

**POL 2016, Question: Discuss media effects on citizens and discuss also if media are powerful actors in society.**

As regards media effects, students must define and discuss agenda-setting, priming, and framing.

Concerning *agenda-setting*, it is crucial to define what is an *agenda*, what is an *issue*, and what happens in the *agenda-setting process*. Examples can be presented to clarify this process. Students can choose examples freely and beyond the ones provided in the texts. Students should explain that agenda-setting (AS) postulates a directional relationship between the most important issues in the news media and the most important issues of the public agenda. It should also be explained that the public *learns* through media consumption what the most important political issues are, because this is the reason why AS occurs. It is an additional merit to mention how AS can be measured in an empirical study.

Concerning *priming*, the definition should include that priming is an *extension of agenda setting and that it describes a political consequence* of it. Real-world examples that can be taken from Miller and Krosnick (changing evaluations of the American president as consequence of changing media agenda) can serve here.

Concerning *framing*, students' answers should yield that the salient information in the frame makes pre-existing cognitions more *accessible and more applicable*. They should also mention that framing is a broader concept and that frames can be found not only in recipients' minds but in all kinds of political information. A good definition comes from Entman.

Concerning *media power*, students should discuss whether and to what extent the media as organizations have political influence in modern society. They can lean on Herman and Chomsky's filter model. Furthermore, students should reproduce the paradox presented by Couldry and Curran and deepen the discussion from there. They should also discuss in what ways the affordances provided by social media and the Internet change or add to this picture, especially if they can foster political engagement. Students are free to choose examples of their choice to discuss the nature and amount of media influence.

**POL 2016, Question: Discuss theoretical and empirical analysis of political trust**

There are many ways to answer the question. A starting point can be based on some of the texts from the reading list. However, there is a vast literature that is available to develop and extend the arguments. It is important to have a good structure in discussion of the arguments. It is normally a good help to organize the study in dependent and independent variables. The dependent variables can be developed from the early studies by Easton, and more recently by Pippa Norris who has published a set of indicators for systems support, going from the diffuse (general) level to the specific level. This classification is widely used and constitutes one of the cornerstones of the theoretical classification of political trust and systems support. It is interesting to study the use of this classification in actual empirical research and to see how fruitful the classification is.

An example of empirical research can be found in the study of confidence in parliaments, which is one of the important regime institutions. Building on this study (Dyrstad and Listhaug) there is a potential to find articles and books that cover many more indicators of support.

Besides dependent variables that includes indicators of trust, it is important present an overview of independent variables that tap into causes of variations in trust. In their study of trust in European parliaments Dyrstad and Listhaug list several variables: political distance, performance, social trust, demography, and electoral institutions. One idea would be to sum up and critically discuss the effect of important independent variables on trust. Besides the classical independent variables discussed in the literature, media coverage of political matters has been associated with political trust. So the role of media coverage in the dynamics of political trust might be discussed.

Empirical analysis of political trust can also be extended to other aspects. An important question is the analysis of trends, and variations of trends across important social and political divides, for example by Eastern and Western Europe and developments in post-communist countries. And many more questions for comparative and time series research could be listed.