

Abstract

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Media Capture: When Politics and Business Marry to Gag Independent Journalism

Over the past decade, many countries have seen a process of closer-than-ever collusion between governments and business elites, mostly oligarchs buying media outlets on behalf of people and circles in control of political power. The phenomenon, termed as media capture, describes a new reality where regulatory authorities, public service or other forms of state-administered media, private media companies and public funding mechanisms are subordinated to a small group of interests seeking to use media for propaganda aimed at cementing their control over state administration and resources.

This has devastating effects on the society as restricts their freedom to access unbiased, independent sources of information to make informed decisions. Cases of concentration of ownership, control of public media broadcasters and discretionary forms of awarding public funding to media abounded in the past. But the past decade or so has seen in Europe and elsewhere a more concerted, sophisticated and systematic process of capturing media companies. Marius Dragomir will speak about the main patterns in the way political and business elites capture media, the results it has on editorial coverage and the effects on the citizenry. The contribution is based on findings of an ongoing research project focused on the key shifts in media and power that the Center for Media, Data and Society (CMDS) at CEU is running in a consortium of 40+ organizations from all over the world.