

**The Relationship Between
Gatekeepers and
Gatewatchers/Gatecrashers
in Malta Today**

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Statement of Research Ethics

I declare that I have abided by the University of Malta's Research Ethics Review Procedures.

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Abstract

The news media landscape has undergone considerable change since the advent of the internet, changing power dynamics. This study aims to explore the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers and gatecrashers in terms of news production and news consumption. It seeks to gain insight into the gatekeeping practices of both local legacy and digital-born news organisations, and finally to examine perspectives on how the relationship is expected to evolve in the coming decade. The methodology adopted was qualitative, employing a stratified sample ensuring representation by all populations under study, gatekeepers, gatewatchers and gatecrashers. Data was collected through 11 in-depth interviews using semi-structured interviews, allowing for an emergent approach. The data was analysed thematically allowing the findings to be compared and contrasted. The key findings of the research show gatekeepers, and gatewatchers/crashers, all play a part in Malta's news media eco-system, their roles ranging from competitive to collaborative, acting symbiotically, 'watching' each other. Gatewatchers/crashers provide a nuanced voice and have the potential to benefit society but dark participation, trolling and politicians gatecrashing can cause distrust. Fact-checking articles are needed to combat dis/misinformation and the future of news requires collaboration, and greater media literacy. Legacy media's officious voice contrasted with digital-born's more informal voice, which focuses on content palatable to younger audiences. The roles of the groups are predicted to blur and overlap in the future. The research adds to the limited research about participation in news media in Malta and identified scope for further research and well as makes recommendations for industry drawn from the answers to the research questions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The news media landscape has undergone considerable change since the advent of the internet changing power dynamics. The dominant news actors of the pre-internet age were the 'gatekeepers', a term reserved for media professionals such as editors and journalists who controlled the flow of information through their internal processes (Thorson & Wells, 2015). Bruns (2011) noted new citizen actors, 'gatewatchers', who enabled by the internet not only received news but reacted and anticipated the news, engaging in sharing, contextualising and curating news produced by gatekeepers. The more active citizens, who created and published their own news content online were called gatecrashers (Bruns, as cited in Barnard, 2018). New gatekeepers emerged, called digital-borns (Nicholls et al., 2018), operating online, sharing the news eco-system with legacy (pre-internet) gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers. The new environment is reshaping the way citizens consume news and challenging traditional news media models.

1.2 The Research Problem

Research into the gatekeeping phenomenon has been conducted internationally, as well as research into gatewatching and gatecrashing, but in Malta it has mainly focussed on gatekeepers. Mula's (2015) examination of participation in news-making identified the need for other perspectives to be studied. Covid 19 and the increased adoption of social media have seen citizens become more active online, yet Marmara (2021) evidenced that only thirty per cent engage in gatewatching/crashing. The relationship between old and new actors in Malta remains unexamined necessitating research into the phenomenon.

1.3 Research Objective

The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers in both local legacy news organisations and local online news organisations and to gain

insight into the current gatekeeping practices. It seeks to fulfil the need highlighted by Mula (2015) for different perspectives on audience participation by looking at the perspective of both the news organisations including editorial staff and journalists and the gatewatchers/crashers and to understand why only approximately thirty percent of the audience engage in the practice. Finally, insights from the different stakeholders into the future of the in the coming decade will also inform the study.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers including gatecrashers in Malta in terms of news production and consumption?

SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do legacy news organisations and online news outlets approach their gatekeeping role?

How is this relationship expected to evolve in the next five to ten years?

1.4 Organisation of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, lays the background information. Chapter two reviews the literature related to the phenomenon in different countries and expands what is known about the relationship its environment in Malta leading to the research questions. Chapter three discusses the methodology adopted, while chapter four presents the findings from the interview and discusses their relevance to literature examined and the research questions. The fifth and final chapter synthesizes the discussion to answer the research question, examines the limitations to the study and makes recommendations for further research as well as recommendations for industry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the origins and development of gatekeeping, gatewatching and gatecrashing that are central to this study and examine aspects of the relationship. It will consider the situation in Malta, related scholarship and the need for this study.

2.2 The Rise of Newspaper Journalism: The Early Years

Journalism history may be traced back to the switch from oral to print cultures (Ong, 1982; Barnhurst & Nerone, 2008), with the arrival of the newspaper giving news a sober form. Editors developed a relationship with their audience and afforded infrequent dull stories, while pamphlets resorted to "popular" journalism to retain readership (Stephens, 1997).

2.3 The Fourth Estate

In the 18th century, Edmund Burke coined the term 'Fourth Estate' to describe journalists in the parliament press gallery (Carlyle, 1840), a fourth link in a chain of estates starting with clergy, then nobility, and thirdly common people, which mediated between politicians and the people, drawing power through its readership (Hampton, 2010). Journalism became a tool of democracy (Schultz, 1998, p.1) allowing for "political, corporate, economic and social" debate (Habermas, 1991). Montesquieu (1966, pp. li-iii) adapted the estates model to form a new chain of estates - the judiciary, legislature and executive - held accountable by a "counter-power": the press, the Fourth Estate, thus acting as society's watchdog and wielding considerable power.

2.4 Gatekeeping, News Creation and Consumption

In 1947, Lewin coined the term 'Gatekeeper' to describe the power of the fourth estate. Gatekeeping is a top-down process whereby media professionals such as editors and journalists control the flow of information, selecting or withholding it for their news channels (Thorson & Wells, 2015; Vos, 2015). It is a core function of journalists, who select, collate, write, edit, and position

information as news to their audience (Hermida, 2020). David Manning White's (1950) seminal study proposed editors decide what is news and thus, what is real, making them the final gatekeeper in a chain of communication among gatekeepers within a news organisation.

News content reflects an organisation's system of gatekeeping which may include bias, attempts to be balanced or impartial and framing (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016), shaping how audiences understand the world (Ranney, 1983). News media shape public opinion by setting the agenda (McCombs and Shaw's, 1972). They explained that when editors and newsroom staff choose what makes it to their pages and where or how it is displayed, they play a significant role in determining the political actuality. Editors and newsroom staff influence political reality by selecting what's published, how it's displayed. Von Sikoski & Matthes (2020) explain framing is how journalists select which aspects to highlight and which to ignore, suggesting a particular definition to a problem and interpreting causal relationships, making moral evaluations, considering political leaning, and affecting audience perception. Politicians push frames, which news organisations adopt and alter, in turn pushing them to their audiences. As with agenda setting, this highlights the power of gatekeepers over audience meaning-making. Both gatekeeping strategies imply a passive audience. The audience is seen as 'drugged' by the news, unable to critically engage with the news and accepting its understanding of the world shaped by powerful gatekeepers.

2.5 The Internet, Super Connectedness, and the News.

Notions of being drugged and addicted to technology creating what Marwick (2008) terms 'techno-panics'— anxiety spurred by technological change – abound. The internet debuted commercially in the US in 1989, becoming a public open tool for information exchange. Its adoption rate was unprecedented, far exceeding that of previous mass communication technologies (Hannemyr, 2003). In embracing the internet, society locked itself into an information age that will continue to gain speed and diffuse (Wriston, 2013). The internet is both a global broadcasting network and a tool for disseminating information and for individuals and their digital devices to interact and collaborate (Milakovich, 2010). Marshall McLuhan's view, echoed by Culkin (1967, p.70)

that "we shape our tools and thereafter they shape us," explains how technology affects our interactions, self-image, and behaviour (Reid, 2018). 21st-century digital platforms enabled the creation of digital societies on social media using Facebook for networking, Twitter micro-blogging, Instagram for photo sharing and YouTube for videos (Walsh, 2020) as well as newcomers such as TikTok for micro-video sharing. The arrival of the smartphone in the late 2000s was perfectly timed to meet societal needs and wants to be able to communicate freely, be networked, informed and entertained while on the move, leading to an always-connected culture (Reid, 2018, Nguyen, 2021). The internet, a 'many-to-many' tool for communication (Keane, 2013, p.18), has promoted communication in everyday language and creativity, allowing ordinary people to generate and disseminate vast amounts of 'user-generated content' (Keane, 2013, p.8). Social media disrupted traditional journalism practices (Chayko, 2017) with always-on audiences demanding more content. Kirsner (1997) noted that as news began to be consumed online, newspapers were pressured into a 24x7 news cycle. Accustomed to one-to-many communication of news at a set time of day, newspapers had to adapt to providing news round the clock, adopting new news values such as "immediacy, interactivity and participation" alongside "old" news values such as objectivity to meet the needs of audiences (Usher, 2014). Usher, added that although immediacy was already a fundamental news value, it's application became more literal, with the 24x7 news cycle becoming a "NOW cycle". In a watershed moment influencing the attitudes of traditional gatekeepers at the time, Murdoch (2005) stated that a new breed of media users had risen and expected content that was "very much as they want it", meaning, like the content they saw on social media such as Facebook and YouTube. Murdoch (2005) argued text alone in online news was insufficient, and Hagerty (2006) suggested multimedia content could address the crisis of printed newspapers. News organisations and journalists sought to meet the demands of the new environment, but were "caught between tradition and change" (Usher, 2014, p.5). Legacy newspapers, surviving newspapers with "longer histories" (Harcup, 2014, p.157), have developed into hybrid organisations running print and online versions, while "digital-born news media" emerged to licence copy,

aggregate or create content (Nicholls et al., 2018). The news ecosystem is growing in richness and complexity as new actants - big data, social media and citizens interact (Reich & Barnoy, 2020). Citizens are no longer just seen as passive receivers of news (Rosen 2006), but as active participants in this complex world.

2.6 From Gatekeeping to Gatewatching/Gatecrashing - the Rise of the Fifth Estate

New terms 'Gatewatchers', 'Gatecrashers' and 'the Fifth Estate', were designated to consumers capturing the agency and activity of the audience in shaping the news, awakened by the possibilities offered by the digital age. Bruns (2011) introduces the idea of gatewatching to describe the involvement of citizens, emphasizing their role in sharing, promoting, contextualising and curating existing news. Bruns (as cited in Barnard, 2018) reserves the new term gatecrashers for citizens who create their own news content and publish it via social media, highlighting the new hybridised role of the 'produser' (Bruns, 2006), audience members that both produce and consume news in an interactive mediascape. Barnard (2018) explains that like the fourth estate, fulfil their responsibility as watchdog, citizens too have the civic responsibility of 'watching the watchers'. Citizens watch at the gates, observing, amplifying and criticising the work of the professional news media organisations, ensuring their accountability to audiences. These networked individuals working collaboratively, gatewatching and gatecrashing are thus the pillars of the fifth estate (Barnard 2018), embodying the participative ideal. Keane (2013) explains champions of participation describe a natural chemistry between the "communicative abundance" afforded by the information era and democracy, offering citizens the chance to question and influence the public agenda and participate in a conversation with experts, political decision-makers, and other citizens, thus strengthening democracy. Bird (2011) asserts that citizens employing new media have broken through the controls of repressive regimes in countries such as China, Iran and Egypt disseminating stories and visuals that industry journalists would not have been able to obtain. Thus, bloggers and citizen journalists have brought new possibilities for democracy.

Consumers wish to control their media rather than be “controlled by it” (Murdoch, 2005). Gilardi et al. (2022) state that digital platforms eroded the power of gatekeepers in traditional media organisations potentially enabling a diverse number of actors to influence the agenda. Gatewatchers and gatecrashers can give voice to their own stories, participating in the flows of information of communities and feeling a growing sense of belonging (Costera Meijer, 2013). The participative ideal so expressed presents a hopeful shift in power towards networked citizens (Keane, 2013), however scholars point to a tri-party relationship in digital news creation, the networked citizens who crowdsource, the machines and the traditional media. Lewis and Westlund (2015) emphasize how enmeshed humans and technology are in news creation. They draw attention to the role played by algorithms, cross-media platforms, and other interrelated elements, noting a shortage of research into “actors, actants, and audiences” and how they interrelate. Robinson and Wang (2018) also stress that as citizen’s lives become increasingly entangled with social media platforms, users relinquish control exposing themselves to advertisers, political actors and more who may not act in the best interests of the citizens.

2.7 The Relationship Between Gatekeepers and Gatewatchers/Crashers

Scholars have proposed that group membership is key part of being human (Wakefield, et al., 2016), with labels, such as gatekeeping, gatewatching/gatecrashing, serving to mark intergroup boundaries, naming ingroups with whom people identify and outgroups with whom they do not (Giles & Giles, 2012). Groups are not necessarily homogeneous, and even within an ingroup or outgroup there may be intragroup differentiation (Simon, 1992). There may be permeability between the groups with some at times identifying with both groups, or one, or the other and groups may converge and diverge (Giles & Giles, 2012). Intergroup relations are complex and multifaceted, the dynamics of the relationship among old and new media actors will be examined in the following subsections by exploring different settings, practices and attitudes.

2.7.1 Gatekeeping vs Gatewatching/Crashing

Bruns (2016) describes the newsscape as a continuum of models of journalism, with gatekeeping at one extreme and gatewatching/gatecrashing at the other end, implying polarisation, however, he suggests they are gravitating towards the middle hybrid area of the continuum suggesting some coming together. He speaks not of a relationship, but relationships implying complexity. Bruns (2008, p.178) states that industrial actors, the gatekeepers and citizen actors, the gatewatchers/gatecrashers, irreversibly exist in an ecosystem “in a variety of adversarial, parasitic or symbiotic relationships”. Rosen (2006) in his viral blogpost “the People Formerly Known as the Audience”, announced a shift in power from gatekeepers to citizens, speaking positively about how gatewatchers/gatecrashers saw themselves as a force to be reckoned with. He listed the tools that enable citizens, explaining the blog gives citizens a voice equivalent to the press. Podcasts are like the radio for citizens who are more adept and have found more applications for it. Shooting, editing and video distribution is now in their hands of citizens, he added. He told gatekeepers, “now we can edit the news” and choose what to give prominence to, adding the top-down power of the media had given way to horizontal communication among citizens that was equally valid and of consequence. Lewis and Usher (2013) using the term “grassroots networks” to highlight the bottom-up approach to news creation and distribution. Eldridge II (2019) states gatewatchers/gatecrashers have found innumerable ways of bringing news to publics arousing curiosity in gatekeepers but also trepidation as they observe the outgroup reshape the field of journalism. Chua and Duffy (2019) call gatewatchers/crashers “peripheral players”, corroborating Brun’s view of gatewatchers/crashers at the gates influencing and pushing through. They acknowledge that some have become hybrid players, using their technical ability and own new methods within the media, acting as links in the middle for core members of the professional and citizen groups. Eldridge II (2019), uses the term “interlopers”, implying they occupy a space they do not belong to, while Lewis and Usher (2013) use the term “hackers” which implies gaining unwarranted, referring to the influence and infiltration of non-media technologists such as programmers in the journalistic field. Although from different

professions, 'hackers' and journalists have common aspirations and some matching skills and can complement each other (Baack, 2018). Lewis and Usher (2013) state 'hacking' offers a novel framework for journalism that should espouse traditional values with open-source ethics enabling journalism to be relevant in a participative digital world but warn that like journalism it should be 'watched' critically.

2.7.2 Citizen Participation in News-making

Gans (1980) argued journalists should "share responsibility with others", and Singer et al. (2011) proposed participatory journalism implies collaboration and oneness as opposed to a parallel activity. Hermida (2011) argued the term encapsulated citizens participating in newsgathering, publishing, disseminating and commenting on news from professional news organisations. In theory, participation allows users to collaborate in journalistic work with some agency and control over news content. Borger et al. (2013) note the tension between the democratic ideal of participation and journalistic gatekeeping. Gatekeepers, discourage participation in decision-making and co-storytelling which undermine journalistic authority. Borger et al. differentiate between "interaction" and "participation", the former implying equal actors, while the latter subordinate. Engelke's (2019) literature review of 375 studies on citizen participation in online journalism concurs with Hermida's (2011) study regarding production stages, explaining journalist's hesitance to permit participation in the news-making stage. Engelke lists three stages - "formation", "interpretation", and "dissemination" (p.32) - and suggests reluctance towards participation in interpretation may be linked to moderation resources and "dark participation" (p.34). Engelke found North American audiences had more participative power than their European counterparts, mainly in the dissemination stage. Although participating in the formation and interpretation of news challenges journalists, they appreciate help in disseminating and promoting their work. Users showed more satisfaction in power-sharing, seeing it as more equal than journalists did. Engelke suggested this may relate to the audience having a limited understanding of professional news-making processes, thus being unaware of the opportunities journalists have to restrict participation, while journalists

are able to recognise the power of the audience as being limited. Rogers (2014) explained, some fields like data journalism are a more level playing field with citizens being more, or as technologically savvy as media professionals. Rogers proposed experimentation is needed to produce good work and being a professional news actor is no guarantee of success in data journalism: many journalists are anxious about spreadsheets. Data journalism, he explained, is a game-changer for participation, making journalists more dependent on communities for content and engagement. The potential of collaboration is seen in The Guardian's landmark experiment in participatory news formation (Bruns, 2014) which saw over 20,000 readers review a third of almost two million pages relating to MP expense receipts within 80 hours. The paper acted swiftly developing a reader interface in just five days (Arthur, 2009) and gamified the experience with user scores and MP "mugshots" (Andersen, 2009). Drawing on a larger reader base to process vast data quicker and more effectively, roles were switched with journalists acting as intra-organisation gatewatchers, watching the findings to be contextualised and repackaged through journalistic work (Bruns 2014). The Guardian's subsequent articles acknowledged this, with headlines like "MPs' expenses – what you've discovered" and the byline "Guardian reporters and Guardian readers", with readers in bold print. Heikka (2017) proposes that journalists, using dialogue, can acquire new work practices of collaborative innovation and become more open to change, while Garcia de Torres and Hermida (2017) suggest that social media use enables participatory reporting that is still accurate, trustworthy and verified.

2.7.3 Citizen Journalism

The term Citizen journalism, synonymous with participatory journalism. Wall (2015) emphasized its importance in capturing and bringing essential episodes of earthly life to publics. The term citizen journalist challenges the authority of professional journalists (Örnebring, 2013): some feel neutral while others threatened by them (Chung et al., 2018) and are uncomfortable with the blurring boundaries between them (Loosen, 2015). Historically, professional journalists are characterised by "Individual freedom and autonomy" explained, Örnebring (2103 p.48), however, his

study found emphasis on belonging to a professional collective with common practices, adherence to ethical standards, knowledge, and expertise in filtering information and editorial decision-making. They differentiated themselves from amateurs who had too much autonomy and were unbound by editorial control and quality and ethical standards (Örnebring, 2013). Chua and Duffy (2019) collected data from Singapore's most-followed English paper from 2015-2016 and 2018-2019 examining changing attitudes of the professionals towards amateurs, observing greater acceptance over time. Earlier observation captured views of citizens as enabled sources who trusted gatekeepers with user-generated content to make professional judgments, with one editor adding citizen journalists were overvalued and lacked insight into how the field works. Later observation found the outlook of gatecrashers was more positive, highlighting citizens were more dispersed, reporting from areas the media were not in, bringing voices they might not always agree with or may be unable to give space to. Bloggers were seen to possess distinct skillsets professionals could learn from. In general, professionals valued the expert citizens more and sought them out but treated amateur citizens with disdain. Wall (2015, p. 1), exemplified the powerful content produced countering notions of disdain, saying some amateurs had even died in creating "mere citizen content".

2.7.4 Trust in the Media, User-generated Content: Disinformation/Misinformation

Intergroup tensions have bearings on trust, particularly claims to being professional and labelling citizens content, pejoratively as amateur. The relationship between media (gatekeepers) and citizens (gatewatchers/crashers) rests on trust and accuracy in professional news media to orient the public and enable democratic participation. (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2022). Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's 2022 report shows global trust levels in news media decreased, with an average of 42%. Finland had the highest trust (69%) and the US and Slovakia had the lowest (26%). Southern and Eastern Europe recorded among the lowest levels (Newman et al. 2022). The Eurobarometer survey shows 39% across the EU trust the traditional written news organisations and their online version, with online news platforms including blogs and podcasts are

trusted less (European Parliament, 2022). Trust in the media has been eroded intentionally by the actions of antidemocratic actors. President Trump gatecrashed, using Twitter and his powerful position, attacking the media calling their scrutiny “fake news” causing trust in US media to plummet (Schappals & Bruns, 2022). Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) assert politicians have adopted the term fake news to discredit the media when scrutinised. Eldridge (2019) warned about dark participation and disinformation which damages public trust by disguising political agendas as bonafide public-interest news, deliberately disinforming publics with fake news. Quandt (2018), stated devious disinformation and blatant trolling are like a twin negative force of positive participation. Keane (2015) warned disinformation from some bloggers and video producers using anonymity, unbound by professional ethics, values and editorial input, permits the influencing of public debate and opinion. Citizens are being engulfed by a deluge of user-generated content which drowns out professional or meritorious citizen content by and by “user-generated nonsense” (p.129) created by a “cut-and-paste online culture” (p.126) generating ill-informed pieces spreading misinformation. Keane added that “profusion breeds confusion” (p.129) and explained that on one hand communicative abundance enables democratic freedom, yet on the other hand people escape the complexity by burying their “heads in the sand” (p.129).

2.7.5 Resources, Business Models, Sustainability and Future Outlook.

Communicative overabundance and antagonism by politicians, citizens with an agenda, etc. complicate gatekeeper-gatecrasher dynamics & strain resources and challenge business models, encouraging what Newman et al. call “selective news avoidance” (2022, p.13). This lack of attention towards professional news that serves the “public interest” [however imperfect] enabling citizens to make informed choices, erodes democracy, creates a “crisis in the business model” and financing of news (Phillips & Witschge, 2012 p3). Skovsgaard & Andersen (2020), (see table below) distinguish between intentional and unintentional news avoidance outlining causes and suggesting solutions. Intentional avoidance includes: negative content, diminished trust and “news overload” as causes. Newman et al. add a sense of powerlessness to alter the situation and the news being too difficult to

understand. Unintentional news avoidance happens when individuals are drawn away from the news by content such as entertainment which competes for public attention, noting algorithms also learn individuals' preferences pushing more of the same (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020). Pariser (2011) explained these trap individuals in a filter bubble, unique to them, reflecting back a diet of content they want and find interesting. While this partly solves problems with communicative overabundance by curating, it detracts from the promise of the internet for variety and plurality. Google and Facebook who have a hegemony on flows of information by grabbing user attention (García Ramírez, 2020) are the main way publics access news (Newman et al., 2019). Advertisers have moved online, challenging traditional news organisations' revenue (García Ramírez, 2020). News organisations have looked at other models such as paywalls, memberships and donations as a way of sustaining their operations (Newman et al., 2022). Digital-born news organisations have multiskilled staffs and perceive their audiences as young, technology-savvy and multimedia-oriented and innovate and experiment employing multiple-revenue stream strategies which include branded content and clickbait (González-Tosat et al., 2022). Brand journalism exploits the trust, influence and journalistic format of a news brand to reach new audiences but may disorient audiences who could confuse it with genuine journalism (Arrese & Perez-Latre, 2017). Orosa et al. (2017) explain clickbait is journalism that primarily aims to “turn the user into a commodity to sell to advertising companies” (p. 1270). It baits the audience with sensational headlines that do not inform but hook, cheating expectations as they are not necessarily fair, complete or accurate and may not deliver on the headline. Newman et al. (2022), report freelance journalists, and gatecrashers such as podcasters are able to persuade audiences to pay for content using new “membership platforms” (p. 20) such as Patreon. They propose these gatecrashers and solo journalists could become greater competition for established news brands and note that they highlight the talent of individuals, with higher wages offered to individual journalists considered a brand. Inevitably, discussions on the future of journalism centre on finding the right business model, or whether there is a good recipe for all.

Table 1. News avoidance explained (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020)

News avoidance		
Type	Intentional	Unintentional
Causes	A specific dislike for news ▪ News is too negative ▪ Low trust in news ▪ News overload	Relatively higher preference for other content than news ▪ Increasing media supply ▪ Personalization through algorithms
Solutions	Change selection and presentation of news ▪ Constructive journalism ▪ Fact-based reporting and transparency ▪ News curation and slow journalism	Change opportunity structures for news consumption ▪ Mix of news and entertainment ▪ Public service algorithm

Journalism is threatened by scarce human and attention resources, leading to decreasing revenues, layoffs, and an ever-growing workload for existing journalists. This increases demands for speed and cost-effectiveness, resulting in churnalism and homogeneous coverage across news organisations (Brédart, 2017; Saridou, 2017). Speed less time to fact-check and verify with organisations adopting publish now, verify later strategies to cope, leading to inevitable loss of quality that had distinguished professional from amateur gatecrashers (Porlezza, 2019). Populism and social hostility further increase the pressure on journalists, who face harassment and economic punishments for exposing corruption or collusion (Waisbord, 2018), leading to self-censorship.

2.8 The Maltese Context: Gatekeeping and Gatewatching/Crashing in the Local Mediascape

There has been no research expressly exploring the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers in Malta. What is known comes from general studies and related areas of the field. The internet came to Malta in 1995 (Agius, 2016). The internet and other factors including

Malta's political history which enabled technological development as well as pressures from globalisation, spurred widespread change in the country resulting in a "mediascape in flux" (Borg and Lauri, 2019, p. ix). Borg and Lauri note the impact of the constant rapid change in digital media technology on the Maltese media system and how differently people function in a "post-digital" Malta. Brown and Marmara (2022) acknowledge the role of the Maltese media in "citizenship education" in a country dominated by two political parties with tribalism manifesting in binary exchanges among citizens or between them and producers about politics, village saints, football, and other matters. They note intragroup tension among gatekeepers, independent media vs political party media, seen in Lovin' Malta crowdfunding, thus collaborating with engaged citizens to initiate legal action to declare party-owned TV and radio broadcasting unconstitutional. Despite the "insularity", Malta's size allows inevitable meetings with 'others' and thus potential breaches of "echo chambers" and filter bubbles (p.70). Research by Marmara (2021) found a largely passive audience, a fifth estate that is yet to awaken and fulfil its civic duty. The studies show that just under a third of the Maltese audience participate in gatewatching/crashing, sharing news articles, commenting and creating media content. In, addition it showed that 16-25-year-olds consumed the least daily news, with older audiences consuming most.

In researching gatekeepers in Malta, it was noted that no literature was available that comprehensively collated data on media ownership, organisation age and political leaning. Thus, data in the public domain was collated from media organisation websites, or through private communication with the organisations where it was absent. An image of the table organising the data is presented here while the full table may be found in the appendices section. Deciding on two possible entries proved difficult. Manueldelia.com, appears to have the freedom of a gatecrasher, but the journalistic rigour of a gatekeeper and thus was listed. Running Commentary: Daphne Caruana Galizia's notebook, a blog, also presented a problem. Caruana Galizia's blog afforded her freedom in selection of whom to hold accountable and in form, yet displayed journalistic rigour (Callus, 2017). Despite her assassination, her blog ousted a prime minister two years after her killing,

showing the power of individual actors, gatecrashing with 21st century digital tools. However, it was not included in the chart as it now exists as an archive of Caruana Galizia's work not an active blog.

Table 2. Table of newspaper ownership, leadership and perceived bias (See appendices)

Newspapers (print and online) – Privately owned - Continued						
Title	Days of publication	Established	Editor	Owner	Perceived political orientation	Notes
The Daily Mirror	Daily (2017)	2017	Managing editor: Caroline Micallef	Caroline Micallef Caroline Micallef The Micallef Group	Liberal	"The Daily Mirror is a new newspaper, owned by a woman, and is a new addition to the Maltese media landscape. It is a new addition to the Maltese media landscape, and is a new addition to the Maltese media landscape." (The Daily Mirror, 2017)
The Daily Mirror	Daily (2017)	2017	Managing editor: Caroline Micallef	Caroline Micallef Caroline Micallef The Micallef Group	Liberal	"The Daily Mirror is a new newspaper, owned by a woman, and is a new addition to the Maltese media landscape. It is a new addition to the Maltese media landscape, and is a new addition to the Maltese media landscape." (The Daily Mirror, 2017)

The use of these participative tools has enabled citizens to keep powermongers in check, yet there has been little research into gatewatching/crashing and their relationship with gatekeepers in Malta. Research by Mula in 2015 examined public participation in journalism in Malta, the attitudes of editors and policies. Mula highlighted the need for different perspectives to be studied such as those of journalists or audience members. Rapid change in the new media landscape, increased online adoption, and disruption from Covid 19 have brought yet more citizens online. Thus, research is needed to understand the relationship between gate keepers and gatewatchers/crashers in Malta and the implications for news production and consumption.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter examined the origins and development of gatekeeping, gatewatching and gatecrashing, central to this study and examined aspects of the relationship. It considered the situation in Malta, related scholarship and the need for this study. The next chapter explains the methodology employed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the framework adopted for this study, detailing the main objectives of the study and discussing the methodology used to collect and analyse the data. This chapter also clarifies how the participants were chosen and explains the ethical considerations made in designing the approach.

3.2 Research Design

This research aimed to understand the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers in legacy and online newspapers in Malta, examining their practices, inter and intra group attitudes and visions, deepening understanding of gatekeeping in the digital age and gaining insight into the next decade.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study, recommended for exploratory research (Cresswell, 2009). Qualitative research is best suited when little research about the population, gatekeepers and gatewatchers/gatecrashers in Malta has been carried out, as it enables the researcher to listen to the participants and understand through what is divulged. Thus, the research adopted an interpretivist approach to understand the phenomena from the actor's perspective (Ferguson et al., 1992), experiencing the local news landscape through this lens. A three-step approach was used to "describe, interpret and understand" data (Ferguson et al., 1992, p.6).

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to 'describe' data. Such interviews involve a conversation between a researcher and participant as equals (Taylor et al., 2016), using open-ended questions, eliciting a descriptive response of the individual's lived experience and the meaning they derive from it (Seidman, 2013). For this research, semi-structured interviews were used to allow for an emergent approach, adapting sequencing of preformulated questions and adding follow-up questions to capitalize on insights (Hopf, 2004). Ferguson et al. (1992) explain that upon hearing the accounts of interviewees, the interviewer 'interprets' the way they make sense of the world.

Examining the data with a bottom-up approach, themes emerged allowing the researcher to make sense and organize information, noting patterns, categories, similarities and differences (Creswell, 2009), as well as unforeseen insights (Bude, 2004). A descriptive 'understanding' was gained by examining the similarities and differences (Creswell, 2009) between gatekeepers and gatewatchers/gatecrashers in Malta and predicting the outlook for this relationship in the upcoming decade.

3.3 Question Design

Semi-structured interviews asked about how the relationship had changed in the past ten years, where it stands now, and how it is expected to evolve in the coming ten years. The questions (see appendices) focused on technology's role in shifting power dynamics, exploring participants' lived experience of economic health of newsrooms, and enabling potential of the internet. Additionally, themes such as trust, audience participation, interactivity, and motivations for participation or non-participation in gatewatching were examined.

The interviews were informed by the research in the literature review, and examination of news outlet websites to discover participative tools being used, allowing readers to interact in news production.

Table 3

Audience news participation tools offered by local news media companies	
Vox pop	News website comments board
Unpaid opinion pieces	Social media article comments
Letter to the editor	Reader question submission for journalists to ask at events
Video submission	Question time for audience in panel discussions
Send a correction	Secure link for leaking information
Send us your story	

3.4 Participants

Eleven participants were sought for the qualitative study. Five were gatekeepers, three from independent news media and two from institutions: political news media organisation and church-run news media organisation. Six other participants represented the active audience, the gatewatchers and gatecrashers.

3.5 Sampling Method

A stratified sample was used to represent gatekeepers, gatewatchers, and gatecrashers. This type of sampling enables the research goals to be achieved by purposively selecting participants from predefined subgroups of the population of interest, with the ability to compare subsets by studying how they are similar and/or different (Given, 2008). The study aimed to be representative of the local news mediascape's mix of actors in three groups, to understand their relationship. Purposive sampling was employed, selecting individuals who could contribute the most to the research based on their prominence, vocality, and the quality and reach of their communication. Unlike other settings, particular participants may contribute more to the research than random individuals (Given, 2008). Gatewatchers were carefully chosen based on the quality of their output, articulation, availability, and disposition. Three of the most prominent and prolific gatewatchers, willing to be interviewed and with a greater output than less active gatewatchers, were selected to mitigate the disproportionate stratification of the sample. Given the greater population of gatewatchers, a larger sample size, beyond the scope of this undergraduate dissertation would have been unachievable in the timeframe and word limit, and thus an unrealistic goal. Boddy (2012) advises setting attainable, realistic goals.

3.6 Procedure

Prior to the commencement of each interview, the consent form was read through and signed. The participants were given a brief explanation of the aims and scope of the research and the breadth of the questioning. Conceptual definitions for the terms gatekeeping as defined by Thorson

and Wells (2015), gatewatching as defined by Bruns (2011) and gatecrashing as defined by Bruns (as cited in Barnard, 2018) were given to ensure that all participant reflections and inputs related to the relationship among these actors as predefined prior to actual questioning commenced. Interviewees were given the choice to answer in either Maltese or English to ensure they felt comfortable and were able to answer fully and more freely in the language they express themselves best in. All interviews were held face to face, apart from two which were held on Zoom for the convenience of the participants. The duration of the interviews was not fixed, and respondents were allowed the time to give examples and elaborate as they wished so as to elicit the richest possible answers. An audio recording was made on two devices in case of technical failure, which the participants consented to. In the case of the Zoom interviews an audio-visual recording was also made. It was decided when planning the research methodology that participants would not be anonymised. The interviews were carried out in early March 2023.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Upon completion of the data collection, transcripts were made and analysed, with themes and sub-themes identified. Participants' answers varied, reflecting diverse experiences, yet similarities were also noted. The strongest and most insightful quotes were included in the analysis of findings due to the word limit. The full transcripts may be found in the Appendices.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics focus on doing good and avoiding harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 1989). Qualitative research seeks openness (Taylor et al., 2016) however frankness may cause harm. Despite the lack of anticipation of harm, and the consenting adult participants not being vulnerable, some participants inadvertently disclosed more than intended (Stacey 1988). This could expose them to potential libel or defamation due to the safe and reliable atmosphere created. Thus, after obtaining pre-interview consent, continuous consent was sought in situations where indiscretions were expressed, allowing participants to decide if the utterance should be kept or removed, as advised by Klykken (2022),

building trust, and fostering a healthier relationship. A sample pre-interview informed consent form is in the Appendices.

Anonymity is promoted by codes of ethics (UK's Social Research Association 2021), yet it may impede research aims. Walford (2018) maintains forgoing anonymity forces a researcher to choose participants carefully. Indeed, the participants chosen, particularly the gatewatchers/gatecrashers were selected for their significant contribution in the mediascape, and the gatekeepers were among the most significant in the local news mediascape. Who they are mattered for the goals of the study, that of a better understanding of the relationship among key players. Foregoing anonymity Walford (2018) states may result in writing and research of higher quality.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology, aims, scope, method of data collection and analysis and ethical considerations of the dissertation. The next chapter presents and elaborates on the findings and analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the analysis of data collected from eleven in-depth interviews with gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers and a discussion. The data was organised into overarching themes and sub-themes. Appropriate quotations were drawn from the data to illustrate and draw insights to answer the research questions.

4.2 Participants

A stratified sample was used ensuring that gatekeepers from independent and institutional (political and church) organisations, including legacy and digital-born and gatewatchers and gatecrashers were represented within the sample.

Table. 4 Table of Participants

GATEKEEPERS			
News Organisation	Participant	Position	Leaning of organisation
Times of Malta	Bertrand Borg	Online editor	Independent
Malta Today	Matthew Vella	Executive editor	Independent
Lovin' Malta	Jonathan Cilia	Editor-in-Chief	Independent
One	Alessandro Mangion	Head of News and Current Affairs	Labour party
Newsbook	Monique Agius	Senior journalist	Maltese Catholic Church

GATEWATCHERS AND GATECRASHERS			
Participant	Activity and media product type	Name of media product if applicable	Main area of interest
Omar Rababah	Gatewatcher	N/A	Migration & human rights
Ruben Abela	Gatewatcher	N/A	Environment, heritage and built environment
Matt Bonanno	Gatewatcher and gatecrasher – Satire/parody, memes, and blog	Bis-Serjeta	Social, political
Steve Bonello	Gatecrasher – cartoons/illustrations	Steve Bonello Art & Illustration	Broad area of interest including politics and environment
Jon Mallia	Gatecrasher	Jon Mallia Podcast	Political, varied
Manuel Delia *	Gatecrasher and gatewatcher	'Truth be told' blog. manuelydelia.com	Politics

*Manuel Delia felt he fit in all three roles (Gatekeeper, gatecrasher and gatewatcher) at different times.

4.3 Findings - Table of Themes

In analysing the data common themes emerged and were used to organise the findings presented in the following section.

Table 5 Table of themes

Over-arching Themes	Sub-themes
Inter/intragroup attitudes and insights into group roles and products.	▪ Gatewatchers/crashers about gatekeepers ▪ Gatekeepers about themselves ▪ Gatekeepers about gatewatchers/crashers ▪ Gatewatchers/crashers about themselves
The environment of the relationship: consumption and production	▪ Citizen journalism vs professional journalism ▪ Openness to citizen participation in news-making ▪ Trust in professional and citizen news media products
Sustainability	▪ Resources ▪ Business models ▪ The future

4.4 Inter/Intragroup Attitudes and Insights into Group Roles and Products

This over-arching theme draws insights into the relationship by examining attitudes towards a party's own role and production as well as that of the other and making comparisons with the other.

4.4.1 Gatewatchers/Crashers about Gatekeepers

All gatewatchers/crashers said or implied they respect some gatekeepers while others less. Some are "*genwini* [genuine]" Rababah said, "like Herman Grech at the Times". Independent legacy media generally commanded most respect while attitudes towards digital-born news media were mixed. Bonanno said certain websites offer "frivolous" and "clickbaity" news" bemoaning the "dearth of investigative journalism" while Abela contrasted them with legacy independent media

who he considered, because of “investigative journalism ... on top, above others”. Mallia, however, contrasted the legacy “old, traditional machine” with digital-born who are “much more daring, more adventurous, less constrained and more modern.” Yet, Rababah noted that some new digital media houses were like a “*showroom tal-ministri* [minister’s showcase]” with flattering reporting about ministers hiding subtle propaganda consequently commanding less respect. Correspondingly, Abela explained “There are gatekeepers with an agenda and select what to publish or twist it to fit their agenda.” All gatewatchers/crashers interviewed respected political party media least with Delia explaining editors who “primarily serve the interests of their employer, before the truth as they know it and are aware of it” have “abdicated their agency and authority”.

4.4.2 Gatekeepers about Themselves

The gatekeeper’s role is to mediate for readers (Vella). Borg explained filtering was central to the role with half the gatekeepers explicitly stating they are guided by the public interest. Agius, a church-media journalist/gatekeeper, clarified that although she works with freedom guided by public interest, “when it comes to sort of church related stories, this freedom goes” necessitating consultation with the editor on how best to report it. Mangion, from party-owned media explained he coordinates and directs journalists, ensuring “they report the news always respecting the *raison d’etre* of our shareholders”. Mangion mentioned shareholders [labour party] and Agius the church, a number of times when questions unlike independent-media gatekeepers who did not. Cilia considered gatekeeping an outdated notion, stating there is “symbiosis”; using social media “we’re working with people and they’re working with us like we don’t have a story and these people tell us about the story”. Cilia also noted the “administrative”, “hoity-toity” voice of legacy papers, saying “young consumers, want to see a meme, ... a cool foodie video, then ... news like that’s how it has to be presented, it has to be warm, and inviting”, showing a multi-skilled newsroom operating across platforms. He highlighted digital-born aggregate organisations were less transparent, rereporting news but communicating it better, like an older brother would... friendly”. Family and age metaphors were used

with Vella using “uncle” for legacy and “teenager” for digital-born, while Cilia used “brother” for digital-borns.

4.4.3 Gatekeepers about Gatewatchers/Crashers

Gatekeepers’ views of gatewatchers/crashers varied. Borg had the most positive attitude towards them stating “they serve a very valuable role”, noting they are sources of news themselves, bringing issues to the fore newspapers are unaware of, that journalists can tap into, and provide an instant feedback loop for papers. He acknowledged gatecrashers fill a void in Maltese media “a more casual take on things” contrasting with legacy’s officious voice concurring with Cilia. Capitalising on their “more conversational tone” gatecrashers grab attention and go viral. Cilia opined that blogging was very profitable and could lead to fame because there is “a certain mystique around it”. Mangion observed that unlike the professional media who double source, untrained citizens carried out acts of journalism, equipped with phone cameras without concern for credibility influencing uncritical consumers. Gatewatcher/crasher bias was a concern for half the gatekeepers, with Cilia calling it a stumbling block for citizen journalism, but Borg said they bring an array of perspectives, did things differently and although competition “in a way” were positive for society, and he “welcomed them” (Borg). Agius’s attitude, however, was more cautious, watching the gatewatchers/crashers, and particular gatecrashers, seeking to understand their how and what they repackage, targets of influence and intent behind their product.

4.4.4 Gatewatchers/Crashers about Themselves

The gatewatchers and gatecrashers interviewed varied in motivation and output, most interviewed, are activists to different degrees, seeking or facilitating social or political change. Some gatewatchers/crashers are guided by the public interest: Abela highlights key points he feels “people should know about”, to “educate” and “to get people to know about things in a simpler way”. Rababah, an activist against injustice explained refraining from gatewatching and being a passive audience member “helps the oppressor not the oppressed”. Making people laugh, while getting

people to think and sparking debate and reaction was Bonnano's approach who seeks to "find an angle that is not really being talked about" or is "under-reported", unpacking unexplored aspects of news or what editors filter out or are unaware of. Most gatewatcher/crashers mentioned their interpretation with Bonello emphasising freedom from "*indhil editorjali* [editorial interference]" stating, "cartoonists should be an opinion maker", and "shouldn't be a hand that draws". Regarding reach, most gatewatchers/crashers relied on footfall, people going to or coming across their content, in contrast Mallia said "literally anywhere there is an online audience ... our content is actually out there looking for you".

4.5 The Environment of the Relationship: Consumption and Production

This over-arching theme explores attitudes towards citizen journalism in comparison with professional journalism. It explores what helps or hinders citizen participation in news making and consumption and trust in professional and citizen news products affecting production and consumption.

4.5.1 Citizen Journalism vs Professional Journalism

Most gatekeepers and gatecrashers agreed with citizen journalism, most however, mentioned that professional practices such as "verification, double-checking, multiple sources" (Delia) should be adopted. Delia described journalism as the work of a person "who looks for facts and disseminates them,... beyond the satisfaction of their personal curiosity and,... satisfies part of the right that all citizens have, to be informed about the conduct of people in power" adding it doesn't matter if they get paid or have a licence. He judged the quality of a piece by whether it "satisfies basic norms of checking that what you're saying is true". Two gatekeepers emphasized the need for media literacy, so people understand there are "multiple takes on any one event" (Borg) and learn to discern reliability of information. Mallia believed it better to have "mounds of information" and have to seek the truth than have just "four, five people [gatekeepers] having the possibility to hide the truth from you", "At least the truth is somewhere out there", "you're going to have to sift through... a lot of competing

voices... to find credible sources” Vella noted some citizens imitated certain journalism, developing consistency, respect for rules a sense of ethics and conscience.

4.5.2 Openness to Citizen Participation in News-making

Four of six gatekeepers were open to offering participation and crowd sourcing to citizens, two were not opposed with Borg increasing opportunities for interaction, and Mangion, keen to in the long term. Gatekeepers, however, predominantly saw the audience as a source rather than a co-creator, some as potential collaborators. Ten of eleven participants showed enthusiasm for Guardian-type crowdsourcing experiments. Bonanno cautioned people could deliberately do it wrongly while Mallia said it could create efficiencies, reducing man hours indicating and that there was citizen enthusiasm that newspapers were not “fully tapping into”. Some gatecrasher processes promote participation. Satire, Bonanno explained allow you to “say stuff without saying it”, with the audience finding satisfaction in working it out and Bonanno too, as he ‘watches’ and orchestrates the process. Two gatewatchers/crashers thought, though not representative, vox pops are important. Mallia, described producing his podcast as very participative, with audiences “continually trading ideas and clashing with one another”, he said they “help me formulate my understanding of subjects” and questions. “We’re creating a small brigade of these participative people” with “no journalistic experience” keen to get more involved in media work, “we’re going to train them on how to talk to the camera” how to edit video and “ask the right questions”.

4.5.3 Trust in Professional and Citizen News Media Products and Factors that Hinder Participation.

Participants perceived trust in media as low. Legacy newspapers were trusted more than digital-born by the Gatewatchers/crashers. Many participants said they trusted particular journalists, especially investigative ones, with Borg saying people trusted specific journalists even if they do not trust the paper and that in the future, journalists would be a brand but stressing the need to distinguish opinion from news. Agius noted the tendency for audiences of party media to trust them

while demanding evidence from non-party media “Fejn hi l-evidenza? [Where is the evidence?]” The Times of Malta fact-checking articles which debunk or confirm claims by politicians, rumours, and fake news on social media, were seen as “*għodda verament tajba* [very good tools]” (Rababah) to increase trust and combat fake news. Dark participation by citizens was seen to reduce trust in citizen news products. Five participants mentioned Blogger A in the context of disinformation, suspicious intentions and agenda some of whom preferred to anonymise for fear of repercussion. Polarisation, cultural fear and “*omertà* [silence]” (Agius) and everyone knowing everyone, also discourages participation. Rababah noted that social media gave everyone a voice but gave rise to trolls, some praising ministers, drowning criticism and undermining critical thinking and democracy. Delia explained “populist politicians from across the political divide” have successfully discredited the media and “institutions that hold them to account” creating “unmediated relationships with their audiences”, eroding trust, seen in comments like while “*Ġurnalizmu tal-ħabbagozz* [cheap journalism]” (Bonanno). Quantity over quality in online news affected trust, Bonanno added, while Delia noted some “uninformed journalists” and Borg and Mangion stressed the need for “soul searching”. Mallia said “too many people”, “talk just so we can hear them” leading to misinformation. Borg argued abundance does not mean value and could make it harder to find valuable insight. Bonello noted vexatious lawsuits against journalists impacting media freedom and Delia noted Daphne’s murder shook journalists into silence.

4.6 Sustainability

This third and final over-arching theme will examine the role of resources in the relationship as well as business models and the way the groups see the future of the roles and the relationship.

4.6.1 Resources

News which links the groups and sustains the relationship, requires resources. Half the gatekeepers described fulfilling many roles because of size of the newsroom. Borg explained many stories are explored but cannot be handled and “put on the backburner” or discarded. Matching the

complexity of a potential story to the skill set of a journalist can be challenging as most journalists are young generalists, unable to tackle in-depth specialist stories. Attention is scarce and is being shared with gatecrashers and other media. Mangion described the tension between the race to be first, gaining more attention and getting it right safeguarding credibility. The speed of the newsroom or the conciseness and nature of the medium was mirrored in rates of speech and behaviour with Cilia [digital-born] being the fastest, followed by Bonanno who also laughed [satire elicits laughing], while the legacy participants spoke more slowly and clearly as did Delia. Correspondingly, Delia described his longform blog as a “pursuit of clarity” through deliberation. While accepting “the longer the blog”, “the smaller the audience”, some of his audience members report clarifying their own thoughts in the process of reading his blog. Regarding finances, advertising has followed the audiences onto social media, demanding new business models.

4.6.2 Business Models

Cilia explains “advertisers have very quickly understood that online is the future” damaging the revenue stream legacy papers long depended on. Vella explained “government advertising has always been part of the media landscape’s budget” but Mallia suggests this creates dependency, unfair competition and stifles innovative approaches to sustainability. Vella describes digital-borns as the “clickbait children on the internet” using clickable headlines to draw traffic. Cilia [digital-born] contrasted his “modern” approach reaching audiences online and physically on bus stops where scrolling headlines on digital displays grab viewers with QR codes taking them online while legacy are still selling printed papers. Gatecrasher, Mallia’s model is a participatory, community-centred model around his podcast. The relationship between him and his audiences is nourished by constant digital contact [WhatsApp chats], physical contact [sell-out live events] and food and drink, and he refers to a “great experience” and “great energy”. The cohesive yet diverse community satisfies “a feeling they innately long for”, belongingness, as “part of a project”, “on the cusp of something new and different” participating by financing it on Patreon, feeling agency through discussion, asking

questions and polishing Mallia, who is the brand. Delia whose blog depends on donations explained “there’s no correlation, between readership and revenue”.

4.6.3 The Future

Some participants envisaged the future differently, others similarly. Vella like others saw “lots of room for newspapers to work with gatecrashers”. Borg envisioned a multi-skilled newsroom including competence in “statistics”, “running databases” and “coding” and the use of AI-assisted content but will also “still have people who can paint pictures with words”, while text would not dominate content. Also, some kind of “meet-the-editors forum” for loyal readers, to get to know them and vice versa to “lift the veil on how the sausage is made”. The newsroom is a bit of a “black box”, he explained. Borg concluded legacy organisations might “take a leaf out of the gatewatcher/crasher’s book and package their content” differently. A quarter of participants suggested there is a blurring of lines between groups and overlap in roles that will increase further. Mallia predicted, unless gatekeepers streamlined and became more efficient, they may “implode” leading to an “exodus from the gate-watcher class into the gatecrasher class” as citizens become more outspoken, “holding truth to power” realising that if all participated, they “couldn’t threaten us because there’s too many of us”. Others ventured there may be no printed papers and Abela no editors and like others stressed the importance of media literacy to “reinstill a sense of objectivity and proper judgement” of what is contributed. Delia too, asserting he does not “think our democracy can function without the gatekeepers”.

4.7 Discussion

This section focuses on the discussed findings which were laid out thematically. It discusses their significance in relation to the research questions and compares them with existing literature presented in the literature review.

4.7.1 RQ1 What is the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers including gatecrashers in Malta in terms of news production and consumption?

The principle aim of the study was to explore the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers: a complex eco-system of "adversarial, parasitic or symbiotic relationships" (Bruns, 2008, p.178). Cilia explicitly noted symbiosis, while others implied it. These groups are at once competition and collaborators; whatever affects one necessarily affects the other, as they feed off or feed each other with content.

Interestingly, notions by gatewatchers/crashers about gatekeepers abounded with contrasts while those about gatewatchers/crashers were more nuanced. Some contrasts were: a) clickbait vs investigative/in-depth – sensational headlines that bait readers but cheat expectations versus headlines that deliver on the expectations following traditional professional norms; b) genuine vs having an agenda – those seen as working in the public interest contrasting with those seen to have a hidden or declared agenda pursuing their own interests; c) old/traditional machine vs daring adventurous/ more modern – legacy, top-heavy as opposed to agile digital-borns. This links to the polarisation observed by Brown and Marmarà (2022), who detected tribalism by citizens when supporting football clubs, political parties, band clubs and others. Like these, journalism is considered a 'public good', and thus this may reflect belonging and loyalty to the kind of news or brand they consume as well as being a reflection of their own product, with gatewatchers/crashers not yet considered a 'public good' to the same degree.

Overall, the findings show mutual respect between the groups, although it was noted that some members were respected more than others. Factors that diminished respect in gatekeepers were agendas and frivolous, inconsequential, entertaining content. Political party media were seen unfavourably by participants because of their agendas. Mangion from party media referred to his "shareholders" and their "*raison d'etre*" in connection with content, suggesting the shareholders are at the top of the gatekeeping hierarchy acting as a gatekeeper above the gatekeeper (editor). Agius,

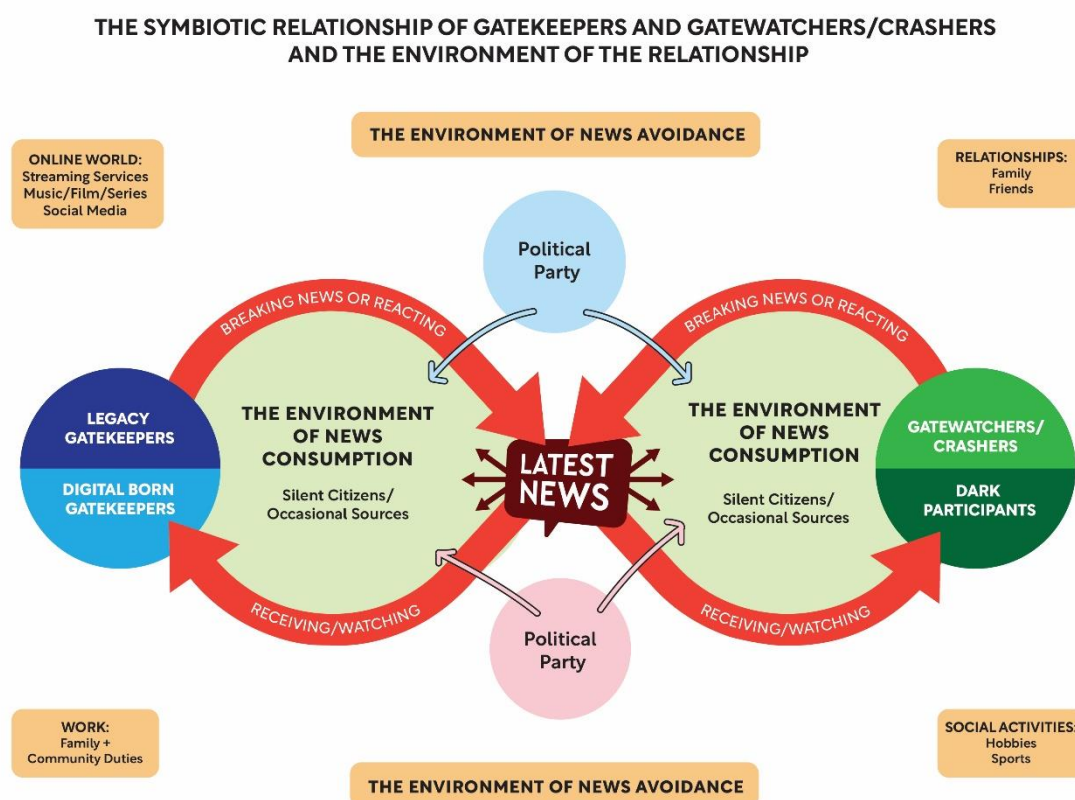
from the church media, a journalist thus subject to gatekeeping by the editor, had freedom in all areas except church related stories, showing greater control of the narrative by the top gatekeeper. Bias and agenda were also a concern of gatekeepers regarding gatewatchers/crashers. The findings reveal questioning of the intent and bias of gatecrashers/watchers as well as appreciation. Agius, a gatekeeper, watches the gatewatcher/crashers showing the relationship locked in an endless loop of watching, linking to Bruns's (2008) observation of symbiosis. The gatekeepers fulfilling their fourth estate role watching the holders of power are watched by the gatewatchers/crashers fulfilling their fifth estate role who are watched reciprocally by the gatekeepers who call them out through fact-checking articles or observe their intent.

The findings show gatewatchers/crashers filling a void. Specifically, Borg explains the first void is the informal approach legacy lacks while Bonanno a gatewatcher/crasher lists another void, tackling angles not talked about by gatekeepers and topics that are under-reported or filtered out by editors. Thus, filling a content gap that helps to better inform citizens, presenting people with a complete and more nuanced picture of what is important. This ties in with Baack's (2018) view which saw non-media players and professionals could complement each other, having common aspirations, to inform citizens, and some overlapping skills: analysing and selecting what is important, although different selections are made.

The findings show dark participation producing disinformation and antagonising, as well as ill-informed gatewatchers/crashers and ill-informed, less experienced journalists which led to misinformation, to be a concern to both parties. Fear of repercussion is even felt by some of the participants who are all participate in public debate, some of which preferred not to name a particular blogger they suspected of disinformation, hidden agenda, and suspicious intent. This is in line with Eldridge's (2019) warning about disinformation disguised as genuine news, hiding agendas, damaging public trust. Agius, noted polarisation, cultural fear, and "omertà" corroborating Brown and Marmara's findings, while Rababah spoke about the rise of trolls drowning voices and reducing

participation. This is in line with Quandt's (2018) findings that devious disinformation and brazen trolling are like a twin negative force of positive participation. Politicians from both parties, Delia observed politicians developing unmediated relationships with audiences, like Schappals & Bruns (2022) observed about Trump, and are gatecrashing, reaching audiences directly, casting doubt on media scrutiny and causing distrust. These factors contribute to a hostile environment for participation which may be a reason for news avoidance, and low participation as if even gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers fear repercussion it is likely that private citizens would do so more and thus hinder participation perhaps explaining the largely passive audience (Marmara, 2021).

Figure 1 The findings discussed in 4.7.1 illustrated pictorially (also see appendices)



4.7.2 RQ2 - How do legacy news organisations and online news outlets approach their gatekeeping role?

The findings reveal, intragroup differentiation: legacy vs digital-born and independent vs political reflecting different approaches to performing their roles. Most, however, agreed upon the importance of processes of journalism such as verification, double-checking and having multiple sources. These findings are directly in line with Örnebring, 2013, whose study found emphasis on belonging to a professional group united by common practices such as ethical standards and expertise in filtering, distinguished from the amateurs who were unshackled from editorial control.

Voice was a point of differentiation with legacy having an officious, formal voice and digital-born more informal. Cilia from digital-born media explained “young consumers, want to see a meme, ... a cool foodie video, then ... news, like that’s how it has to be presented, it has to be warm, and inviting”. News as Keane (2013) explained, enables citizens to make informed choices, yet youths consume less daily news (Marmara, 2021) compared to other age groups. Cilia’s prescription is reminiscent of “a spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down” [song in the film Mary Poppins], as he appears to suggest slipping the news in between other content the young enjoy and ensuring they are informed citizens strengthening democracy or packaging it in ways they find palatable.

Content has recently become subject to fact-checking in dedicated articles by the Times of Malta. Fact-checking to debunk or confirm claims, rumours, etc. (whether made intentionally or accidentally erroneously) by politicians, ‘experts’ and citizens via gatekeepers or on social media, extend the role of the fourth estate, bringing a degree of quality assurance to the news media landscape. Fact-checking may deter mis/disinformation in the long run, especially if more gatekeepers follow suit, satisfying participant needs for quality over quantity.

Finally, most gatekeepers made references to limited resources with some describing performing a variety of roles. This indicates flexibility and adaptability, which in an era of constant rapid change will be necessary for the survival of the organisations.

4.7.3 RQ3 – How is this relationship expected to evolve in the next five to ten years?

The future of the relationship depends on the health of the groups; thus, such a discussion necessitates consideration of the resources and models that sustain the groups, be they organisations, one-man shows or individual gatewatchers sustained by news.

The need for legacy papers, seen as top-heavy to streamline and create efficiencies was highlighted. The findings pointed to the fact that these challenges faced by legacy media organisations, limiting their role and in-depth work, could lead to silent citizens becoming more outspoken and seeking unmediated relationships with audiences themselves. Mallia mentioned, “creating a small brigade of these participative people”, showing he is creating an enabling environment for citizen participation by sharing skills, leading to what Keane (2013) termed “information abundance” or “overabundance”. Overabundance and the burden of sifting through to find veracious, trustworthy news could potentially increase news avoidance or conversely see a return to relying more on newspapers as an “uncle” (Vella about legacy) or “brother” (Cilia about digital-born) to tell citizens what is important.

The findings reveal digital-born media to be less text-based, using memes and video across platforms, and employing clickbait, experimenting with different models and ways to reach audiences, even in the physical world on bus stops. This is consistent with research by González-Tosat et al., (2022) who show digital-borns as tech-savvy, multimedia-oriented and seeking different revenue streams and models, including clickbait, catering to younger audiences. Borg envisaged the future for his legacy media as multi-skilled (audio, coding, statistics, etc) where text would not dominate as the medium of expression. This suggests that there will be less intragroup differences between legacy and digital-born.

Newman et al. (2022) found individual journalists and talented individuals were considered a brand as are gatecrashers such as Mallia. Similarly, Borg envisioned journalists becoming a brand, but

stressed news and opinion should be clearly distinct from each other. Borg suggested legacy organisations might “take a leaf out of the gatewatcher/crasher’s book” packaging content differently. He also spoke about making the newsroom less of a “black box” for audiences, and getting to know audiences, and showed an openness for participation that indicates learning from gatewatcher/crashers and watching of innovation from these players, in line with Chua and Duffy’s (2019) findings that professionals could learn from gatecrashers. It also shows a move towards nurturing a fledgling community, similar to Mallia’s approach which might indicate a trend where citizens, despite being constantly connected, need community to heal experienced disconnection, coming together to hold “truth to power”.

Finally, the findings reveal some participants doubted the usefulness of the terms that described them, and some felt they did not describe them or that they fit more than one. Participants spoke about further blurring of lines between groups and overlapping of roles in the future.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The previous chapter discussed the significance of the research findings in relation to the research questions, compared them with existing literature and found that the research questions were answered. This chapter synthesises the answers, discusses the limitations of the research and proposes recommendations for future research and industry.

5.1 Summary

In Malta, gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers play a variety of roles in the news media eco-system that range from competitive to collaborative, parasitic to symbiotic. While the gatekeepers are seen as a public good, the gatewatchers/crashers are seen as providing a more nuanced voice that adds to the news media coverage, contextualising and amplifying what is important, filling a void and complementing. The relationship is complicated by dark participation, disseminating fake news and subtle propaganda, trolling, discouraging participation and politicians gatecrashing, reaching audiences directly, casting doubt on media scrutiny and causing distrust. The groups are locked into a perpetual cycle of mutual 'watching', which can benefit society creating quality assurance.

Legacy media and digital-born news organizations in Malta approach their gatekeeping role differently. Legacy media tend to have an officious and formal voice and are text-dominated, while digital-born media have an informal voice and are more multimodal. Legacy media also tend to emphasize processes such as verification, double-checking, and having multiple sources, while digital-born media focus on content that is palatable to their young audience. Fact-checking articles by gatekeepers is a new approach, to combat increasing mis/disinformation and provide quality assurance to the news media landscape. Finally, all gatekeepers have limited resources but are showing flexibility and adaptability, making do to survive.

In this ever-changing digital age, it is unclear what the future holds for the relationship between legacy and digital-born media. While legacy media needs to become more efficient and multi-skilled, digital-borns must retain youth-oriented approaches while focussing on providing quality content. Gatecrashing is predicted to increase, but the role of gatekeepers may be renewed to bring clarity in an environment of communicative overabundance. To ensure the future of news, collaboration between the groups and more fact-checking articles, to build trust, are needed, together with greater media literacy so the responsibility of debunking or confirming claims does not fall only on the shoulders of the fourth estate. The boundaries between groups will continue to blur.

5.2 Limitations

The rigour of adhering to a very restrictive word count when the interviews yielded such incredibly rich data was a most uncomfortable straight jacket. As in gatekeeping, selections had to be made to answer the research questions within the limit, omitting precious insights and nuances that did not address the questions directly or were less erudite or succinct. It was noted that the participants in this research were over thirty years of age, thus the findings do not represent. The sample of gatewatchers was necessarily underrepresented and contained people who are perhaps exemplary and act in good faith guided by the public interest as are gatekeeper and thus although interesting and valid cannot be seen to represent the whole diverse group.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

The third wheel in the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers is social media. Facebook is used as an access to news by most participants, but also newer platforms which digital-borns are tapping into such as TikTok, Instagram. Research is needed to understand its role in the relationship, and how this is affecting the power dynamics and the relationship. The findings showed the audience is a black box for gatekeepers and vice versa. Research by statisticians yield quantitative results indicating levels of trust and numbers of news avoiders or active/passive audiences and more, but little is known about the reasons for news avoidance in Malta, and what

would increase trust, particularly in younger audiences. Thus, further research into what motivates audience members to gatewatch or gatecrash or to remain silent or avoid news altogether is needed to help shape the direction and decisions of industry. Finally, the need for greater media literacy was iterated in the findings. Research could compare successful initiatives in other countries with the current local efforts and propose strategies that may influence policy in this regard.

5.4 Recommendations for Industry

- Greater transparency on the ownership, leadership and funding of news organisations may lead to increased trust.
- Increasing interest in journalism:
 - Building relationships with audiences, having tours or talks at premises.
 - Openness about work processes through: “how it’s made features”, “this is our newsroom” or “meet our journalists” posts.
 - Outreach programmes offering workshops and nonformal training to interested audience members.
 - Fact checking articles across all news organisations, with supporting evidence included.
- Media literacy is often seen as a government responsibility, the news industry collectively through the IGM or independently could take the lead by:
 - Designing tool kits and training for educators and NGOs, sponsoring school projects
 - Designing community outreach programmes, teaching media literacy to citizens above school age
- Public service campaigns using their platforms and reach to:
 - Educate readers with checklists for good journalism, identifying bias, and comparing coverage across news media.
 - Educate on positive participation, attacking an argument not a person, etc.

5.5 Conclusion

This research study added to very limited pre-existing literature on participation, exploring the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers in news-making and consumption in Malta, as well as the approaches of gatekeepers from legacy and digital-born organisations. It provides insights into the future of the relationship and news-making and consumption. The key findings of the research show gatekeepers, and gatewatchers/crashers, all play a part in Malta's news media eco-system, their roles ranging from competitive to collaborative, acting symbiotically, 'watching' each other. Gatewatchers/crashers provide a nuanced voice and have the potential to benefit society, but dark participation, trolling and politicians gatecrashing can cause distrust. Fact-checking articles are needed to combat dis/misinformation and the future of news requires collaboration, and greater media literacy. Legacy media's officious voice contrasted with digital-born's more informal voice, which focuses on content palatable to younger audiences. The roles of the groups are predicted to blur and overlap in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Tables of Maltese newspaper ownership, leadership and perceived political orientation

Newspapers (print and online) – Privately owned						
Title	Days of publication	Established	Editor	Owner	Perceived political orientation	Notes
Illum	Print: Sunday only Online: 24x7	Print: 2006 Online: 2010	Editor: Albert Gauci Cunningham	MediaToday Ltd. Owners: Saviour Balzan, Roger Degiorgio.	Liberal, Centre-left	
Malta Today	Print: Wednesday and Sunday Online: 24x7	Print: 1999 Online: 2010	Editor-in-Chief: Kurt Sansone Online editor: Karl Azzopardi			
Business Today	Print: Sunday Online: 24x7	Print: 1999 2010: online	Paul Cocks		Business oriented	
The Malta Independent	Print: Monday to Saturday Online: 24x7	Print: 1994 Online: 2014	Editor-in-Chief: Stephen Calleja	Standard Publications Ltd.	Centrist, independent	“Our allegiances do not lie with this or that party – our allegiance has been and will remain to the people, first and foremost and above all else.” Standard Publications Limited
The Malta Independent on Sunday	Print: Sunday	Print: 1992 Online: 2014				
The Malta Business Weekly	Print: Thursday Online: 24x7	Print: 1994 Online: 2014	Editor: Andre Camilleri		Business oriented	
Times of Malta	Print: Monday to Saturday. Online: 24x7	Print: 1935 Online: 2000	Editor-in-Chief: Herman Grech Online editor: Bertrand Borg Herman Grech	Allied Newspapers Ltd Majority shareholder is the Strickland Foundation, a charitable trust	Traditionally conservative, has become more liberal in recent years	“Times of Malta prides itself on being independent. It is not affiliated to any external organisation or political party. Editors and journalists operate separately to Allied Newspapers’ commercial operations” (Times of Malta. n.d)
The Sunday Times of Malta	Print: Sunday	Print: 1935 Online: 2000				
The Shift	Online: 24x7	2017	Managing editor: Caroline Muscat	Tula Limited Owned by Caroline Muscat. To become a foundation.	Liberal	“0% (€0) of income from Maltese government, political parties or politicians” “Funded by loyal readers, and organisations (including the EU) that aim to safeguard public right to know” (The Shift, 2022)

Newspapers (print and online) – Privately owned - Continued						
Title	Days of publication	Established	Editor	Owner	Perceived political orientation	Notes
Lovin' Malta	Online: 24x7	2016	Editor-in-Chief: Johnathan Cilia	Lovin Malta Ltd.	Commercial, Liberal, Independent	Clickbait business model
Maltadaily	Online: 24x7	2020	Editor: Gabriel Mifsud	Thirteen Media Ltd	Commercial, Independent	Infotainment platform for GenZ
Manueldelia.com	Online: 24x7	2017	Blogger: Manuel Delia	Owner: Manuel Delia	Independent Liberal	Slow blogging, investigative. Background: Was a full-time political operative. Currently an activist for good governance.
SideStreet Malta	Online: 24x7	2019	Luigi Sapiano	Owner: Luigi Sapiano	Commercial, Independent	"Values freedom of expression and grassroots journalism" (SideStreet Malta, n.d.)
Corporate Dispatch	Online: 24x7	2018	Managing editor: Jesmond Saliba	Corporate Identities International	Apolitical, Independent	News aggregation. "a marked bias for substance over speed...Also presents a platform for academics thinkers and experts to present their research and views"

Newspapers (print and online) – owned by institutions						
Title	Days of publication + Format	Established	Editor	Owner	Perceived political orientation	Notes
Il-Mument	Print: Sunday	Print: 1972	Editor: Alex Attard	Nationalist Party Media.link Communications	Conservative, Centre-right	
In-Nazzjon	Print: Monday - Saturday	Print: 1970	Editor: Joe Cassar			
NetNews.com .mt	Online: 24x7		Online Editor: Robert Cremona			Previously maltarightnow.com
L-Orrizont	Print: Monday to Saturday. Online: 24x7	Print: 1962	Acting editor: Claudio Coleiro	General Workers Union Union Print Co. Ltd.	Traditionally left (aligns with the Labour Party ideology)	
It-Torċa	Print: Sunday Online: 24x7	1944	Editor: Victor Vella			Launched as 'The Torch' in 1944, later renamed as 'It-Torċa'.
Talk.mt	Online: 24x7	2021	Editor: Brian Gatt			Replaced iNEWS Malta
KullHadd	Sunday	1993	Editor: Ronald Vassallo	Labour Party/ Partit	Centre-left (probusiness)	
One	Online: 24x7	1999	Head of News & Current Affairs: Sandro Mangion	Laburista ONE Productions Ltd.		Prior to 1999, One Productions was known as Rainbow Productions Ltd.
The Journal	Online: 24x7		Editor: Randolph De Battista	Labour Party/ Partit Laburista		
Il-Lehen	Print: Sunday	1928	Editor: Pio Dalli	Malta Catholic Action	Catholic conservative	Previously known as Lehen is-Sewwa. Newspaper based on Catholic views.
Newsbook	Online: 24x7 Maltese and English	2012	Registered Editor: Kevin Papagiorcopulo	Beacon Media Group Ltd	Catholic conservative	"We are pro-life, speak truth to power", "inspired by the Christian ethos" Beacon Media Group (2021)
TVM.com.mt	Online: 24x7 Maltese and English		Editor-in-Chief: Mark Sammut News Editor: Norma Saliba	Public Service Media. Owned and funded by the State.	Aligns with government of the day.	Judge Grazio Mercieca found the BA and PBS guilty because of TVM's overly-partisan coverage, (Cordina, 2022)

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Appendix B: The symbiotic relationship of the gatekeepers and gatewatchers/crashers

THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP OF GATEKEEPERS AND GATEWATCHERS/CRASHERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP

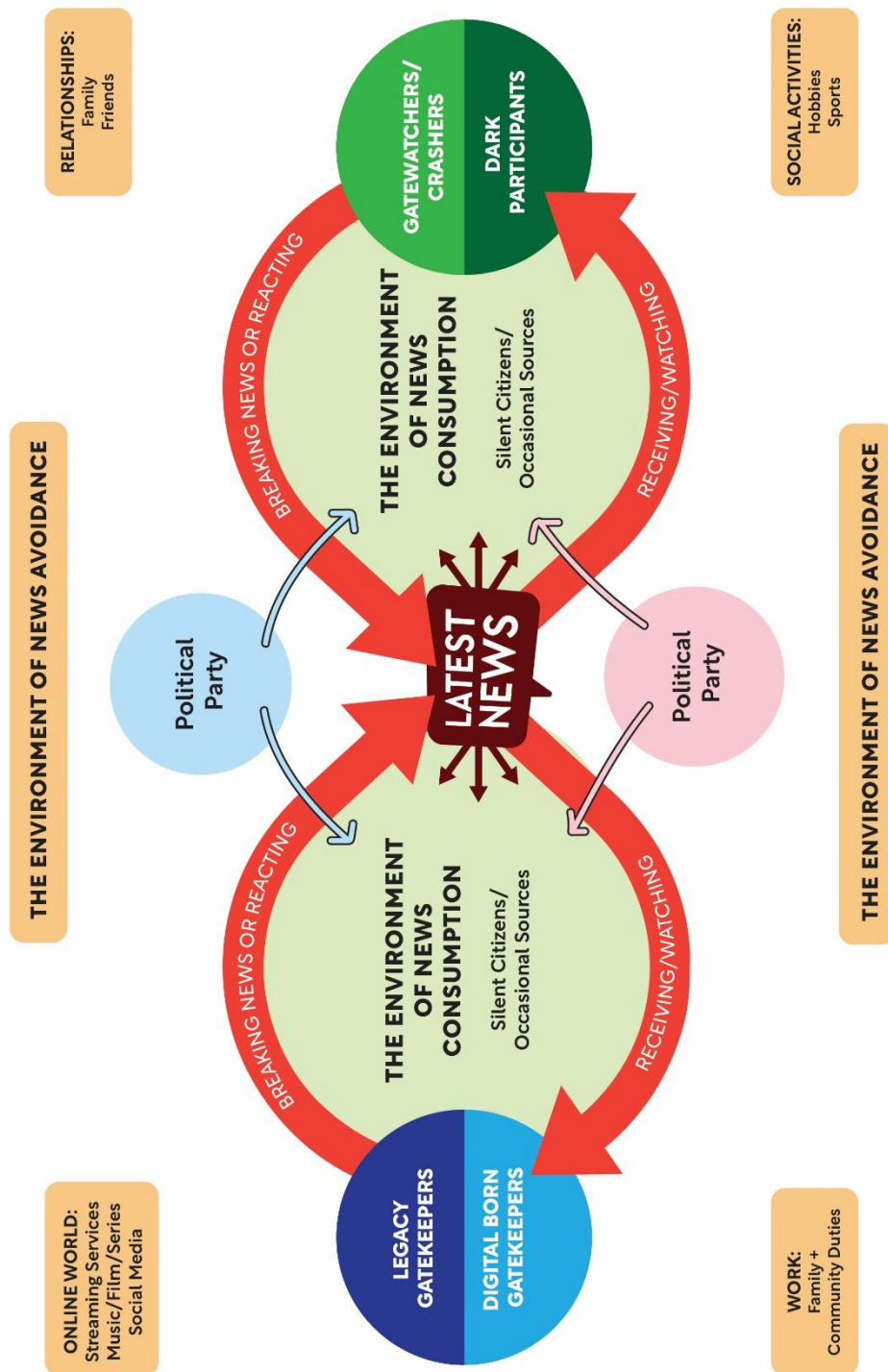


Diagram of the relationship and the environment of the relationship, synthesizing the findings pictorially.

Appendix C: Interview consent form

Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Daniela Peresso a student at the University of Malta, reading for a Bachelor of Communications (Hons). I understand that the project is designed to gather information for academic work and no other use will be made of the information I supply.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview. I may even withdraw participation at any time.
2. I give my consent so that during the interview notes may be taken and consent to an audio recording of the interview being made and that subsequently the dialogue will be transcribed and included with the study.
3. I also consent to participate in a second follow up interview or to receive and respond to a follow up email and to the keeping and processing of the email data for the purpose of the study.
4. I agree to be quoted by first name and surname and where applicable the name of the news organisation, blog, vlog or activity relating to the study.
4. I have understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
6. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature of Student

For further information, please contact:

Mr Martin Debattista - Dissertation Tutor

Appendix D: Interview questions

Note: Warmer questions not listed

	QUESTIONS FOR GATEKEEPERS	QUESTIONS FOR GATEWATCHERS
1	How do you view your role of gatekeeper and how do you approach your gate keeping role in the present day, how has it changed in the past ten years? And how do you expect it to change in the next ten years?	In the past the role of the audience was more passive. You take an active role; how do you view your role as a gatewatcher/gatecrasher? How do you expect it to change in the next ten years?
2	What is your attitude towards the activity of gatewatchers and gate crashers in Malta?	What is your attitude towards the activity of gatekeepers in Malta?
3	Why do you think gatewatchers engage in their activity and why do you think gatecrashers feel the need to create their own media?	Why do you feel the need to create your own media product? Are you bridging a gap? If yes, can you tell me about that gap?
4	The internet has offered unprecedented potential for audience participation in the news media landscape, however research by Marmara (2022) and Misco (2021) show that just under a third of the Maltese audience participate in sharing news articles, commenting and creating media content. Why do you think this is so and what could help awaken the rest of the audience?	The internet has offered unprecedented potential for audience participation in the news media landscape, however research by Marmara (2022) and Misco (2021) show that just under a third of the Maltese audience participate in sharing news articles, commenting and creating media content. Why do you think this is so and what could help awaken the rest of the audience?
5	The relationship between the media (gatekeepers) and citizens some of which perform the role of gatewatchers rests on the premise of trust in the professional news media and their ability to provide relevant and accurate reportage, orienting the public and providing a forum of democratic participation (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2022). How do you view trust in the newspaper media? Could this have anything to do with the low audience engagement observed by Marmara and Misco? Why?	The relationship between the media (gatekeepers) and citizens some of which perform the role of gatewatchers rests on the premise of trust in the professional news media and their ability to provide relevant and accurate reportage, orienting the public and providing a forum of democratic participation (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2022). How do you view trust in the newspaper media? Could this have anything to do with the low audience engagement observed by Marmara and Misco? Why?

6	What is your attitude towards citizen journalism, or should the word journalism only be used to refer to the work of professional journalists working within news media organisations? What about participatory journalism, to what extent do you welcome this? How do you conceive this? Will journalism in the future in Malta be more like a dialogue with citizens? Why? /Why not?	What is your attitude towards citizen journalism, or should the word journalism only be used to refer to the work of professional journalists working within news media organisations? To what extent should citizens participate in the news making process? Will journalism in the future in Malta be more like a dialogue with citizens? Why/Why not?
7	What opportunities do you provide for participation in the news making process? Do you expect this to increase or decrease, why and how? and why?	What opportunities do you find to participate in the professional news making process as an audience member, and how else would you like to participate?
8	Advertisers want to be where the people are, the internet and the explosion of social media have damaged the link between advertising and the professional news product, undermining what was a steady revenue stream from the advertisers seeking a mass audience. How has this affected your organisation and what do you think about this?	How has the internet and social media affected your news consumption?
9	The Guardian experimented with crowd sourcing, inviting readers to sift through thousands of receipts released by the House of Commons, in order to carry out investigative work that enabled it to be carried out quickly and proved very popular with readers. Do you envisage involving readers in such work? Why or why not?	The Guardian experimented with crowd sourcing, inviting readers to sift through thousands of receipts released by the House of Commons, in order to carry out investigative work that enabled it to be carried out quickly and proved very popular with readers. Would you be interested in carrying out such collaborative work with a local newspaper, contributing to investigation? Why or why not?
10	How do you think the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers and gatecrashers in terms of news production and consumption will evolve in the coming decade?	How do you think the relationship between gatekeepers and gatewatchers and gatecrashers in terms of news production and consumption will evolve in the coming decade?

Appendix E: Interview transcripts