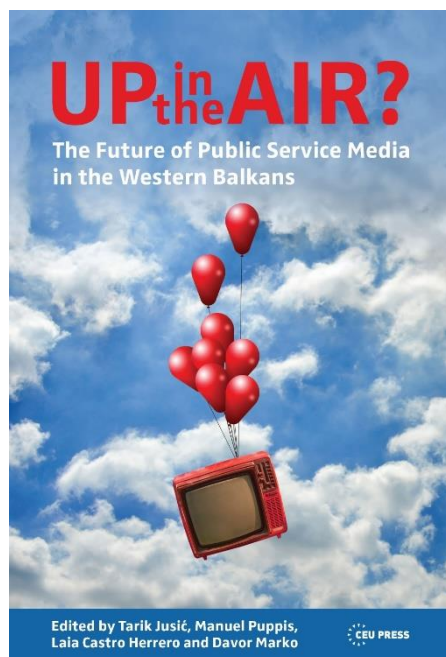




Up in the Air?

The Future of Public Service Media in the Western Balkans

The agenda for transition after the demise of communism in the Western Balkans made the conversion of state radio and television into public service broadcasters a priority, converting mouthpieces of the regime into public forums in which various interests and standpoints could be shared and deliberated. There is general agreement that this endeavor has not been a success. Formally, the countries adopted the legal and institutional requirements of public service media according to European standards. The ruling political elites, however, retained their control over the public media by various means.

Can this trend be reversed? Instead of being marginalized or totally manipulated, can public service media become vehicles of genuine democratization?

A comparison of public service media in seven countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) addresses these important questions.

About the editors

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"Up in the Air?" offers an impressive overview of the state of play of Public Service Media in the Western Balkans. Renowned scholars in the field present empirical data and above all rich insights into the complexity of Public Service Media working (or not) in a context of politicization and commercialization. This book adds to the existing scholarship on Public Service Media, reflecting on this policy project, institutions as well as the values and activities related to it, challenging Western-centric theories to date. A must-read for everyone who is willing to accept that the mimetic approach, whereby post-communist countries simply take over the so-called BBC model, has not worked to date and will not work in the future either."

Karen Donders, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

"A timely, comprehensive and perceptive collection surveying key developments in a most delicate and significant European region. Well-crafted chapters document heroic achievements, thwarted aspirations, technological transformations and enduring struggles in forging national identities: the Western Balkans become a theater for exploring the difficult future and role of public service media in complex information ecologies."

*Monroe Price, Annenberg School for Communication,
University of Pennsylvania*

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