DSPACE

https://dspace.org/

Partisan journalism: examining Fox News'coverage of Donald Trump during 2020 US Presidential elections

Vilakazi, Precious Swazi

2023
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/36894

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

The research probes how Fox news' coverage of Donald Trump during the 2020 United States elections changed between the day before the calling of the elections and the day after. The study teases out how Fox 'repositioned' itself after calling Joe Biden the winner, while still maintaining its Republican partisanship. Using qualitative textual analysis, a thematic content analysis of news broadcast by the channel on 6 and 7 November 2020 was conducted. 16 television broadcast videos from various Fox News programmes consisting of interviews, panel discussions, a news bulletin and an editorial opinion that took place over the two days were analysed. To find the difference in their reporting, the study looked at content and stylistic themes that emerged and how they changed on both days. Research findings show that Fox had a partisan approach to news on both days by promoting propaganda and a Trump-centred political agenda in their newsroom. Despite being Republican supporters, the channel still wanted to show that they were 'good journalists' on 7 November 2020. The channel ambivalence in its reporting to maintain its support for the Republicans while acknowledging Biden's victory. From a normative approach to media, this research highlights the unethical nature of the relationship between Fox and the state in journalistic terms. The study emphasises the kind of reporting that promotes personal politics instead of being an independent voice, which does not satisfy the demands of journalistic norms.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Fox News, media-state relations, themes, news genre, propaganda, objectivity