



The News Shapers: The Sources Who Explain the News

Lawrence C. Soley

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Analysts, political scientists, scholars, and consultants,--The News Shapers describes the elite club of individuals that the media approach for inside information, background, or predictions concerning the outcome of still-unfolding stories. Although they are presented as detached experts, Lawrence C. Soley uncovers their long histories of partisanship as former government officials or politicians, and charges that most of the shapers have no better credentials than the millions of people to whom the news media never turn. Soley's findings, based on a University of Minnesota study which examined three major networks' evening newscasts during 1987-1988, reveal that a small number of white, politically conservative men associated with Washington-based think tanks, former Republican administrations, and private, East Coast universities virtually monopolize political discourse in the mass media.

Dispelling the myth of the media's liberal bias, Soley discusses the shortcomings of both print and broadcast journalism which lead to selection of partisan news analysts, and the effects of their commentaries on foreign and domestic affairs. Special attention is given to Henry Kissinger, Washington Think Tanks, and the media's handling of the conflict with Iraq. The News Shapers identifies the experts, their past political affiliations, and their often thin academic credentials. It is highly recommended for scholars in communications, journalism, and political science, as well as for newspaper readers and television news viewers.

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