Specialised
Design for children's hospital is 'breathtaking'	Independent.ie	01/05/2015	Specialised
Hundreds more patients to be recalled over scans	Independent.ie	01/05/2015	No byline
Bowel cancer found in more patients after re-checks	Independent.ie	02/05/2015	Specialised
My first patient of the year was almost 40 stone	Independent.ie	03/05/2015	General

HSE can't fill rural GP jobs despite medical card lists	Independent.ie	04/05/2015	Specialised
Parents tell of tough fight on behalf of their sick children	Independent.ie	04/05/2015	No byline
Discretionary medical card numbers up 60pc since reviews stopped	Independent.ie	04/05/2015	Specialised
HSE spent €170k on sex-change ops in 2014	Independent.ie	04/05/2015	General
Price boost as up to 100,000 go for health cover	Independent.ie	04/05/2015	Specialised
Flood of new abuse claims in wake of care home scandal	Independent.ie	05/05/2015	Specialised
Critical' shortage of midwives highlighted	Independent.ie	05/05/2015	General
Lifestyle remains a major factor in disease prevention	Independent.ie	05/05/2015	No byline
Breast cancer rate worryingly high in Dublin	Independent.ie	05/05/2015	Specialised
Care home worker fined for assaulting autistic resident	Independent.ie	06/05/2015	General
Obesity crisis to escalate faster among Irish women than men	Independent.ie	06/05/2015	Specialised
Midwives set new standards of care	Independent.ie	06/05/2015	Specialised
Ireland's obesity problem will be worse than cholera or Aids for our health service, professor warns	Independent.ie	06/05/2015	No byline
Teen left paralysed after surgery awarded almost €1.7m	Independent.ie	06/05/2015	General
Irish under-fives weigh in as fattest in Europe	Independent.ie	07/05/2015	Specialised
Surge in numbers waiting more than a year for surgery	Independent.ie	07/05/2015	Specialised
Pressure on Labour and SF TDs as abortion bill set to come before Dáil	Independent.ie	07/05/2015	Specialised
Hospital café ordered to shut after rat found	Independent.ie	07/05/2015	General
Watchdog rejects HSE bid to water down report on Portlaoise Hospital	Independent.ie	08/05/2015	Specialised
HSE failed to take appropriate action to deal with litany of issues at Portlaoise Hospital - damning HIQA report	Independent.ie	08/05/2015	No byline
Labour party politician considers another vote against Government on abortion	Independent.ie	08/05/2015	Specialised
Review reveals Portlaoise failures	Independent.ie	08/05/2015	Wire
I fear findings will fall on deaf ears - like many recommendations in the past	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	Expert
They knew children could die, that lives could be ruined, but they did nothing'	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	General
Lack of dignity was the worst thing of all for bereaved	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	General
Portlaoise facing services scale-down	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	No byline
Timeline of Tragedies	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	No byline
HSE faces call for 'clear-out' after damning Hiqa report	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	Specialised
Patient safety not on agenda at management meetings	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	Specialised
Records of patient were deliberately removed'	Independent.ie	09/05/2015	Specialised
Just one-in-60 families 'winners' in State's new dementia strategy	Independent.ie	10/05/2015	General
Schools earning money on junk food	Independent.ie	10/05/2015	General
19 stillbirths at 'overcrowded' hospital in one year - FOI	Independent.ie	10/05/2015	General
Pressure on HSE to reveal all maternity unit failures	Independent.ie	10/05/2015	General
HSE chief says 'clear-out of uncompassionate staff needed' from maternity units	Independent.ie	10/05/2015	General
GPs needed in each area if 'under six' plan to work	Independent.ie	11/05/2015	General
I don't believe we're going to be fattest in Europe, says minister	Independent.ie	11/05/2015	General
Top food writer claims HSE food advice is 'out of date'	Independent.ie	11/05/2015	General
I can't discipline anyone over baby deaths - Minister	Independent.ie	11/05/2015	Specialised
Deaths of two more babies to be referred for probe	Independent.ie	11/05/2015	No byline
Five Aras Attracta staff members to be charged with assault	Independent.ie	11/05/2015	General
Doing nothing is not an option when lives of mothers on the line	Independent.ie	12/05/2015	Expert
Mum-of-three 'never got to touch her newborn baby' before she died of cancer	Independent.ie	12/05/2015	General
Doctor's alleged failure to put adequate plan for baby's treatment in place 'amounted to poor professional performance', fitness-to-practice inquiry hears	Independent.ie	12/05/2015	General
Taoiseach called on to allow emergency debate into latest HIQA report into babies' deaths at Portlaoise Hospital	Independent.ie	12/05/2015	Specialised
Free under-sixes GP visits face legal challenge	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	Specialised
Family gets €1m over failure to spot cancer that killed mother	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	General
Our teens drink less but parents fourth heaviest drinkers in OECD	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	General
Whooping cough outbreak kills three babies	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	Specialised
Probe as baby dies at Cavan hospital	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	No byline
Taoiseach Enda Kenny 'empathises' with parents of baby who died at Cavan General Hospital yesterday	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	No byline
HIQA 'not asked' to investigate four baby deaths at Cavan General Hospital	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	Wire
Doctor tells fitness-to-practice inquiry he was 'delighted' when he saw baby's vital signs improving	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	General
We need to know where it is all going wrong' - Mother who lost baby at Cavan hospital a year ago today	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	General
Desperate father of girl (9) diagnosed with rare form of cancer slams medical card delay	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	No byline
Full inquiry into maternity unit at Cavan Hospital 'not warranted' at this stage - Leo Varadkar	Independent.ie	13/05/2015	Specialised
Family wants action on maternity units	Independent.ie	14/05/2015	No byline

Family anxiously awaits post mortem after baby's death at Cavan Hospital	Independent.ie	14/05/2015	Specialised
I am ashamed at the manner in which patients were treated,' Leo Varadkar on Portlaoise hospital	Independent.ie	14/05/2015	No byline
I am ashamed at the manner in which patients were treated,' Leo Varadkar on Portlaoise hospital	Independent.ie	14/05/2015	No byline
Lucinda: 'If Portlaoise babies had received the same care as me they'd still be alive'	Independent.ie	15/05/2015	Specialised
Patients on waiting lists to be treated privately or abroad	Independent.ie	15/05/2015	Specialised
Government signs first ever public private partnership (PPP) deal for medical construction	Independent.ie	15/05/2015	Specialised
Children's hospital will bring traffic chaos'	Independent.ie	17/05/2015	General
Rhona Mahony: Our mothers and youngest citizens deserve better	Independent.ie	17/05/2015	Expert
I never got to hear my baby son Joshua cry' - Grief stricken mother tells her story to Leo Varadkar	Independent.ie	17/05/2015	General
Doctors warned of dangers years before deaths	Independent.ie	17/05/2015	Specialised
Parents of babies who died at Portlaoise hospital 'were not dealt with honestly' - Leo Varadkar	Independent.ie	17/05/2015	Specialised
Lack of honesty' over baby deaths	Independent.ie	17/05/2015	Wire
GPs will launch challenge to free care for under-sixes	Independent.ie	18/05/2015	Specialised
Three-month wait for independent report into Portlaoise hospital	Independent.ie	18/05/2015	Specialised
Workload warning over extension of free doctor visits to under-sixes	Independent.ie	19/05/2015	No byline
Irish women undergoing fertility treatment can continue to use anonymous donor sperm for at least another year	Independent.ie	19/05/2015	Specialised
Donor sperm law is put back for a year	Independent.ie	19/05/2015	Specialised
Tech centre `will transform` healthcare services	Independent.ie	19/05/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise Hospital families say information on dead babies was deliberately suppressed	Independent.ie	19/05/2015	Specialised
Bereaved parents' plea for probe into HSE is ruled out	Independent.ie	20/05/2015	Specialised
We were urged to go the legal route to stop internal review'	Independent.ie	20/05/2015	Specialised
Investigation ordered into latest Cavan baby death	Independent.ie	20/05/2015	Specialised
Nurses at Beaumont Hospital serve notice of industrial action	Independent.ie	21/05/2015	No byline
My imperfections will be the ones noticed' - Teen posts heart breaking poem as wait for life-changing surgery continues	Independent.ie	21/05/2015	General
Retired GPs asked to join under-sixes scheme as it faces court challenge	Independent.ie	22/05/2015	Specialised
Make love, not war - HSE bulk buys condoms	Independent.ie	22/05/2015	General
Doctor launches action against HSE over plan to give free GP care to children under six	Independent.ie	22/05/2015	General
Varadkar appoints group to advise on new cancer strategy for next decade	Independent.ie	25/05/2015	Specialised
Doctors withdraw letter about bereaved mothers	Independent.ie	25/05/2015	Specialised
HIQA expresses major concerns for safety of children in asylum centres	Independent.ie	25/05/2015	Specialised
No out-of-hours charges for under sixes with GP co-ops	Independent.ie	26/05/2015	Specialised
Cancelling operations for cancer 'has to stop'	Independent.ie	26/05/2015	Specialised
No rush to change abortion in the Constitution - Taoiseach	Independent.ie	26/05/2015	Specialised
Psychiatric patients 'at serious risk due to doctor shortage'	Independent.ie	27/05/2015	Specialised
Doctor made 'measured decision' in sterilisation of patient	Independent.ie	27/05/2015	General
HSE patients 'too frightened to complain' warns Ombudsman	Independent.ie	27/05/2015	No byline
Ex-HSE staff must be banned from sensitive inquiries, says PAC report	Independent.ie	28/05/2015	Specialised
Complaints about hospital care were locked in a box - and key was lost	Independent.ie	28/05/2015	Specialised
Maternity hospital is on course - Varadkar	Independent.ie	28/05/2015	Specialised
Just 830 GPs have signed up to provide free care for under-sixes	Independent.ie	29/05/2015	Specialised
75 health workers could keep unapproved payments	Independent.ie	29/05/2015	Specialised
Treatment outsourced to help 1,500 public patients	Independent.ie	29/05/2015	Specialised
Reservations over maternity hospital plan	Independent.ie	29/05/2015	Specialised
Lansdowne Road deal will not attract nurses and doctors	Independent.ie	30/05/2015	Specialised
Unclean' HSE-run home had no locks on toilets	Independent.ie	30/05/2015	Specialised
Kenny will not bend to Left on abortion	Independent.ie	31/05/2015	Specialised
Queue-jumping rife on hospital waiting lists' - damning report	Independent.ie	02/06/2015	Specialised
It's Groundhog Day all over again as we're forced to endure long delays	Independent.ie	02/06/2015	Specialised
Mental health services have been 'bleeding' vital staff, report warns	Independent.ie	03/06/2015	Specialised
Queue-jumping is serious breach of policy - Varadkar	Independent.ie	03/06/2015	Specialised
Portlaoise Hospital has A&E 'downgraded' and will no longer carry out complex surgery	Independent.ie	03/06/2015	Specialised
Psychiatric nurses end their industrial action at Galway hospital	Independent.ie	03/06/2015	General
Downgrade of Portlaoise hospital set to take place next year	Independent.ie	04/06/2015	Specialised
HSE acts on patient risk at last - but the real test of safety is yet to come	Independent.ie	04/06/2015	Specialised
Central Mental Hospital gets planning green light	Independent.ie	04/06/2015	Specialised
Report calls for 'no-fry' zones around schools to help students fight obesity	Independent.ie	04/06/2015	General
1,000 GPs have now signed up for under-sixes scheme - HSE	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	Specialised

IMO calls for rejection of Lansdowne Road pay deal	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	Specialised
Delay in hiring outside experts to probe HSE staff	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	Specialised
Gardaí probe death of Alzheimer's patient after hospital attack	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	General
Jump in complaints of doctors not treating patients with dignity	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	Specialised
102-year-old woman forced to spend 26 hours on trolley in hospital emergency department	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	No byline
Tallaght hospital to meet family of 102-year-old who spent 26 hours on trolley	Independent.ie	05/06/2015	No byline
Rose (102) now faces waiting list after A&E ordeal	Independent.ie	06/06/2015	Specialised
There's only room for short-termism in health politics	Independent.ie	06/06/2015	General
High death toll from flu among elderly last winter	Independent.ie	06/06/2015	Specialised
We have concerns that must be satisfied over maternity hospital plan'	Independent.ie	06/06/2015	Specialised
Consultants go to war over €350m in back money	Independent.ie	07/06/2015	General
Is 'chemical cosh' really an outrage against dignity?	Independent.ie	07/06/2015	General
Residents are in turmoil over new children's hospital	Independent.ie	07/06/2015	General
Hospital waiting lists soar as 470,000 people are left waiting for care	Independent.ie	08/06/2015	No byline
Miss Y review failures leave her solicitor 'dumbfounded'	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	Specialised
Miss Y's solicitor is left 'dumbfounded' by behaviour of HSE	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	Specialised
Second 100-year-old woman left on a hospital trolley for 25 hours	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	General
Troubleshooter squad to visit crisis-hit A&Es	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	Specialised
Amnesty to attack Irish abortion legislation	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	No byline
Irish government relies on 'safety valve' of women going to UK for abortions rather than address the issue - Amnesty International	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	No byline
Massive support for four young children who urged Leo Varadkar to make hospitals safer after mum tragically died	Independent.ie	09/06/2015	No byline
Varadkar gives guarantee of patient safety at A&Es	Independent.ie	10/06/2015	Specialised
Abortion law leaving doctors practising medical roulette'	Independent.ie	10/06/2015	Specialised
Just half of all GPs sign up for free care to under-sixes	Independent.ie	11/06/2015	Specialised
Couple 'failed miserably' by clearing of gynaecologist	Independent.ie	11/06/2015	General
Watchdog furious over HSE text seeking 'chat' about Portlaoise report	Independent.ie	11/06/2015	Specialised
67 incidents led to permanent incapacity or death in maternity hospitals last year	Independent.ie	11/06/2015	No byline
Hiqa raised concerns over maternal bleeds at Portlaoise Hospital	Independent.ie	12/06/2015	Specialised
67 'extreme incidents' at maternity hospitals, new report claims	Independent.ie	12/06/2015	Specialised
Man accused of sexually assaulting patient in Mater Private Hospital goes on trial	Independent.ie	12/06/2015	General
Family's plea for €120k so cerebral palsy toddlers can receive life changing surgery in United States	Independent.ie	12/06/2015	General
Almost €1m settlement for family of young mother who died of cancer after missed opportunities to diagnose	Independent.ie	12/06/2015	No byline
Six Áras Attracta staff charged with assault	Independent.ie	13/06/2015	General
7,713 patients waited on A&E trolleys last month	Independent.ie	13/06/2015	Specialised
Maternity legal claims reach 56 so far this year	Independent.ie	13/06/2015	Specialised
Highlight link of smoking to Alzheimer's, urge experts	Independent.ie	21/09/2015	Specialised
Parents of Aibhe (6) 'haunted' that beloved daughter 'spent some of her final hours without them by her side'	Independent.ie	21/09/2015	General
Girl (6) died four days after being admitted to hospital with vomiting	Independent.ie	22/09/2015	General
Broken bones, mysterious injuries, cigarette butts as food: just some of allegat	Independent.ie	22/09/2015	Specialised
New flood of complaints revealed on care in homes for the disabled	Independent.ie	22/09/2015	Specialised
Hated €2.50 drugs levy to stay, but it won't rise in Budget	Independent.ie	22/09/2015	Specialised
Calls for a €20 rise in disability allowance	Independent.ie	22/09/2015	Specialised
Children's hospital land at Mater is returned	Independent.ie	22/09/2015	Specialised
Ring of steel up at Leinster House as small group of nurses stage protest	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	No byline
Care services 'will find it hard to retain staff'	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	No byline
Doctors defend treatment of tragic Aibhe (6), inquest hears	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	General
Brain-dead pregnant woman kept on life support	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	No byline
We're spending €130 more now on healthcare than before recession	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	Specialised
Foreign carers face racism, long hours and poor wages	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	Specialised
GPs advised not to issue sick certs for too long	Independent.ie	23/09/2015	Specialised
Critical blood tests never performed on Aibhe - inquest	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	General
Booze is part of our culture - and drinks industry has nurtured it	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	General
Psychiatrists urge ban on alcohol sponsors for sport	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	Specialised
Hospitals are now in 'death zone' due to overcrowding	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	Specialised
Grieving mothers who lose babies forced to share wards with healthy newborns	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	Specialised
Completely unacceptable' situation as over 300,000 people depending on just one ambulance in north Dublin	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	General
Thousands of abortion activists expected at 'March for Choice'	Independent.ie	24/09/2015	General
€2bn plea for health not just a dream: HSE boss	Independent.ie	25/09/2015	Specialised

Test babies to check if pregnant mums had been drinking: doctor	Independent.ie	25/09/2015	Specialised
Call to test newborns for mums' drinking	Independent.ie	25/09/2015	Specialised
Grieving mothers 'have to share wards with newborns'	Independent.ie	25/09/2015	Specialised
Warning to women here over Brazilian brand of implants after EU suspends their use	Independent.ie	25/09/2015	Wire
HSE pays out over €333m to settle claims in the last three years	Independent.ie	26/09/2015	Specialised
State should help fund IVF, says Rhona Mahony	Independent.ie	27/09/2015	General
Ireland's cancer survival rates among worst in western Europe	Independent.ie	28/09/2015	Specialised
Doctor felt 'ambushed' by patient after surgery	Independent.ie	29/09/2015	General
Big rise in numbers of women aged over 44 seeking crisis pregnancy counselling	Independent.ie	29/09/2015	Specialised
Claims against maternity units rise	Independent.ie	29/09/2015	Specialised
Patient papers found dumped in 'overflowing bin' on public road - HSE launch investigation	Independent.ie	29/09/2015	No byline
Kenny defends Varadkar's claim that 'heads will roll' if trolley crisis continues	Independent.ie	29/09/2015	Specialised
Surgeon denies telling patient he threw her womb in a bucket	Independent.ie	30/09/2015	General
Some 80,000 people may miss out on new psoriasis drug	Independent.ie	30/09/2015	General
Varadkar 'suspicious' of waiting list figures	Independent.ie	30/09/2015	Specialised
Type 2 diabetes patients entitled to two free GP checks a year now	Independent.ie	01/10/2015	No byline
Revealed: Varadkar's dire warnings to Howlin about this year's health budget	Independent.ie	01/10/2015	Specialised
Abortion referendum endorsed by Human Rights Commission	Independent.ie	01/10/2015	Specialised
Smaller maternity units 'can no longer be run in isolation'	Independent.ie	01/10/2015	Specialised
Patient safety at risk because of poor hand-washing in one of the most overcrowded hospitals' - Hiqa	Independent.ie	01/10/2015	Specialised
Experts warned of risks in hospitals but 'were ignored'	Independent.ie	02/10/2015	Specialised
My head is on the block each day, says HSE chief O'Brien	Independent.ie	02/10/2015	Specialised
Cramped cancer unit put patients at risk of infection	Independent.ie	02/10/2015	Specialised
Tanya Sweeney: I have never had an abortion - out of luck	Independent.ie	02/10/2015	General
Father of the late campaigner Donal Walsh opposes plans for children's hospital	Independent.ie	03/10/2015	Specialised
Nothing to see here, just a case of moral cowardice	Independent.ie	04/10/2015	General
Stop saying it's all rosy, doctor tells Varadkar	Independent.ie	05/10/2015	Specialised
For some, the financial stress of cancer feels worse than the illness itself	Independent.ie	05/10/2015	General
The cost of cancer: 'I went hungry so the kids could eat'	Independent.ie	05/10/2015	General
Mouth cancer survivor Rita is left with a lifetime of bills	Independent.ie	05/10/2015	Specialised
Revealed: Cancer is costing sufferers up to €1,200 a month	Independent.ie	05/10/2015	Specialised
Revealed: the €1,200 hidden cost of cancer	Independent.ie	05/10/2015	Specialised
All 1,500 nursing graduates to get jobs	Independent.ie	06/10/2015	Specialised
Full-time jobs for all 1,500 graduate nurses this year	Independent.ie	06/10/2015	Specialised
Mental health is the Cinderella of the HSE and we're all losing out as a result	Independent.ie	06/10/2015	Expert
Fair Deal nursing home scheme guaranteed a healthy Budget - but what of other services?	Independent.ie	06/10/2015	Specialised
Vacancies for 171 specialist doctors	Independent.ie	07/10/2015	Specialised
Leo Varadkar: We can't make you fit, but we can help you make better choices	Independent.ie	07/10/2015	Expert
Only one-third of us getting enough exercise	Independent.ie	07/10/2015	Specialised
HSE's alleged culpability should have been considered' for death of MS sufferer	Independent.ie	07/10/2015	General
Patients are waiting up to 15 months for heart bypass	Independent.ie	08/10/2015	Specialised
Nurses at St Vincent's Hospital vote overwhelmingly for industrial action	Independent.ie	08/10/2015	General
Weaknesses in infection control at Letterkenny Hospital which put patients at risk - HIQA	Independent.ie	08/10/2015	Specialised
Irish mothers struggle to recognise obesity in their children	Independent.ie	08/10/2015	General
HSE chief in Madrid as crisis in A&Es deepens	Independent.ie	09/10/2015	Specialised
Overcrowded hospital forced to go 'off call' and refuse patients	Independent.ie	09/10/2015	Specialised
Long delays for patients who need to be seen by specialists	Independent.ie	10/10/2015	Specialised
Fat children switch on cancer genes says new research	Independent.ie	11/10/2015	General
Hospitals fined €5.8m for waiting list delays	Independent.ie	12/10/2015	Specialised
Parents coping with a child with disability: 'Isabella could live until she's 10	Independent.ie	12/10/2015	Specialised
Nurses in the emergency department at St Vincents Hospital will commence a work	Independent.ie	12/10/2015	No byline
Galway Hospital faces €1.176m fine over waiting lists	Independent.ie	13/10/2015	Specialised
Anti-malarial drug to be withdrawn from Irish market	Independent.ie	13/10/2015	Specialised
Live and comprehensive coverage of Budget Day: Free GP care for under 12s?	Independent.ie	13/10/2015	Specialised
Budget 2016: Free GP care 'to be extended to 11-year-olds'	Independent.ie	13/10/2015	Specialised
No extension of free GP care to under 12s without talks, doctors warn	Independent.ie	13/10/2015	Specialised
Free GP care on offer to 200,000 more children under 12 years of age	Independent.ie	14/10/2015	Specialised

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Nurses in work-to-rule over A&E overcrowding	Independent.ie	14/10/2015	Specialised
Verdict of medical misadventure in death of Aibha (6)	Independent.ie	14/10/2015	General
Elderly and young children to benefit from health budget	Independent.ie	14/10/2015	Specialised
Thousands of children in hospital for teeth removal 'due to dental care cuts'	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	Wire
Free GP care for under-12s is a tonic, but can doctors cope?	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	Specialised
No sugar tax and not much provided for young people	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	Specialised
Varadkar to allow public to give life-saving emergency medicines	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	Specialised
Cuts to free dental care 'hospitalising our children'	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	Wire
Health Minister disputes claims 10,000 children a year are hospitalised for dental extractions	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	General
One in five dentists are missing work due to 'being stressed' over patient care	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	General
Hospital apologises as family of girl (7) with cerebral palsy awarded €6.7m damages	Independent.ie	15/10/2015	No byline
Several counties do not have enough GPs, warns study	Independent.ie	16/10/2015	Specialised
Apology 'too little, too late' as disabled Katie (7) gets €6.7m	Independent.ie	16/10/2015	General
Despite this week's 'no-risk Budget', our health service faces greater threat of cuts	Independent.ie	16/10/2015	Expert
Varadkar hits back at claims by dentists	Independent.ie	16/10/2015	Specialised
Alert issued after chemotherapy treatment for Irish cancer patients 'contaminate	Independent.ie	16/10/2015	Specialised
Health errors will happen, but this is a concern cancer patients can do without	Independent.ie	17/10/2015	Specialised
Lack of clarity on chemo scare is not good enough	Independent.ie	17/10/2015	No byline
Why was I given a lethal cancer drug after it was recalled?'	Independent.ie	17/10/2015	Specialised
HSE says no Irish patient received contaminated chemotherapy following its recall on Monday	Independent.ie	17/10/2015	Specialised
Q & A: Why is there such a scare about chemotherapy treatments?	Independent.ie	17/10/2015	Specialised
I was kept in the dark for days over suspect chemo treatment'	Independent.ie	19/10/2015	Specialised
People living in poorest areas get worst healthcare	Independent.ie	19/10/2015	Specialised
Illness hits much younger in these areas'	Independent.ie	19/10/2015	Specialised
Health of children was affected by the economic crash	Independent.ie	20/10/2015	General
No plans for IVF funding	Independent.ie	20/10/2015	No byline
Firm in cancer drugs scare at centre of two other recalls since June	Independent.ie	20/10/2015	Specialised
Irish abortion laws 'insane' - Fr Ted writer Graham Linehan	Independent.ie	20/10/2015	Wire
Women with breast cancer in deprived areas have 33pc higher mortality rate	Independent.ie	20/10/2015	No byline
Medical Council to give verdict against gynaecologist Peter Van Geene	Independent.ie	21/10/2015	General
Gynaecologist Peter Van Geene found guilty of two counts of poor professional performance	Independent.ie	21/10/2015	General
Doctor is guilty of two performance claims but cleared of 13	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	General
Woman sues HSE after ovary removal op	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	General
Ex-HSE staff to be excluded from health probes	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	Specialised
Two machines out of service in firm hit by chemo scare	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	Specialised
HSE makes €22.4m tax settlement with Revenue Commissioners	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	Specialised
HSE chief executive Tony O'Brien defends Madrid conference expenses paid by company	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	Specialised
Boy (10) who 'suffered brain damage at birth' given €2m settlement	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	No byline
Hospital staff failed to recognise signs of foetal distress in baby Mark Molloy who died at 22 minutes old - report	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	General
Calls for one of the country's biggest hospitals to go 'off call' to clear 'severe overcrowding'	Independent.ie	22/10/2015	General
Pro-choice group risking jail with 'abortion pill bus'	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	General
Publish baby death details to help others, pleads mum	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	Specialised
Little Mark Molloy only lived for 22 minutes but his legacy is immense in helpin	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	Specialised
Beaumont shuts A&E as patients in their 90s left on chairs	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	General
Secret of my success... my bedside manner	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	No byline
HSE chief defends his Spanish trip	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	Specialised
Dozens of elderly patients still waiting on trolleys at Beaumont Hospital	Independent.ie	23/10/2015	General
Backlog of 1,980 nurses caught in red tape, despite A&E trolley crisis	Independent.ie	24/10/2015	Specialised
Abortion pill bus' gets calls from women	Independent.ie	24/10/2015	General
HSE chief spent three nights in Madrid for talk	Independent.ie	24/10/2015	Specialised
Contingency measures in place following intravenous food supply issue for ill babies - HSE	Independent.ie	24/10/2015	No byline
Contingency measures in place following intravenous food supply issue for ill babies - HSE	Independent.ie	24/10/2015	No byline
Seven women sue consultant guilty of poor performance	Independent.ie	25/10/2015	General
Dearbhail McDonald: Medical negligence - a suitable case for treatment	Independent.ie	25/10/2015	Specialised
Sick children face IV food drip issue	Independent.ie	25/10/2015	General
Patients waiting a day and a half to see their GP	Independent.ie	26/10/2015	Specialised

Hospitals suffer 'dumbing down' in the quality of doctors for hire	Independent.ie	26/10/2015	Specialised
Master of Rotunda says he was wrong on abortion law	Independent.ie	26/10/2015	Specialised
Suicide risk hasn't opened the floodgates'	Independent.ie	26/10/2015	Specialised
Most payouts to symphysiotomy survivors are in €50,000 bracket	Independent.ie	27/10/2015	Specialised
Big Interview: Micheál Martin - FF manifesto 'not going there' over abortion	Independent.ie	27/10/2015	Specialised
Over 3,000 children on waiting lists for mental health services despite high youth suicide rate	Independent.ie	27/10/2015	General
Legal action over vulnerable woman ends 'without satisfactory outcome'	Independent.ie	27/10/2015	Specialised
Medical card means test is unfair, claims new report	Independent.ie	29/10/2015	Specialised
Scheme to offer HIV tests in cafes, bars and offices	Independent.ie	30/10/2015	Specialised
Lack of staff at disability home 'poses risk' - report	Independent.ie	30/10/2015	Specialised
Woman who had ovary removed as protective measure against cancer settles High Court action	Independent.ie	30/10/2015	General
High Court increased compensation award made to Hepatitis C woman by €70,000	Independent.ie	30/10/2015	No byline
Free GP care for under-12s faces delays	Independent.ie	31/10/2015	General
More patients suffer chemo delays following contamination	Independent.ie	31/10/2015	Specialised
So Little Things can make a big difference	Independent.ie	02/11/2015	General
Model tells of A&E trolley hell	Independent.ie	02/11/2015	No byline
Service for patients on trolleys leaves a bad taste	Independent.ie	02/11/2015	Specialised
Chemo shortage will not affect patients in long term, says HSE	Independent.ie	02/11/2015	Specialised
Moulding pureed food makes meals more appealing	Independent.ie	02/11/2015	No byline
How one hospital turned around its menus	Independent.ie	02/11/2015	Specialised
56 extra hospital beds open, but delays hit Galway	Independent.ie	03/11/2015	Specialised
Specialist warns of cancer treatment shortage	Independent.ie	03/11/2015	Specialised
BCG supply delay until early 2016	Independent.ie	03/11/2015	No byline
Woman at centre of abortion controversy settles High Court challenge	Independent.ie	03/11/2015	General
HSE apologies to bar manager who ended up blind after optic nerve was cut in 'routine operation'	Independent.ie	03/11/2015	No byline
Botched routine operation on gland left man (32) blind	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	General
Report on Ms Y birth controversy is quashed	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	General
Patient (91) left lying on A&E trolley for 29 hours	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	Specialised
Consultant compares conditions in top hospital to torture: 'Nobody of any age should be subjected to this inhumanity'	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	Specialised
Breast cancer screening service restored	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	Specialised
Kathleen Lynch: 'Nurses have never entirely deserted service even in strikes'	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	General
Taoiseach Enda Kenny on man (91) left on trolley for 29 hours: 'Shocking example of a dysfunctionality in the system'	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	Specialised
Tallaght Hospital to launch review after disclosure information on man (91)	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	General
Man, 91, 'unhappy' about disclosure of 29-hour Tallaght Hospital trolley wait	Independent.ie	04/11/2015	Wire
Palliative care guidelines to ease pain symptoms	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	Specialised
Whistleblower row erupts over doctor's A&E 'torture' expose	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	Specialised
Varadkar's patch 'best location for maternity unit'	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	Specialised
27 girls report abnormal symptoms after receiving the cervical cancer vaccine	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	Specialised
Family's heartache after father-of-two (25) bled to death while waiting on ambulance	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	General
Gardai investigating 'sex assault' on elderly woman in hospital bed	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	General
Government 'failed spectacularly' to deal with health system crisis, Dail hears	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	Specialised
Hospital patients treated for out-break of potentially fatal C. difficile superbug	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	General
Worried parents claim daughters have been seriously injured by cervical cancer v	Independent.ie	05/11/2015	General
Man who bled to death was waiting 40 minutes for ambulance	Independent.ie	06/11/2015	Specialised
Higher court awards are expected for catastrophic injury cases	Independent.ie	06/11/2015	General
Relative of woman (93) who had 29-hour wait on trolley: 'I'd have more confidence going to the vet with my dog'	Independent.ie	06/11/2015	General
Irish Parents vow to continue search for answers about the cause of health issues suffered by their teenage daughters	Independent.ie	06/11/2015	General
Boy who suffered shoulder injury during birth settles HSE action for €650,000	Independent.ie	06/11/2015	No byline
Varadkar to ban alcohol ads on sporting pitches to 'de-glamourise' drink	Independent.ie	07/11/2015	Specialised
Parties need to reach consensus on fixing our health service	Independent.ie	07/11/2015	Expert
New waiting list figures add to woes for elderly on trolleys	Independent.ie	07/11/2015	Specialised
Death by numbers: why hospice care doesn't add up in Midlands	Independent.ie	08/11/2015	General
Leo's Buddhism won't fix the trolley crisis	Independent.ie	08/11/2015	General
Varadkar to visit Tallaght Hospital amid trolley crisis	Independent.ie	08/11/2015	General
Gastric bypass operations to resume at Dublin hospital	BreakingNews.ie	27/04/2015	No byline - BK
Lifetime ban on gay men blood donations may be justified, ECJ rules	BreakingNews.ie	29/04/2015	No byline - BK

Varadkar: Hospital crowding progress slow, but is improving	BreakingNews.ie	29/04/2015	No byline - BK
Hundreds of patients recalled after errors in scan readings	BreakingNews.ie	30/04/2015	No byline - BK
Last day to get health insurance before LCR deadline	BreakingNews.ie	30/04/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses at CUH announce industrial action over oncology staffing	BreakingNews.ie	30/04/2015	No byline - BK
Health insurance penalty for over 34s begins at midnight	BreakingNews.ie	30/04/2015	No byline - BK
Over-reliance on locum doctors is a false economy says leading consultant	BreakingNews.ie	30/04/2015	No byline - BK
Survivors of symphysiotomy 'devastated' as High Court finds against 76-yr-old	BreakingNews.ie	01/05/2015	No byline - BK
Campaigners want Govt inquiry as woman loses symphysiotomy damages action	BreakingNews.ie	01/05/2015	No byline - BK
Young doctors 'need incentives to set up in rural areas'	BreakingNews.ie	03/05/2015	No byline - BK
State 'covering up' real cost of nursing home care: Nursing Homes Ireland	BreakingNews.ie	04/05/2015	No byline - BK
Almost everyone in Ireland will be overweight by 2030: WHO research	BreakingNews.ie	06/05/2015	No byline - BK
26% more people on trolleys last month than in April 2014, say nurses	BreakingNews.ie	06/05/2015	No byline - BK
Let firefighters step in if ambulances aren't available, say fire chiefs	BreakingNews.ie	06/05/2015	No byline - BK
BK017: Nurses want 1,000 extra beds opened in Irish hospitals	BreakingNews.ie	06/05/2015	No byline - BK
INMO will press for wage increases	BreakingNews.ie	06/05/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar: Employing more people, not raising wages is the priority	BreakingNews.ie	07/05/2015	No byline - BK
Midlands hospital report due to heavily criticise management	BreakingNews.ie	08/05/2015	No byline - BK
Personalised treatments in cardiac care launched	BreakingNews.ie	08/05/2015	No byline - BK
Health watchdog says it cannot guarantee Portlaoise hospital safe	BreakingNews.ie	08/05/2015	No byline - BK
Parents of children with life-limiting conditions criticise Coppinger as abortion Bill proposed	BreakingNews.ie	08/05/2015	No byline - BK
New plan to be developed for Portlaoise hospital	BreakingNews.ie	08/05/2015	No byline - BK
Dáil to vote on abortion-law repeal bill	BreakingNews.ie	12/05/2015	No byline - BK
Portlaoise baby deaths: Woman describes baby's body being brought to her in tin box	BreakingNews.ie	12/05/2015	No byline - BK
Dáil votes down repeal attempt on abortion laws	BreakingNews.ie	12/05/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar orders HSE to improve conditions in Portlaoise Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	12/05/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar to meet families who lost babies at Portlaoise	BreakingNews.ie	13/05/2015	No byline - BK
Investigation launched into newborn's death at Cavan hospital	BreakingNews.ie	13/05/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar: HIQA inquiry into Cavan hospital 'not warranted'	BreakingNews.ie	13/05/2015	No byline - BK
Bereaved parents meet Health Minister in Portlaoise	BreakingNews.ie	13/05/2015	No byline - BK
Anger and grief as bereaved parents tell Health Minister about Portlaoise Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	14/05/2015	No byline - BK
Treatment of grieving parents by Portlaoise hospital 'shames' minister	BreakingNews.ie	14/05/2015	No byline - BK
Internal documents reveal patient safety concerns of staff at Cavan Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	17/05/2015	No byline - BK
Only one in 50 doctors signed up for free GP care for under-6s scheme, says survey	BreakingNews.ie	17/05/2015	No byline - BK
Minister criticises 'lack of honesty' at Irish hospitals	BreakingNews.ie	17/05/2015	No byline - BK
TD accuses HSE of "systematic intentional cover up"	BreakingNews.ie	19/05/2015	No byline - BK
Current HSE management 'cannot be trusted' with maternity investigation	BreakingNews.ie	19/05/2015	No byline - BK
HSE Director says more Portlaoise Hospital staff could face disciplinary hearings	BreakingNews.ie	19/05/2015	No byline - BK
HSE Director: Downgrading of Portlaoise Hospital could 'have made things worse'	BreakingNews.ie	19/05/2015	No byline - BK
Families first to lose out in under-funded health service, say nurses	BreakingNews.ie	20/05/2015	No byline - BK
€8.5m final settlement for boy who suffered injuries at birth	BreakingNews.ie	20/05/2015	No byline - BK
Unsafe conditions' cause industrial action at Beaumont Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	20/05/2015	No byline - BK
Beaumont nurses issue industrial action notice	BreakingNews.ie	21/05/2015	No byline - BK
Psychiatric nurses list conditions to avoid strike at Galway unit	BreakingNews.ie	21/05/2015	No byline - BK
New HSE scheme to supply heroin addicts with overdose antidote	BreakingNews.ie	21/05/2015	No byline - BK
Mother of baby that died at Midlands Regional Hospital praises Varadkar	BreakingNews.ie	22/05/2015	No byline - BK
Doctor enters High Court challenge to free GP care for children under six	BreakingNews.ie	22/05/2015	No byline - BK
GPs being monitored by Commission over free care for under 6s	BreakingNews.ie	23/05/2015	No byline - BK
Equality Minister: Vote Labour in election and you'll get a 'Repeal the 8th' referendum	BreakingNews.ie	25/05/2015	No byline - BK
Deadline extended for doctors to sign up to free GP care for children under six	BreakingNews.ie	25/05/2015	No byline - BK
Govt announces funding reprieve for charities	BreakingNews.ie	26/05/2015	No byline - BK
Psychiatric nurses to begin work-to-rule over security concerns	BreakingNews.ie	26/05/2015	No byline - BK
Psychiatric nurses 'afraid to work' at Galway unit	BreakingNews.ie	26/05/2015	No byline - BK
Patients fear complaining will result in worse care	BreakingNews.ie	27/05/2015	No byline - BK
Pro-life campaign downplays repeal of eighth support	BreakingNews.ie	27/05/2015	No byline - BK
Psychiatric nurses 'very concerned' at suspension of new referrals in Waterford	BreakingNews.ie	27/05/2015	No byline - BK
Auditors to examine financial arrangements at St Vincent's Healthcare	BreakingNews.ie	28/05/2015	No byline - BK
Robot required to alleviate staff shortages at hospital, says Donegal	BreakingNews.ie	28/05/2015	No byline - BK

Councillor			
Two sides resume talks in Galway psychiatric nurses dispute	BreakingNews.ie	28/05/2015	No byline - BK
HSE investigates HIV cases among Dublin's homeless	BreakingNews.ie	29/05/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses sent home from hospitals told registrations had lapsed	BreakingNews.ie	29/05/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses and midwives will leave country over low pay, union warns	BreakingNews.ie	30/05/2015	No byline - BK
Report claims nursing homes give third of old people psychotropic drugs	BreakingNews.ie	01/6/2015	No byline - BK
Report reveals most hospitals still engage in 'queue-jumping'	BreakingNews.ie	02/06/2015	No byline - BK
Complex surgery removed from Portlaoise hospital	BreakingNews.ie	03/06/2015	No byline - BK
New hospital announced to replace Central Mental Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	03/06/2015	No byline - BK
INMO: Hospitals mooted to take on Portlaoise Hospital services 'already overcrowded'	BreakingNews.ie	03/06/2015	No byline - BK
Psychiatric unit to reopen at Galway hospital	BreakingNews.ie	04/06/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar: Portlaoise emergency department may be reduced - but not yet	BreakingNews.ie	04/06/2015	No byline - BK
Only half of trainee doctors plan to stay in Ireland	BreakingNews.ie	04/06/2015	No byline - BK
Ceiling collapse in Cork University Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	04/06/2015	No byline - BK
IMO votes unanimously against Lansdowne Road Agreement	BreakingNews.ie	04/06/2015	No byline - BK
IMO President claims pay agreement does not address health crisis	BreakingNews.ie	05/06/2015	No byline - BK
Inquiry launched at Loughlinstown hospital after elderly woman dies following attack	BreakingNews.ie	05/06/2015	No byline - BK
101-yr-old woman on trolley for 26 hours: 'The Minister has made a promise. We need to see it in action'	BreakingNews.ie	05/06/2015	No byline - BK
Management apologises to elderly woman who spent 26 hours on hospital trolley	BreakingNews.ie	05/06/2015	No byline - BK
Inquiry at Loughlinstown hospital after elderly woman dies following attack	BreakingNews.ie	06/06/2015	No byline - BK
Second 101-year-old woman 'on hospital trolley for over 24 hours'	BreakingNews.ie	08/06/2015	No byline - BK
HSE assembles team to tackle trolley crisis	BreakingNews.ie	09/06/2015	No byline - BK
Women's rights 'violated' by Ireland's abortion laws - Amnesty	BreakingNews.ie	09/06/2015	No byline - BK
Alarming hospital waiting list figures released	BreakingNews.ie	09/06/2015	No byline - BK
Females treated like 'child-bearing vessels', claims report	BreakingNews.ie	09/06/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses defer strike after hospital agrees recruitment date for new staff	BreakingNews.ie	09/06/2015	No byline - BK
Pro-Life Campaign calls Amnesty 'de facto abortion lobby'	BreakingNews.ie	09/06/2015	No byline - BK
3,500 complaints about public services last year	BreakingNews.ie	10/06/2015	No byline - BK
Complex laws not helping women: Rhona Mahony	BreakingNews.ie	10/06/2015	No byline - BK
Low uptake of plan for free GP care for under-6s in some counties	BreakingNews.ie	10/06/2015	No byline - BK
Dublin hospital asked wrong patient to come in for spinal operation	BreakingNews.ie	10/06/2015	No byline - BK
Girl left brain-damaged receives €2.5m settlement after suing HSE for negligence	BreakingNews.ie	10/06/2015	No byline - BK
IMO to launch proposals to combat substance and alcohol abuse	BreakingNews.ie	11/06/2015	No byline - BK
Tipperary boy to receive €6.5m settlement from HSE	BreakingNews.ie	11/06/2015	No byline - BK
Disabled residents 'at risk' as concerns raised about use of drugs for restraint (by BreakingNews.ie)	BreakingNews.ie	11/06/2015	No byline - BK
Woman died after 18-month delay in breast cancer diagnosis	BreakingNews.ie	11/06/2015	No byline - BK
Vulnerable children still sent to 'unsafe' adult services	BreakingNews.ie	12/06/2015	No byline - BK
HSE settles action with family of woman after twice failing to diagnose her breast cancer	BreakingNews.ie	12/06/2015	No byline - BK
'Major failings' at Louth care home	BreakingNews.ie	12/06/2015	No byline - BK
Irish patients forced to travel for treatment to be repaid	BreakingNews.ie	14/06/2015	No byline - BK
Free care for under-sixes will hurt healthcare, GPs warn	BreakingNews.ie	14/06/2015	No byline - BK
Drug policy organisers propose controlled injection centres for drug users	BreakingNews.ie	21/09/2015	No byline - BK
Research: Third of people born in 2015 may develop dementia	BreakingNews.ie	21/09/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses' union calls on public to join Dáil protest today	BreakingNews.ie	22/09/2015	No byline - BK
Fianna Fáil will not campaign to repeal the amendment on abortion	BreakingNews.ie	22/09/2015	No byline - BK
Stop Out of Control Drinking campaign releases final report	BreakingNews.ie	23/09/2015	No byline - BK
Health system budget control not up to scratch says Noonan	BreakingNews.ie	23/09/2015	No byline - BK
Healthcare group claims Govt can save €130m on prescription drugs	BreakingNews.ie	24/09/2015	No byline - BK
Dail Health Committee to discuss future of country's maternity services	BreakingNews.ie	24/09/2015	No byline - BK
Abortion Rights Campaign to discuss Amnesty International poll on abortion	BreakingNews.ie	24/09/2015	No byline - BK
St Vincent's emergency department nurses to ballot for action in overcrowding row	BreakingNews.ie	25/09/2015	No byline - BK
Irish women warned as EU suspends use of breast implants made by Brazil company	BreakingNews.ie	25/09/2015	No byline - BK
Thousands march in Dublin calling for repeal of 8th Amendment	BreakingNews.ie	26/09/2015	No byline - BK
HSE director to run trolley crisis taskforce	BreakingNews.ie	28/09/2015	No byline - BK
Man finds confidential patient files on street near hospital in Drogheda	BreakingNews.ie	29/09/2015	No byline - BK
€290m by health insurers; taxpayers' money used to fill funding gap	BreakingNews.ie	29/09/2015	No byline - BK
Govt announce €3bn package for health service over six years	BreakingNews.ie	29/09/2015	No byline - BK
New GP lead service to be offered to people with diabetes	BreakingNews.ie	30/09/2015	No byline - BK

Varadkar would 'love to know' who leaked overcrowding crisis email	BreakingNews.ie	30/09/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar tells INMO 'strike is not the answer' and releases 300 beds for A&E	BreakingNews.ie	30/09/2015	No byline - BK
Health Committee to assess procedures at Portlaoise and Cavan maternity units	BreakingNews.ie	01/10/2015	No byline - BK
Inspection of Louth hospital highlights risk of contracting Legionnaires Disease	BreakingNews.ie	01/10/2015	No byline - BK
HSE chief, Tony O'Brien, takes charge of taskforce tackling A&E overcrowding	BreakingNews.ie	01/10/2015	No byline - BK
Children cannot bathe every day at HSE-run home, HIQA report finds	BreakingNews.ie	02/10/2015	No byline - BK
IVF treatment should be funded' says Fine Gael Senator	BreakingNews.ie	02/10/2015	No byline - BK
HSE need a €500 million bailout this year	BreakingNews.ie	02/10/2015	No byline - BK
A&E conditions set to get worse this winter, IHCA warns	BreakingNews.ie	03/10/2015	No byline - BK
INMO: A&E overcrowding has never been as bad	BreakingNews.ie	05/10/2015	No byline - BK
Report outlines additional financial costs for cancer patients	BreakingNews.ie	05/10/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar's €100m to tackle overcrowding 'nowhere near enough after €3.8bn lost in last four years': INMO	BreakingNews.ie	05/10/2015	No byline - BK
I've never been as concerned going into a winter period'	BreakingNews.ie	05/10/2015	No byline - BK
1,500 graduating nurses to be offered permanent jobs in bid to ease hospital overcrowding	BreakingNews.ie	06/10/2015	No byline - BK
INMO to ballot members on industrial action if HSE fail to address 'critical areas'	BreakingNews.ie	06/10/2015	No byline - BK
Health Minister demands 20% tax on soft drinks to help combat obesity	BreakingNews.ie	07/10/2015	No byline - BK
Health Minister says people need to look after themselves better	BreakingNews.ie	07/10/2015	No byline - BK
St Vincent's nurses to start action in overcrowding protest	BreakingNews.ie	08/10/2015	No byline - BK
Childcare and health among main sticking points as Cabinet meets to finalise Budget 2016	BreakingNews.ie	08/10/2015	No byline - BK
Stains on toilets and equipment, poor cleaning and flaky paint prompt 'high-risk' finding at Letterkenny Hospital	BreakingNews.ie	08/10/2015	No byline - BK
1,500 nursing jobs to be filled	BreakingNews.ie	10/10/2015	No byline - BK
Budget reported to set aside more money for health and education	BreakingNews.ie	10/10/2015	No byline - BK
Report recommends weight management centres all over country	BreakingNews.ie	12/10/2015	No byline - BK
Hospitals fined €5.8m as thousands wait longer than 18-month target	BreakingNews.ie	12/10/2015	No byline - BK
St Vincent's nurses to start work-to-rule	BreakingNews.ie	12/10/2015	No byline - BK
Family of a Dublin woman launch medical negligence action in High Court	BreakingNews.ie	12/10/2015	No byline - BK
Budget 'could fund free GP care for children under 12'	BreakingNews.ie	13/10/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses at St Vincent's Hospital begin work-to-rule today	BreakingNews.ie	13/10/2015	No byline - BK
INMO say strike will continue until overcrowding is addressed	BreakingNews.ie	13/10/2015	No byline - BK
Free GP care described as 'poorly disguised attempt to buy votes'	BreakingNews.ie	14/10/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar wanted a sugar tax in Budget 2016	BreakingNews.ie	14/10/2015	No byline - BK
Thousands of children in hospital for teeth removal 'due to dental cuts'	BreakingNews.ie	15/10/2015	No byline - BK
Eczema skin creams 'should be free'	BreakingNews.ie	15/10/2015	No byline - BK
Alert issued after some chemotherapy treatments contaminated	BreakingNews.ie	16/10/2015	No byline - BK
Around 200 patients contacted after chemotherapy drug recall	BreakingNews.ie	16/10/2015	No byline - BK
Manufacturer releases statement following chemotherapy drug recall	BreakingNews.ie	16/10/2015	No byline - BK
Medical experts gather to discuss recruitment problems at Irish hospitals	BreakingNews.ie	20/10/2015	No byline - BK
Verdict due this evening on gynaecologist Peter Van Geene	BreakingNews.ie	21/10/2015	No byline - BK
Committee finds against Consultant Gynaecologist at Fitness to Practise inquiry	BreakingNews.ie	21/10/2015	No byline - BK
Varadkar rejects FF criticism on Health budget	BreakingNews.ie	22/10/2015	No byline - BK
Couple 'put the push' on HSE to publish report on failings in death of baby Mark Molloy	BreakingNews.ie	22/10/2015	No byline - BK
Cork boy wins €2m interim settlement with HSE in brain damage case	BreakingNews.ie	22/10/2015	No byline - BK
INMO claims overcrowding at Beaumont Hospital is set to spiral	BreakingNews.ie	22/10/2015	No byline - BK
Abortion pill bus' to travel from Dublin to Cork, Limerick and Galway today	BreakingNews.ie	23/10/2015	No byline - BK
Number of Irish women have contacted the 'abortion bus' for pill	BreakingNews.ie	23/10/2015	No byline - BK
'Abortion pill bus' set to visit Cork and Dublin rallies today	BreakingNews.ie	24/10/2015	No byline - BK
Medic are asking for a national emergency to be declared in hospitals	BreakingNews.ie	24/10/2015	No byline - BK
Pro-Life campaign labels 'abortion pill bus' a cheap publicity stunt	BreakingNews.ie	24/10/2015	No byline - BK
HSE implements contingency plans to supply intravenous food for sick babies	BreakingNews.ie	24/10/2015	No byline - BK
Abortion Pill Bus tour ends with pro-choice rally in Dublin	BreakingNews.ie	24/10/2015	No byline - BK
Irish shortage of nurses despite higher average than other OECD countries	BreakingNews.ie	25/10/2015	No byline - BK
Survey: The waiting time to see a GP has more than tripled in five years	BreakingNews.ie	26/10/2015	No byline - BK
Nurses at St Vincent's suspend industrial action	BreakingNews.ie	29/10/2015	No byline - BK
First national sexual health strategy launched in Ireland	BreakingNews.ie	29/10/2015	No byline - BK
IMO: No extension of free GP care until new contract is signed	BreakingNews.ie	30/10/2015	No byline - BK
Six hospitals to get unused stroke machines from Cork	BreakingNews.ie	02/11/2015	No byline - BK
Emergency Department Task Force meets to discuss overcrowding	BreakingNews.ie	02/11/2015	No byline - BK

INMO to ballot Emergency Department members on industrial action	BreakingNews.ie	03/11/2015	No byline - BK
Consultant 'totally understands' why nurses feel driven to take industrial action	BreakingNews.ie	04/11/2015	No byline - BK
Health service 'let my mother down in her final days'	BreakingNews.ie	04/11/2015	No byline - BK
Kenny hits out at Tallaght Hospital bosses after 91-year-old spends 29 hours on trolley	BreakingNews.ie	04/11/2015	No byline - BK
Limerick midwives vote for industrial action	BreakingNews.ie	04/11/2015	No byline - BK
Taoiseach wants answers after elderly man left for 29 hours on hospital trolley	BreakingNews.ie	04/11/2015	No byline - BK
Heads on a plate' not an answer to overcrowding crisis, doctors say	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
HSE promises 400 extra beds by year end	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
Leo Varadkar: 'Indefensible' to spend 24 hours on a trolley in A&E	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
87-year-old woman alleged to have suffered attempted sex attack in Tipperary hospital	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
Sixty-four new ambulances for health service	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
Leo Varadkar: There are dozens of people every day on trolleys for more than 24 hours	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
Brendan Howlin: Shortage of ambulances in Louth due to 'short-notice absences'	BreakingNews.ie	05/11/2015	No byline - BK
Greens accuse FG and FF of avoiding responsibility on abortion	BreakingNews.ie	07/11/2015	No byline - BK