A TYPOLOGY OF NEWS SOURCING
Routine and non-routine channels of production

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This article presents a novel typology for analysing the routinisation of news and daily newsroom practices. Drawing inspiration from the work of Sigal, Tuchman and others, the framework – comprising eight categories – provides a reconceptualisation of routine and non-routine channels of news production to facilitate an exploration of source material, focusing on initial story triggers. One contribution which is particularly useful relates to the subcategorisation of the traditionally singular "routine" channel; although the broad concept of routine source material is familiar, it has generally not been systematically deconstructed in previous analyses. Considering different types of routine news allows for a deeper understanding of how these channels are integrated into contemporary daily news production and the role of internal newsroom and external actor dynamics. This is particularly relevant in an era in which there is a high usage of information subsidies, passive news reporting, cannibalised content, and desk-bound work. As such, the application of this model provides insights into the dominance and subordinate use of various channels in contemporary newsrooms. The discussion also illustrates how such a typology can aid empirical research with reference to the content analysis study from which this framework was developed.

KEYWORDS: Channels of production; Journalism practices; News production; News routines; News sources; Typology

Introduction

Journalists' actions and work practices have intrigued researchers for decades: newsrooms have been studied for more than half a century, allowing the analysis of "rules, roles and processes" (Domingo and Paterson 2008, 18). Ethnographers observe "recognisable patterns" (Schultz 2007, 192), even if such formulaic language like news routines and construction does not necessarily translate to journalists' perceptions of their work (Zelizer 2004; Schudson 1989). While many

journalists' "rules" and daily motivations may be somewhat ideological, but manifest in action, temporal and spatial factors also contribute to routinisation (Singer 2004; Shoemaker and Reese 1996). The consideration of journalism as a practice (Ahva 2017) is a useful way to consider actors' behaviour in the newsroom context of shared knowledge, collective structures, and individuals operating as both physical and mental carriers of practices (Reckwitz 2002). It is through repeated daily actions, and the acceptance, integration and normalisation of behaviours and practices that evolving news production patterns become evident and warrant ongoing attention, especially given the converged and hybridised developments in professional journalism over the past two decades. Many fundamentals of journalism practice appear unchanged from decades ago, with student textbooks still emphasising the mechanics of reporting such as news values, finding stories, and conducting interviews, while incorporating some elements on social media, digital skills, and online publishing (Mencher 2011; Burns and Matthews 2018). Yet, for many journalists, the work environment has altered as news organisations adjust to digital publishing and its temporal affordances, online competition and revenue struggles. Such factors mean many journalists have had to adjust their daily working patterns, which may also be tied to changed editorial expectations (Cherubini and Nielsen 2016), newsroom priorities and ultimately how stories and source contributions develop. For news workers, factors such as increased workload, unstable employment, multi-skilling, and increased desk work are all key elements of the contemporary labour backdrop (Paulussen 2012). Given this shift, it is important to reconsider some elements of the routinisation of news work as different trends – for example "churning" press releases, the cannibalisation of content from other outlets or the reporting of scheduled events – have various requirements and are affected by different factors, constraints and motivations, even if they are all routinised. This variation in "routine" news is often overlooked in commentary and analysis and, therefore, a typology capturing these distinctions can be a valuable research tool. This article proposes such a model based on eight classifications under two over-arching "routine" and "non-routine" categories; the framework was developed inductively following a content analysis study in which existing classifications of sourcing channels were deemed unsatisfactory in establishing a deep understanding of contemporary journalistic practices.

Referring to Gans, Tuchman, Fishman and others, Ryfe summarises how journalistic routines facilitate the pragmatic balance between actions and ideals as they "speak to functional and symbolic needs of the profession" (2009a, 199). The ideological motivations can also affect practices, such as striving to achieve objectivity and relying on official sources (Carlson 2009; Hall et al. 1978; Soloski 1989). Capturing these functional needs and establishing a link to the acquisition of source content for news is challenging; journalism is, in many ways, a hybrid of routinising the sometimes-unpredictable, while incorporating subjects and material which is often highly familiar and decidedly predictable. This is highlighted in Sigal's (1973) three channels of news production – routine, informal and enterprise categories – which have been used as a template to explore origins of content (Ciboh 2017; Bashri, Netzley, and Greiner 2012; Hansen 1991, 1990). Often, the dominance of routine channels is the study's overarching concern, but what requires further attention is both a deeper deconstruction of different types of routine sources and a consideration of some of the actions and resources associated with both routine and non-routine channels. Such an exploration can also provide insights into the role of actors influencing news through media logic or professionalised communication strategies (Altheide 2004; Thorbjornsrud, K; Figenschou 2014), or whether any reliance on certain types of routine news is, in fact, more associated with internal newsroom decision-making and dynamics.

The typification model presented here uses this concept of distinct channels with the intention of offering fresh, multi-faceted insights evolving from Sigal's original triad. It does this by proposing eight sub-channels, four of which are considered "routine", and four of which are "non-routine". The aim is to resist generalities when discussing types of news, specifically routine news; instead, this approach highlights how various environmental, structural and resource-related factors can facilitate or restrict different types of journalism. Ryfe (2009b, 675) refers to the "templates" which journalists draw on while assembling news stories, described as a "vocabulary of precedents"

for Ericson et al (1987, 348), and such images are useful when considering channels in this way as they offer a framework in which familiar, repeated story-gathering practices can be conceptualised. What is crucial in Ryfe's work is how it is only when journalists invest in such patterns that they become structural steering forces and ultimately incorporated into the newsroom activity as a routine. Furthermore, such routines can become "sticky" and difficult to alter (Ryfe 2009a, 674), and may become internalised and ultimately reinforced through the ongoing socialisation of journalists in newsrooms.

It is difficult for any analysis, let alone a typology, to universally capture the fluid boundaries of contemporary journalism (Carlson and Lewis 2015) and its diverse range of activities and actors. The model proposed here is most applicable to professional, mainstream organisations – at local or national level – producing daily news reports on diverse subjects. That is not to say elements may not be useful elsewhere, but the primary purpose was to analyse that professional, general-newsroom environment. The article begins with an overview of existing literature on routine and non-routine news and channels of production before describing the contextual motivation behind the framework's development. The eight channels are introduced and discussed, categorised under two broad "routine" and "non-routine" channels. The framework is then used to demonstrate how insights can be garnered by using these channels empirically: results from the content analysis study which inspired the typology illustrate some of the additional findings that can be revealed with the newer categorisation. At this point it is worth noting that the content analysis results themselves are not of primary importance here, but rather how the possibility of garnering such results opens new avenues for researchers seeking to understand contemporary newsroom behaviours.

Sourcing material and channels of production

Information subsidies and routine news

The notion of "routine" news is typically associated with public relations material and other information subsidies (Gandy 1982), as well as the use of familiar, often official, sources; the reliance on information subsidies and PR has formed the basis of research in journalism studies for decades (Macnamara 2016; Jackson and Moloney 2016; Lloyd and Toogood 2015; Ciboh 2017; Moloney, Jackson, and McQueen 2013; Kiousis et al. 2009; Lewis, Williams, and Franklin 2008b, 2008a; O'Neill and O'Connor 2008; Curtin 1999; Butler 1998; Hansen 1991). A central concern regarding information subsidies is how they can skew news agendas towards information volunteered to journalists (Gandy 1982), shifting influence to the communication professionals seeking coverage with groups which are typically already powerful, well-resourced and well organised (Gans 1979). Crucially, it is no longer just politicians or officials, as actors such as NGOs, charities, trade unions and other pressure groups all seek to influence media coverage and establish increasingly media-friendly strategies (Franklin, Lewis, and Williams 2010; Manning 2001; McNair 2004; Edwards 2017; Williams 1999) in what could be indicative of the potential evolution towards a radical pluralism model of public relations (Davis 2000). Third-party material is arguably so prevalent as it provides content "at something less than the cost a user would face in the absence of the subsidy" (Gandy 1982, 61). Therefore, in an era of increased output, declining resources, changing audience behaviour, 24-hour news, and general quickening of journalism, information subsidies' influence may be unsurprising (Phillips 2015; Kiousis et al. 2009; Lewis, Williams, and Franklin 2008a; Jackson and Moloney 2016).

Furthermore, there is a complexity present when evaluating the use of information subsidies and "churnalism" (Boumans 2018), with some suggesting it is a useful, reliable and increasingly necessary part of contemporary reporting (Van Hout and Van Leuven 2017; Macnamara 2016; McNair 2004). The process of intertextual journalistic transformations also captures how journalists may not simply reproduce this material, but instead bring in other information to "corroborate or criticise, amend or explain" (Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Baden 2018, 482).

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Elsewhere, Phillips (2015) argues that journalism's dissemination function ensures that information provided by state bodies can have a valuable civic role, such as government announcements about school meals or planning decisions. Such information, according to Phillips, is of no less value than more investigative work into celebrity affairs or an individual MP's expenses claims, highlighting the nuance needed when considering different routine sourcing channels.

Overall, the prevalence of PR ties in with general concerns about routine channels of news displacing alternatively sourced original newsgathering, especially in the digital age (Vobic and Milojevic 2014). A related concept in online publishing can be seen with "bricolage", coined by Levi Strauss, describing "the creation of objects with materials to hand, re-using existing artefacts and incorporating bits and pieces" (Hartley 2002 in Doudaki & Spyridou 2013, p.909), and concerns prevail about this cut-and-paste culture (Phillips 2011, 2010; Gillmor 2008). Phillips (2010) acknowledges that the "cannibalisation" practice, whereby media obtain content from other outlets and republish it under their own title, is nothing new, but flourishes in the online environment due to competition intensity and the lack of technical or temporal barriers in lifting material. What becomes apparent is the seemingly growing reliance on easily accessible information which may be from a diverse range of contributors and starting points. This demonstrates how any consideration of journalistic sourcing must extend beyond simply who is heard to how they are accessed, as journalists may obtain contributions from the same actor through different channels, depending on the situated context.

Non-routine news

In contrast to some of the traditionally routine sources described above, many romantic images of journalism evoke images of unpredictability, chaos, informal tip-offs and investigative work. Yet, even the seemingly unpredictable or unconventional reportage can be routinised. Reich (2008, 557) refers to the "pattern of information flow" in which leaks take place; citing Sigal and others, he suggests leaks are an informal channel but one which can be frequently used. This is also apparent within scenarios which appear unstructured but in which patterns emerge: Berkowitz's (1992) work on the "what-a-story" highlights the familiar ways in which reporters and editors process events, suggesting even unpredictable stories effectively become loose rewrites of previous reports which resonates with the concept of "templates" mentioned earlier (Ryfe 2009b, 675). Nevertheless, it is very difficult to capture all of the complexities of what we consider non-routine news, especially as so much will be shaped by activities out of the spotlight, reliant on informal journalist-source relations (Manning 2001). The lack of transparency sometimes evident with public relations activity also means it can be involved in cases which appear more like authentic original newsgathering (Van Leuven et al. 2015), bringing further opacity to the process.

Elsewhere, the use of familiar actors is not enough to suggest original research was not carried out by the journalist; as Boesman et al argue (2015), the presence of routine sources does not necessarily mean routine newsgathering. The same individual source – for example, a politician – can provide both routine source material (through a parliamentary appearance, on-the-record interview, or press release), while also acting as a non-routine source, by leaking information or providing off-the-record remarks. This shifts the lens on to the sourcing channel and becomes important when analysing contemporary sourcing practices in which the implications may go beyond *who* is being heard, instead shifting to *how* they are being heard. This is important as, although much literature explores the distinctions between elite and non-elite sources (Splendore 2017), and who defines the news (Carlson 2009), the emphasis often remains on the actor, rather than the process and development of the story which is the priority here.

Boesman et al's observation echoes Deppa's point (1982) in which she highlights how news may not necessarily be based on a routine process, but contains routine elements. This assessment follows her discussion on routines in news, and how creativity in news reporting is based not so much on traditional concepts of freedom, but is equated "with the ability to identify what is happening in a complex and shifting environment, and to process it in a way that attracts and then

informs readers" (1982, 11). Such assessments align with the pragmatic undertone apparent in much of the literature suggesting news routines like story assembling and gatekeeping 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, 105); routine "facilitates the control of work" (Tuchman 1973, 110); routines are part of the shared knowledge about what counts as "good journalism" (Schneider 2013); and routines "make it easier for journalist to accomplish tasks in an uncertain world" (Lowrey 2008). It, therefore, becomes apparent that news of various origins – routine or non-routine – is typically shaped during the journalistic production process by drawing on recognisable patterns, which the journalists involved have internalised as legitimate practices, and which often can be captured or categorised by researchers. The following section explores some of the existing categorisations present in the literature.

Typifying news: existing models and frameworks

Carlson summarises how "the reliance of official sources and routine news channels is one of the most reproduced findings in studies of journalism" (2009, 529). This reference to channels can be tied to Sigal's (1973) work on three channels of production (routine, informal and enterprise) mentioned previously, published at a similar time to other efforts to categorise types of news (Molotch and Lester 1974; Tuchman 1973). Sigal describes "routine" channels as official proceedings, press releases, press conferences and non-spontaneous events. "Informal" channels in his model include background briefings, leaks, nongovernmental proceedings, news reports, editorials, etc, while "enterprise" includes interviews, spontaneous events, books, research, and reporters' own analysis (121). Elsewhere, Molotch and Lester's work, shown in Table 1, 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, 101). They classify events as either routine, serendipity, scandal or accident, depending on whether they were planned, and by whom they are promoted.

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

Table 1: Molotch and Lester's typology of public events 1974 (p.111)

Tuchman's (1973) typifying model shown in Table 2, meanwhile, focuses on some of the practical issues of different news types, broadly split between hard and soft news, with subcategories of hard news. Timeliness, and the perception of temporality, is key in Tuchman's model, which becomes a particularly important consideration in the framework proposed here, and is pertinent in the online news sphere in which a sense of hypertemporality and all-day news cycles are present (Ananny 2016; Bødker 2017). Temporality also relates to the resources available more generally, and the perceived need to publish a certain amount of content; such expectations on journalists may, therefore, lead them to more easily accessible sources.

Typification	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 2: Reproduced from "Practical issues in typifying news" (Tuchman 1973, p.117)

The research lens of each of the models focuses on different aspects of the reporting process and, combined, they form useful ways of thinking about news sourcing that goes beyond simply who is heard in the news. Such conceptualisation work presents the opportunity to consider the reasons for the dominance of certain channels in newsrooms, and the potential motivations behind the use of each channel. These models are more than 40 years old, providing analytical depth in the early days of journalism studies, and remain a valuable basis for considering news events, although the changing media landscape may offer the potential for updates. Shoemaker and Reese (2014, 188) believe the internet and all it affords has become a new routine research channel, while Boesman et al (2015) suggest inter-media sourcing is more common now than in the past. Echoing Palmer's (2000) concern that Sigal's placing of "other news reports" is the "informal" category may be problematic, Boesman et al recommend that they could be a distinctive channel, and that 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. Overall, there appears to be scope for a typology which can help to reflect these numerous approaches and factor in some of the altered practices which are becoming established in converged newsrooms.

At this point, it is useful to reinforce the distinction between (i) sources as contributors to, or actors in, stories and (ii) sourcing channels, whereby the focus is on what effectively triggered the story's development. Gans (1979) defined sources as the actors from whom journalists observe or interview while, similarly, for Berkowitz (2009), they are the people or institutions which reporters turn to for their information. Yet, depending on the focus of the research lens, there can be other angles to consider in sourcing process, as Johnson et al indicate: they define sources as "actors that convey information that can reach journalists *through different channels* at both the *discovery* and gathering phases of the news production process" (2018, p. 871. Italics added). The references to "different channels" and "discovery" here is useful, introducing the concept of sourcing pathways through which journalists first access stories, distinct to the individuals used *in* the story. This broader understanding of a "sourcing channel" – separate to any actor – aligns with Sigal's routine/informal/enterprise conceptualisation, shifting attention to a sometimes-overlooked dimension of sourcing. In this context, therefore, a channel is defined as the primary pathway – formal or informal – through which the issue or event gained the journalist's attention and *started* to develop: for example, it could be a press release, a parliamentary event, or an off-the-record briefing, to list just a few. While many actors may play a part in the assembling of the report (through contributing or verifying details) and the final publication/broadcast, the channel is

distinct, marking the starting point. Recognising this distinction between sources as contributors, and a sourcing channel as the original trigger, is a crucial conceptual point in this discussion. This is also separate to the activities journalists use in obtaining further information, such as online sources like Wikipedia and Google (Tylor 2015; Lih 2004); while these online resources may be part of the research process, they are not typically the starting point for a story.

Research context and motivation

The typology proposed here evolved from a qualitative content analysis of daily news coverage of healthcare and health policy from five mainstream news outlets in Ireland. Although it restricts the subject matter and means much of the news organisations' output is excluded, focusing on healthcare in daily reporting has been an insightful lens through which general journalistic practices can be explored (Stroobant, De Dobbelaer, and Raeymaeckers 2018; Bard 2017; Williams 1999). The objectives and results of the original content analysis are secondary (partly explored in Author 2017), as the focus here lies with one specific classification trait. The coding process involved tracing the origins of each news report through a qualitative document analysis (Altheide 1996, 1987), where a key distinction from traditional content analysis is that the researcher looks beyond the text; it was this more exploratory content analysis that allowed some of the patterns used in the framework to become evident. However, this was undoubtedly a more demanding approach as each story required the researcher to search for the original source. Some reports stated clearly the origins, with in-text references such as "speaking exclusively to this newspaper", "following a freedom of information request", or "in a press release issued this morning". However, in many instances it was unclear. In cases where there were no cues in the news report, various searches were carried out: search engines were used to look for quotes (which, for example, might direct to a press release); browsing social media provided insights regarding where a person was speaking; searching radio podcasts showed if an individual appeared on a radio station; and searching parliamentary reports provided information not found through search engines. Most stories' origins were obtainable through these processes, with 7.5 per cent of source material deemed unknown/untraceable.

Another key element of Altheide's approach to content analysis is the value of reflexivity and further probing the content analysis data to better understand its meaning for the production process. In this study, this was interpreted by generating a list of factors which may be tied to the use of each channel. Drawing on professional experience and a familiarity with how news can vary from publication to publication was also useful: such familiarity is key for an effective analysis, as Altheide says "ideally" the researcher using such a method 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" (1996, 9).

Initially, Sigal's three channels of news production – routine, informal and enterprise – were recorded for each of the texts (n=896). However, one shortcoming of these three categories became apparent early in the coding process: the routine categorisation, which was the dominant channel, encapsulated a diverse range of sourcing practices, and the overarching single routine channel failed to capture some of these variations which could have proven insightful in the analysis. For example, a promotional press release from a politician – reproduced with little amendment – was categorised in the same channel as content repurposed from a rival media outlet, or official data released by a state body. Furthermore, the distinction between informal and enterprise channels was sometimes unclear, especially when contrasted with the spectrum of "routine" content. Consequently, the channels were reconceptualised inductively: firstly, split into either over-arching routine or non-routine categories. This was interpretive and based on the narrative description compiled during the initial coding process, as recommended by Altheide. Following this, within both categories, common sourcing trends were grouped together and continually refined until the

eight dominant channels were identified. The stories were then recoded deductively to one of the eight channels.

The framework expands on Boesman et al's (2015), who collapsed the informal and enterprise channels into one, designating "other media" as distinct. While this proposed model does something similar, it is at a more fragmented level. Most of the reconceptualisation was done on the side of the "routine" channels, while the traditional "informal" channel remains mostly evident in the "leaks" category, and the "enterprise" category remaining titled as such. Although this model was developed from a study on online news reporting practices, there is no reason to suggest it is limited to that format, as it relates to journalistic sourcing more generally. Of course, the nature of news reporting means that as stories develop or maintain a presence in the news, they often pick up elements of different channels. To maintain methodological clarity, any application of the eight subchannels should treat each news report as the unit, rather than drawing on the general news event and attempting to trace back its origins. Instead, the focus remains on the specific news element presented as the lead development in each published news report.

Eight channels of production

The typology proposes eight categories, comprising two primary groupings: routine and non-routine channels. These two overarching categories comprise four sub-channels each, providing eight channels overall, illustrated in Figure 1. These eight channels are outlined below with examples, brief description, and a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of each channel to news organisations. Although there were initial challenges in the inductive categorisation process to capture each channel, the eight categories encapsulate the starting point of all the stories within the sample. Of course, they do not illustrate the entire process used in the news report's formation, but instead demonstrate the single preliminary activity, behaviour or event which triggered the report's development.
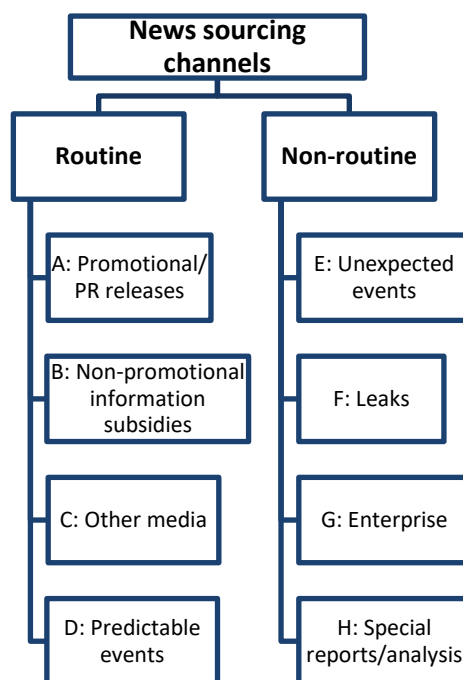

Figure 1: The proposed new channels of production typology based on eight categories

Routine channels – A, B, C, D

A – Promotional/PR releases:

Examples: A press release from the Minister for Health announcing the launch of a new healthy eating campaign; A survey commissioned by a medical workers' trade union about job satisfaction and working conditions, with accompanying press release.

This is content based on material provided by an individual or organisation in the form of information subsidies: the material may be promotional/positive for the third party or PR material offered in response to an issue. Typically, it is content in which the external actors are seeking to influence coverage and sway the general narrative through the inclusion of this information. The advantage to reporters and editors using this material is its low cost (crucial to the subsidy notion of information subsidies), ease of access, the speed with which it can be republished, and the fact it may be perceived as being easy to process by non-expert journalists. Furthermore, its direct association with a third party may be interpreted as a low risk for a news organisation in terms of verified content and avoiding defamatory or inaccurate information. The disadvantages may be the resistance many editors may have towards PR, the potential risk to the brand's credibility and integrity, and the similarity of the organisations' news report to rival publications' versions.

B – Non-promotional material

Examples: Release of official census figures regarding population health; Publication of monthly figures for surgery waiting lists or emergency department overcrowding.

This content is also based on material provided by third parties but is typically not as agenda-driven as Channel A; this could be considered relatively neutral information. It may also have accompanying press releases highlighting the report's/data's key findings, which may be intended to steer coverage, but crucially the information provided is open to interpretation, and may also be highlighting problems (such as a critical watchdog report). As with Channel A, the advantages to the news organisation are its low cost, ease of access and little temporal investment needed. Furthermore, as it may often be considered somewhat neutral information, it may help editors to feel they are fulfilling the dissemination function and public service role of journalism (Deuze 2005), providing citizens with official information about the state and its services. Among the disadvantages are the potential similarity to other publications' versions, and the fact the material may require expertise to find the best news angle and contextualise, which may require more time and resources.

C – Other media

Examples: Speakers contributing to phone-in radio shows; human interest case studies that appear in one publication and are replicated in another

This is content repurposed from other media reports on rival organisations, which may be another newspaper or website, TV programmes or interviews carried out on radio stations. This is the familiar "cannibalisation" of content (Phillips 2011) and can be advantageous for news organisations because of the low cost and ease of access, as is the case with Channels A and B. Furthermore, from a competitive perspective, it also ends a rivals' exclusivity of a story/contribution, and it may be trusted as being accurate and verified, therefore low risk, due to having already been published by other organisations, suggesting an inherent legitimacy and value in the material. Some disadvantages may include a risk to credibility to the brand by repeatedly using information from a rival and potentially promoting a rival organisation; this latter point is tied to questions of attribution, thus raising further questions about how to appropriately credit the original source outlets.

D – Predictable

Examples: Reporting on parliamentary activity or court reports

This content may be somewhat predictable, as the event and context is scheduled, but the exact happenings may be unknown. Furthermore, events such as parliamentary debates still require processing and may be interpreted differently depending on the journalist/news outlet and their chosen news angle. The advantages are that the events are easily planned for and scheduled around, and will likely be seen as a guaranteed source of content, even if the focus is not yet known. They may also be open to interpretation which can be used for agenda-driven coverage, and different framing of events through the highlighting of alternate actors or angles. The disadvantages for news organisations include how the coverage may result in similarities to other

publications' versions and may require expertise to thoroughly analyse the event. Furthermore, a knock-on effect may be that this channel becomes an overly reliant source which may dictate coverage, thus minimising opportunities, resources and general editorial demand for non-diary, non-scheduled events.

Non-routine channels – E, F, G, H

E – Unexpected events

Examples: Sudden death due to delayed arrival of ambulance service; Patient in hospital who faced lengthy delays for a hospital bed due to overcrowding

This is coverage of unplanned events and issues, often associated with breaking-news events, and could be seen as the closest to the "what a story" template (D. Berkowitz 1992). The specific sources used will vary, depending on what is available in the aftermath of the incident, but may be a hybrid of official responses and contributions from witnesses or social media reaction. Among the advantages to news organisations of such coverage are the opportunities to show competitiveness/relevance by breaking the story and being the source of the audience's first encounter with the event. However, the disadvantages may include a perceived need to maintain a presence and constant updates, the risks of unverified/inaccurate information, and being wholly reliant on external reaction/contributions to provide content in the early stages of the event.

F – Leaks

Examples: Details on an unpublished document sent between health service officials; Whistleblower speaking to a journalist

This content is based on information not in the public domain and obtained by the journalist through informal channels or contact; typically, such information is received via a tip-off from a source, and aligns strongly with elements of Sigal's "informal" channel. The advantage to the organisations for this type of material is the prestige and exclusivity that goes with such leaked material, the potential to set the agenda, and the potential for strategic release by saving the story for a quieter news period. The disadvantages are that such stories and tip-offs require reporters to be trusted, known and have a network from whom they will be contacted, thus necessitating a certain level of experience. It also requires thorough verification which demands various resources and may pose legal risks.

G –Enterprise

Information obtained through a freedom of information request; Investigate reporting based on undercover work

This is based on original story-gathering and the emphasis is on how the journalists steer the story rather than being primarily influenced by external actors. It also includes the use of one-on-one interviews, such as highlighting human interest stories when individuals are sourced independently by the journalists rather than through intermediaries such as NGOs or PR agencies; however, it is, of course, often difficult to determine the origins of these interactions. The advantages relate to prestige and exclusivity, the potential to set an agenda, and less pressure to publish or broadcast immediately. The resources required are the potential disadvantage, and the

fact there is no guarantee that the journalists' work which they are pursuing will result in a publishable story. It also requires more verification and legal checks than the routine channels.

H – Special reports
Examples: analysis and opinion columns; data journalism

This content is typically not a news story, and includes features, opinion/analysis, or any kind of non-textual storytelling such as data analysis or a longer-form multimedia project. Ultimately it is a piece of content that may not be based on freshly, originally obtained information but brings a new perspective. The advantages to news organisations are the prestige associated with such work and its originality and exclusivity, in particular if novel storytelling tools are used or high-profile contributors are secured. The potential to set the agenda and have the work referenced elsewhere may also be a factor. The disadvantages relate to the technical skills required for certain formats, and the potential cost and other resources, such as time, expertise, and legal clarification.

By its nature, the non-routine grouping is more challenging to categorise as there is more unstructured exchanges between journalists and the actors with whom they interact, and many such actions are not necessarily visible to an audience or researcher. This is especially true as the overarching "non-routine" category is effectively attempting to encapsulate all that which does not fit into our understanding of "routine" channels. Nevertheless, the practice nature of journalism with its repeated, established routines mean that patterns are apparent within this broader non-routine assortment, and the challenge is to apply some analytical form to these trends.

While the categories presented above provides a descriptive basis, Table 3 adds a further analytical dimension by capturing some of the other factors that may be influential. This is tentative and general, and may not be applicable in every scenario, but draws inspiration from the typifying work of Tuchman (1973) discussed earlier, such as including the temporality dimension. These assessments, inferred during the qualitative content analysis process in the original study, categorises each factor as either low, medium or high. The first four rows examine the temporal nature of each channel: the time required to research the story, whether it can be scheduled, the urgency of publication and the perceived pressure to provide running updates. For example, 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 contrasts with 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, and include some of the points raised in the previous section discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each channel.

	ROUTINE CHANNELS (A-D)				NON- ROUTINE CHANNELS (E-H)			
	A: Promotional & PR material	B: Non-promotional material	C: Other media reports	D: Predictable and scheduled events	E: Unexpected events	F: Leaked information	G: Enterprise reporting	H: Special reports
Time								
Scheduled/easy to plan around	MED	MED	LOW	HIGH	LOW	MED	MED	HIGH
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
Perceived pressure to provide updates	LOW	LOW	MED	MED	HIGH	MED	MED	LOW

External actors								
Reliance on outside contributions	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MED	LOW	HIGH	LOW	LOW
Agenda from the actors involved	HIGH	MED	N/A*	MED	MED	MED	MED	MED
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
Guarantee of story	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MED	MED	MED
Final product								
Similarity to rivals' version	HIGH	MED	HIGH	MED	HIGH	LOW	LOW	LOW
Risks (eg, legal)	LOW	LOW	LOW	MED	MED	HIGH	HIGH	MED
Prestige for news outlet	LOW	LOW	LOW	MED	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

Table 3: The factors associated with each channel, categorised as low, medium or high. *As no source actor is directly involved in this category, this was deemed N/A

Some 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 3, 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, freedom of information requests can be submitted and analysed, or phone calls can be made from a desk, and having an established network of sources makes 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. It appears that one of the key variables may relate to experience: having the knowledge, familiarity and ability to source the necessary information ensures non-routine, original work can be completed from most settings. Thus, it appears that the desk or physical location is not the main concern, but the issue instead may lie with the journalist's own experience and habitual work practices.

Application of the framework to empirical research

The reconceptualisation evolved while coding a dataset of news reports about the health sector in Ireland, and referencing this study provides an opportunity to demonstrate the insights available with this typology, even if thorough discussion of the results themselves is beyond the scope. Sourcing and online news production practices were central to the original study's objectives so a thorough understanding of the channels through which contributions and stories were being obtained was valuable. After the initial coding recorded one of Sigal's three channels, this was deemed insufficient given the additional observations recorded about each story's origins. After the new typology was generated, the sample was then recoded using the eight subchannels. Figure 2 shows the categorisation of the stories using Sigal's triad, and Figure 3 shows the data recategorised into the eight new channels (No Channel H was present in the original dataset as it focused solely on traditional news reports). What becomes apparent is the extra insight available within the overarching routine channel: promotional material dominates, while other media is

clearly visible, and predictable – though not PR-driven – material is also a notable contributor. The nuancing of the routine channels prompts discussions about the forces shaping each category: for example, a dominance of promotional PR (channel A) suggests a strong influence of external sources, while a strong use of other media (channel C) indicates some internal newsroom pressure to obtain and publish content. Allowing these patterns to become evident was the motivation behind the conceptualisation, and it can thus be brought forward to use as a coding variable for other analyses.
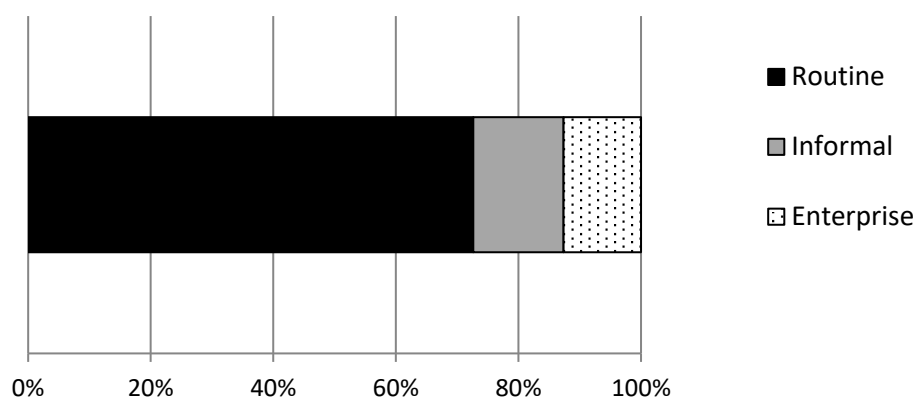
Figure 2: The percentage of stories categorised into Sigal's channels of production
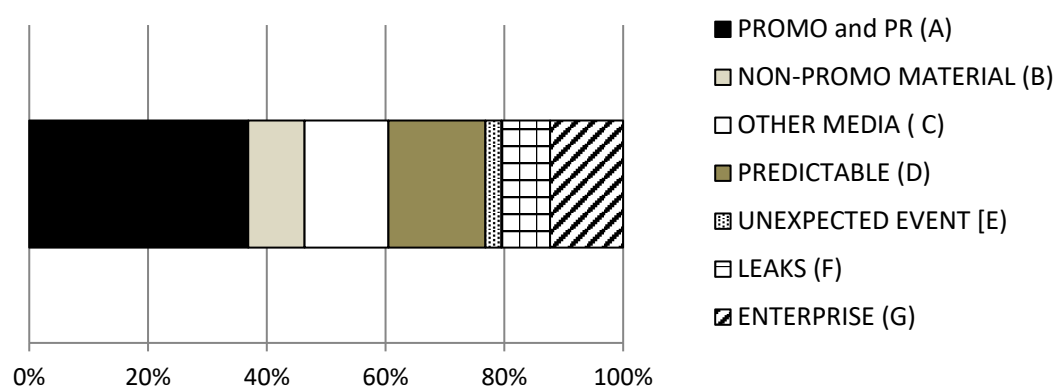

Figure 3: The percentage of stories categorised into the new channels

Two examples from the study which demonstrate the framework's usefulness are outlined below. The findings and their potential implications for journalism practice, beyond the discussion here, demonstrate how the typification can help in the analysis of news production and sourcing. For example, Figure 4 shows the use of each sourcing channel throughout the day based on the timestamp of first publication. These results can be useful for assessing implications and outcomes for content amid scenarios whereby, perhaps, there are fewer journalists with specialist knowledge, or hyper-temporality is prioritised. For example, the results show the prevalence of routine channels during the daytime hours, illustrating how promotional material dominates throughout the day. Elsewhere, Channel C, other media, contributes heavily during the late morning and afternoon: this was explained by the "cannibalisation" of material from various radio programmes, such as the morning news show and an afternoon phone-in show. Predictable events such as parliamentary

activity also contribute heavily during the afternoon, providing an ongoing stream of content to maintain the constant publication processes associated with digital publishing. The overnight spike visible is associated with content which was typically held for the print edition of the publication before being published on the website (see Author 2017).
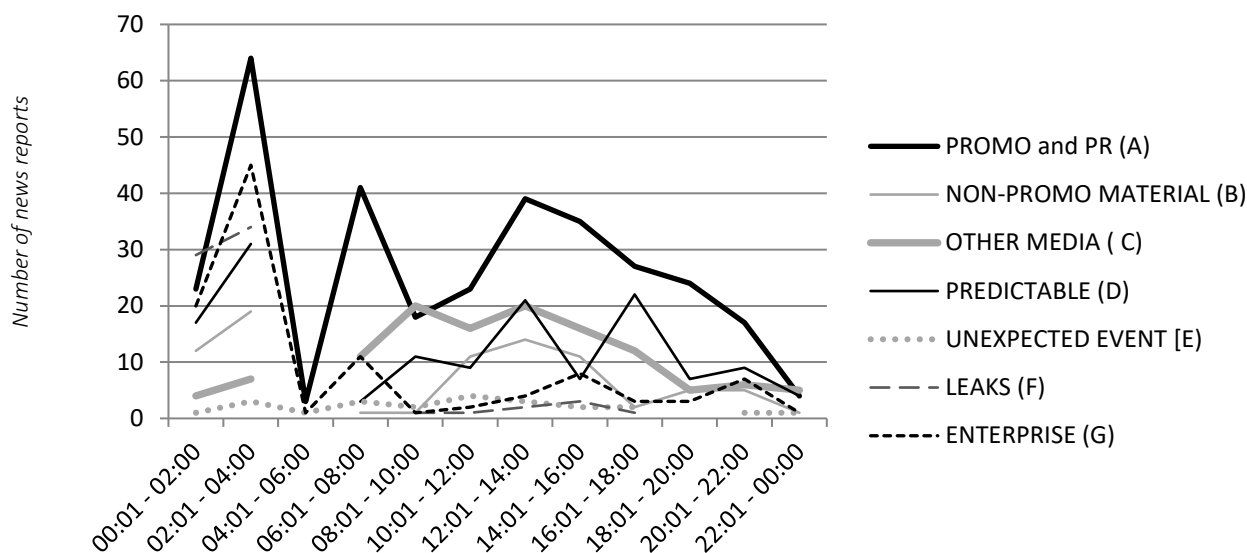

Figure 4: The use of routine and non-routine channels throughout the day

Another application of the typology is evident in Figure 5 whereby the code is presented alongside byline category. This indicates how both specialised and general reporters are heavily reliant on promotional PR material, while showing that leaks are almost exclusively tied to specialised reporters, aligning with arguments about source networks and the informal contacts journalists build up over time while working on particular beats. Channel B, the non-promotional information subsidies, is also mostly associated with specialised reporters, reinforcing the potential need for some level of expertise to comprehend official reports or data sets. Similarly, specialised reporters dominate the "predictable" Channel D, which is a manifestation of beat reporting, such as those political or court reporters who report from routine proceedings daily. Elsewhere, general reporters' reliance on "cannibalised" media content may suggest a passive approach to reporting, where easily obtainable information is valued; this, in turn, could be associated with diminishing opportunities to specialise in certain beats (Siegelbaum and Thomas 2016; Nikunen 2013). Nevertheless, general reporters still pursue enterprise reporting (Channel G) at a similar level to specialised reporters. These results regarding authorship suggest specialisation is not necessarily an indication of immunity to PR influences, nor is the desire to pursue original leads limited to those tied to specific beats.
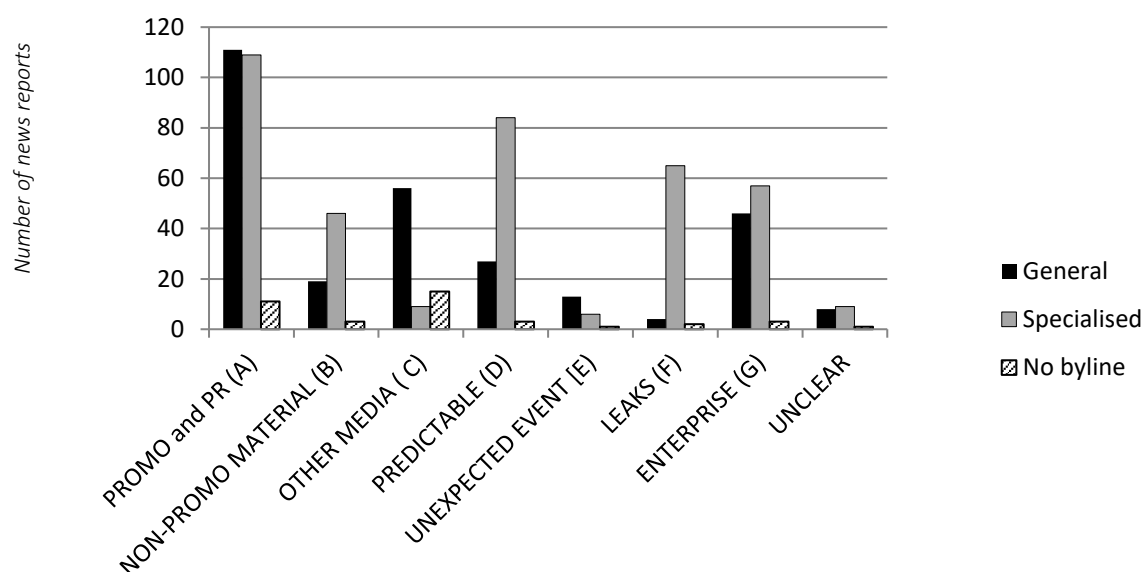
14

Figure 5: The various byline categories and how they use different channels of production

As seen throughout, these channels are ultimately the pathways through which journalists access their stories. Deconstructing the routine channels in such a way allowed for a deeper analysis, establishing links between each channel and the factors associated with its dominance or marginalisation, as detailed in Table 3. Even the ability to distinguish between promotional PR and non-promotional information subsidies is useful when considering the influence of external actors in the news process or how "official" information from state bodies is used as part of the media's dissemination function. This material is also clearly distinct from the reportage on scheduled events like parliament and courts, which requires different skills and resources. On the "non-routine" side, the unexpected events are what many might initially think of as typical news events, which must be covered with accuracy and immediacy. The leaks and enterprise channels align strongly with Sigal's informal and enterprise channels respectively, incorporating much of the reporting that falls into the somewhat romanticised image of the investigative reporter. The presence of the "special reports" category could be used to capture the content which falls outside of traditional news reports. Additionally, for any researcher using this framework, it may be useful to have an additional "other" category to capture material that does not fit into the categories presented here.

Conclusion:

The typology is an attempt to delve into some of the nuances of journalistic sourcing practices and resist generalities, especially when considering terms like "routine news". As demonstrated, the demands and requirements of different channels may affect how prevalent they are in the newsroom as editors' ideation regarding what channels are most valued will vary depending on their own priorities, resourcing, and pressures from elsewhere. Overall, 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 typically require more time, resources and specialist knowledge, and may come with risks. As is

the case with any researcher-driven taxonomy, the framework may not necessarily align with how journalists' perceive their work routines; presenting such a model to practitioners could further strengthen or alter some elements.

The discussion here is not the place to explore the merits or concerns regarding the prevalence or marginalisation of each channel, as the primary aim here was to demonstrate the insights available when a more detailed framework is applied to a content analysis. Therefore, the typology does not strive to consider merit, or to reduce and stereotype routine news as problematic and non-routine news as more worthwhile. Conversely, it seeks to facilitate a broader analysis of these two overarching channels and explore what each subchannel comprises and what factors lead to its role in daily journalistic activity. Crucially, the typification allows for clearer distinctions to be made within the routine channel than previously described elsewhere. The distinctions raised throughout this discussion are achieved through an often-underused interpretation of sources, by shifting the emphasis from *who* the source is, to *how* journalists are accessing stories and what exactly is triggering the story and leading to its development in the newsroom. This highlights how the same individual or organisation can act as both a routine and non-routine source depending on what their intentions may be: positive publicity may be associated with PR material, but something far more strategic may be gained through informal, non-routine communication channels with journalists.

The model was conceptualised based on the data and analysis from one study but was informed by decades of literature, and efforts were made throughout to minimise the reliance on the particulars of that single empirical case. Nevertheless, the typology's application to other studies and national contexts may require modification from researchers to encapsulate the nuances of that area. The health sector in Ireland is in the news on an almost daily basis, with issues such as industrial relations, waiting lists, and hospital standards all frequent topics. It is difficult to determine the extent to which this shaped this typology: the clear distinction between promotional and non-promotional material was perhaps the area most heavily influenced, as there was a combination of promotional material from NGOs and trade union groups, as well as more official, non-promotional figures such as waiting periods for procedures and watchdog reports on standards in hospitals and care homes. These were crucial distinctions to make in the analysis of sourcing patterns, and arguably one of the steering forces for reconceptualising the channels. Furthermore, the fact that just 7 per cent of origins could not be determined perhaps suggests a heavily mediatised sector with many stakeholders seeking to influence coverage through information subsidies and other routine channels, and thus healthcare may have proven to be a useful topic to establish the various channels. However, such work may be more challenging when applied to other sectors and it must be remembered that the inductive nature of this typology's formation meant it was ultimately custom-built for this study's content, reflecting the channels through which *this* sample's stories developed. Nevertheless, procedural settings such as courts and parliaments have international resonance, as does the trend of repurposing content from rivals, covering unexpected events, leaks, and more enterprise reporting. Therefore, while the prevalence of each channel may vary by country, there is little to suggest the national context here presents unique factors that would skew the typology's fundamental composition.

This leads on to an important recommendation for future research in which other content analyses adopt this typology and consider how it functions as a coding measure. The nature of tracing the origins of content means that fully employing the framework requires a thorough, systematic methodology to determine the sourcing channels. This is more challenging than simply recording an actor's presence but is crucial to establishing and highlighting the distinction between sources as actors contributing to a story, and story establishment and development as a journalistic practice. This typology can hopefully be used in future studies to assist with the categorisation of journalistic content and establishing empirical links to journalists' daily activities.

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