CSS Journalism and Mass Communication: theories of mass communication, media and society, and news writing

This summary covers the core of the FPSC syllabus for the optional paper in Journalism and Mass Communication: the idea, the names and dates examiners expect, and the points that score in a 20-mark answer. Learn the boxed definitions word for word.

1. Communication: concepts and models

What communication is

> **Communication** is the process by which a source selects, shapes and sends a message through a channel to a receiver, who interprets it and may respond, so that meaning is shared between them.

The word comes from the Latin *communis*, meaning common: communication succeeds when sender and receiver reach a common understanding, not merely when a message has been sent. The elements in almost every model are the **source**, **message**, **channel**, **receiver**, **feedback**, **noise** (anything that distorts the message) and **context**. By scale, communication is intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, public or mass.

> **Mass communication** is the process by which professional communicators use technological media to send messages rapidly and publicly to large, heterogeneous and scattered audiences, with limited and delayed feedback.

Lasswell's model (1948)

Harold Lasswell reduced communication to one question: **Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?** Each part names a field of research: control analysis, content analysis, media analysis, audience analysis and effects analysis. Strengths: simple, memorable, maps the discipline. Weaknesses: linear, no feedback or noise, and it assumes communication always has an effect.

Shannon and Weaver's mathematical model (1949)

Claude Shannon of Bell Laboratories and Warren Weaver designed a model for telephone and telegraph systems. An **information source** produces a message; a **transmitter** encodes it into a signal; the signal passes along a **channel**, where a **noise source** may distort it; a **receiver** decodes it; the message reaches the **destination**. Its lasting concepts are **noise** (physical, psychological or semantic interference), **redundancy** (repetition that lets a message survive noise) and **channel capacity**. Criticism: linear, passive receiver, nothing about meaning.

Schramm's models (1954)

Wilbur Schramm added the **field of experience**: the sender encodes from within their own experience,

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the receiver decodes from within theirs, and communication is possible only where the two overlap. His circular model with the psychologist Charles Osgood (the **Osgood-Schramm model**) shows two parties who each act as **encoder**, **interpreter** and **decoder** in turn, so feedback is built in. It fits conversation but implies an equality between the parties that mass communication lacks.

Westley and MacLean's model (1957)

Bruce Westley and Malcolm MacLean built the first model specifically for mass communication. **X** stands for events in the environment. **A** is the advocate, a source with a purpose (politician, company, pressure group) who selects certain Xs and sends a message about them. **C** is the channel role, the journalist or editor, a gatekeeper without a persuasive purpose of their own, who selects from what A sends and from Xs observed directly and passes a version on. **B** is the audience, which may also observe some Xs directly. Feedback runs from B to A, B to C and C to A. The model puts the gatekeeper at the centre; it says little about content or effects.

Model	Year	Shape	Feedback	Noise
Lasswell	1948	Linear	No	No
Shannon and Weaver	1949	Linear	No	Yes
Osgood and Schramm	1954	Circular	Yes	Implied
Westley and MacLean	1957	Multi-step	Yes, delayed	Implied

Model	Best used for
Lasswell	Propaganda, mapping research
Shannon and Weaver	Technical transmission
Osgood and Schramm	Interpersonal communication
Westley and MacLean	Mass communication, gatekeeping

> **Exam tip.** When asked to "critically examine" a model: give its elements, draw a simple labelled diagram, state two strengths and two weaknesses, and end with one sentence on what later models added.

2. Normative theories of the press

A normative theory states how the media **ought** to behave in a given political system. The classic statement is *Four Theories of the Press* (1956) by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm: the press takes the form and colouring of the political structure within which it operates. Denis McQuail later added the development and democratic-participant theories.

Authoritarian theory

The oldest arrangement, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when printing spread under absolute monarchies. Truth resides in the ruler and a small elite; the press exists to support state policy. Control comes through licensing of printers, censorship before publication and prosecutions for

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sedition. Private ownership is allowed on condition of loyalty; criticism of the rulers is not.

Libertarian theory

Rooted in the Enlightenment: Milton (*Areopagitica*, 1644), Locke, Jefferson and Mill (*On Liberty*, 1859). People are rational and can tell truth from falsehood if both circulate freely, so the press must be free of government control, a "free marketplace of ideas" and a check on the state, the **fourth estate**. Ownership is private, anyone may publish, and the only limits are laws on defamation, obscenity and wartime sedition. Weakness: it assumes many small publishers and has no answer to concentrated ownership or a press that prefers profit to public service.

Social responsibility theory

Formulated by the **Hutchins Commission** (1947), which found that the free press had become a big business serving owners and advertisers. Freedom is kept but carries duties: a truthful, comprehensive account of the day's events in a meaningful context; a forum for comment and criticism; a representative picture of the groups in society; and clarification of society's goals and values. Control comes from professional ethics, codes and press councils, with the state intervening only when self-regulation fails. Most modern codes, including the Press Council of Pakistan's, rest on this theory.

Soviet communist theory

Based on Marx and Lenin as applied after 1917. The media are owned by the state on behalf of the working class and serve the party, educating, organising and mobilising the masses. Criticism of the party line is forbidden, though criticism of inefficient officials is encouraged. Unlike the authoritarian model, private ownership is not permitted, and the press must be positive and ideological rather than merely obedient.

Development media theory

McQuail proposed this for newly independent countries. The media should accept development tasks in line with national policy; freedom is conditional on development needs; priority goes to national culture and language; and the state may intervene by subsidy, control or censorship. The danger, seen under several military governments in Pakistan, is that "development" becomes a cover for silencing critics. The **democratic-participant theory** reacts against both commercial and state media, demanding small-scale, local, interactive media with a right of access for all; community radio and citizen media are its modern form.

Theory	Ownership	Who controls	Purpose	Forbidden
Authoritarian	Private or state	Ruler, through licences and censorship	Support state policy	Criticism of rulers
Libertarian	Private	Market and courts	Inform, entertain, check government	Defamation, obscenity, wartime sedition
Social responsibility	Private, with public role	Ethics, press councils, public opinion	Inform, debate, serve society	Invasion of privacy, harm to vital social interests
Soviet communist	State	Party	Educate and mobilise	Criticism of the party line

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Development	Mixed	Government, for development	Nation building	Material harming development priorities

3. Theories of media effects

Effects research has had three phases: **powerful effects** (1920s to early 1940s), **limited effects** (1940s to 1960s) and **moderate, long-term effects** (from the late 1960s).

Magic bullet or hypodermic needle theory

An early assumption rather than a tested theory: the media inject messages directly into a passive, atomised mass audience, each member reacting alike. Support came from First World War propaganda, the Payne Fund studies of films and children in the early 1930s, and the panic after Orson Welles's radio drama *The War of the Worlds* (1938). Hadley Cantril's study of that broadcast found that most listeners were not fooled. The theory ignored individual differences, social relationships and selective perception.

Two-step flow

Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet studied the 1940 American presidential election in Erie County, Ohio, expecting strong media effects. *The People's Choice* (1944) found that few voters changed their minds because of the media; most relied on people they trusted. Ideas flow from the media to **opinion leaders**, ordinary people who follow the media closely on a topic, and from them to the rest. Katz and Lazarsfeld developed the idea in *Personal Influence* (1955). Criticisms: breaking news reaches everyone directly, so the flow is often one step or many; leaders and followers consume the same media; the model comes from a pre-television era.

Agenda setting

> **Agenda setting** is the ability of the news media, through the amount and prominence of coverage they give to issues, to influence which issues the public regards as important.

Bernard Cohen wrote in 1963 that the press may not be successful in telling people what to think, but is stunningly successful in telling them what to think about. McCombs and Shaw tested this on undecided voters in Chapel Hill during the 1968 election (published 1972): the issues voters called most important matched almost exactly the issues the media covered most. Later work added second-level (attribute) agenda setting, which shades into framing.

Framing

> **Framing** is the process by which the media select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a text, so as to promote a particular definition of a problem, interpretation of its cause, moral evaluation and recommended remedy.

The idea comes from Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974) and was applied to news by Robert Entman (1993). A frame is the angle of a story: the same petrol price rise can be framed as government failure, a global problem, a burden on the poor or a step towards fiscal discipline. Frames work through word choice (militant or freedom fighter), sources, pictures, headlines and omissions. Agenda setting tells the audience what to think about; framing shapes how they think about it.

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Cultivation theory

George Gerbner's Cultural Indicators project, begun in the late 1960s, analysed American television and surveyed viewers. Heavy, long-term viewing "cultivates" a picture of the world that matches television's world: heavy viewers (four hours or more a day) overestimate violent crime and their chance of being a victim and are more fearful and distrustful, the **mean world syndrome**. **Mainstreaming** is the pull of heavy viewing towards a shared, television-shaped outlook across social groups; **resonance** is the doubled effect when the television message matches the viewer's own experience. Criticisms: small correlations, and cause and effect are hard to separate.

Uses and gratifications

This asks not what the media do to people but what people do with the media. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) set out its assumptions: the audience is active and goal-directed, chooses media to satisfy needs, and can report its own motives. McQuail's typology of gratifications: **diversion**, **personal relationships**, **personal identity** and **surveillance**. Criticisms: it relies on self-report and is descriptive rather than predictive.

Spiral of silence

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1974) argued that people fear isolation and constantly scan the climate of opinion. Those who believe their view is losing ground fall silent; those who believe it dominant speak out. By presenting one view as the majority view, the media start a spiral in which the apparently dominant view is heard more and the other less, until the public picture bears little relation to private opinion. Critics note that a committed "hard core" does not fall silent and that social media lets minorities find each other.

> **Worked example.** "Explain, with reference to two theories, how television coverage of a flood emergency might influence public opinion in Pakistan." Agenda setting: by leading every bulletin with the flood for three weeks, channels make relief the issue by which the public judges government, pushing inflation and security down the list. Framing: a channel that frames the flood as "provincial mismanagement" produces different judgements from one that frames it as "a climate disaster beyond any government's control", even with the same pictures.

4. Media and society in Pakistan

Press history

Before 1947, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar*, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar's *Comrade* (1911) and *Hamdard* (1913) and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *Al-Hilal* (1912) gave the Muslim community a political voice and were repeatedly fined or closed under the Press Act of 1910. The Pakistan movement had its own organs: *Dawn*, founded by Jinnah as a weekly in Delhi in 1941 and a daily from 1942; *Nawa-i-Waqt*, started by Hameed Nizami in Lahore in 1940; *Jang*, founded by Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman in Delhi at the end of the 1930s; and *Pakistan Times*, launched in Lahore in 1947 with Faiz Ahmed Faiz as its first editor. Since then the pattern has been control under military rule and partial freedom under civilian rule.

1. **1947 to 1958:** a weak but relatively free press; Public Safety Acts were used against left-wing papers.
2. **Ayub Khan (1958 to 1969):** Progressive Papers Limited was taken over in 1959. The **Press**

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and Publications Ordinance (1963) let the government demand securities, forfeit presses and cancel declarations. The **National Press Trust** (1964) brought major papers under government ownership.

3. **Yahya Khan and Z. A. Bhutto (1969 to 1977):** martial law censorship, then a civilian government that kept the PPO and the NPT and used advertising, newsprint and arrests against critics.
4. **Zia-ul-Haq (1977 to 1988):** the harshest period: formal pre-censorship, closures, jailings and, in 1978, the public flogging of four journalists in Lahore after protests by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.
5. **1988 to 1999:** the PPO was replaced in 1988 by a milder registration ordinance; the NPT was wound up in the 1990s.
6. **Musharraf (1999 to 2008):** the 2002 ordinances opened broadcasting to private satellite television and FM radio, but took channels off air under the emergency of November 2007.
7. **2008 to the present:** a large, competitive, commercially driven media with constitutional guarantees, but subject to PEMRA actions, pressure from state institutions, violence against journalists and growing regulation of online speech.

Radio Pakistan went on air on 14 August 1947; television began in Lahore in November 1964 and the state-owned PTV dominated television (alongside the semi-private STN/NTM network from 1990) until the 2002 ordinance opened it to private channels. The news agencies are the Associated Press of Pakistan (state) and Pakistan Press International (private); the press is organised through the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (owners), the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

The constitutional and legal framework

> **Article 19** of the Constitution (1973): every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, commission of or incitement to an offence.

Article 19A, inserted by the Eighteenth Amendment (2010), gives every citizen the right of access to information in all matters of public importance, subject to reasonable restrictions by law; the federal Right of Access to Information Act (2017) gives it effect. Other main laws:

- the **Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance** (2002): a council to enforce an Ethical Code of Practice and hear complaints against newspapers;
- the **Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Registration Ordinance** (2002): declarations for publishing;
- the **Defamation Ordinance** (2002): civil remedies for libel and slander, alongside criminal defamation in the Penal Code;
- the **Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act** (PECA, 2016): online offences including defamation and "unlawful online content"; amended in 2025 to add an offence of spreading false information online and to create a new social media regulatory authority;

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- the **Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act** (2021);
- older laws still used against the press: the Official Secrets Act (1923), contempt of court, Maintenance of Public Order laws and the Anti-Terrorism Act (1997).

PEMRA

> The **Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA)** is the statutory body created by the PEMRA Ordinance of 2002 to regulate the establishment and operation of all broadcast media and distribution services in Pakistan, to issue licences, to enforce a code of conduct and to hear complaints from the public.

PEMRA licenses satellite television, FM radio, cable, direct-to-home and IPTV. A chairman and members appointed by the federal government run it, with Councils of Complaints in the provinces and the capital. The **Electronic Media (Programmes and Advertisements) Code of Conduct** (2015) binds licensees on accuracy, balance, hate speech, coverage of terrorism, live broadcasts, victims' privacy, advertising limits and children's content. Penalties run from warnings and fines to suspension or revocation of a licence. The standard criticisms: government-appointed members, so no independence; bans on channels, anchors and topics without transparent process; use against channels that annoy the government of the day. Its defenders reply that the code is sound and the problem is selective enforcement.

Ethics, freedom and regulation

Ethics govern conduct where the law is silent or a poor guide. The main principles of the Press Council and PEMRA codes: **truth and accuracy** (verify, separate fact from comment, correct errors promptly); **fairness** (right of reply); **independence** (no gifts, "lifafa" payments or undisclosed paid content); **harm minimisation** (privacy, grief, identity of children and victims of sexual violence, no graphic images of the dead); **protection of sources**; **no plagiarism or fabrication**; and **respect for the social fabric** (no sectarian or ethnic incitement, extreme care on blasphemy accusations, where a careless report can cost lives). Common failures: unverified "breaking news", live coverage that aids terrorists, trial by television and paid content disguised as news. The remedy examiners expect is self-regulation with teeth: an independent press council, ombudsmen, training, and a regulator appointed through a transparent process.

Regulation is not the opposite of freedom; the question is who regulates, by what process and for whose benefit. The test is whether a rule is applied by an independent body, in public, by known standards, with a right of appeal; where it is not, regulation becomes control. Pakistan shows both: strong constitutional guarantees and an outspoken media, alongside bans, pressure through advertising and overbroad laws on online speech.

5. News values and news writing

What makes news

> **News** is a timely, accurate account of an event, development or opinion that is of interest or importance to a significant number of people, selected and presented by journalists.

The classic news values are **timeliness**, **proximity**, **prominence**, **consequence**, **conflict**, **human**

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interest, **novelty** and **magnitude**. Galtung and Ruge (1965) gave the most cited list of news factors: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, personification and negativity. Harcup and O'Neill (2001) added celebrity, entertainment, good news and the paper's own agenda.

Gatekeeping

Kurt Lewin coined the term in 1947; David Manning White applied it in 1950 to a wire editor he called "Mr Gates", who rejected roughly nine of every ten agency stories, often for subjective reasons. News is not a mirror of events but the product of selection by individuals, newsroom routines, policy, advertisers and sources.

The inverted pyramid and the lead

Hard news puts the most important information first and the least important last, so the story can be cut from the bottom and the reader can stop anywhere with the main facts. The form is usually traced to the American Civil War and the telegraph. Its parts: the **lead** (first paragraph, answering the most important of the five Ws and H, who, what, when, where, why, how, in about 25 to 35 words); the **body** (details in descending order, with quotations and attribution); **background**; and the least important details, cut first. A **summary lead** states the news point directly and is used for most hard news; a **delayed** lead opens with an anecdote or scene and reaches the news point in the second or third paragraph (the "nut graf"), which suits features.

> **Worked example.** Facts: a bridge on the Karakoram Highway near Kohistan collapsed on Tuesday evening after heavy rain; two trucks fell into the river; four people died; the highway is closed; the National Highway Authority says repairs will take ten days. Weak lead: "On Tuesday evening, according to the National Highway Authority, there was an incident on the Karakoram Highway near Kohistan." Strong lead: "Four people were killed on Tuesday evening when a rain-weakened bridge on the Karakoram Highway near Kohistan collapsed under two trucks, closing the main road to China for at least ten days, the National Highway Authority said." The strong lead puts the human toll first, answers what, when, where and how, gives the consequence and attributes the repair estimate.

Attribution and editing

Attribution tells the reader where information came from and protects the writer: "the minister said", "according to police". Facts the reporter witnessed need none; claims, opinions, figures and anything disputed do. Levels agreed with sources: **on the record** (name and words usable), **on background** (words usable, source described generally), **deep background** (usable without attribution) and **off the record** (not publishable). Use "said" for most quotations. Copy editing checks facts, names and figures; cuts wordiness; enforces house style; removes legal dangers such as libel and contempt; and writes the headline and captions. A good headline is a short, present-tense statement with a strong verb: "Bridge collapse kills four, closes KKH".

Form	Purpose	Structure	Voice
Hard news	Report an event quickly and accurately	Inverted pyramid	Impersonal, attributed
Feature	Explore a subject in depth	Delayed lead, narrative, strong ending	Descriptive

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Editorial	State the paper's opinion	Issue, argument, position	Institutional "we"
Column	Opinion of a named writer	Free	Personal
Investigative report	Expose hidden wrongdoing	Findings first, then evidence and method	Documented, careful

6. Public relations and advertising

Public relations

> **Public relations** is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding and goodwill between an organisation and its publics.

A "public" is any group whose opinion affects the organisation: employees, customers, investors, government, community and media. Modern PR dates from Ivy Lee's Declaration of Principles (1906) and Edward Bernays (*Crystallizing Public Opinion*, 1923). Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified four models: **press agentry** (one-way publicity, truth optional), **public information** (one-way, accurate, the government department model), **two-way asymmetric** (research used to persuade the public without changing the organisation) and **two-way symmetric** (dialogue that may change both sides, the ethical ideal). The process is summarised as **RACE**: Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation. Tools: press releases, press conferences, newsletters, events, crisis plans and social media. PR earns coverage rather than buying space, so it is cheaper and more credible but less controllable than advertising. In Pakistan, government PR runs through the Press Information Department, provincial information departments and Inter-Services Public Relations.

Advertising

> **Advertising** is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor through the mass media.

Four tests: paid, non-personal, identified sponsor, promotion. Advertising is classified by purpose (product, institutional, public service, political) and by medium (print, broadcast, outdoor, digital). It finances the media: a Pakistani paper or channel earns most of its revenue from advertisers, and the government is the largest single advertiser, which gives both influence over content. The oldest model of how an advertisement works is **AIDA**: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. A campaign is planned around a target audience, a unique selling proposition, a creative strategy, a media plan (**reach**, the share of the audience exposed at least once; **frequency**, the number of exposures) and a budget. Broadcast advertising is governed by the PEMRA code, which limits advertising time and forbids misleading claims; deceptive marketing is also an offence under the Competition Act (2010). Ethical issues: misleading claims, stereotyped portrayal of women, advertising to children and advertorials.

7. Development communication

> **Development communication** is the planned and purposeful use of communication, through the mass media and interpersonal channels, to promote social and economic development and to help people take part in decisions that affect their lives.

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The term is attributed to Nora Quebral of the University of the Philippines (1971). **Development support communication** is communication within a specific project, such as a vaccination drive; **development journalism** is critical, in-depth reporting of agriculture, health, education and poverty.

Three paradigms

Modernisation (dominant paradigm, 1950s and 1960s). Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) argued that media exposure produces "empathy", the ability to imagine a different life, leading to literacy, participation and growth. Wilbur Schramm's *Mass Media and National Development* (1964), written for UNESCO, called the media "the great multiplier". UNESCO set minimum media standards for a developing country: ten daily newspaper copies, five radio receivers, two cinema seats and two television sets per hundred people. Criticism: it ignored structural causes of poverty and assumed information alone changes behaviour.

Dependency (1970s). Latin American scholars argued that underdevelopment came from the dependence of the periphery on the centre, and that Western media flows were part of it; the remedy was self-reliance and a new world information order.

Participatory (from the late 1970s). Drawing on Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970): development comes from dialogue, not transmission; people are subjects, not targets; communication should be horizontal. Community radio, folk media and local-language programming are its tools.

Diffusion of innovations

Everett Rogers (1962) explained how a new idea spreads through a social system. Adoption passes through knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. Adopters are innovators (2.5 per cent), early adopters (13.5 per cent), early majority (34 per cent), late majority (34 per cent) and laggards (16 per cent). The rate depends on relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. Mass media work best at the knowledge stage; opinion leaders and change agents such as extension workers and lady health workers decide the persuasion and decision stages, which links diffusion to the two-step flow.

Pakistan

Radio Pakistan's farm programmes have advised farmers for decades; television has carried family planning, literacy and health campaigns; the polio programme combines broadcast spots, endorsements by religious scholars and door-to-door work by vaccinators and lady health workers; flood warnings in 2010 and 2022 used radio, SMS and social media. Lessons: media messages work only when backed by interpersonal communication and trusted local voices in local languages; misinformation spreads through the same channels and must be countered; and development journalism stays weak because newsrooms reward political and crime reporting.

8. Global media and new media

Global village and cultural imperialism

Marshall McLuhan (*The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 1962; *Understanding Media*, 1964) argued that electronic media had collapsed distance into a "global village" and that "the medium is the message". The critical reply is **cultural imperialism**, associated with Herbert Schiller (*Mass Communications and American Empire*, 1969): news, films, programmes and advertising flow overwhelmingly from a few Western countries, led by the United States, carrying consumer values and displacing local cultures and

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industries. The four big Western agencies (Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France-Presse and United Press International) supplied most foreign news, so developing countries saw each other through Western eyes. The Non-Aligned Movement took this to UNESCO as the demand for a **New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)**. The MacBride Commission's *Many Voices, One World* (1980) called for a more balanced flow, stronger national and regional media and respect for cultural identity. The United States and the United Kingdom rejected it as a threat to the free flow of information and left UNESCO in the mid-1980s.

New media

> **New media** are digital, networked and interactive forms of communication, based on the internet and mobile devices, in which content can be produced, shared and altered by users as well as by media organisations.

Characteristics to contrast with old media: **digitality**; **interactivity**; **convergence** of text, sound and video on one device and of media industries (Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 2006); **hypertextuality**; **many-to-many networking**; **immediacy** and **personalisation**; and the collapse of the gatekeeper, since anyone can publish. Web 2.0, a term popularised around 2004, describes platforms built on user-generated content. Effects on journalism:

- **Citizen journalism:** eyewitnesses with phones break news before reporters arrive.
- **Speed over verification:** the race to be first multiplies errors; rumours travel faster than corrections.
- **Collapse of the business model:** advertising has moved to Google and Meta; newsrooms have shrunk.
- **Algorithmic gatekeeping:** platform algorithms select for engagement, not importance.
- **Filter bubbles and echo chambers:** Eli Pariser (2011) warned that personalisation shows users more of what they already like, hardening opinion.
- **Misinformation** (false content shared without intent to deceive), **disinformation** (false content created and spread deliberately to cause harm) and **malinformation** (true content used out of context to harm).

In Pakistan, digital channels and vloggers now rival television for political audiences. The problems are a sharp **digital divide** (urban and rural, men and women), weak digital literacy, organised disinformation, online harassment of journalists, and a regulatory response seen as excessive: content blocking by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, internet and platform shutdowns, and successive PECA amendments. Balance the gains against the costs, and propose digital literacy, independent fact-checking, transparent platform rules and a narrowly drawn law applied by an independent body.

9. Essay points

- **Media in a democracy:** information, watchdog, forum, agenda setting, mobilisation (the lawyers' movement of 2007, flood relief) and education; against these, ownership concentration, commercial pressure, sensationalism and the media's own unaccountability.
- **Press freedom in Pakistan:** Article 19 against a long list of restrictions and informal pressures;

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expansion since 2002 against bans, violence and online regulation; freedom with responsibility.

- **Media effects:** never argue no effect or total effect; agenda setting and framing for political effects, cultivation for long-term effects, two-step flow and uses and gratifications for the active audience, each with a Pakistani example.
- **Commercialisation:** ratings drive sensationalism and conflict-driven talk shows; advertising dependence weakens independence; remedies are public service broadcasting reform and audited audience measurement.
- **Media and national security:** the legitimate need to deny terrorists publicity against the use of "security" to silence criticism; the test of independent, published standards.
- **Social media:** democratisation against disinformation; regulate harm, not speech; media literacy.
- **Development:** the media as multiplier against their neglect of development stories; the participatory model; polio as a case study.
- **Ethics:** the gap between codes and practice; self-regulation with an independent council and ombudsmen; special care on religion, gender and children.

Exam tip. In a theory question: name the scholar and year, define the theory in one sentence, explain its mechanism, cite a study, apply it to a Pakistani example and give one criticism. In an essay: a short introduction with a clear position, subheadings, one argument per paragraph, and a conclusion that proposes something. Examiners reward structure, names and examples, not length.

Quick check

1. State Lasswell's formula and explain how each of its five parts corresponds to a field of communication research. (6 marks)
2. Compare the libertarian and social responsibility theories of the press with reference to the source of each, the role of the state and the problem each was designed to solve. (10 marks)
3. Explain the two-step flow theory, state the study on which it was based, and give two criticisms of it. (8 marks)
4. Distinguish between agenda setting and framing, giving one example of each from Pakistani news coverage. (8 marks)
5. Evaluate the view that PEMRA has failed to balance regulation and freedom in Pakistan's electronic media. (10 marks)
6. Write a summary lead of not more than 35 words from the following facts: the Lahore High Court on Monday suspended a provincial notification raising fees at government colleges by 40 per cent; the petition was filed by a students' union; the next hearing is on 12 November. Then explain why your lead is structured as it is. (8 marks)
7. Describe the five adopter categories in Rogers's diffusion of innovations theory and explain, with reference to the polio campaign in Pakistan, why mass media alone cannot secure adoption of a health practice. (10 marks)
8. Distinguish between misinformation, disinformation and malinformation, and suggest three measures a Pakistani newsroom could take against them. (8 marks)

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1. Lasswell (1948): "Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?" "Who" corresponds to control analysis, the study of who owns, runs and influences the media. "Says what" corresponds to content analysis, the systematic study of messages. "In which channel" corresponds to media analysis, the study of the technology and institutions of the press, broadcasting and the internet. "To whom" corresponds to audience analysis. "With what effect" corresponds to effects analysis, the study of changes in knowledge, attitude or behaviour. The formula maps the discipline but, being linear, leaves out feedback and noise.

2. Source: the libertarian theory grew from Enlightenment thought (Milton's *Areopagitica*, 1644; Locke; Jefferson; Mill's *On Liberty*, 1859), whereas the social responsibility theory was formulated by the Hutchins Commission (1947) and set out in *Four Theories of the Press* (1956). Role of the state: the libertarian theory keeps the state out except for laws on defamation, obscenity and wartime sedition, trusting the free marketplace of ideas and the rational reader; the social responsibility theory also prefers private ownership and self-regulation through codes and press councils, but accepts state intervention where the press fails its obligations. Problem solved: the libertarian theory answered authoritarian control through licensing and censorship; the social responsibility theory answered the problem the libertarian system created, a press concentrated in few hands, serving advertisers and owners, sensational and unaccountable. The first is freedom from the state; the second is freedom with duties to society.

3. The two-step flow theory holds that media influence reaches most people indirectly: messages flow from the media to opinion leaders, who follow the media closely on a topic, and from them through conversation to the less attentive members of their circle. The theory rests on the Erie County, Ohio study of the 1940 American presidential election by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, published as *The People's Choice* (1944), and was developed in Katz and Lazarsfeld's *Personal Influence* (1955). Criticisms: first, breaking news reaches the public directly, so the flow is often one step or many rather than two; second, the division between leaders and followers is artificial, since the same person leads on one topic and follows on another.

4. Agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) concerns which issues the media make salient: heavy, prominent coverage leads the public to regard an issue as important; it tells people what to think about. Framing (Entman, 1993) concerns how an issue is presented: by selecting some aspects of reality and making them salient, the media promote a definition of the problem, its cause, its moral evaluation and its remedy; it tells people how to think about an issue. Example of agenda setting: when channels lead every bulletin for weeks with electricity prices, polls find the public naming utility bills as the country's most important problem. Example of framing: one channel frames a protest march as "a fight for democracy" and another as "a threat to public order", so viewers of the two reach different judgements about the same event. Any accurate Pakistani examples of the same type earn the marks.

5. Begin with PEMRA's purpose: created by the 2002 ordinance to license and regulate private broadcasting, enlarge choice and enforce a code of conduct. For the view: its members are appointed by the federal government, so it lacks the independence that regulation of speech requires; it has suspended channels, banned anchors and prohibited coverage of particular topics, sometimes without notice or reasoned orders, and courts have set aside several of its actions; enforcement is selective, falling on channels critical of the government of the day while sensationalism and hate speech by others go unpunished. Against the view: the 2015 code is a sound document on accuracy, balance, coverage of terrorism and protection of victims; some

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regulation of over a hundred channels is unavoidable, and the alternative is chaos or direct ministerial control; and PEMRA's licensing created the private sector in the first place. Conclusion: the failure lies less in the law than in the structure and practice of the authority. Remedies: appointment of members through a transparent parliamentary process, published reasoned decisions with a right of appeal, equal application of the code, and a stronger role for self-regulation, in line with social responsibility theory.

6. A suitable lead: "The Lahore High Court on Monday suspended the provincial government's 40 per cent increase in fees at government colleges, on a petition by a students' union, and fixed the next hearing for 12 November." (34 words.) Structure: the most newsworthy fact, the suspension of the increase, comes first, because it affects thousands of families (consequence) and involves a high court (prominence); "on Monday" gives timeliness without starting with the time; "40 per cent" is the figure readers want; the petitioner is attributed; the next hearing is least important and comes last, where it could be cut. The lead answers who, what, when and where in one sentence under 35 words, with an active verb and no opinion.

7. Rogers (1962) divides adopters by the time they take to adopt: innovators (about 2.5 per cent), venturesome people who tolerate risk; early adopters (about 13.5 per cent), respected local opinion leaders whose adoption signals approval; the early majority (about 34 per cent), deliberate people who adopt just before the average; the late majority (about 34 per cent), sceptics who adopt under social pressure or necessity; and laggards (about 16 per cent), traditional and often isolated people who adopt last or never. Mass media alone cannot secure adoption of polio vaccination because the media work at the knowledge stage, making people aware that the vaccine exists and is free, while adoption depends on the persuasion and decision stages, which are governed by interpersonal influence. Parents who hesitate in Pakistan do so because of rumours about the vaccine's safety or religious permissibility and distrust of government and outside agencies; these are overcome by trusted intermediaries: lady health workers who visit homes, local religious scholars who endorse the vaccine, and early adopters whose children are visibly healthy. The campaign therefore pairs mass media for awareness with interpersonal channels for persuasion.

8. Misinformation is false or misleading content shared without intent to deceive, for example a wrong casualty figure forwarded in good faith. Disinformation is false content deliberately created and spread to deceive or cause harm, such as a fabricated statement attributed to a politician or a doctored video. Malinformation is content that is essentially true but used out of context or maliciously to cause harm, such as leaked private messages or an old disaster photograph presented as current. Three measures: first, a verification protocol under which no claim from social media is published until confirmed by a second, independent source, with reverse image search for pictures and video; second, a fact-checking desk that publishes corrections prominently and labels unverified claims as such on air; third, a style rule that attributes every claim to its source and avoids amplifying known false content without clear labelling.

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