

# Captured by Elites: The Portuguese Media System in Liberalism (1820–1926)

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**Abstract:** This article argues that the concept of ‘captured media’ is invaluable to a deeper understanding of the roles performed by media systems throughout European liberalism and early democratization of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This case-study explores the structures of the media system during Portuguese Liberalism (1820–1926) in the scope of the Portuguese empire. The concept of the ‘Imperial Public Sphere’ is applied to show how imperial and colonial elites captured the media system to exercise and spread its political and ideological power. As a methodological approach to analyze the roles performed by press, the case-study relies on the model developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), which is applied to three empirical cases. The use of the concept ‘captured media’ in the field of media history is a contribution to understanding the political roots of the press during colonialism and its legacy to contemporary media systems in Lusophone countries.

**Keywords:** Imperial Public Sphere; Portuguese media system; liberalism; captured media.

## INTRODUCTION

This article argues that the concept of ‘captured media’ is invaluable to a deeper understanding of the roles performed by media systems throughout European liberalism and early democratization of 19th and 20th centuries. This case-study explores the structures of the media system during Portuguese Liberalism (1820–1926) in the scope of Portuguese empire. With this socio-political perspective and temporal dimension, the concept of ‘Imperial Public Sphere’ is used to show how imperial and colonial elites captured the media system to exercise and spread its political and ideological power. As a methodological approach to analyze and discuss the roles performed by press, the case-study relies on the

model and guidelines developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) to characterize media systems.

Three empirical realities are brought together to demonstrate the main dimensions, characteristics and roles performed by media systems. With the concept of a dialogical Imperial Public Sphere in mind, the first is the micro-level case of *Abelha da China* (1823–1824), a Macao newspaper which inaugurated the public sphere in colonial liberalism. The second is a meso-level case, which presents the press system of Angola during the Constitutional Monarchy (1854–1910). The third is the macro-case of *Gazeta das Colónias* (1924–1932), an informed newspaper that promoted the debate and discussion in the Imperial Public Sphere (IPS) during the last years of the Portuguese Liberalism period.

The first section of the article develops the theoretical approach to this study and discusses the concepts of ‘captured media’, the IPS and ‘media systems’. In the second part, the study presents the empirical cases, with a focus on the emergence of the press in Macao, the media system of Angola and the role performed by *Gazeta das Colónias*, published in Lisbon and with an imperial circulation. All the empirical cases are paradigms of the capture of press by elites. The article concludes that during Portuguese Liberalism the media was guided by and for elites. The strong political parallelism between the media system and political and economic groups and the low level of professionalization also corroborated the capture of media by elites. The use of the concept ‘captured media’ in the field of media history is a contribution to understanding the political roots of the press alongside colonialism and its legacy to contemporary media systems in Portuguese speaking countries.

## **THEORETICAL ROOTS**

### **IMPERIAL PUBLIC SPHERE**

The concept of IPS follows the assumption of ‘entangled media history’ developed by Cronqvist and Hilgert (2017) who define the concept as including such ideas as overlapping, convergence, dissemination, imperialism, resistance, adaptation, crossovers, interference and hybridization. On this basis, the concept of IPS is a requirement for understanding the history of the media in Portugal and in Portuguese colonialism since it is intended to reflect the press’ emergence, convergence and evolution.

Habermas’s (1991/1962) public sphere theory contributes to the political theory of democracy in which he shows the process by which public opinion emerges and how the press is its structural platform. The IPS hypothesis follows that of Habermas a priori because of the intention here to constitute the public

sphere as a dimension of analysis and as an explanation for the socio-political dynamics of the Portuguese colonial empire in the context of political liberalism from 1820–1926. A critical reading of Fraser (2014) remains essential to develop the concept of IPS and demonstrate its pertinence for the study of empires.

First, the idea of the public sphere correlates with the modern and sovereign state within a delimited territory, which also applies to the Portuguese colonial empire of the 19th and 20th centuries. Second, the participants in this public sphere were members of the same political community. In the Portuguese empire, this ‘community’ included colonial government structures and economic sectors as well as intellectual groups. Third, the theme of IPS was its political and economic organization, the capitalist market and state regulation. During the last two centuries, the structures and the manner of exercising power at the imperial, national and colonial levels were the focus of discussion and conflict within the public sphere. Fourth, associated with the modern press and media, the public sphere requires national (and imperial) infrastructure linking and uniting a dispersed public. The decrees of Queen Maria II in 1836 to install the ‘national press’ in the colonies and print the ‘official bulletins’ were the first steps in the construction of this communications network. The linking of the African colonies to the network of European and global submarine cables took place between 1874 and 1883, enhancing communications between the territories and the metropolis while improving the role of the press. Fifth, in every colonial territory, Portuguese was the common language of the press and was used by all social groups.

Barton (1979) and Ochs (1986) in their studies on the media in Africa argue the legacy of European colonialism and its press system, European languages and geography have all been central to the historiography of the press and the media. Assuming the influence of Harold Innis (1986), we can see the growing importance of the imperial context for studying the media. Potter (2003) shows the emergence of an ‘imperial press system’ in the British empire between 1876 and 1922. Kaul (2006) brings together a set of studies on the British media in the imperial context. In the Portuguese empire, with its imperial approach but not a common public sphere, the studies collected by Garcia et. al (2017b) and Machado et. al (2023) are good references.

This research used the concept of an IPS that recognizes a common public sphere and media system, which integrates the territories of the Portuguese empire, bringing together its media while also assuming its interdependence in the exercise of colonial power. Thus, the IPS is configured as the geographical area, and public debate within empire has the press and journalism as privileged structures, the imperial and colonial elites as protagonists and the political and economic dynamics derived from the imperial situation as the fundamental issues.

## CAPTURED MEDIA

The concept of ‘captured media’ is invaluable for understanding and discussing the performance of media systems in a historical perspective. The concept has been explored and applied to comprehend and unveil the forces that restrict or bias the media and journalistic roles in contemporary political regimes, for instance Italy (Stille, 2006), Latin America (Guerrero and Márques-Ramirez, 2014), and Turkey (Finkel, 2015). Precisely because the idea is seminal to explain the contemporary developments of media in relation of the features of political systems, the use of the concept from a historical perspective contributes to a better and deeper understanding of the historical heritage of media systems. The historical perspective also helps to connect the dots between the past and present of media and political systems. In addition, the multidisciplinary roots and the nature of the concept – in Economics, Political Science and Media Studies – reinforce the usefulness of the concept in Media History, especially in combination with the idea of IPS.

Mungiu-Pippidi (2013, 41) defines media capture as “a situation in which the media have not succeeded in becoming autonomous... [and] have persisted in an intermediate state, with vested interests, and not just the government, using them for other purposes”. Stiglitz (2017, 10) argues that “media capture occurs when one or more of the parties that the media are supposed to be monitoring on behalf of society ‘captures’ or takes hostage the media, so that they fail to perform their societal function”. Stiglitz (2017) focuses on capture by corporate interest and governments and defines four broad and overlapping dimensions to examine the phenomenon: ownership, financial incentives, censorship and cognitive capture. The latter relates to the world’s perception of journalism activity and the translation of this understanding in media reporting, which in turn shapes societies’ views. Stiglitz argues that rather than developing the watchdog role, the media “are little more than a reflection of the views widely shared within it. Indeed, they can become part of the echo chamber that amplifies and solidifies conventional wisdom” (2017, 14). Media capture should not be the preserve of government but also the focus of ‘vested interests’, because when “media are captured by vested interests, these interests use their influence to change the politics” (Schiffrin 2021, p. 5).

In order to discuss the nature of media capture throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in Portuguese IPS, the study applies the four dimensions proposed by Stiglitz. The study explores the connection between ownership and economic and political forces (‘vested interests’) and how incentives at the state (imperial) and government (colonial) levels to publish affect the dependency of the press upon social and economic groups. The study also examines not only the use of the censorship, especially against the voices divergent from government and imperial policy; but also the closeness of journalism to social and political groups.

## MEDIA SYSTEMS

Hallin and Mancini (2004) reinvigorated studies of media in historical and contemporary perspectives. Hallin and Mancini argue that to evaluate the media, it is fundamental to examine the nature of the state, the political system, the pattern of relations between political and economic interests, and the development of civil society. The present study follows the methodological approach established by Hallin and Mancini, and analyzes the media system in four dimensions: 1) the development of the market, with emphasis on the circulation of the press; 2) political parallelism, i.e. the nature and degree of relations between the media and politics and the way in which the media translate political divisions within a society; 3) the development of journalistic professionalism; and 4) the nature and degree of state intervention in the media system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, 21–45).

In sum, the concept of ‘Media Captured’, the proposition of the ‘Imperial Public Sphere’ and the methodological approach of ‘Media Systems’ are the theoretical framework to explain the roles performed by media and press system during Portugal’s Liberalism. The next section will present three case studies, the Macanese newspaper *Abelha da China*, the media in Angola and the newspaper *Gazeta das Colónias*, bringing together micro, meso and macro-levels perspectives to examine the process of capture by imperial and colonial forces.

## EMPIRICAL CASES

### **ABELHA DA CHINA (1822–1823)**

Alves (2000) uses a study of public opinion and the press that gave it a voice in Macao in the first decades of 19th century to illuminate and explain the origin of the Portuguese IPS. The imperative of legitimization of the Liberal Revolution (1820) was the push to the development of public opinion in Macao. The confrontations between liberals and absolutists, the disagreements between local and imperial elites that ruled from Lisbon and the economic fragilities of the territory were the privileged topics of the Macao press between 1820 and 1840. The *Abelha da China*, 1822–23, affirmed the end of the absolutist regime and gave voice to a liberal and commercial elite that required intervention in public affairs and who sought to regulate the opium trade to survive.

The interests and the convergence of local commercial owners, members of the military forces and the catholic clergy were the catalysts for the emergence of *Abelha da China*. The main topics of the first newspaper of Macao were the promotion of liberal ideas and revolution and the freedom of local enterprises. For instance, the paper reported the discussions and decisions of the colonial

administration (*Leal Senado*) and proposals to regulate commerce. Although *Abelha da China* endorsed the governments of Lisbon and Macau, the newspaper also promoted the controversy over the political orientation of the regime and the administrative issues of the territory. The weekly newspaper of Portugal and its empire, also gave voice to the events in Europe, United States and South America with reference to reports from European newspapers (Costa, 2022).

*Abelha da China* inaugurated the public sphere of Macao and the local elites promoted the press as a strategy to politicize the public space, to affirm liberalism and to improve the economic power of local elites. In research of natural born Macanese linked to the press (which include elites with Portuguese and Chinese origins through family connections), Sena (2022) shows that social relations in Macao were influenced by ethnic, cultural and religious issues, as well by the dynamics of political and economic factors. Throughout the 19th century, the press of Macao was strongly related to the political, economic and social demands of colonial elites and the press performed a strategic role in the propagation of their worldviews. The restoration of the Old Regime (1823–1834) and the ensuing re-instatement of censorship of the press in September 1823, enabled the government to force the *Abelha da China* to change its political orientation. Shortly, thereafter the paper ceased to be published. In this context, imperial and colonial administration' imposed censorship and persecution to journalism, aiming to eliminate the criticism and divergences of the local *intelligentsia* and its press.

### **ANGOLA (1866–1910)**

At the end of the 19th century, the mass press was affirmed in Portugal. In the context of the empire, both press and journalism had asserted themselves in the colonial territories as: the main platform for information and discussion; channels for mobilizing political forces; and as the setting for conflict among social groups. The press focused on the political situation in the Portuguese empire, which included central government affairs in Lisbon, the governments of the colonies and local administrations. As previous research shows, it was common for colonial newspapers to have pages set aside for metropolitan, colonial and local topics, in addition to news and features on events in other African and Asian colonies (Fonseca, 2017).

Angola's media system is fundamental to understanding the role developed by journalism in the scope of the Portuguese empire due to the political and economic importance of the colony (Duffy, 1959). The *Civilização da África Portuguesa* (1866) was the first unofficial newspaper in Angola and emerged 21 years after the implementation of the official gazette (1845). Throughout the Constitutional Monarchy almost 70 newspapers appeared in Angola, but the press flourished mainly in Luanda, reflecting the concentration of elites and

political and economic power in the capital of the colony. Meanwhile, newspapers circulated in the main cities of Angola, which can be seen by the letters from the readers, the existence of correspondents in locations across the territory and by the news contents. The regionalization of the press started in 1880, with the appearance of newspapers in Moçâmedes, Catumbela, Benguela, Ambriz and Novo Redondo. Print runs were minimal: in 1881, the weekly *Jornal de Loanda* printed 800 and in 1883 the weekly *O Mercantil* printed 700. The print runs reflected the size of the target audience of the natural born elites due to the empire's denial of the status of citizen to Africans (Lopo, 1964; Gonçalves, 1964).

Civil servants, merchants, liberal professionals (especially lawyers) and politicians were the owners of newspapers at this time. They also acted as editors and journalists of the titles, but they did not perform journalism exclusively nor did they depend on newspapers for their financial independence. In fact, political activity motivated the emergence of newspapers, as well as defined their editorial line. The set of variables for the analysis of the origin and development of the press shows that it had above all a political and non-commercial character; a low level of circulation despite the regionalization and the ownership by elites (Fonseca, 2019).

In the dimension of professionalism, journalistic activity was related to the political action of those who exercised journalism, and, in most cases, journalists were the founders and owners of the newspapers in which they wrote. Journalism was a hobby of the European and African intellectual elites because journalists did not yet exist in the form a professional category organized in clubs, associations or unions. However, Lourenço (2002) suggests the first signs of a professional identity among Angolan journalists are from this period. Lourenço (2002) argues that the mutually supportive behavior across titles and workers, visible in the texts published in the press, points to a journalism identity, as did the proposal of the newspaper *O Sul d'Angola*, in 1894, to create an association of professionals in order to hold accountable those who acted as journalists.

Journalists were linked to the social and political groups (in most cases informal) to which they belonged and made the press a platform for the propagation of their ideas. In their texts, journalists proclaimed to write the 'truth', to make use of 'partiality' and 'justice', but they did so in accordance with their beliefs and the interests of the groups to which they belonged. There exists a correlation between the ownership of newspapers and the exercise of journalism, as well as a direct relationship between the ideas of those who exercised journalism and the content of newspapers. Consequently, neither the instrumentalization nor the professional autonomy of journalists existed although journalistic exercise was attached to political advocacy. Or, the 'cognitive capture', and the fight to adopt and shape the imperial society worldviews.

The previous indicators – political press, property linked to political groups and journalistic activity attached with political activism – point to a strong parallelism between the press and the political forces of the time. Throughout the Constitutional Monarchy (1834–1910) two political groups stood out, both consisting of intellectual, economic and social elites: Portuguese settlers and the ethnic natural born Africans (Corrado, 2008). Such duality manifested itself in the press and appears as its main cleavage at this time. In a broad approach, it can be said that the Portuguese supported the colonial project while the Africans fought for the autonomy of Angola. Although most newspapers in Portugal defended the colonial project and criticized the policies of local governments, there were titles that supported either the republic or the monarchy. Some Portuguese owned newspapers defended the rights of Africans, others propagated the distinction between the races and the inferiority of Africans. Another segmentation within the scope of Portuguese owned newspapers was the demand for decentralization and autonomy of Angola in opposition to those who fought for the continuity of a centralized political power in Lisbon. Newspapers founded by Portuguese settlers were also divided between supporting or criticizing local governments, which was most often explained by their political and economic ties. Other features of the press were the conflicts among newspapers (which translated to disputes among political groups), the creation of newspapers in response to the editorial line of the titles in circulation, and the persecution promoted by the government against the newspapers that attacked it. These factors reinforced the strong parallelism between journalism and political forces in Angola throughout the period.

State intervention and capture of the press was strong. The government owned the official gazette and through it produced the propaganda of the administration and of the colonial project. There is a record of persecution of newspapers and journalists, such as the arrest of journalists; the transfer of journalists to other colonies due their criticism of government; and the prosecutions and persecution of several African journalists. It should be noted that the African press and its journalists were the main victims of the persecution of the Angolan governments, which implied the dismantling of their periodicals and the silencing of the press that opposed the colonial project. However, since there are no indicators of public subsidies to newspapers, over time several titles have collaborated with the government to the extent that they supported its policies, including being created for this purpose, which reveal public support and capture by government.

Portuguese elites promoted the flourishing of the independent press in Angola mainly to affirm itself and to fight the policies of both the central government and that of the colony. From the 1870s onwards, the ethnic African elites made the press an inclusive space of struggle and demand, because their political and economic power continued to decline with the progress of the colonial project.



Concerning ownership, links to corporate interests, the cognitive nature of journalistic content and state intervention, the press system was captured during the period of the Constitutional Monarchy, primarily by the elites and the imperial government.

### **GAZETA DAS COLÓNIAS – AN IMPERIAL NEWSPAPER**

The public sphere was both a demand and a legacy of the 1820s liberal revolution and sociocultural modernity (Tengarrinha 2013, Alves 2015). In the context of the Portuguese colonial empire, the regime change revolutionized the elites and the empire's administration, to bring about an IPS. News and opinion articles on colonial issues in general and each of the territories in Africa and Asia were present in the Portuguese press throughout the 19th century, gaining new life after the British Ultimatum of 1890. It is notable that from 1912 the *Jornal do Comércio*, which had been published since 1853, changed its masthead publication data from “Jornal Propriedade da Empresa do Jornal do Comercio” (Newspaper Property of the Company of the Journal of Commerce) to include the suffix “e das colónias” (and the colonies). Meanwhile, the weekly *Diário de Notícias* started a section devoted to colonial affairs.

The weekly *Gazeta das Colónias: Semanário de Propaganda e Defesa das Colónias* (1924–26) was a journalistic landmark that claimed the IPS and inserted itself into Portugal's media system. Advertising had an important role in the newspaper that was associated with the economic interests of the metropolis operating in the colonies, companies like the Banco Nacional Ultramarino (National Overseas Bank), the Sociedade de Angola e do Congo (Angola and Congo Society), Sá Leitão & Co. Import and Export and the Companhia de Moçambique (Mozambique Company). Regarding circulation, *Gazeta* was sold and circulated in Portugal and in colonial territories, but with a low level of issues and limited to the elites.

Another variable of this dimension, the nature of the newspaper and its relation with the public, the *Gazeta* was published by Oliveira Tavares (a member of the armed forces), António Leite de Magalhães (Governor of Guinea, 1927–31) and the intellectual José Veloso de Castro. Its regular writers were members of the military, politicians, civil servants, intellectuals and scholars of Africa and Asia with experience in the field who were concerned with colonial issues and who thirsted for an intervention in the Portuguese imperial project through the press system (Fonseca, 2023).

The contents were organized along colonial themes and territories in this weekly publication owned by the Colonial Advertising Company. In the letters from the publisher, there was a preference for topics related to the management of the empire, including colonial autonomy *versus* political centralization; colonial public services and workers; the finance and economic situation;

the religious question; the problem of indigenous labour; and the international image of the empire.

Looking to the role of *Gazeta* in the context of liberalism and colonialism, the ideological propaganda of the empire stood out. For instance, in its first issue, published on 19 June 1924, an article by Colonial Minister Mariano Martins noted that ‘the propaganda of our colonizing action is one of the missions imposed on itself by the *Gazeta das Colónias*’. Through this imperial ‘propaganda’, the political and cultural ideology of colonialism spread, in which the ‘civilizing mission’, economic and productive dimension and the religious issues were underlined.

Regarding political parallelism, the newspaper was closely connected to public and private corporations, for instance *Banco Nacional Ultramarino* and *Mozambique Company*, which showed the ties between paper and political and social forces of Portugal and the Empire. Illustrative of political parallelism and the power of the imperial and colonial elites exercised through the public sphere and the *Gazeta* was the announcement in issue 21, in April 1925, of the departure of Oliveira Tavares from being one of the newspaper’s publishers to become the head of the *Companhia de Moçambique*. The importance of the press as a structure of the public sphere and as a crucial space for intervention in the political process was reaffirmed when Leite de Magalhães became a member of the government of Angola in the second half of 1926 (issue 37, September 1926).

Concerning relations with political forces and parties, these became transparent when we analyzed the journalists and writers of *Gazeta*. For example, contributors included the engineer and politician Alfredo Augusto Freire de Andrade; historian and colonial administrator Armando Cortesão; Artur Tamagnini de Sousa Barbosa, the Governor of Macau; General José Augusto Alves Roçadas; Goan intellectual and politician Luiz de Menezes de Bragança; and Brito Camacho, a physician, republican politician and colonial governor. The newspaper also had journalists working in offices in Angola and Mozambique – even in the interior of these territories – which highlights its connections as a communications company with the press in the colonies.

Analyzing the third dimension, the level of the professionalism was low, as the history of Portuguese press has demonstrated. At this time the journalistic field had no professional norms; most contributors were amateur hobbyist writers, which enabled the instrumentalization of journalism to respond to elite interests and sometimes to personal ambitions. Meanwhile, it’s also important to highlight the orientation of newspaper contents to public problems of Portugal and its empire, namely economic, political and social challenges.

Finally, looking to the role of the state, through the publication of *Gazeta*, there were not any indications that censorship had affected the contents and circulation. However, the military coup in 1926 affected the irregularity of the

circulation statistics and caused the demise of the paper. The main topics of *Gazeta* were concerned with state and public governance, throughout the Empire and the analysis revealed a high level of involvement of politicians and public servants with the paper.

The case of *Gazeta das Colónias* as an imperial newspaper with circulation in all the colonies of the Portuguese empire, demonstrated the attachment and the capture of media system in four dimensions: ownership by imperial elites; financial incentives through public and private advertisement; censorship with the advent of military government and cognitive connection with the world-views of the colonial and imperial program.

## CAPTURED BY ELITES

The goals and methods of the colonial enterprise were the main topic of discussion between the imperial elites of the early 20th century (Roberts, 1986). The historian Roberts (1986) demonstrates how the political, economic and military elite were protagonists in determining the response to imperial problems, highlighting the role of institutions in the colonial territories and the conflicts created between the metropolis and these territories due to the ‘cost’ of the colonial enterprise. Beasley (2005) identifies the role of the founders of the Colonial Society in the emergence and affirmation of imperial ideology in the United Kingdom from 1870, which depended on flourishing journalism and popular literature. In the Portuguese empire, as the case of the press of Macao and Angola showed, the imperial and colonial elites appropriated the press and journalism as favored channels of affirmation and conflict with the colonial project. Press systems were used by elites to promote and pursue their vested interest related to economic benefits connected to private enterprises and also related to public policies and rules.

The imperial and colonial elites, fully aware of their condition and power, represented themselves through the press and used journalism to capture the colonial enterprise. The concept of imperial and colonial elites used here is that used by Xavier and Santos (2007), where the ‘imperial elite’ are those who were engaged in the imperial space to exercise political, economic or cultural functions. On the other hand, the ‘colonial elite’ was composed of groups in the imperial territories in which they owned interests and exercised power. In this respect, the *Gazeta das Colónias* was associated with the imperial elite and the newspapers published in the territories were associated with the colonial elites. The elites used the IPS and Portugal’s media system to propagate their ideology, defend their political and economic interests, articulate their ambitions and disseminate their cultural practices. These elites interacted and debated with each

other, promoting, questioning and fighting metropolitan ideology and directives in accordance with their interests. By integrating the IPS and media system, these elites demonstrated an understanding of the empire as an entity formed by a continuum of local structures and, as such, played the role of an ideological device shaping the worldviews through press and journalism.

## CONCLUSIONS

The IPS emerged from the liberal struggles of the 19th century and promoted public debate and the press in the colonies belonging to the Portuguese empire. Politics and the economy were the theme of public opinion in an interdependent geographical space. The Portuguese language and shared intellectual culture, in addition to regional and local peculiarities, shaped the development and growth of a press that was the stage for all social life, provoked conflict and built consensus. Imperial elites, whether they were based in Lisbon or in colonial governments, economic enterprises in the territories, colonial elites and the native elites, were all protagonists in the IPS.

Portugal exercised political, economic, social and military power over its domains throughout the last two centuries (Newitt, 1981). The imperial project and colonial issues were themes that were intrinsic to the life of the country and overseas colonies, and this was reflected in the information and opinion content that shaped the media system. The continuous contestation of the empire in the territories, as well as the permanent disagreements over the direction of the colonies, were also reflected in the IPS and media system. In the context of public space and opinion, the metropolis and the colonies were an integrated imperial and discursive public sphere. An appreciation of the IPS is essential to understanding the press and journalism (the media system) as a structure of representation and political conflict in the imperial and colonial context.

The economic, political, military and ideological forces – the four sources of social power identified by Michael Mann (2012) – were protagonists in the discussion and conflict in the IPS and capture of the media system. The colonial and imperial elites took control of the press system and were agents in an IPS that propagated the colonial ideology of that period and shaped the imperial Portuguese worldview.

Applying the concept of media capture and using the dimensions developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) to explore the roles and features of the Portuguese imperial media system during liberalism, the research revealed the following characteristics. First, journalism performed roles typical of liberalism, but demonstrated a cognitive capture, presenting the agenda, political views and ideologies of the social groups that were attached. Second, the press did not become

a means of mass circulation and remained a political and non-commercial institution, with a restricted audience and owned by political and social forces. Third, both the press and political systems revealed a strong political parallelism regarding ownership and the manifestation of corporate and government connections with journalism. Fourth, the processes of professionalization and professionalism were in their infancy and the performance of journalists was linked to their political action. Finally, the imperial state and the government maintained a strong intervention in the press through advertisement, incentives to create newspapers, censorship and the persecution of journalists and titles.

Several studies have identified the roles of propaganda and the ideological device of the Portuguese media system during the authoritarian Estado Novo (1933–1974), for instance Garcia, Leonárd and Alves (2017a). In the scope of the Portuguese transition to democracy during the 1970s, the media also performed a political role and was related to the dissemination of ideologies of political parties and social movements (Maxwell, 1983; Rezola and Gomes, 2014). Discussing and analyzing a Lusophone media system in contemporary societies, Figueiras and Ribeiro (2019) brought together case studies that showed the connections among media systems, governments and private corporations. Against this background, I suggest research on imperial Portuguese media history and contemporary studies on the media of Lusophone countries will benefit from the adoption of the concept of media capture. The idea of media capture is a theoretical insight that could improve media studies and gain a deeper understanding of the impact of legacies on contemporary political and media systems; the comprehensive analysis of the continuities and ruptures on media performance; and the roles developed by journalism.

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