
The Control, Contestation and Trend of Political News Coverage in Contemporary Bangladesh: Ethnographic Explorations of Viewing and Making Television News

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Abstract

The censorship and control in Bangladesh mediascapes are prolific. The arrival of satellite television in the 90s marked a new era for the media culture in the country. The tendency of using news broadcasting media as the mouthpiece of government continues even in the age of so-called neoliberal media economy. This paper aims to unravel the control and contestation in the practice of television news by the private satellite channels in Bangladesh. The trend of covering and broadcasting political events and issues remain as the point of departure of this paper. Based on the newsroom ethnography the author tries to argue that there is a growing and inherent fear among the media practitioners in Bangladesh. Often that inherent fear helps to create a trend of broadcast journalism that fails to meet the viewers' expectation. While the audiences refuse the 'monotonous' political news coverage in the television they also address the symptom of censorship and "authoritative" control by the regulatory forces viz. government. The paper aims to place the perspective of working journalists in the news-based television channels in Bangladesh into the thematic of media anthropology/sociology. The thematic is broadly categorized into power and control, contestation and compromise, mediation and democratization. The objective of the paper is to comprehend the politics of news-making in the 24/7 news channels in Bangladesh. In doing so, while the constraining factors are being discussed, the contradictions in the wake would also get revealed. Finally, the paper would elaborate how the private television channels played a key role in transformative democracy by generating the new social ground through political news coverage.

Keywords: Television NewsMaking, Political Journalism, Bangladesh Mediascapes, Media Ethnography, Politics of Newsmaking

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