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## **The Greek political publishing field during the long 1960s, exemplified by the case of Istorikes Ekdoseis, 1963-1981**

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## SUMMARY

This thesis deals with political publishing during the Greek *long sixties*, 1963-1981. In particular it provides a historical narrative of Greek left-wing publishing in the broad sense (including communist, leftist, anarchist, countercultural and alternative media) during this period.

The major argument of this thesis is that Greek political publishing during the time under investigation constituted a distinctive publishing field, in terms of John B. Thompson's treatise of the publishing field theory, which is in turn based on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. I argue that the political publishing field differs distinctively from the trade-publishing field in terms of the significance of the five sources of capital (economic, social, human, intellectual, symbolic) defined by Thompson. While all five are present in the political publishing field, economic capital, which is vital in trade publishing, is of less significance, while symbolic capital is of the utmost importance. It is possible for characteristics to be shared across time and space, but generalising without investigating can easily lead to wrong conclusions since fields evolve in time and are also affected by the specific social, political, economic, and technological conditions of each country. Thus we need to investigate each field in a specific time and space frame and by drawing upon the publishing field theory specify its particular characteristics.

In order to illustrate my key argument I use a variety of case studies in Chapter 1, and a key case study, that of Istorikes Ekdoseis, in the last two chapters. Archival research has been used to reconstruct the universe of

Istorikes Ekdoseis as well as other case studies. Unfortunately, only fractions of archives have been recovered. A full reconstruction of the Istorikes Ekdoseis publishing project would not have been possible without the extensive use of oral history. Oral history also allowed me to develop an idea of the audience and readership of the publications—information that could not be acquired any other way. The internet and social media have in this regard proved to be crucial sources. The dissolution of the revolutionary movements of the long sixties resulted in the dispersal of their members, not only across Greece but even worldwide. The internet has provided the opportunity to track them down by searching the web or various databases. The recent social media boom offered the means to contact former agents of the field or readers.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Greek political publishing field during the *long sixties*. This chapter historicises the Greek political publishing field and discusses how both internal and international political developments had their impact on the formation and disintegration of the field. Issues of time and space are also discussed in this chapter. The political publishing field reflects the underlying sociality of space. The majority of the field's agents were concentrated in central city locations, close to the social spaces frequented by the youth, mainly student, target audience (i.e., university faculties, bars and cafes). Furthermore through the presentation of different case studies I conceptualise widely and loosely used terms, such as underground press, alternative, press, countercultural media. I also show how during this time due to the institutional anticommunism (until 1974) many intellectuals were involved in publishing (e.g. as printers, publishers, door-to-door salesmen) due to being banned from working in a variety of other sectors of the economy. This in combination with the popularity of political publishing led a number of trade publishers to be involved in political publishing during the time under investigation.

In Chapter 2 I apply Thompson's field theory to show that political publishing in Greece during the long sixties constituted a publishing field in its own right. The aforementioned major argument of this thesis is presented in theoretical terms in this chapter; that a distinct publishing field existed is shown by the importance of symbolic capital and the virtual absence

of economic capital, making it an anomaly in the trade publishing field. Unlike trade publishing's conventional sub-subfields, political publishing exhibited virtually no influence from economic capital. Likewise, other publishing fields are not affected by the historical context in the same way political publishing is. Of course, the particular circumstances of time and space affect all publishing fields to a greater or lesser extent. Technological advances, increased literacy and standards of living, or an increase of attendance in higher education all affect the way a publishing field or subfield will develop. In the case of the Greek political publishing field, however, historical time and context did not merely influence developments—they created the field itself. I argue that the rise of social movements in the long sixties in Greece and the attendant politicisation of the youth—today's “baby boomers”—were essential to the very rise of the field, while the end of the long sixties and the decline of the same social, cultural and political movements brought the field to its end.

In chapter 3, I elaborate on the dialectics of form and content of published works within the political publishing field through the use of case studies. I argue that the form, as in the graphic design and the material quality, was directly related to symbolic capital, and symbolic capital was—as I have argued—of overarching significance in the political publishing field. Two distinct patterns or publishing practices emerged in relation to the distinct form of the period. The first was the copying of originals in an attempt to draw on and transmit the symbolic capital that inhered in them—from the publisher, author or title of the original through to the copied works. The second pattern was the production of first-hand cheap editions with deliberately poor aesthetics when there was no symbolic capital in the original that might be transmitted via copying.

The fourth and fifth chapters explore in detail the dissertation's case study: *Istorikes Ekdoseis*, a Greek publishing venture prominent during the long sixties. Before proceeding with *Istorikes Ekdoseis*, both the Chinese policy regarding the foreign press and the use of press and publishing during the long sixties within the international revolutionary movements are discussed. This is necessary since one cannot fully comprehend the political publishing field if the global aspect is neglected. Various political trends

developed a sense of universality, both in terms of beliefs and in terms of the movements that championed them. The exchange of literature—translations, hosting articles or publishing works produced by comrades from all around the world—between “true believers” in different countries was a prevalent practice at the time, and in reality, it was nothing but the publishing embodiment of the perception of being part of a global revolutionary project.

Istorikes Ekdoseis is one of the few political publishing houses that operated through the entire period, save the seven years of military rule from 1967 to 1974. The ideological motivations of its founders and contributors throughout its operation and its highly political and ideological content, as well as the fact that it operated across the entire long sixties, are sufficient reasons to select Istorikes Ekdoseis as a representative case study of the Greek political publishing field. These two chapters cover, respectively, the first and second operational periods of Istorikes Ekdoseis (i.e., pre- and post-junta) and include both a narrative of the publishing activity per se and an application of publishing field theory. To reconstruct the history of this publishing project—and position it and its agents within the political publishing field—a series of methodological and research tools were employed. Elements of Bourdieu’s field theory—especially as modified by Thompson—have been pivotal in grounding the framework of the research. The focus on a single publisher should be perceived as a micro-historical approach, which is used to support and substantiate the arguments regarding the greater narrative. In this sense, it is not an attempt to scale down the research as this would be contradictory to the long sixties approach, itself a core element of the research framework. These two chapters thus, in a way, combine the core of the first two chapters of the dissertation: a historical narrative where publishing field theory is applied in order to reconstruct the field and at the same time determine its distinctive characteristics.

The conclusions that follow sum up the key arguments of the dissertation. These are:

1. Political publishing in Greece during the long sixties constituted a distinctive publishing field.
2. A fundamental characteristic of this field is the centrality of sym-

bolic capital. This form of capital is at the heart not only of every agent within the field but of the field itself. The decline of symbolic capital is closely intertwined with the decline of ideological and political currents at the time. This decline not only brought political publishers to their knees but also forced most of them to close down or migrate to other publishing fields, thereby turning them into relics of a once vivid and flourishing publishing space.

3. Another fundamental characteristic differentiating this publishing field from trade publishing is the relative insignificance of economic capital. One may think that this is due to the very real dearth of financial resources available to the agents of the field. In reality, this scarcity of financial resources is not the reason for the insignificance of economic capital. The main reason for this was political, rather than economic since publishing was primarily seen as a political task or duty. Since individuals were driven to the field by a sense of political duty, they took up the work even when not particularly suited to it and with little concern for the monetary compensation.

