

Chapter 10

Gatekeeping: A Critical Review

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Introduction

Gatekeeping refers broadly to the process of controlling information as it moves through a gate or filter (Barzilai-Nahon, in press) and is associated with exercising different types of power (e.g., selecting news, enforcing the status quo in parliamentary committees, mediating between professional and ethnic groups, brokering expert information). The literature on gatekeeping is fragmented in terms of epistemologies, theories and models, vocabularies, heuristics, and research challenges both within and between disciplines and fields. This happens because discourse on the topic of gatekeeping is conducted within each discipline, in relative isolation. In spite of an extensive literature, few comprehensive reviews are to be found. This chapter follows in the footsteps of two such reviews (Metoyer-Duran, 1993; Shoemaker, 1991). It offers a systematic review that explores the main trends and analytical frameworks relating to gatekeeping in the literature from 1995 to 2007 in eight fields: library and information science (henceforth information science), communication, law, management of information systems, management, political science, public affairs, and sociology. The review demonstrates the lack of analytical tools to respond to two important phenomena: the dynamism of gatekeeping and essential role of those subjected to a gatekeeping process. Network Gatekeeping Theory is a contextualizing move to highlight research threads in the literature through these two missing

prisms. This new framework is a platform to help researchers develop and further refine questions for an improved understanding of gatekeeping.

Past Theories of Gatekeeping (1946–1995)

The concept of gatekeeping is well explored, starting with its evolution in the mid-twentieth century, and covers many fields of research and practice (Bass, 1969; Lewin, 1951; Schultze & Boland, 2000; Sturges, 2001; Tushman & Katz, 1980). Lewin (1947, 1951), the creator of the concept, looked at gatekeepers through psychological lenses, researching how and why the food habits and activities of families differed. He noted that, in the groups he examined, housewives controlled the decision-making process related to food habits and activities by creating behavioral barriers and incentives; Lewin referred to these housewives as gatekeepers. The concept subsequently took on different flavors and theories were developed mainly in the fields of communication, management of technology, information science, and later political science. Each discipline and field emphasized different components in the conceptualization of gatekeeping. The next four sections introduce the premises and foundations put in place by each field.

It is important at this stage to specify the boundaries of the study. Gatekeeping is a ubiquitous and diverse phenomenon, which can be observed in many daily activities. This chapter deals only with information sources that studied gatekeeping explicitly. By drawing directly upon concepts that surround gatekeeping, scholars exhibit the importance and centrality of the gatekeeping phenomenon to their research. Therefore, research that dealt with the phenomenon only implicitly was excluded. Areas of research that discuss gatekeeping implicitly include, for example: scholarly publishing (Clemens, Powell, McIlwaine, & Okamoto, 1995),

impact factor (Garfield & Sher, 1963), the role of brokers in organizations (Wenger, 2000), knowledge discovery (Davenport & Hall, 2002), selective dissemination of information, agenda setting (Hammond, 1986; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), search engines and channeling information (Introna & Nissenbaum, 2000), and cognitive models of thinking (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982).

Communication Theories

Theories developed in studies of communication and journalism looked primarily at gatekeepers as selectors or human information filters (e.g., editors, gatherers). Although presenting varied theories, Shoemaker (1991, p. 1) defined gatekeeping as follows: “Simply put, gatekeeping is the process by which the billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transformed into the hundreds of messages that reach a given person on a given day.” Ten years later Shoemaker admitted a broader concept of gatekeeping: “However, the gatekeeping process is also thought of as consisting more than just selection. ... In fact, gatekeeping in mass communication can be seen as the overall process through which social reality transmitted by the news media is constructed, and is not just a series of ‘in’ and ‘out’ decisions” (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001, p. 233). Thus, theories of communication focused mainly on the *process* of gatekeeping and identifying the prominent factors that influence it.

Theories assuming *individual factors* (e.g., personal judgment) as the major determinant of gatekeeping (Snider, 1967; White, 1950) were among the first evaluated. For example, White (1950) suggested a simple model to explain the selection process in newspapers and argued that news items were rejected for three reasons: personal feelings of the gatekeeper, insufficient

space, and whether the story had appeared previously. Scholars who followed these theories emphasized personality characteristics (Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, 1972; Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986) or the influence of the gatekeeper's moral and normative values on the decision-making process (Gans, 1979). Focusing on individual factors often entailed relying on external cognitive models of thinking (Hewes & Graham, 1989; Kahneman et al., 1982; Snodgrass, Levy-Berger, & Hayden, 1985) and external decision-making models (Wright & Barbour, 1975).

The second wave of theories in communication studies focused on what Shoemaker (1991) labeled *routine and organization level theories*. These included internal contexts to the organization, such as theories that emphasize the effect of organizational characteristics on gatekeeping (Bass, 1969; Dimmick, 1974; Westley & MacLean, 1957); routines that establish the working procedures of gatekeepers (Sigal, 1973); and established industry benchmarks (Davison & Yu, 1974; Galtung & Ruge, 1965). This wave also includes theories that concentrate on external constraints to and motivators of routines to gatekeeping, such as cost and time constraint models (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Jones, Troidahl, & Hvistendahl, 1961), mechanical production models (Gieber, 1956), and technology absence factors (Livingston & Bennett, 2003).

As more theories and models of gatekeeping appeared, scholars began to investigate gatekeeping as an act of agenda setting and change in society. These investigations fostered the development of theories focusing on the *institutional and social environment*, which, among other things, discuss the impact of group consensus on gatekeeping (Bantz, 1990), how market pressures affect gatekeeping (Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor, 1989), models of newsworthiness (Shoemaker et al., 2001), and cultural impact theories (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Finally, some

scholars were interested in the characteristics of messages themselves and developed *information characteristics theories* that explore how visual factors (Abott & Brassfield, 1989) and the size, number (Gieber, 1956), and clarity (Galtung & Ruge, 1965) of messages affect editors' decisions about whether and how to include messages in the media. To summarize, most communication theories have viewed gatekeeping as the process of controlling the entry of messages into the gatekeeper's space.

Management and Technology Theories

Gatekeeping theories in the field of management and technology are monolithic in the sense that they emerge and branch out from one main meta-theory, *the technological gatekeeper*. The concept, first introduced by Allen (1966) in his dissertation and developed and expanded later by Allen and others (Allen, 1977; Allen & Cohen, 1969; Allen, Piepmeier, & Cooney, 1971; Gerstberger & Allen, 1968), was mainly inspired by Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1965) studies of opinion leaders and how they affect many of life's activities. Unlike Katz and Lazarsfeld, Allen allowed gatekeepers to be more than formally designated opinion leaders and emphasized the role of informal gatekeepers. Allen (1977) identified three characteristics of gatekeepers and the stakeholders who interact with them: (1) The gatekeeper is a high technical performer, (2) most gatekeepers are first-line supervisors, and (3) gatekeepers are those whom technical management generally recognizes as having such a role.

Tushman and Katz (1980, p. 1071) continued developing this direction of research and were interested in improving communication across organizational boundaries in R&D organizations and in finding ways to understand the role of gatekeepers as "key individual(s) who are both strongly connected to internal colleagues and strongly linked to external domains."

Tushman and Katz distinguished between gatekeeping and boundary spanning, claiming that a gatekeeper must be strongly connected both internally and externally but boundary spanners are connected only externally. Some scholars, particularly those in the current management literature, treat gatekeepers as boundary spanners and vice versa, blurring the distinction between the two concepts (Pawłowski & Robey, 2004; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004). Subsequently, the concept was applied to particular contexts in R&D management such as human resources issues (Katz, Tushman, & Allen, 1995) and technology alliances (Soh & Roberts, 2005).

In general the literature in this area either concentrated on developing a set of parameters to identify technological gatekeepers (Allen, 1977; Myers, 1982; Schultze & Boland, 2000) or used existing parameters to comprehend how gatekeepers affect the flow of information, business processes, and sub-units' communication in organizations. A focus on either intra-organizational or cross-organizational contexts is a particular weakness of these models. Another limitation is the lack of variation among the different models from the one originally suggested by Allen. Finally, the focus is solely on the gatekeeper and not on other actors who may affect gatekeepers' interactions. Most of the literature in communication studies treats the gatekeeper as a selector, one who protects the walls and gates; management studies tend to view gatekeepers as breaking walls or crossing boundaries in order to connect and facilitate.

Information Science Theories

The field of library and information science embraced the gatekeeping subject only after it was already well rooted in communication and management. Similar to communication studies, information science is also rather fragmented, encompassing many different theories and meanings relating to gatekeeping. However, unlike communication, information science also

borrowed some of its theories and vocabularies from other fields (the editorial gatekeeper from communication [Glogoff, 1988] and the technological gatekeeper from management [Allen, 1969; Wilkin, 1977]) and applied these concepts to information science. Examples include studying the editorial review process in academic journals (Glogoff, 1988) and investigating the role of the technological gatekeeper outside the R&D world, such as in the information technology profession or academia (Cronin, 1982; Klobas & McGill, 1995). Other variations on both managerial and communication concepts of gatekeeping were used in exploring the role of librarians as gatekeepers from a selection or intermediary perspective (Chamberlain, 1991; Sturges, 2001).

Most of the theories coming from communication and management are vertical because they explore questions within the context of a certain profession or organization. For example, “How do editors/gatekeepers affect public opinion?” is a profession-bound question that focuses on editors. Two streams of theories in information science challenged these conventions. The first, *cultural theories of gatekeeping*, concentrated on identifying gatekeepers in communities and understanding their roles. As with the editor and technological gatekeeper theories, its roots came from outside the information field. Norman Kurtz (1968) defined gatekeepers as individuals who move between two cultures to provide information that links people with alternatives or solutions. The strength of such a model is the conceptualization of gatekeepers’ linkage roles in communal and social networks (Booth & Owen, 1985) and the illumination of other roles they may have in communities; for instance: how to identify gatekeepers (e.g., as preserving cultural ethos and symbols, as key individuals who help in the political and social lives of communities) (Kurtz, 1968; Metoyer-Duran, 1993; Tricarico, 1986); understanding gatekeepers’ roles in the exchange and use of information (Shannon & Magdaline, 1973);

exploring specific cases of ethnic groups (Borowiec, 1975; Metoyer-Duran, 1991). This stream has had limited impact because it focuses only on ethnic communities (e.g., African-Americans, Latinos, Polish Americans) and such a focus sometimes lies outside the scope of traditional information science journals.

The second stream, *information seeking models*, is tightly connected with the cultural stream, making it hard to differentiate between the two. Information seeking models place a greater emphasis on the information needs and services of a community and the role of gatekeepers in fulfilling those needs; the cultural stream emphasizes the gatekeeping role in the community over community information needs. Some scholars apply a hybrid *information-culture approach* to gatekeeping, arguing that information-seeking behavior should be viewed within the context of the individual's cultural experience (Chatman, 1985; Metoyer-Duran, 1991, 1993). In this context, gatekeepers are analyzed as agents who disseminate information in their community for acculturation purposes. Still, the focus on gatekeepers within information science is on their role within ethnic communities.

Communication studies focus on questions of gatekeeping within the context of professions and organizations. Information science examines ethnic communities in which gatekeepers serve as disseminators. Information science's contribution to gatekeeping research is the conceptualization of gatekeepers as being immersed in communities whose voice they represent.

Political Science Theories

With few exceptions, the political science literature is very much focused on understanding gatekeeping in democracies, using game-theory methods. Gatekeeping was first

formalized by Denzau and Mackay (1983) and referred to the political behavior of legislature committees that sought to maintain the status quo. The idea is that one of the principal powers of a committee is its ability to veto proposals within its jurisdiction. McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast (1994, p. 18) agree and assert that “in each chamber of Congress, at least one subcommittee and one full committee have gatekeeping rights in that a bill normally will not be considered by the entire legislative body until it has been approved in committee.” Researchers have analyzed these rules and equilibria in other places, such as the European Community (Fitzmaurice, 1988; Lenaerts & Van Nuffel, 1991). This literature is considered non-mainstream in political science and in some instances finds its way into law journals. Unlike in other fields, gatekeeping in the 1980s and 1990s was only beginning to establish itself in political science, which had a narrow interpretation of the term.

1995–2007: Studying the Current Gatekeeping Literature

The major objective of this chapter is to provide a consolidated view of current literature on gatekeeping, reflect on trends, and suggest a starting point for further theorizing. For this purpose key journals in eight disciplines and fields from 1995 to March 2007 were studied. Table 10.1 provides the list of journals systematically scrutinized, their ranking, and the number of articles containing a gatekeeping concept. The following considerations were followed: (1) Priority was given to currently published journal ranking reports generated by experts in a particular field (the fields of information science [IS] and management of information systems [MIS] are examples). (2) When no ranking was available within a certain discipline or field, the study used ISI’s Web of Knowledge to establish the number of citations and used this as the basis for comparing the journals. (3) If neither of these two measures existed (e.g., as in law and society), a panel of experts in the field was consulted to determine journal rankings.

Table 10.1 Gatekeeping articles in journals (March 2007, 1995)

Field	Journal abbr.	Journal title	Rank	Number of articles with GK presence	Total articles published	Percent of total articles with GK presence
Information Science ¹ (Info Sci)	JASIST	Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology	2	27	1230	2.2%
	LQ	Library Quarterly	4	7	808	0.9%
	ARIST	Annual Review of Information Science and Technology	3	0	83	0.0%
Total Information Science articles				34	2121	1.6%
Management Information Systems ² (MIS)	ISR	Information Systems Research	2	4	366	1.1%
	JAIR	Journal of the Association for Information Systems	9	3	119	2.5%
	MISQ	MIS Quarterly	1	16	479	3.3%
Total MIS articles				23	964	2.4%
Management	AMJ	Academy of Management Journal	2	18	1045	1.7%

(Mgmt)	AMR	Academy of Management Review	4	10	977	1.0%
	MS	Management Science	1	19	2004	1.0%
Total Management articles				47	4026	1.2%
Political Science (Poli Sci)	AJPS	American Journal of Political Science	1	21	723	2.9%
	APSR	American Political Science Review	2	34	3479	1.0%
	BJPS	British Journal of Political Science	8	5	413	1.2%
Total Political Science articles				60	4615	1.3%
Communication ³ (Comm)	CR	Communication Research	3	2	344	0.6%
	ICS	Information Communication and Society	-	4	333	1.2%
	JMCQ	Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly	12	76	1739	4.4%
	NMS	New Media Society	29	16	380	4.2%
Total Communication articles				98	2796	3.5%

Law and Society ⁴ (Law)	JLS	Journal of Legal Studies	3	10	314	3.2%
	LSI	Law and Social Inquiry	2	29	507	5.7%
	LSR	Law and Society Review	1	18	499	3.6%
Total Law articles				57	1320	4.3%
Public Affairs (Pub Aff)	A&S	Administration and Society	11	14	504	2.8%
	ASQ	Administrative Science Quarterly	3	17	881	1.9%
	JPART	Journal of Public Administration, Research, and Theory	1	7	466	1.5%
	PAR	Public Administration Review	5	16	1415	1.1%
Total Public Affairs articles				54	3266	1.7%
Sociology (Soc)	AJS	American Journal of Sociology	2	20	2916	0.7%
	ASR	American Sociological Review	1	22	819	2.7%
	SF	Social Forces	4	38	1826	2.1%
Total Sociology articles				80	5561	1.4%

Total journal articles				453	24669	1.8%

1. See Schoegl and Stock (2004).
2. See Pfeffers and Tang (2003).
3. Journals ranked by ISI impact factor and expert panel.
4. Journals ranked by expert panel.

Out of a total of 24,669 articles in eight disciplines for the twelve-year period, 453 (2 percent) focused on or made reference to gatekeeping (see Table 10.1). Communications and law and society have the largest number. However, we need to consider the degree of emphasis on gatekeeping in individual articles. For this purpose, articles explicitly including gatekeeping concepts were categorized¹ according to the depth of treatment:

- Analysis: Articles that include a full analysis of gatekeeping.
- Factor: Gatekeeping is a factor within the study, but not a large component.
- Mention: Gatekeeping is only mentioned in the study.
- Book review: Gatekeeping is included in a book review.
- Commentary/editorial: Gatekeeping is included in a commentary or editorial.
- Citation: Gatekeeping is included in the references.

Using these categories, we find that of the 453 articles only a small number deals with the subject in depth. Table 10.2 presents the distribution of the various types of gatekeeping presence. Only twelve (3 percent) of all the articles mentioning gatekeeping analyzed the concept thoroughly (Analysis) and only eighteen articles (4 percent) used gatekeeping as a factor (Factor). This shows that gatekeeping concepts are mainly used for the purpose of articulating ideas or to serve as metaphors to characterize a certain state, rather than for a fully developed theoretical framework.

Table 10.2 Type of gatekeeping presence by field of study

Field of Study	Type of Gatekeeping Presence						Total
	Analysis	Factor	Mention	Book review	Citation	Commentary/ editorial	
Comm	4	3	60	16	15		98
Info Sci	3	3	19	5	3	1	34
Law	1		43	5	8		57
MIS		2	16		3	2	23
Mgmt		4	34		7	2	47
Poli Sci	2	3	42	2	10	1	60
Pub Aff		1	50	1	2		54
Soc	2	2	53	7	15	1	80
Total by type	12	18	317	36	63	7	453

The percentage of articles on a topic may reflect how important a certain topic is within a field. Communication and law and society journals appear to show most interest in gatekeeping (see Table 10.1). The picture changes when we take into account the depth of treatment (the factor and analysis types of articles in Table 10.2). As we discuss later, these disciplines also have the highest level of fragmentation in conceptualizing gatekeeping. The fragmentation of discourse may indicate an attempt to challenge a hegemonic theoretical framework (for example, the editorial framework in communication). It may also reflect intellectual uncertainties stemming from unsound theories or the inapplicability of these theories, given changes in the environment (for example, the interactivity of the Internet may necessitate some reconceptualization of editorial gatekeeping).

Another interesting fact illuminated by Table 10.2 is that MIS, management and public affairs do not have articles that fully analyze the concept of gatekeeping, yet do have some utilizing gatekeeping as a factor in a larger study. Did these fields fail to produce new theoretical frameworks for gatekeeping in the years 1995 to 2007? Deeper analysis shows that these three are not the only fields that did not contribute new theories on gatekeeping during this era. Later we discuss the reasons for, and implications, of this situation.

Gatekeeping Rationales

Interesting questions to explore include the following: Are there new conceptualizations of gatekeeping in the current literature? If so, what they are? Which research paths did these fields take in recent years? To address these questions, we examined individual articles to identify the motivation or rationale underlying the appearance of gatekeeping concepts in the literature. Table 10.3 summarizes the results.

Table 10.3 Rationale of gatekeeping conceptualization

Gatekeeping rationale	Description
Access	Providing or preventing access to a service, status, or position that includes a level of screening to determine one's suitability for passage, and assignment to a designated category. Used to control participation, inclusion/exclusion.
Editorial	A particular type of Access: Processes of selection used by journal editors, reviewers, and the news media to identify works to be published and disseminated. Often associated with power to define how field of study progresses, or what items are newsworthy. (Crane, 1967; Shoemaker, 1991)
Protection	Regulating information coming from outside and its distribution in order to protect members of the network or the information. (Metoyer-Duran, 1993)
Preservation of culture	A particular type of Protection: Mediating and controlling information for the sake of preserving core values, norms and continuity of a social network, community, and culture. (Metoyer-Duran, 1993)
Change agent	Engaging either deliberately or whose behavior results in social, cultural or behavioral change—this is usually done by agenda setting or shaping and changing preferences and views. (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1965)

There are two dominant rationales (see Table 10.4): the notion of editorial gatekeeping (similar to the traditional concept in communication studies) and gatekeeping for the sake of preservation of culture. Preservation of culture served as one of the main theories in information science in years past but it has since become marginalized. The current literature instead emphasizes the editorial meaning of gatekeeping borrowed from communication. At the same time, preservation of culture did become the main attention driver over other representations of gatekeeping for social science disciplines such as political science, public affairs, and sociology. Table 10.4 summarizes all types of gatekeeping rationales in articles that treated the concept of gatekeeping.

Table 10.4 Rationale for gatekeeping by field of study

Gatekeeping category	Field of Study								Total per category
	Comm	Info Sci	Law	MIS	Mgmt	Poli Sci	Pub Aff	Soc	
None	15	3	8	3	7	10	2	15	63
Access	3	1	17	1		7	6	17	52
Change agent	12		1	1	1	3	2	5	25
Disseminator	3	5		2	7	1	4	3	25
Editorial	52	10	1	7	9	3	5	5	92
Facilitator		6	11	2	7	3	10	10	49
Linking		2	2	2	5		6	1	18
Preservation of culture	9	4	8	3	6	30	14	15	89
Protection	4	3	9	2	5	3	5	9	40
Total per field	98	34	57	23	47	60	54	80	453

Key Questions and Definitions of Gatekeeping

Table 10.2 showed that the concept of gatekeeping is still used as a metaphor, symbol, or illustration mainly for the purpose of articulating ideas rather than as a stand-alone theoretical framework. In the next section, attention is directed to the analysis of those articles that make in-depth reference to gatekeeping (analysis and factor type articles), a total of 30 articles (see Table 10.5).

Table 10.5 Gatekeeping rationale by field for analysis and factor items

Category	Field of Study								Total
	Comm	Info Sci	Law	MIS	Mgmt	Poli Sci	Pub Aff	Soc	
Access						1		1	2
Change agent	1					2			3
Disseminator	1	1							2
Editorial	4	1						1	6
Facilitator		3		2	1				6
Linking		1	1				1		3
Preservation of culture					3	2		2	7
Protection	1								1
Total	7	6	1	2	4	5	1	4	30

The analysis revealed several trends: Law and society used facilitator and access most frequently for purposes of illustration (see Table 10.4) but the in-depth articles concentrated on the linking notion (see Figure 10.1). Surprisingly, access was used rarely for in-depth analysis purposes. Finally, some disciplines focused on only one main aspect of gatekeeping. For example, public affairs and law deal only with linking and MIS focused only on facilitator.

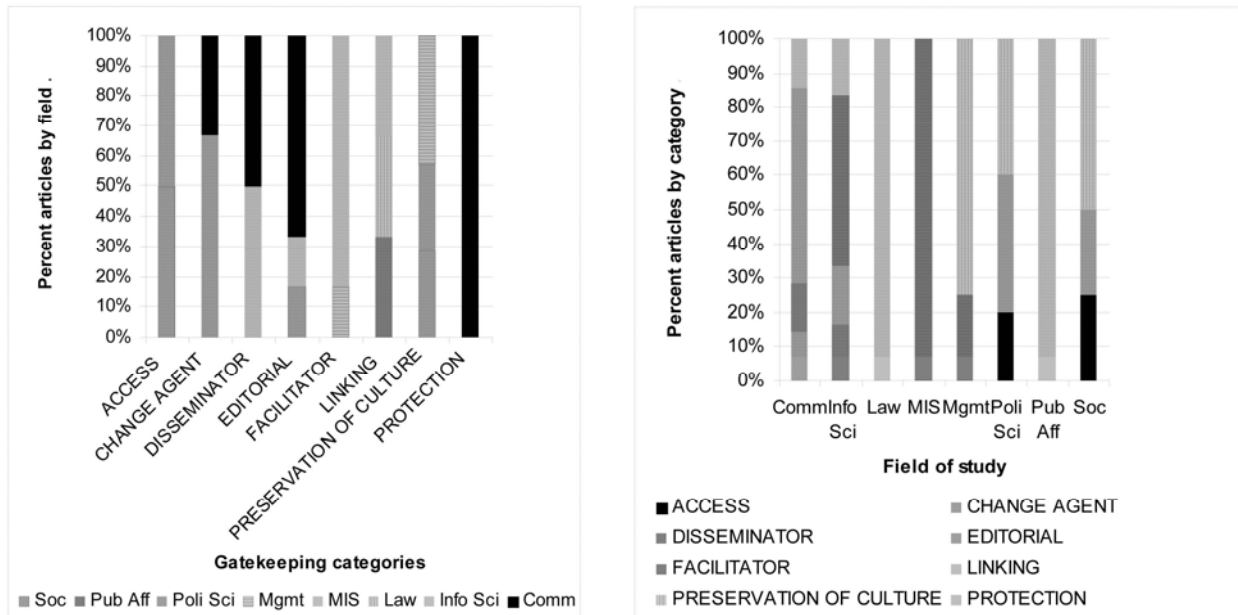


Figure 10.1 Gatekeeping rationale by field for analysis and factor articles

The fragmentation phenomenon observed in earlier research is also reflected in the current literature, as shown in Figure 10.1. Gatekeeping is treated in various ways in communication and information science (for example, information science looks at the categories of disseminator, editorial, facilitator, and linking as the rationale for analysis). What does this fragmentation mean? What are the main research questions in the current literature? Are there narratives shaping gatekeeping research within and across the fields? If so, what are those narratives? Do gaps exist in how scholars currently treat gatekeeping?

To answer these questions, Table 10.6 first offers a micro-level insight into the different

gatekeeping definitions and research questions in each article. This is followed by a within-field analysis and then a cross-field analysis of themes. The cross-field examination is of particular importance because it entails searching for patterns that may serve as common denominators for breaking disciplinary boundaries.

Table 10.6 Overview of articles studying gatekeeping in depth

Field	Author, date	Category	Gatekeeping definition from article	Key questions
Comm	Hardin, 2005	Editorial	<p>“Gatekeeping, the decision-making process editors use to choose stories, is a basic and powerful force because it is essentially the way sports editors shape readers’ integrated views of social reality. Gatekeeping is affected by a number of factors, including values, organizational norms and routines, personal beliefs and experiences, and ideology. ... Audiences may also influence gatekeeping, although scholars debate how or to what degree.” (p. 65)</p>	<p>1. How do editors [gatekeepers] make decisions? 2. Do gatekeepers refer to reader interests?</p>
	Leichty & Springston, 1996	Disseminator	<p>“Decisions as to what information to pass along and whom to pass it to” (p. 469)</p>	<p>What are the roles of PR practitioners? (gatekeeping is one of these roles in a larger study)</p>
	Singer, 2001	Editorial	<p>“Building on sociologist Kurt Lewin’s proposal that a person or group with some power decides what passes through the ‘gate’ and thus is able to become part of general knowledge.” (p. 66)</p>	<p>How does the gatekeeper role change due to the Internet?</p>

	Shoemaker et al., 2001	Editorial	“Gatekeeping is the process by which the vast array of potential news messages are winnowed, shaped, and prodded into those few that are actually transmitted by the news media. ... However, the gatekeeping process is also thought of as consisting of more than just selection, to include how messages are shaped, timed for dissemination, and handled. In fact, gatekeeping in mass communication can be seen as the overall process through which the social reality transmitted by the news media is constructed, and is not just a series of ‘in’ and ‘out’ decisions.” (p. 233)	Is newspaper gatekeeping influenced more from a routine level of analysis or individual characteristics?
	Singer, 2006b	Editorial	“The Internet defies the whole notion of a ‘gate’ and challenges the idea that journalists (or anyone else) can or should limit what passes through it. At the same time, the sheer quantity of information online, along with its wildly varying quality, reinforces the need for someone to sort it out as well as to lend it credibility and, ideally, utility.” (p. 265)	How does the gatekeeper role change due to the Internet?
	Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002	Change Agent	“By selecting which public affairs stories will be reported and by giving special prominence to some stories, the news media suggest which people, issues, and events are especially deserving of public attention.” (p. 180)	Does new media set agenda differently from traditional media?
	Porter & Sallot, 2003	Protection	Based on definition from Leichty and Springston (1996): “decisions as to what information to pass along and whom to pass it to” (p. 469)	What are the roles of PR practitioners in an Internet world? (gatekeeping is one of these roles in a larger study)

Info Sci	Klobas & McGill, 1995	Disseminator	“Gatekeepers, individuals who promote communication of technical and professional information by gathering it from a wide range of sources and disseminating it widely to their colleagues” (p. 581). “We propose that gatekeepers can be identified primarily by the extent of their information dissemination activity.” (p. 582)	How to identify a gatekeeper?
	Braun & Dióspatonyi, 2005	Editorial	“Relations between scientific ideas and their consumers or audiences are typically mediated through social mechanisms that provide institutional channels for the flow of ideas. These channels, in turn, are controlled by organizations or persons who control the admission of manuscripts, i.e., they are gatekeepers of ideas inasmuch as they are empowered to make decisions as to what is let ‘in’ and what is kept ‘out’.” (p. 854)	How can we better understand the process of selection?
	Robbin & Frost-Kumpf, 1997	Facilitator	Based on definition from Katz and Tushman (1979). “‘technological gatekeeper’ or boundary-spanner on whom project groups rely heavily for information and who contributes to an organization’s effectiveness by filtering and channeling external technology and information into the organization (Katz & Tushman, 1979). The boundary-spanner serves as a mediator between ‘organizational colleagues and the world outside and effectively couples the organization to scientific and technological activity in the world at large’ (Allen, 1970, p. 192)” (p. 104)	What factors contribute to failures of communication during the process of data production and data utilization? (analyzing gatekeepers’ role and how they can improve their role)

Blair, 2002	Facilitator	<p>Gatekeepers “direct inquiring individuals to the documents that they are most likely to need. Because the gatekeepers are usually individuals who use, or have used, the information that they possess, they are also usually able to interpret or explain the meaning of that information, that is, how it is used by the organization. Second, if they do not have the documents an inquirer wants they can often direct him/her to another gatekeeper who is more likely to have them. Finally, because the storage of paper documents has an explicit cost, the gatekeepers will be selective about what they keep, and will often weed out and discard documents that are no longer useful. This makes it more likely that social information networks will provide access to information that is useful for the purposes of the organization.” (p. 1024)</p>	<p>What is the importance of gatekeepers in context of communities of practice?</p>
Agada, 1999	Linking	<p>“Gatekeepers are defined as information intermediaries who move between cultures, linking their community members with alternatives or solutions (Kurtz, 1968). ... As intermediaries, they mediate between formal and informal networks (Booth & Owen, 1985); public agencies and ethnic citizens (Borowiec, 1975); and their cultural communities and the dominant society (Duran, 1977).” (p. 75)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to identify a gatekeeper? 2. What are their information needs? 3. What are their information sources?

	Awazu & Desouza, 2004	Facilitator	“Gatekeepers are emergent leaders who decide which pieces of code get stored in the community and which don’t. Gatekeepers or trusted developers maintain a quality of knowledge stored (von Krogh, Spaeth, & Lakhari, 2003). Gatekeepers help knowledge transfer over time by contributing to the timely update of knowledge and making it immediately available to others.” (p. 1018)	How to augment current knowledge management practices? (gatekeeping is one of the factors that facilitates this process)
Law	Suchman & Cahill, 1996	Linking	Gatekeeping activities described as those of Silicon Valley law firms “determining which clients get access to which investors, and vice versa.” (p. 698) “Gatekeeping activities such as these help to establish normative boundaries around the Silicon Valley community, albeit perhaps at the risk of stifling structural innovation. ... In essence, gatekeeping moderates the uncertainty of anonymous market relations, protecting the cultural underpinnings of the local economy.” (p. 699)	How do gatekeepers shape the market of financing start-ups?
MIS	Pawlowski & Robey, 2004	Facilitator	“Studies of the gatekeeper role in research and development teams highlight the importance of individuals who gather and translate information from other departments and disperse it to fellow team members (Katz & Allen, 1985; Katz & Tushman, 1981; Tushman & Katz, 1980)” (p. 648)	How to better understand gatekeeper-gated relations in order to explain IT usage?

	Ulrike Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004	Facilitator	“Gatekeeper brokers engage in an alliance or affiliation with another actor to mediate exchanges with a third party. ... In the gatekeeper brokerage model, the broker’s interests tend to be aligned with the customer or buyer. As a gatekeeper, the broker gathers information from a third party and manipulates it (e.g., through aggregation, filtering, sorting, and editing) before distributing selective content to the customer.” (pp. 89–90)	How to better understand the role of IT professionals as knowledge brokers [gatekeepers]?
Mgmt	Beyer, Chanove, & Fox, 1995	Preservation of Culture	A gatekeeping role “filtering out information deemed unworthy from that deemed worthy of dissemination (de Grazia, 1963).” (p. 1219)	How does the review process of journals [gatekeeping] affect the fate of submitted manuscripts [of gated]?
	Shumsky & Pinker, 2003	Facilitator	“Many service systems are arranged with a front line of gatekeepers who refer jobs to a stable of experts.” (p. 839)	How do gatekeepers perform a routing of a customer?
	R. Katz et al., 1995	Preservation of Culture	“Gatekeepers are those key technical professionals who are strongly networked to both internal and external sources of critical information.” (p. 850)	How do supervisors [gatekeepers] impact the ability of technical subordinates [gated] to be promoted?
	Pollack & Zeckhauser, 1996	Preservation of Culture	“The choice of specific projects or endeavors to fund is delegated to decision-makers in subunits, individuals we refer to as gatekeepers.” (p. 642)	1. What are the problems that gatekeepers may face in a decentralized context? 2. Can one assess distortions in gatekeepers’ decisions?

Poli Sci	Blanton, 2000	Access	“The first stage is a ‘gatekeeping’ stage in which policymakers make a decision about whether a country is eligible to receive any U.S. arms at all.” (p. 124)	Are human rights and democracy significant determinants in the decision to transfer arms abroad? (gatekeeping as a decision is the multi-stage process]
	Putterman, 2005	Change Agent	Gatekeeping “refers to the people’s ability to check others who frame the legislative agenda on their behalf.” (p. 147)	Who should set the agenda? (suggesting the gated should switch roles with gatekeepers)
	Scott, 2005	Change Agent	“Throughout I follow Putterman in using the term ‘agenda-setting’ to refer to the power of legislative initiative, although this power is more properly a form of ‘gatekeeping,’ which is merely one form of ‘agenda-setting.’” (p. 138)	In absence of agenda-setting institution, how does one aggregate preferences?
	Krehbiel, 1997	Preservation of Culture	“The committee may exercise gatekeeping authority to keep in effect an exogenous status quo, or it may propose a bill.” (p. 924)	How agenda should be set?
	Segal, 1997	Preservation of Culture	“The committee with gatekeeping power (G) chooses whether to propose remedial legislation” (p. 29). “Briefly, the committee-gatekeeping model resembles the Ferejohn/Shipan (1990) model and explicitly allows the respective Judiciary Committee’s median preference to differ from that of its parent chamber.” (p. 35)	What would be a better voting behavior model by supreme court? [the gatekeeper is a small factor, mainly exploring the way it operates]
Pub Aff	Obstfeld, 2005	Linking	“Allen (1977) found that individuals with more informal contacts outside the organization, or ‘gatekeepers,’ were critical for importing novel information and linking the organization with its environment. These gatekeepers effectively serve as	What is the importance of gatekeepers’ role as linkers?

			the primary link to external sources of information and technology (R. Katz & Tushman, 1981)” (pp. 100–101)	
Soc	Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001	Editorial	“Selection bias involves media gatekeepers’ (e.g., editors’) choices of a very small number of protest events to report from a much larger pool of events which could be reported. That selection is part of the media’s agenda setting role.” (p. 1400)	How social movements [gated] influence the way issues are framed by mass media [gatekeepers]?
	Clayman & Reisner, 1998	Preservation of Culture	“Gatekeeping, as a social scientific concept, can be traced to Lewin’s (1947) writings on social planning. He observed that the most efficient way to bring about widespread social change is to concentrate on persons in key positions of influence, who function as ‘gatekeepers’ in the flow of goods and ideas through the society. Lewin viewed the societal impact of gatekeepers as a matter of ‘group dynamics,’ and hence he saw gatekeeping as a basic problem for sociology. At the same time, however, he conceived of the gatekeeping process itself in individualistic and psychological terms.” (p. 178)	How can we better understand the social practices of the assessment process [gatekeeping]?
	Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997	Preservation of Culture	“Cultural gatekeepers, those who determine which images will be available to the public, may be influenced by racial tensions in society. We argue that what these gatekeepers promote influences future symbolic representations.” (p. 445)	How does representation of Blacks in books in the U.S. [gatekeeping] represent cultural change?

	Kunovich & Paxton, 2005	Access	<p>“Parties play an important gatekeeping role in political systems (Caul, 1999; Kunovich, 2003; Sanbonmatsu, 2002).</p> <p>Political parties make decisions about what candidates to field and how much support to give them (e.g., through placement on party lists).” (p. 520)</p>	<p>What are the ways political parties [gatekeepers] mediate and interact with factors that affect representation of women [gated]?</p>
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Literature Review (1995–2007): A Within-Field Analysis

Communication

Some recurrent patterns are evident in current communication studies research. First, there is a focus on the editorial connotation of gatekeeping associated with one of the field's core professions, journalism. With few exceptions (Singer, 2001, 2006b), gatekeepers in journalism are perceived as an integral part of the elite. In other fields, however, they are perceived as part of a larger community consisting of the gated—those subjected to gatekeepers' controls—and gatekeepers themselves. The main unit of analysis is the individual gatekeeper with a latent communal perspective, in this case, the editor's community. Thus, the unit of analysis does not rise above the individual level and gatekeepers are seen as part of a collective, institution, or corporation. When concentrating on new technologies and changes to information practices, most studies use traditional frameworks of gatekeeping—ignoring the role of those gated, including their power and impact on the process. The recurrent theme suggests that gatekeepers construct and change social reality and therefore act as political agents. For example, Shoemaker and colleagues (2001, p. 233) refer to this process as “social reality transmitted by the news media (that) is constructed.” Hardin (2005, p. 65) acknowledges that “it is a powerful force because it is essentially the way sport editors shape readers' integrated views of social reality.” This is in contrast to the traditional literature that conceptualized gatekeepers as neutral stakeholders, concentrating mainly on procedures and processes.

Information Science

The main trend in information science according to within-field analysis is the absence of a dominant framework or theory and fragmentation of the notion of gatekeeping. Yet, the

concept has evolved within information science, which initially borrowed its theoretical frameworks from other disciplines. A differentiating semantics of the editorial rationale has evolved over the years due to a dialogue between the fields of communication and information science. Thus, the semantics of scholarly editors emphasize the quality and superiority of information artifacts entering the gatekeeper's network (e.g., articles chosen to be published) controlled by constraining gates of publication (Braun & Dióspatonyi, 2005; Kling, Spector, & McKim, 2002). In communication studies, quality is perceived as one factor among many others in framing the editorial gatekeeper; for example, the need to reach out to the largest audience is the principal consideration and, therefore, quality in some cases suffers at the expense of popularity (Bennett, 2004).

Furthermore, current literature on gatekeeping in information science tends to distance itself from enculturation theories of gatekeeping, such as those of Metoyer-Duran (1991) and Duran (1977). Scholars do not see the benefit of enculturation theories to contexts where gatekeeping involves selection, dissemination, or mediation of information use in organizational, professional, or individual contexts; these are applied mainly in cases where ethnic, off-line communities are analyzed and the linkage to cultural context is a given (Agada, 1999).

MIS

As has been noted, current gatekeeping studies in both MIS and management do not analyze gatekeeping in-depth but instead use the concept as a factor in larger studies. MIS relies solely upon the notion of the gatekeeper as a facilitator, whose origins are embedded mainly in Allen's (1977) technological gatekeeper theory. The unit of analysis is at the organizational level and the goal is to achieve effectiveness and efficiency through knowledge brokers—gatekeepers

who translate and facilitate the flow of information between units and/or organizations. The prevailing mode of analysis, in contrast to communication and information science (which emphasize the remoteness of the gatekeeper as part of an elite group [Mosca, 1938; Pareto, 1935]), is not elitist but follows more of a pluralist paradigm (Dahl, 1983; Truman, 1951). The gatekeeper's expertise, ability, and membership of a network are emphasized. Speaking of pluralism, it is surprising that the articulation and language used in MIS studies still ignore the importance and role of the gated.

Management

The main goal attributed to gatekeeping in the current management literature is the preservation of organizational culture and goals, a hybrid comprising enculturation theories, boundary spanning, and editorial gatekeeping. The means of action is facilitation (Pollack & Zeckhauser, 1996) but the goal is the preservation of values and norms within networks (e.g., organizations and departments) by promoting the preservation of the cultural characteristics that define these networks. There is confusion as to whether gatekeeping is a neutral process (Pollack & Zeckhauser, 1996; Shumsky & Pinker, 2003) or a political one (Beyer, Chanove, & Fox, 1995; Katz et al., 1995), a confusion that reflects the different origins of management studies. Operations research entails a more neutral approach by concentrating on the process and stages of development of gatekeeping; organizational behavior focuses more on political channels, emphasizing the sociopolitical factors that affect the decisions of gatekeepers.

Sociology

No matter what the gatekeeping rationale is in the sociological literature (e.g.,

preservation of culture, editorial, and access), a leitmotif is the representation of reality. Two types of gated are expressed in the literature of sociology. The first type, a gated community such as women (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005), Blacks (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997), or social movements (Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001), are represented through a medium (e.g., on the Internet, in books, the mass media, politics). The second type, the gated individual, lives the social reality constructed by the gatekeeper. These studies manifest a power discourse where the gatekeeper determines and sets the boundaries of language while the gated remains deprived of any meaningful resources to intervene in that process without the gatekeeper's permission.

Political Science

Political science is unique because it is the only discipline that consistently uses a pluralist vocabulary for gatekeepers and views them as collective agents with a hegemonic mission, without individualistic aspirations; for example, committees in a political sphere (Krehbiel, 1997; Segal, 1997); the state (Blanton, 2000); and even provocative arguments that demonstrate how the common gated, the people, function as gatekeepers (Putterman, 2005). The power of gatekeepers arises from their ability to preserve the status quo through veto against measures that may change the political environment against the wishes of the gatekeeper. In contrast to the discussion in communication studies, which perceives gatekeepers as agents of change, political science inverts the gatekeeper role to that of maintaining order and equilibrium. A limitation of the political science narrative is that it restricts gatekeeping studies to democratically based situations.

A Cross-Field Analysis (1995–2007): Common Gatekeeping Themes

The within-field analysis provided us with some descriptive findings about how each field treats gatekeeping. To be able to analyze and reflect upon any changes, we need to see which themes emerge across the various fields. Table 10.7 provides a cross-field analysis. It is followed by a discussion on each theme.

Table 10.7 Common cross-fields themes

Theme	Articles grouped by theme
Process	Beyer, Chanove, & Fox, 1995; Braun & Diospatonyi, 2005; Hardin, 2005; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001; Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001
New-Old	Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002; Porter & Sallot, 2003; Singer, 2001; Singer, 2006
Identity	Agada, 1999; Klobas & McGill, 1995
Influence	Awazu & Desouza, 2004; Beyer, Chanove, & Fox, 1995; Blair, 2002; Blanton, 2000; Clayman & Reisner, 1998; Katz, Tushman, & Allen, 1995; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Leichty & Springston, 1996; Obstfeld, 2005; Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004
Relations	Pawlowski & Robey, 2004; Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001
Practical	Pollack & Zeckhauser, 1996; Robbin & Frost-Kumpf, 1997; Scott, 2005; Shumsky & Pinker, 2003; Suchman & Cahill, 1996
Normative	Krehbiel, 1997; Putterman, 2005; Segal, 1997

Process Theme: Effects on Decision Making

The process theme concentrates on factors affecting the decision-making process. It effectively neutralizes the political and power metaphors of gatekeeping by separating them from subjective factors such as personal feelings and perceptions (Beyer et al., 1995; Smith et al., 2001). Moreover, by focusing on the process, this approach stifles discourse on how the gated influence the process. This prevents them from being a potentially equal player in the system (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Shoemaker et al., 2001). Smith and colleagues (2001, p. 1397) put it

this way: “Even when movements succeed at obtaining the attention of mass media outlets, media reports portray protests in ways that may undermine social movement agendas.”

New-Old Theme: Comparing Old and New Contexts

The set of research questions raised under this rubric belong exclusively in the communication field, which attempts to understand the differences between traditional modes of communication and new ones such as those enabled by the Internet. One can only speculate why other fields are slow to examine how new technologies affect notions of gatekeeping. Are communication theories more mature compared to those in other fields? The new-old theme demonstrates communication scholars’ uneasiness with traditional theories of gatekeeping. Many studies attempt (often unsuccessfully) to analyze new gatekeeping phenomena with an arsenal of old tools and frameworks that need to be revised. Singer (2006a) highlights the mismatch of context and theory by arguing that gatekeepers no longer treat information as an end product but as a basis for user engagement, participation, and personalization. Can traditional communication theories explain the interactivity of relations between the gatekeeper and the gated or explain the co-production of gatekeepers? Most traditional gatekeeping theories cannot accommodate such phenomena.

Identity Theme: Who Is a Gatekeeper?

The new-old theme is dominated by communication scholars; the identity theme, however, is dominated by information science scholars and is concerned with the basics of existing theoretical frameworks. The two studies presenting the identity theme (Agada, 1999; Klobas & McGill, 1995) presume that gatekeepers emerge from within the community in a

bottom-up process and represent needs of community members. These studies perceive gatekeepers from both a pluralistic and a neutral perspective. The factors that differentiate gatekeepers from other members of the network are mainly their information skills rather than their affiliation to a certain class or elite or the power they possess.

Influence Theme: Impact of Gatekeeping

The influence theme is reflected through deterministic questions exploring the impact of gatekeeping within a certain context. For example, it studies how gatekeeping and gatekeepers affect cultural change through the portrayal of Blacks in U.S. children's picture books from 1937–1993 (Pescosolido et al., 1997), influence the nature of knowledge management in communities of practice (Blair, 2002), affect participation of women as political candidates (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005), affect policymakers' decisions about the transfer of arms to another country (Blanton, 2000), influence the fate of submitted manuscripts (Clayman & Reisner, 1998), influence the chances of a subordinate being promoted in organizations (Katz et al., 1995), play roles in public relations (Leichty & Springston, 1996), and affect IT usage within inter-firm relations (Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004). In these studies, gatekeeping and gatekeepers are taken as independent variables and the gated, in most cases, are the dependent variables. A criticism is inevitably leveled against the apparently infinite number of dependent variables and contexts. Gatekeepers and gatekeeping might be anything, under the appropriate circumstances, weakening the ability to decompose gatekeeping analytically as a process or to focus on the gatekeeping itself as the main topic.

Relations Theme: Analyzing Stakeholders' Relations

This theme analyzes relations among different stakeholders by identifying the relevant stakeholders and their relationships (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Although not the primary goal, this theme promotes discussion about the type and meaning of relations between gatekeepers and gated. Nevertheless, the dominant focus is the gatekeeper, not the gated.

Practical Theme: Illustrating Processes

The practical theme deals with the motivators of, incentives for, and impediments to the information flow processes. The main research question under this theme is “How?” The goal is to explicate gatekeeping incrementally by reflecting on its different stages. This theme is mainly of interest to researchers in professional fields: management, law, and information services. The questions raised are practical in nature, with measurable purposes and outcomes (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness, and cost-benefit analysis). However, its strength is also its weakness because the theme does not address questions about the meaning of gatekeeping.

Normative Theme: Who and What Questions

The normative and identity themes both ask foundational questions. The identity theme is dominated by information scientists; the normative theme is the domain of political scientists, who are interested in such questions as: “Who should be the gatekeeper?” and “What should she or he do?” (Krehbiel, 1997; Putterman, 2005; Segal, 1997). These sets of questions are invaluable to the foundation of the next generation of theories. They carefully examine the premises that constitute existing theories and at the same time shift them away from purely practical implications.

1995–2007: A Stagnation Era—What Next?

The seven themes suggest a period of stagnation in gatekeeping theory development. Only two, the identity and normative themes, critically examine the foundations of gatekeeping theories and gatekeepers. Most other types of studies do not create new theories or ask fresh questions about gatekeeping. First-order questions in the context of gatekeeping are usually questions of “what” and “who” rather than “how” and “when.” For example, what is gatekeeping? Who is considered a gatekeeper? What determinants affect gatekeeping? Studies from 1995 to 2007 mainly apply existing theories (for example, using the gatekeeping theories created by Metoyer-Duran [1993], Shoemaker [1991], or Allen [1977]). They prefer to focus on second-order questions and, assuming that the cornerstones of theories are well firmly in place, meaningful issues taken for granted. For instance, instead of revisiting definitions of gatekeeping, they study how a particular factor affects gatekeeping effectiveness or how gatekeepers operate in a particular context.

A devil’s advocate might claim that the chances of any topic being studied from the ground up are fairly small. In most studies the preference is to progress incrementally, building on foundations provided by scholars from the past (Kuhn, 1962). Not every study should be of a critical nature or attempt to revolutionize the field by addressing first-order questions (Gregor, 2006); however, every field should provide certain mechanisms in order to re-examine the axioms, assumptions, and hypotheses that advance theory building. Unfortunately, our macro-level look at eight disciplines/fields in the last decade resulted in almost no discourse about the conceptualization of gatekeeping. This should raise concerns regarding the future of this topic and suggest the need for a critical analysis of the field of gatekeeping, re-examining the foundations.

What might be the reasons for such stagnation? Perhaps this situation indicates a degree of stabilization and consolidation rather than stagnation, pointing to the maturation of the topic and its associated theories. But the findings of this study suggest something different. The plurality of vocabularies within and across fields² exemplified in Figure 10.1 implies that there is no common definition; nor is there a unifying theory that provides the necessary infrastructure one associates with a mature field. Even the editorial gatekeeping rationale, which represents one of the anchor frameworks for discussion on gatekeeping, has not evolved to a level that would ensure agreement on most of the first-order questions. For evidence, we need only look at the amount of debate and variation on this theoretical framework (Shoemaker, 1991). The fragmentation reflects a lack of within-field as well as cross-field integration. This does not mean that particular theoretical frameworks lack rigor or are insubstantial. It demonstrates, however, that scholars choose not to raise first-order questions that might stir controversy and divert them from their main research focus. It is as though they prefer to address “safe” questions and avoid big issues that might endanger the scholarly mainstream.

The second reason for stagnation in theory development has to do with nomenclature and the questions that are being framed within the internal discourse of each field but do not connect with the narratives of other fields. One reason for scholarly silos is the fear of academic criticism and fear of not meeting the rigid legitimacy benchmarks of each field or discipline. Scholl (2007) describes a similar concern in the e-government arena. Gatekeeping is a broad concept, which needs to borrow, and then integrate, heuristics and basics from a number of fields if it is to deal with challenging theoretical questions. Remaining field-bound may cause an interdisciplinary concept to stagnate and may also discourage scholars from undertaking foundational work.

Do We Need a New Theory?

This chapter argues for a fresh approach to the study of gatekeeping. There are three reasons why this is needed.

The first is evidenced by the new-old theme. This theme nicely illustrates some of the frustrations that scholars have when attempting to describe and analyze new gatekeeping phenomena using traditional tools and theories. The ubiquity of information and communication technologies, the widespread use of interactive applications, and the increasing digital skills of the population oblige scholars to revisit or at least re-examine classical models of gatekeeping. Singer (2001, 2006a) demonstrates the mismatch in two articles studying how the World Wide Web changed the newspaper editor's (the gatekeeper's) role using traditional communication theories of gatekeeping (Donohue et al., 1989; Snider, 1967; White, 1950): "We do not exist in isolation and we do not exist only through our personal interests. We exist as members of a real community that extends well beyond our newspaper's primary circulation area" (Singer, 2001, p. 78). Later she acknowledges that "the Internet defies the whole notion of a 'gate'" (Singer, 2006b, p. 265) and concludes that "these findings suggest that newspaper editors may be reconceptualizing their gatekeeping role as they become more experienced in creating content for the Internet, a medium whose open nature obliterates the traditional notion of the professional journalist deciding what information people can and cannot see" (Singer, 2006b, p. 275). If gatekeepers have reconceptualized their gatekeeping roles, why should scholars not do the same?

Secondly, most early theories of gatekeeping provided questions, solutions, and foundations contextualized to their own field or discipline. In keeping with Foucault's (1972) claim, these theories create a narrative that disciplines scholars to work within a set of axioms, vocabularies, and relations between concepts that are perceived as being unique to the discipline.

The discipline disciplines its scholars through a narrative, a homogenous discourse that constructs boundaries around the discipline and between it and other disciplines, emphasizing its uniqueness. The discipline thus legitimizes some aspects of research while excluding others. This intellectual gatekeeping may foster normative homogeneity but it hinders critical thinking. In order to understand a concept with all its contextual richness we need to break down the walls of disciplines and propose a theory that is not limited to any one paradigm. Providing an interdisciplinary framework that could appeal to various contexts and fields may be of considerable value. The suggested theoretical framework, sometimes called a meta-theory, can be customized later, crafting questions that fit a particular field.

Thirdly, the findings of this study show that the majority of articles focuses on gatekeepers' roles. Surprisingly, after sixty years of gatekeeping research, we have yet to agree on a nomenclature identifying the entity (e.g., individual, group, community) subjected to a gatekeeping process. Even where gatekeeping has more of a collective connotation (e.g., facilitator, linking, preservation of culture), gatekeepers are conceptualized as proxies of their communities, groups, or organizations while the gated have an active, yet ignored role. The simple fact that no vocabulary exists in the literature identifying these stakeholders exemplifies the passivity or negligence in the way prevailing discourse treats the gated and scholars' limited ability to present alternative thinking. Network Gatekeeping Theory for the first time in the literature names this entity as the gated (Barzilai-Nahon, in press).

To conclude, laying out the within-fields and cross-fields themes enables us to understand the concept of gatekeeping currently being applied in research. It also exposes the lacunae that need to be bridged: The difficulty of coping with complex phenomena such as gatekeeping without adequate analytical tools. For example, we need to refer to the gated as an

important stakeholder group and the interactivity of information technology. Hence, the need to draw foundational elements from a number of theories to create a common ground for discussion and a more refined conceptualization.

Applying Network Gatekeeping Theory

Barzilai-Nahon (in press) developed the concept of network gatekeeping as a theoretical framework that emphasizes four perspectives: first, gatekeeping as an information control process not necessarily limited to one specific type of control (e.g., selection); second, networks as a crucial dimension in conceptualizing gatekeeping³; third, identifying gatekeepers and gated, the entity subjected to a gatekeeping process, through their interactions with each other; and fourth, analyzing the dynamism of gatekeepers and both the gated's status and position. These four elements address the gaps identified in the current literature.

Network Gatekeeping identifies the gated according to their salience to gatekeepers (the degree to which gatekeepers give priority to competing gated claims) by four attributes (1) their political power in relation to the gatekeeper, (2) their information production ability, (3) their relationship with the gatekeeper, and (4) their alternatives in the context of gatekeeping. It predicts that the salience of a particular gated to a gatekeeper is correlated with possession of these attributes. Table 10.8 illustrates the typology of gated in Network Gatekeeping Theory according to the four attributes.

Table 10.8 Gated typology

	P	I	R	A	TIER	TYPE OF CLASS
0					Tier 0: Traditional Gated No possession of attributes	Traditional Gated
1			X		Tier I: Dormant Gated possession of one attribute	Captive audience
2		X				Lost voice
3				X		Vagabond reader
4	X					Squanderer Gated
5		X	X		Tier II: Potential Gated possession of two attributes	Exploited apprentice
6			X	X		Demanding user
7	X		X			Potential change agent
8		X		X		Illusive apprentice
9	X	X				Empowered Gated
10	X			X		Vagabond user
11		X	X	X	Tier III: Bounded Gated possession of three attributes	Frustrated Gated
12	X		X	X		Influence Bounded Gated
13	X	X	X			Choice Bounded Gated
14	X	X		X		Threatening Gated
15	X	X	X	X	Tier IV: Challenging Gated possession of four attributes	Challenging Gated

P – Political power; I – Information production; R – Relationship; A – Alternatives (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008)

Articulating the four attributes provides a snapshot of gatekeeping based on the interactions among the gated and gatekeepers, at a particular moment and in a specific context.

Table 10.9 applies Network Gatekeeping to the current literature and is followed by a discussion.

Table 10.9 Articles by gated tier and type

		Relationships			Information production			Alternatives			Political power ¹				Gated typology					
Author, date	Gate-keeping rationale	No exchange/feedback	Some exchange/feedback	Frequent exchange/feedback	Another creator	GK as creator	End user also creator	No association	None	Circumvention of Gatekeeper	GK have power/gated have none	GK has more power than gated	GK is equal to Gated	Gated have more power	Relationships	Info Production	Alternatives	Power	Gated Tier	Gated Type
Hardin, 2005	Change agent		x			x			x					x	x			x	Tier II – Potential Gated	Potential Change Agent
Leichty & Springston, 1996	Disseminator			x	x				x			x						x	Tier II – Potential Gated	Potential Change Agent
Singer, 2001	Editorial	x			x					x	x						x		Tier I – Dormant Gated	Vagabond reader
Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001	Editorial	x			x	x				x	x						x		Tier I – Dormant Gated	Vagabond reader
Singer, 2006	Editorial			x		x	x			x			x		x	x	x	x	Tier IV – Challenging Gated	Challenging Gated
Althaus &	Editorial	x			x					x		x					x	x	Tier II –	Vagabond user

Tewksbury, 2002																			Potential Gated	
Porter & Sallot, 2003	Protection		x					x	x		x				x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Comm TOTAL		3	2	2	4	3	1	1	3	4	3	2	1	1	4	1	4	4		
Klobas & McGill, 1995	Disseminator			x			x		x			x			x	x		x	Tier III – Bounded Gated	Choice Bounded Gated
Braun & Dióspatonyi, 2005	Editorial		x		x				x		x				x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Robbin & Frost-Kumpf, 1997	Facilitator			x	x					x	x				x		x		Tier II – Potential Gated	Demanding user
Blair, 2002	Facilitator			x	x					x		x			x		x	x	Tier III – Bounded Gated	Influence Bounded Gated
Agada, 1999	Linking			x	x					x		x			x		x	x	Tier III – Bounded Gated	Influence Bounded Gated
Awazu & Desouza, 2004	Preservation of culture			x	x						x				x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Info Sci Total		0	1	5	5	0	1	0	2	3	3	3	0	0	6	1	3	3		
Suchman & Cahill, 1996	Linking		x						x	x		x			x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Law Total		0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		
Pawlowski & Robey, 2004	Facilitator			x			x			x		x			x	x	x	x	Tier IV – Challenging	Challenging Gated

																			Gated		
Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004	Facilitator			x			x			x		x				x	x	x	x	Tier IV – Challenging Gated	Challenging Gated
MIS Total		0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	2	2	2			
Beyer, Chanove, & Fox, 1995	Editorial		x				x		x						x	x				Tier II – Potential Gated	Exploited apprentice
Shumsky & Pinker, 2003	Facilitator		x				x				x	x				x		x		Tier II – Potential Gated	Demanding User
Katz, Tushman, & Allen, 1995	Preservation of culture			x					x	x						x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Pollack & Zeckhauser, 1996	Preservation of culture		x				x									x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Mgmt Total		0	3	1	0	2	1	1	3	1	4	0	0	0	4	1	1	0			
Blanton, 2000	Access		x				x									x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Putterman, 2005	Change agent			x			x	x							x	x	x	x	x	Tier IV – Challenging Gated	Challenging Gated
Scott, 2005	Change agent			x			x									x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Krehbiel, 1997	Preservation of culture			x					x	x						x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Segal, 1997	Preservation of			x					x						x			x	x	Tier III – Bounded	Influence Bounded Gated

	culture																		Gated	
PoliSci Total		0	1	4	0	3	1	2	3	2	3	0	1	1	5	1	2	2		
Obstfeld, 2005	Disseminator		x		x					x	x				x		x		Tier I – Dormant Gated	Vagabond reader
Pub Aff Total		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0		
Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001	Change agent		x		x					x		x			x		x	x	Tier III – Bounded Gated	Influence Bounded Gated
Clayman & Reisner, 1998	Editorial		x		x	x			x		x				x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997	Preservation of Culture		x		x				x		x				x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Kunovich & Paxton, 2005	Preservation of Culture		x					x			x				x				Tier I – Dormant Gated	Captive audience
Soc Total		0	4	0	3	1	0	1	2	1	3	1	0	0	4	0	1	1		
	Total for All Fields	3	13	14	13	9	6	6	4	14	18	8	2	2	27	6	14	12		

1. Counted even if the gated had minimal power in relation to the gatekeeper.

The Political Power of the Gated

Information control as a process is in many cases a manifestation of the power of stakeholders who seek to achieve their political interests. The literature across all fields uniformly avoids any analysis of power of gatekeepers in relation to the gated (see Table 10.9). In most studies, the gatekeeper is perceived as powerful and the gated as powerless, or at most as having minimal power relative to the gatekeeper. Exceptions to a gatekeeper's elitist image can be found only in four articles in communication and political science (Hardin, 2005; Putterman, 2005; Segal, 1997; Singer, 2006b). Singer (2006b) perceives the gatekeepers as accommodating to the interactive nature of the Internet; he treats the gated as having power equal to gatekeepers. Analyzing Hardin's (2005) approach to power is more complicated due to the dual approach she takes. Normatively, she refers to the reader's interest as the factor that should determine the editor's (gatekeeper's) decisions regarding whether, what, and when to publish something. Empirically, she points out that editors ignore the gated preferences but she hints that the gated can still have the upper hand if they act collectively to punish gatekeepers (for example, by not buying the newspaper).

Putterman (2005) claims that the framers of the law ought to be the people (gated) and not the representative politicians and therefore the people (gated) should actually be considered as legislative gatekeepers. This argument raises a critical question: If the gated possess power, do they turn into gatekeepers? The transformation of the gated into gatekeeper is not achieved through the possession of one of the attributes (political power, information production, alternatives, relationship); each of these simply represents the potential for gatekeeping. However, it is the capability of the gated to perform an act of information control, the exercising of this control, and the surrounding context that makes one a gatekeeper. Being a powerful entity

does not, necessarily, make one a gatekeeper. It is the discretion to exercise gatekeeping along with the context that turns the entity into a gatekeeper. Certainly, affiliation with powerful circles and elites increases one's chances of playing the role of a gatekeeper. Referring again to Putterman's article: If people (gated) were granted the power to frame the law directly *and* they exercised that power, and if the purpose of this framing were to exercise information control, then they could be considered gatekeepers and not gated.

The facilitator and linking rationales for gatekeeping could be expected to involve more equal powers among the social actors; our study, however, produced different results. Even these types of gatekeeping were presented by the different scholars in a unidimensional manner, emphasizing only the gatekeeper and not the gated as a source of power (Agada, 1999; Blair, 2002; Pawlowski & Robey, 2004; Robbin & Frost-Kumpf, 1997; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004; Shumsky & Pinker, 2003).

The Information Production of the Gated

The second attribute is the information production of the gated. Most of the literature surveyed investigates the creation of information either by the gatekeeper or by other sources, such as news articles written by reporters. Only a few studies analyze the information production of the gated and what this tells us about the nature of gatekeeping (Beyer et al., 1995; Klobas & McGill, 1995; Pawlowski & Robey, 2004; Putterman, 2005; Singer, 2006b). In classic portrayals of gatekeeping, especially in communication models looking at editors as gatekeepers, the gatekeeper is presented as the sole producer or the principal disseminator of information (Bagdikian, 2004; Foucault, 1980; Metoyer-Duran, 1993). Current literature diminishes the role the gated might have in reality. Scholars portray gatekeepers using metaphors of dominance.

Information production by the gated may translate into power and undermine gatekeeping as a process; in many cases scholars therefore prefer to overlook these capabilities and exclude them from their analysis. The result is that research questions and hypotheses are framed linguistically around gatekeepers' production, dissemination, and use of information while the context of the gated is ignored. This is particularly surprising because the current literature on information use in the world of Web 2.0, Web 3.0, and other evolutionary technologies underscores the importance of users as co-producers (Foot & Schneider, 2006). Prevailing discourse seems to predispose scholars to adopt a one-sided perspective, that of the gatekeeper. The vocabulary itself favors the gatekeeper, silencing any inclination to raise in-depth questions about the nature of gated information production.

Nevertheless, some new gatekeeping studies are asking questions about the duality of information production. Singer (2006b) claims that contemporary gatekeepers see information not as an end product but as a basis for user engagement, participation, and personalization. Foot and Schneider (2006) describe the Internet as a space for the co-production of political information by elites and non-elites. Future research may delve into questions of ability to produce information by gated, the meaning of it to the gatekeeping process, and its effect on network dynamics.

Relations Between the Gated and Gatekeepers

The third attribute to take into consideration in Network Gatekeeping is the relationship of the gated with gatekeepers. Having a reciprocal, enduring, and direct exchange enables the gated to alter their political power and the nature of their relations with the gatekeeper. Table 10.9 reveals that in cases where the rationale for gatekeeping is editorial, access, or protection,

the relations between gatekeepers and gated tend to be framed as sender and receiver, respectively. Although most of the literature does acknowledge a relationship between gatekeepers and the gated, it does not include in-depth investigations into the meaning of the reciprocity or the enduring nature of these relations. Foot and Schneider (2006) argue for a recursive influence between candidates for elections and users (e.g., voters, potential donors) in the context of Web campaigning. Traditionally the candidates would count as gatekeepers and the users as the gated. Yet, the authors point to the dynamic, interactive nature of information feedback, creation, and modification. Web campaigners design their sites and their messages taking into consideration the feedback they will receive from users. Moreover, their talkbacks and other types of feedback recursively influence and modify the messages that consequently influence users. It creates a new dynamic where the gatekeeper-gated roles change frequently. The authors justly emphasize not only the ability of the gated to produce information by gated, but also their participation in shaping gatekeepers' decisions, thereby transforming the gatekeeper to gated and vice versa. Future research may look into this interplay and investigate its dialectics and its significance for gatekeeping theory. What are the conditions that transform gated to gatekeeper? How do the gated control information, which is simultaneously being controlled by gatekeepers? Do gatekeepers use certain gatekeeping mechanisms more than others to protect their self-perceived status?

Alternatives Available to the Gated

Network Gatekeeping also considers the alternatives that the gated have. Unlike other attributes, alternatives are a well treated topic in the current literature (Agada, 1999; Obstfeld, 2005; Robbin & Frost-Kumpf, 1997; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004; Smith et al., 2001). Benkler

(2006, p. 133) claims there is greater individual autonomy in the network environment due to the range and diversity of things that individuals can do for and by themselves and by providing “nonproprietary alternative sources of communication capacity and information, alongside the proprietary platforms of mediated communications.” In contrast, Barzilai-Nahon (in press) and Barzilai-Nahon and Neumann (2005) argue that this growing autonomy in many instances does not translate to greater freedom or power for the gated due to users’ self-regulation (see also Sunstein, 2001, 2006). These authors suggest differentiating between legal rights and the de facto limited options that one has in choosing among alternatives.

Lessons in Applying Network Gatekeeping

Reflecting on the various attributes of Network Gatekeeping Theory as applied in current literature is only the first stage. To strengthen the analysis of the complex phenomenon of gatekeeping, it is also important to consider how attributes interact (reflected in Table 10.9 as types and tiers of gated) (Barzilai-Nahon, in press). By analyzing Tables 10.9, 10.10, and 10.11, we discuss how different types of gated are reflected in the current literature. More specifically we discuss three issues emerging from the literature review: (1) the dominance of lower tiers of gated, (2) the absence of certain types of gated, and (3) the association of certain gatekeeping rationales with certain tiers of the gated.

Table 10.10 Comparison of gatekeeping rationale with gated typology

Tier	Gated Type	Gatekeeping Rationale								Total by Typology
		Access	Change Agent	Disseminator	Editorial	Facilitator	Linking	Preservation of Culture	Protection	
Tier I – Dormant Gated	Vagabond reader				2					2
	Captive audience	1	1		2		1	6	1	12
Tier II – Potential Gated	Demanding user			1		2				3
	Exploited apprentice				1					1
	Potential Change Agent		1	1						2
	Vagabond user				1					1
Tier III – Bounded gated	Influence Bounded Gated		1			1	1	1		4
	Choice Bounded Gated			1						1
Tier IV – Challenging Gated	Challenging Gated		1		1	2				4

Table 10.11 Field by gated tier

Tier	Field								Total by Tier
	Comm	Info Sci	Law	MIS	Mgmt	PoliSci	Pub Aff	Soc	
Tier I – Dormant Gated	3	2	1		2	3		3	14
Tier II – Potential Gated	3	1			2		1		7
Tier III – Bounded gated		3				1		1	5
Tier IV – Challenging Gated	1			2		1			4
Total by Field	7	6	1	2	4	5	1	4	30

Dominance of Lower Tiers of the Gated

Tiers I and II of the gated—dormant and bounded gated—comprise the majority of articles (21) that deal with gatekeeping in the literature (see Tables 10.10 and 10.11). Only a small number deals expressly with Tier IV, challenging gated. Scholars tend to avoid the complexity of interactions between the gated and gatekeepers and to ignore the importance of the challenging gated in the context of stakeholder interactions. The low gated tiers indicate that research questions posed by scholars are framed in elitist rather than in pluralistic terms. For example, bounded research questions such as “How do gatekeepers set the rules of the game?” and “What do gatekeepers need in order to mobilize gated?” are addressed in terms of the dominance and proactivity of gatekeepers. Therefore, gatekeepers are regarded in many cases as superior in their resources and powers, which may be the case in some instances, but may play down instances in which the gated are challenging gatekeepers. Scholarly discourse appears to have centered on gatekeepers to such a degree that gatekeepers have become the main focus of research. This is reflected in the habitualization of language representations that construct gatekeepers in strong linguistic terms as the focus of network practices (see also Berger & Luckmann [1966] on social construction).

We argue that scholars should direct some attention to different mechanisms upon which both gated and gatekeepers may be able to call in their interactions with each other. Working within an elitist paradigm may be appropriate but one should not ignore the emerging mechanisms that the gated may use when interacting with gatekeepers. Examples of such mechanisms include recommender systems in which the users/gated comment on the quality of books and articles written by gatekeepers.

Moreover, the gated type captive audience has a fairly large representation in the

literature (12 articles). This type is encouraged by the gatekeeper to interact and provide feedback and is furnished with the means to do so. The relationship requires an information exchange between the gated and gatekeeper but is constrained by the rules and agenda set by the political process, framed and decided upon by the gatekeeper.

Absence of Certain Types of Gated from the Literature

Barzilai-Nahon's Gatekeeping Network Theory spreads sixteen classes of gated over five tiers. Our review reveals an absence in the literature of seven types of gated. This absence may indicate a lack of research in the various fields to investigate all classes and to understand them in depth but it also may suggest a rare type of gated. For example, one of the absent types is lost voice in Tier I. Gated of the lost voice class are aware of and utilize their ability to produce information but they do not possess any other attributes. Gatekeepers (one or more) provide the infrastructure (e.g., easy-to-use blog software, a tool to create and design Web sites) and thus control the space within which the gated may operate. This type also represents a gated without alternatives, which may occur for several reasons. For example, existing mechanisms or technologies may not provide them with an alternative. The context in which lost voice gated operate implies that the gatekeeper may have a monopoly on the infrastructure governing the interaction. Another reason may be the cost of switching from one alternative to another. For example, a user who developed his or her virtual profile under a particular social network provider may be reluctant to re-develop a profile on another platform. This class of gated may be a catalyst to achieving network gatekeepers' goals because they derive some of their political power and reputation from their ability to attract users, create high volumes of information traffic, and show their ability to manage these assets (e.g., YouTube, Facebook). This type of

gated is well explored in other fields, for example in management studies, but from a perspective other than gatekeeping (e.g., switching costs and lock-in mechanisms).

Association of Gatekeeping Rationale with Certain Tiers of Gated

Table 10.10 illuminates certain linkages between the rationale for gatekeeping and type of gated. The editorial and preservation of culture gatekeepers maintain dominance while interacting with gated in Tier I, specifically the captive audience gated type. Facilitator gatekeepers interact with gated of Tier IV but also with Tier II and III gated. This raises the following question: Is it the type of gatekeeping that creates a situation that empowers the gated? Other observations are that disseminator is linked to Tier II of gated and change agent varies in all tiers.

Discussion: Stocktaking and Gatekeeping Self-Examination

Network Gatekeeping Theory offers a road map to address certain gaps that exist currently for scholars of gatekeeping by: (1) creating a new vocabulary to fit current contexts, (2) taking account of dynamics, and (3) applying interdisciplinary methods and approaches to questions of gatekeeping. The theory cannot serve as a panacea or as the ultimate theoretical framework to illustrate and explain gatekeeping phenomena with all its complexities. It has some limitations: First, the dynamism reflected in this theory is obfuscated by the dichotomous types of gated, which does not allow much scope for the gray classifications that are so common in a dynamic context. Such a limitation is typical of the early stage of theory evolution. Early stage theory should empower scholars to play a bigger role in molding parts of the theoretical framework and customizing it to their own needs. At the same time, the current theory is

sufficiently developed to stimulate a debate and elicit questions that were previously marginal. A second limitation may become evident if, by presenting these four attributes as a definitive roadmap, it constrains researchers' motivation to include or exclude other variables that may be critical to a specific context.

A New Vocabulary

As discussed in this chapter, there is limited cross-fertilization of theories between fields. Nevertheless, each field has its own vocabularies, metaphors, and symbols, which results in unique theoretical constructs and variables that frame research questions in a field-localized manner. The cross-field themes analysis (see Table 10.7) attempts to strip idiosyncratic questions from their bounding disciplinary paradigm and find similar themes.

Network Gatekeeping Theory is presented as one approach to bridging the vocabulary gaps that prevent the transfer and transformation of concepts from one field to another. In other words, the new vocabulary facilitates the assimilation of well researched concepts by blurring boundaries while benefiting from the maturity of other concepts. For example, co-production issues have been well researched in communication and human-computer interaction fields and would bring added value if idiosyncratic boundaries were passable (Lu, 2007; Scholl, 2007). The implication of using Network Gatekeeping Theory as a neutralizing mechanism also implies the ability to deal with language itself as a gatekeeping tool and a mechanism of power (Bourdieu, 1991).

The second advantage of the new vocabulary is the introduction of well-recognized gated entities that previously were unnamed in the literature. Current and past literature does not ignore the existence of the gated; after all, gatekeepers need the gated to exercise control of information.

It prefers not to label them in this way, but rather to use more neutral words such as readers, team members, and employees (Bennett, 2004; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004). The gated concept (Barzilai-Nahon, in press) was originally offered as a way of extending the linguistic benefits of classification and definition and to encourage new ways of thinking and framing questions, highlighting the gated as visible actors and the environment as encompassing multiple stakeholders. It is an environment with different actors, different roles, and a context that changes constantly. The simple fact that no vocabulary exists in the literature to identify these stakeholders illustrates the passivity or negligence with which traditional models treat them.

Finally, explication of types and tiers of gated, although somewhat rigid in its dichotomous framing (thus inviting further refinement), serves as a point of departure for discussion and debate among researchers. Scholars are called to define the gray areas between the tiers and types and to study the transformation of gated from one type and tier to another. It may encourage various disciplines and fields to raise questions while taking into account power dynamics, information production, social relationships, and alternatives. It is viewed as the beginning of a discourse among many disciplines and fields, around the complex of practices that constitutes gatekeeping.

Dynamism and Context

Most literature analyzed in this chapter treats gatekeeping as a static phenomenon. Moreover, gatekeeping is presented as a growing phenomenon, with inertia of a kind implied by the adage “the rich get richer” but instead “the gatekeeper gets more gatekeeper-y.” The evolution of the gatekeeping role has been presented as linear, with the power of gatekeepers increasing over time (Bagdikian, 2004; Zittrain, 2006). These representations, essentially static

maps, are heuristically useful if the intent is to raise consciousness about who, how, and what really count or to illustrate a stakeholder configuration at a particular context and time. Like all models, however, one should remember that they are a simplification of reality. Gatekeepers and the gated are not monolithic social and political entities, nor is their behavior unidimensional. Accordingly, dynamism is important to represent an environment where the interests and goals of the stakeholders constantly change, as do their gatekeeping and gated roles. Awareness of the dynamic character of gatekeeping may help scholars move beyond traditional theories and tools that cannot explain dynamic situations where the alternatives available to the gated change, the skills and capabilities of information producers evolve, and relationships between gated and gatekeepers become more complex.

One question that needs to be raised is whether dynamism invites the contextualization of Network Gatekeeping Theory. Carens (2004, p. 118) argues that a contextual approach has five interrelated elements:

First, it involves the use of examples to illustrate theoretical formulations. Second, it entails the normative exploration of actual cases where the fundamental concerns addressed by the theory are in play. Third, it leads theorists to pay attention to the question of whether their theoretical formulations are actually compatible with the normative positions that they themselves take on a particular issues. Fourth, it includes a search for cases that are especially challenging to theorists own theoretical position. Fifth, it promotes consideration of a wide range of cases, and especially a search for cases that are unfamiliar and illuminating because of their unfamiliarity.

Kukathas (2004, p. 216) criticizes contextual theories as “not a particularly distinctive approach in political theory; that to the extent that it is distinctive it is not particularly theoretical; and that to the extent that it is theoretical it is not particularly useful.” Network Gatekeeping

Theory allows for the understanding of the dynamism of interactions that involve information control in various contexts while using the various attributes that we suggest. Hence we offer a framework that theorizes about a large phenomenon and yet accommodates distinctive attributes of gatekeeping in context.

Interdisciplinarity

Analysis of the current literature suggests the need for an interdisciplinary theoretical framework in order to unveil the multiple dimensions of gatekeeping in the context of the information society. Network Gatekeeping Theory is only the first step toward this goal, incorporating multi-field approaches and vocabulary. But the advantage of interdisciplinary frameworks lies not only in constructing core concepts, but more in crafting questions. For example, scholars would like to understand the various roles of gatekeepers that sometime contradict each other—reflecting on the gatekeeper as the guardian of boundaries on one hand and as the messenger of the community on the other.

Network Gatekeeping Theory may serve as a meta-theory, as an umbrella for future theory and model building processes. It may also serve as a starting point for a broader debate and refinements in various fields and disciplines around first-order questions concerning networks.

Future Directions

Locus of the Gated

Network Gatekeeping Theory raises a new set of questions; questions about understanding the gated as actors who participate in the gatekeeping process and society. The

duality of gatekeeper-gated entails further questions emphasizing additional roles of gatekeepers beyond the traditional ones. Another set of questions has to do with the influence that gatekeeping mechanisms have on habits, values, norms, awareness, and attitudes. Most current and past literature on gatekeeping focused on behavioral, positivist questions (e.g., Metoyer-Duran, 1993). Less emphasis was given to critical questions. Some of that is explored in the literature that deals with gatekeepers as change agents. Yet, most studies used the elitist prism where the gatekeeper sets the agenda and the gated are manipulated according the gatekeeper's intentions and will. This chapter aims to alter that perspective, taking into account new practices. Additional topics of inquiry should address how the gated influence the norms of gatekeepers.

Bringing in Communities

Acculturation theories of gatekeeping flourished at the end of the twentieth century; today, however, studies seem to concentrate on primordial communities or communities of diverse population (Agada, 1999). Most studies referenced in this chapter extend discussion to a more theoretical level, for example, considering different types of gated (e.g., readers, voters, employees). However, the studies typically use the individual as the unit of analysis rather than looking into the community of which the gated, and sometimes the gatekeepers, are a part. We should instead promote theories that emphasize various facets of communities and explore the crucial role of communities in creating identity and action (Barzilai, 2003; Metoyer-Duran, 1991). It is important to understand the role of the community itself as a gatekeeper, not only through individuals that represent it (Barzilai-Nahon & Neumann, 2005), but also through its apparatuses, symbols, language, narratives, and institutions. A community is an entity by itself with power constituted and exercised via its institutions (Barzilai, 2003). Such a perspective

requires that scholars are receptive to paradigms of gatekeeping that differ from the traditional, elitist model. The communal perspective will encourage studies about self-regulation and self-gatekeeping. Many scholars will argue that technology has allowed a higher degree of autonomy for individuals. Paradoxically, however, autonomy is not necessarily correlated with less gatekeeping, control, and regulation.

Textual Society and Language

Another major change needs to be addressed in relation to gatekeeping. The ubiquity of technology and the profusion of information have shifted much human information exchange to the textual domain (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). Most uses of social network activities today rely heavily on literacy. Gatekeeping has also shifted, becoming less associated with physical activities and more with text and information. Therefore, scholars of gatekeeping should endeavor to understand the lingual refinements and discourse implications as part of the gatekeeping process (e.g., Moore, 2007).

The Pendulum of Neutral-Political

Studies that inquire more about process questions reflect the desire to present gatekeeping from a more neutral perspective, as if neutrality allows a higher degree of objectivity, abstraction, and prediction. Some scholars prefer to see gatekeepers as monolithic entities, independently of political forces. However, the dynamism of the information society and of gatekeeping itself oblige scholars to ask questions about the political power of both gatekeepers and the gated. Most of the gatekeeping literature does not recognize the major role that politics plays in understanding gatekeeping. For example, information science and sociology mention the

gatekeeping role of the editors of academic journals to ensure homogeneity of information and protect the interests of the community as well as the boundaries of the field. They do not take the next step and state that understanding stakeholders'/editors' interests involves analyzing the politics of gatekeeping. This chapter has presented a theory that requires us to look inside the political black box of networked interactions.

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Endnotes

1. Two researchers reviewed the articles. The inter-rater reliability, that is, the level of agreement in categorizing items for the pair of judges using Cohen's Kappa was higher than 0.87.
2. One should exclude from the fragmentation discussion public affairs and law because they had only one paper each on the topic that analyzed in-depth gatekeeping.
3. The assumption is that *gatekeepers* are part of a network of stakeholders. In order to understand *gatekeeping* one should look at the concept from a more holistic perspective, understanding its components. Network could be either a social network, or a technological network.

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