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Fundação
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UIDB/00126/2020, UIDP/00126/2020

Captured Media: Researching Media Systems in and after Transitions

5-6 December 2022

The concept of ‘captured media’ has been used to describe media systems in countries that have transitioned from authoritarian to democratic regimes in the late 20th century (Mungiu-Puppidi 2013; Guerrero & Marquez-Ramirez 2014). Despite being far from a homogenous reality, young democracies have experienced difficulties in building strong, independent media ecosystems, and are still characterized by self-censorship and both political and economic pressures as part of the daily routine of newsrooms. These systems either go down “the path toward an Authoritarian/Communist type media system” (Batorfy, 2019) or “serve as propagandists and political instruments to befuddle, misinform, and disinform audiences and thus oppose civil society and democratization.” (Armanca & Gross, 2020). In this respect, the concept of captured media exhibits many of the dimensions that factually stifle freedom of expression and its role in a democracy. Hallin and Mancini (2004) speak of political parallelism which, in its extreme form, may lead to political instrumentalization, party colonization (Bajomi-Lazar, 2014), and oligarchization (Ryabinska, 2014), with the creation of a media system that is merely a mouthpiece of political elites (Zankova, 2021).

Thus, the conference “Captured Media: Researching Media Systems in and after Transitions” aims to bring together researchers working on media systems in countries that participated in the third wave of democratization, from Portugal in 1974 to Asia-Pacific and Latin American countries in the 1980s and Eastern Europe, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The aim is to discuss how media systems have evolved after the establishment of democracy, and to debate how media and journalistic institutions are co-opted by political and economic structures in countries that lack a strong tradition of press freedom and adequate guarantees.

While the media are traditionally perceived as performing a central role in the democratic process, responsible for scrutinizing power structures, this role has been particularly questioned and undermined in the last decade by populist movements (which label journalism as an ‘enemy of the people’), the collapse of traditional business models, the emergence of new reception practices and ultimately a climate of uncertainty that has led to profound changes in the relationship between the media and the outside world (Ribeiro & Zelizer, 2022). While these tendencies can be found in most countries, in young democracies they may be particularly



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disruptive, due to the lack of a strong culture of press freedom and media independence, close ties between the media and the political class and ineffective legal frameworks. They may result in self-censorship and deficiencies in media professional standards and accountability. Thus, the conference welcomes papers with comparative research, and others, focusing on case studies from countries and media systems that have undergone a transformation from authoritarian to democratic regimes. Papers dealing with the following topics are especially welcome but many others may be proposed:

- Press Freedom and media independence in young democracies;
- Self-censorship;
- The evolution of media systems in young democracies;
- Political parallelism;
- Journalism practices in times of uncertainty;
- Media and journalism and new business models;
- Media and populist discourses;
- Media concentration and opacity of media ownership;
- Comparing news practices in different countries;
- Media in transition;
- Democratic culture and media;
- Media frameworks and media freedom guarantees.

Abstracts for paper proposals between 300-400 words may be submitted until 15 September (deadline) by email: conferencecapturedmedia@gmail.com

All abstracts will be peer reviewed before final acceptance. A collection of some of the papers may be published after the conference

Conference organization

The conference is organized by the Research Centre for Communication and Culture (CECC) hosted at the Faculty of Human Sciences at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa in cooperation with the project 'The Media System and Journalism Culture in Bulgaria (A Study in the Light of



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the Three Models of Media – Politics Relations by Hallin and Mancini)', hosted by Veliko Tarnovo University "St. Cyril and St. Medhodus and funded by the Bulgarian Scientific Fund.

The conference will be held at the Lisbon campus of Universidade Católica Portuguesa, which can be easily accessed via metro (30-minute ride), bus or taxi (10-minute ride) from the Lisbon airport.

Conference Organizing Committee:

Isadora Ataíde

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For more information, visit: <https://capturedmediaconference2022.com>