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Depoliticization, understood broadly as the process of removing political characteristics from a given domain, has been widely discussed in political science since the early 2000s (Bennett & Entman, eds., 2000). However, its conceptualization in media discourse and impact on journalism have been marginally studied. Underpinned by Mouffe's (2011) framework notion of agonist pluralism that the inner nature of political foundation is conflictual, scholars have termed depoliticization of media discourse as a discursive logic to transform a political contestation into a moral condemnation or an expertise incapability, leading to a disservice of media pluralism (Maesele & Raeijmaekers, 2017, p. 8). With declining public interest and trust in political news, there is a growing need for a further understanding of the factors currently impeding journalism. In response, my presentation will provide an analytic framework from a political discourse perspective to address this emerging problem of depoliticization in contemporary journalism. To operationalize this research in a narrowed down scope, this research intends to use the media system in China as a case study. The duality role of media in China has long been a contentious topic with its contradiction between liberalising journalism and solidify authoritarianism, and hence by has accommodated a complexity and timeliness in its media system. This research will utilize both quantitative and qualitative analysis to contribute to the theoretical understanding of journalism norms and professionalism in politically constrained media environments under the lens of depoliticization. Underpinned by a notion of meta-journalism discourse, this research will approach discourse analysis on the samples from Joint Newscast, a legacy TV news programme in China across a period of 30 years, combined with generalizations of in-depth interviews with the professionals with this programme. The findings are expected to spark further explorations on the counterbalance strategies to this depoliticization from either policy makers or relevant researchers.

Keywords

journalism, politics, depoliticization, media pluralism

References

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