

## Module 7: Philippine Mass Media

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Media plays a central role in the functioning of democracies. It is often called the Fourth Estate to stress its significant role as a vanguard of the people against government excess. Countries that do not have free media compromise the right to information are said to be undemocratic. According to Livingstone (1994), media is important in presenting the political processes to the public. In a participatory democracy, the media is responsible for disseminating critical information to the people.

**Mass media** refers to “a single communicator, or sender, and many receivers (e.g., an audience, readers, viewers, etc.) receiving content through a particular channel” (Kawamoto, 2003). Before the advent of the Internet, mass media consisted of the radio, television, newspapers, and films. However, the Internet and other digital technologies have heralded the rise of ‘new media.’ Currently, definitions of mass media already cover all information received via the Internet. Real-time access to information and immediate feedback that are enabled by these new technologies have a huge societal impact. For this reason, what we know about the world is largely mediated by what we consume in mass media. The huge presence of new media has even reinforced this situation. Currently, radio and television programs can already be accessed via the Internet, thereby broadening access to their content and providing people with a choice about the time and pace they wish to watch them.

### | Most Essential Learning Competencies

- Analyze the forms and functions of social organizations; and
- Explain the forms and functions of state and non-state institutions.

### | Content Standards

By the end of this module, learners are expected to demonstrate an understanding of:

- Cultural, social and political institutions as sets of norms and patterns of behavior that relate to major social interests; and
- The agents/institutions, processes, and outcomes of cultural, political, and social change.

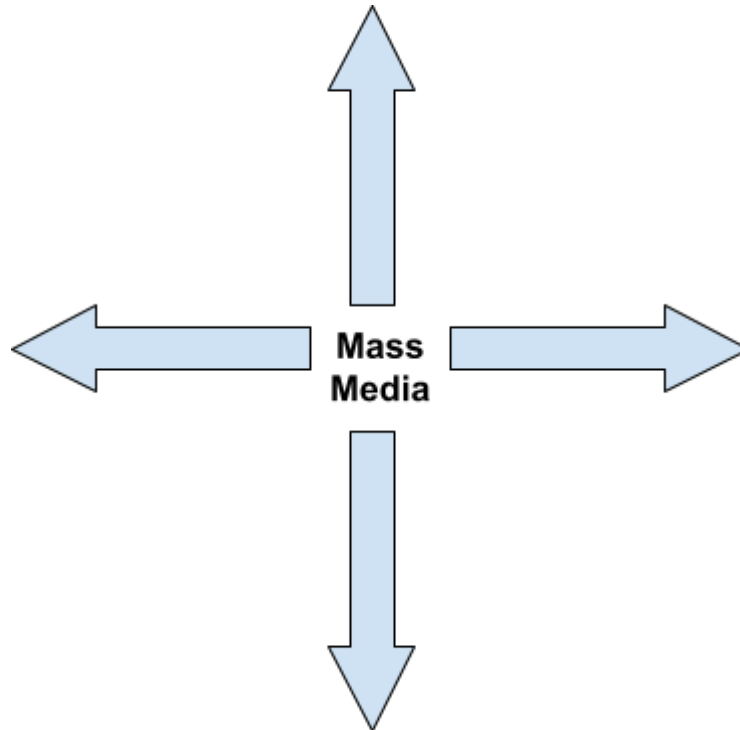
### | Performance Standards

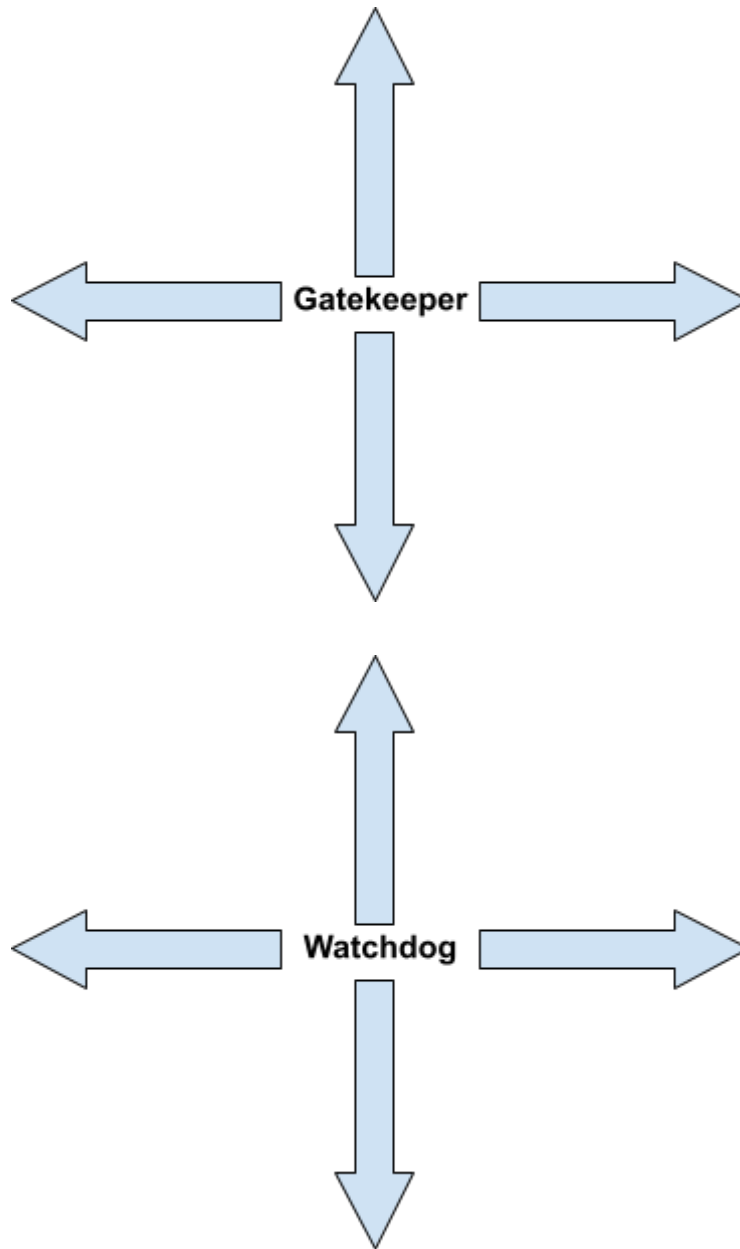
By the end of this module, learners are expected to:

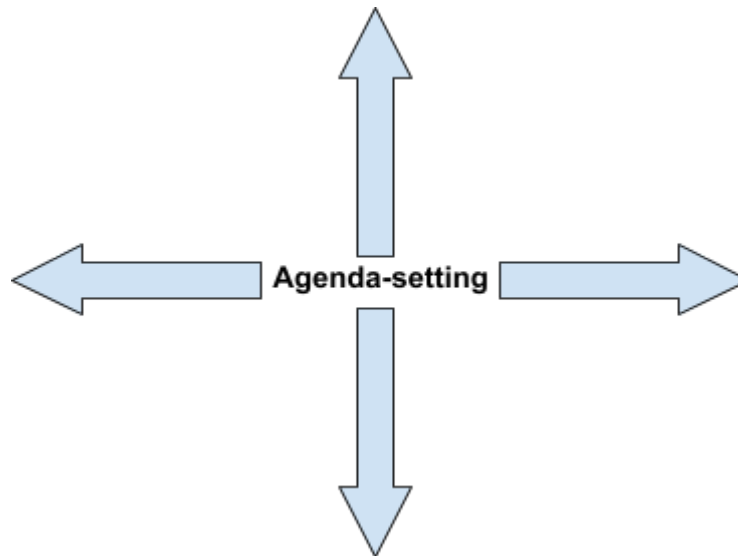
- Analyze aspects of social organization;
- Identify one's role in social groups and institutions; and
- Evaluates factors causing social, political, and cultural change.

**| Self-evaluation Form (Part I)**

Write words that you associate with 'mass media', gatekeeper, 'watchdog', and 'agenda-setting'.







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## Lesson 1: The Roles and Functions of Mass Media

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### | Lesson Objectives

At the end of the lesson, the student is expected to be able to:

- Know the media's functions and roles in society;
- Understand the role of social media and how it has transformed the media's role;
- Develop awareness of current issues surrounding the mass media; and
- Apply knowledge about the media in promoting positive values in society.

### | Key Concepts

- Mass Media - refers to one communicator which sends signals to multiple receivers.
- Gate-keeper - role of the media wherein content is filtered and then released to the public.
- Watchdog - role of the media wherein the outputs are transparent and critical information on public officials.
- Agenda-setting - role of the media wherein the media contributes to shaping the context of government policies.

- Agent of socialization - an institution which impacts on the social development of an individual.

## | Study Guide

A. This is to provide a motivational activity to introduce the topic to the students.

### Activity 1: Socialization and media exposure

*Instructions.* Fill in the following table:

Mass Media	Number of Hours Spent (in a day)
Television (mainstream channels)	
Radio	
Internet	
Cable Television	
<b>TOTAL HOURS SPENT</b>	

Answer the following questions and discuss your answers with your seatmate:

- What type of media are you most exposed to?
- Why do you think you are most exposed to this type?
- What specific functions (divert, instruct, interpret, bond, inform) do your exposure to mass media serve?

Reflect on the following questions:

- Why is the mass media regarded as the fourth estate?
- What does it mean when the media acts as a gatekeeper of information? Give examples of cases that you know about.
- How do digital technologies transform the way individuals acquire information?
- How important is the watchdog role of the news media?
- To what extent does the interpretation function of mass media heightened by the advent of digitally-mediated new media?
- What are the limits and possibilities of new media technologies?

## | The Functions of the Media

Mass media serves many functions. It informs, instructs, interprets, diverts our attention from other activities, and allows us to bond with family or like-minded individuals (Communication in the Real World, 2016). When mass media updates us on what is happening worldwide or in Philippine politics, it serves its information function. This is important because, without this function, the general public will be unaware of the challenges and developments in the rest of society and especially about how the government functions on a daily basis. Media are necessary to inform and active citizens. Information that citizens need to know in order to participate actively

and competently in a functioning democracy are shared through various forms of mass media and, more importantly, institutions of the press (those who produce news). Prior to widespread use of digital media, the news media were able to communicate with the public through the professional conduct of journalism, that is, collecting, verifying, fact-checking, understanding, analyzing, and reporting important news and current events.

This has changed significantly. The speed, almost real-time dissemination of information has led to immediate reporting of information from not only journalists but also influencers on social media, bloggers, regular citizens, and many others. Thus, audiences are exposed to sometimes inaccurate information, disinformation, and misinformation from political state and non-state actors, all of which can mislead the public.

The news media have important functions in interpreting events for the public. Feature stories, analytical articles, editorials, opinion columns, and commentary radio and television interpret the meaning of events and share their views with the public.

Certain forms of media content are intended to educate specific audiences. These include children's shows with educational content, programming with documentaries, cooking shows, health and self-help programs, etc.

### **| News Media's Role in Society**

Aside from the functions discussed above, the media, specifically those that deliver the news, has an important role in democratic societies. These are as follows: gatekeeper, watchdog, agenda-setting, and agent of socialization.

As a **gatekeeper**, the media, its practices, system, and ownership structure can impact what and when they report the news. This means that they have much leeway in filtering the material that one gets to read or watch. The reporter, the desk editor, the producer, the news director, and even the network or newspaper owner determine which are newsworthy and which particular stories can be published. They make these determinations based on established norms of news values, what do the public need to know in order for them to be active informed citizens and what they need to know to preserve public safety. These include reporting on disasters such as typhoons or earthquakes, reporting important political and historical events as they happen, or informing the public about critical issues that are developing in other countries that may have impact on the Philippines..

The **watchdog** role of the media, helps strengthen public officials' accountability to their citizens. Democracy is anchored on checks and balances among the three branches of government, namely: the executive, legislative, and judiciary, all three are State entities. The press or the news media are often called the Fourth Estate, the external check on powers of the State. The media report on the actions and decisions of institutions of the government and its officials, in large part to enable the public to hold them accountable for their actions and any wrongdoing or abuses of power. For this reason, media freedom or freedom of the press are necessary for the proper functioning of a democracy. Without the freedom to access information from the government and report on it to the public, there would not be transparency and accountability.

In 2021, Maria Ressa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (Linao, 2021) for her work in fighting attempts to suppress freedom of the press during the years of the Duterte presidency.

When mass media calls attention to a specific issue, it confers importance to the issue in the eyes of the general public and by extension, to policymakers. This **agenda-setting** role of the media refers to its ability to help shape the priorities and policies of the government and the public.

## | Synchronous Activity

### **Activity: On Socialization and Media Exposure**

*Instructions.* Discuss with your seatmate your similarities and differences in terms of media exposure from the activity during the module introduction.

*Step 1.* Read the following: [Philippine Statistics Authority. 2020. Latest Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey.](#)

*Step 2.* Discuss your response to the following questions with your seatmate:

- What does the survey say about disparities between urban and rural households and in terms of mass media exposure? What about age disparities?
- What impact would these disparities have on socialization?

## | Asynchronous Activity

### **Activity: Limiting Press Freedom**

*Instructions.* Form into groups, and read on the situation of the media during the Marcos and Duterte administrations.

*Step 1.* You may start with this one from Rappler: [FAST FACTS: How Marcos silenced, controlled the media during Martial Law](#)

*Step 2.* Discuss: How can state control of the media impact the information released to the public, and why do you think this is done by authoritarian leaders?

*Step 3.* Using a manila paper or a shared document, create a timeline of the events during the Marcos. Use your creativity.

### | Self-Paced Learning Activity (Optional)

#### **Activity: Reflection on Online Game**

*Instructions.* Play this online game: [We become what we behold by Nicky Case](#).

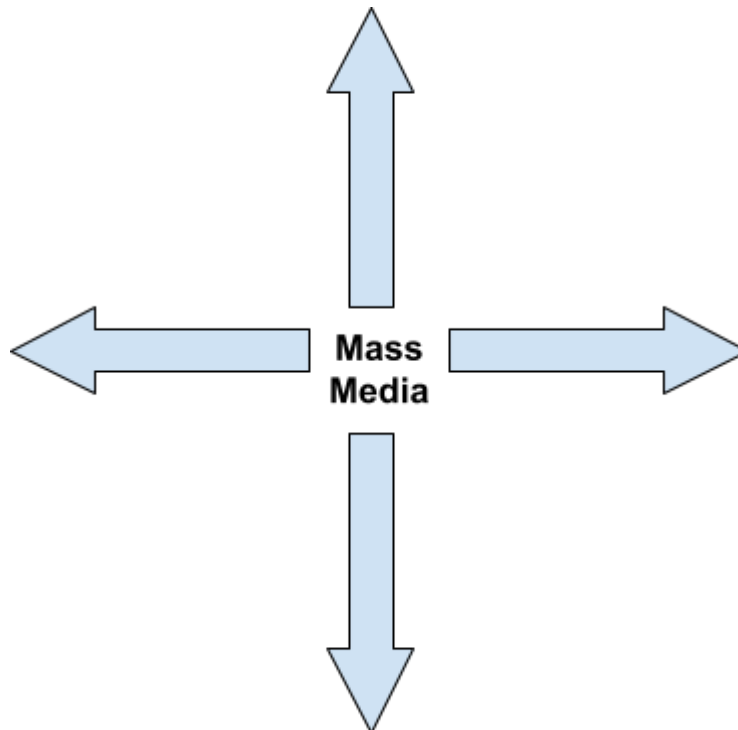
*Step 1.* Discuss your experience with a partner using the following guide questions:

- Was there an instance where you found a piece of media (it can be a news article, a Facebook post, or even a meme) that informed the way you perceived others?
- Would you still consume these types of media if the information presented were not as sensational?

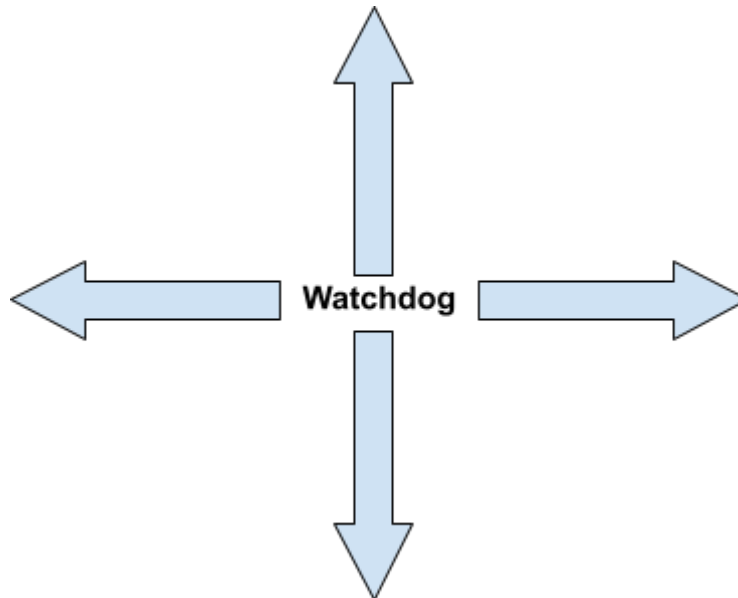
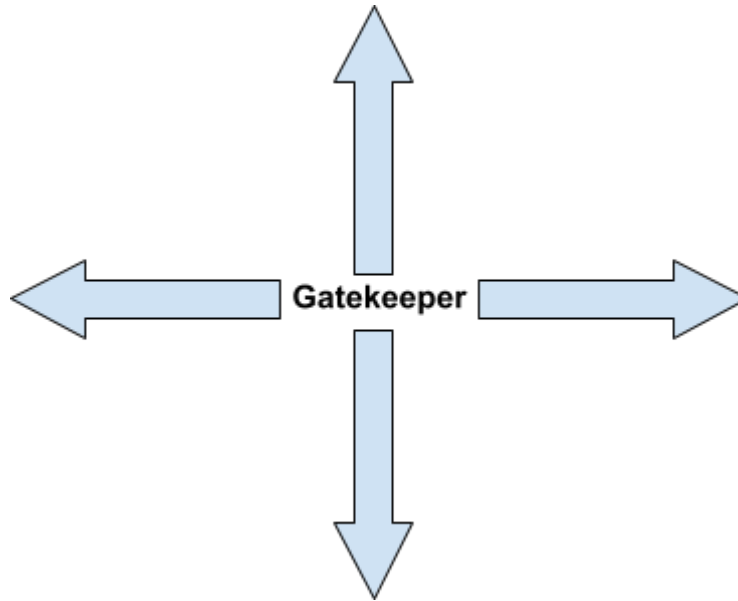
### | Self-Evaluation Form (Part 2)

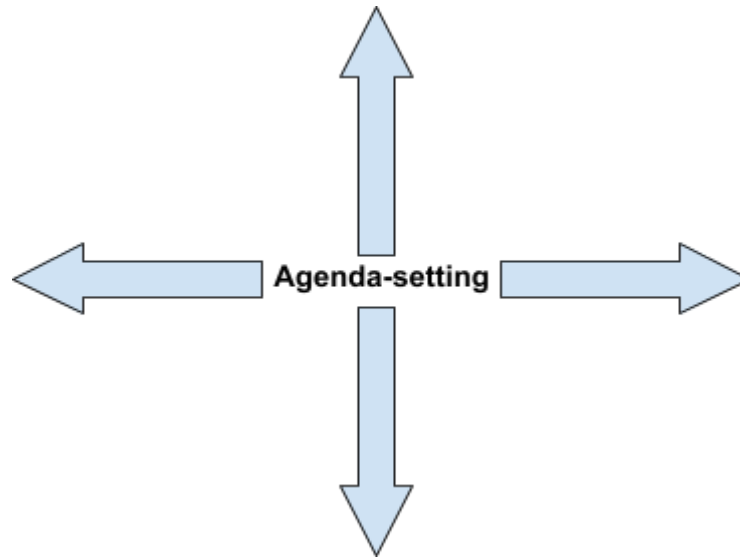
Answer the following questions.

1. After studying the lesson, update the conceptual map for the words mass media, gatekeeper, watchdog, and agenda-setting below.









2. How will you apply the knowledge you have learned on the roles and functions of mass media in improving Philippine society?

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**Rubric for Discussions**

	Excellent	Above Average	Developing	Needs Improvement
<p><b>Content:</b>                      The central theme/idea/argument of the student's output is focused and supported by evidence which indicates mastery of the content.</p>				
<p><b>Organization:</b>                      The flow of the discussion of the central theme/idea/theme is coherent.</p>				
<p><b>Presentation:</b>                      The form and presentation of the central theme/idea is clear, persuasive, polite, and easy to understand.</p>				

**Rubric for Creative Outputs**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<p><b>Content:</b> The artwork clearly presents information, ideas, and/or theme on topic which demonstrates understanding and mastery of the content.</p>				
<p><b>Presentation:</b> The artwork is meaningful and elicits understanding on the subject.</p>				

**References**

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