

Local news and media capture: a Q&A with Phil Napoli | Columbia Journalism Review

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For many years, the term “media capture” was used primarily by economists and political scientists who wanted to understand societies that were Democratic on paper but—in reality—had a captive media under soft control. Political scientist Alina Mungiu-Pippidi described “media capture” as an environment in which news media are controlled “either directly by governments or by vested interests networked with politics.”

When Columbia University’s School of International Affairs held a [conference](#) on media capture in 2016, the term was not well known in the world of journalism; the first conference [volume](#) looked mostly at overseas occurrences. Since then, the problem has spread, and it faces countries all over the world, including the US. The decline of profitability—a prevalent problem in the local journalism world—puts outlets and local communities in danger of political influence.

[...]

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