Participation In American Politics: The Dynamics Of Agenda-building

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Noting that media agenda-setting research has seldom examined how the initial media agenda develops, a study examined the connection between news sources and agenda setting by means of a content analysis of sources and channels appearing in network television news and local television news. The findings were compared to similar studies of newspapers. Results indicated that television relied more heavily on routine news sources than did the newspapers in earlier studies. A similar amount of reliance on officials as sources was found as well as a small percentage of women identified as news sour

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One aspect of the problem is estimating the probable impact on the changing public agenda of decisions about the timing and representation of new policy initiatives. Even the best analytical work may be rendered inconsequential if it is introduced and promoted in such a way that it fails to engage the attention of the relevant public and public officials. Although Cobb and Elder's book on the dynamics of agenda-building is essentially a contribution to modern democratic theory, it nevertheless sheds some light on this aspect of promotion.