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Media and Democracy:
Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Challenges
SYNOPSIS—DRAFT

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August 4, 2008

Note: This synopsis gives an overview of the contents and underlying literature for a speech scheduled on August 2008 at the University of Mauritius. A working paper of this topic will be available in some days...

Abstract

Media play an important role in democratic systems and in democratization processes too. In addition to their control function of the justice, government and parliamentary action, they control a good part of public information, therefore they may be key players in agenda setting processes. In consolidated democracies, characterized by programmatic linkages between political actors and the electorate, the today's key role of media in the political process is to establish and ensure the link between the political supply and demand side. Hence, media represent a rich source for scholars investigating in mechanisms behind the political mobilization. But how can information of programmatic positions be extracted? In my speech, I give an overview of recent theoretical and methodological approaches in the concerned field. A comparison of different widely used measurement techniques shows that results heavily depends on employed techniques.

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