

Call for contributions:

“Media and Class in Greece” – Proposed edited volume

Yiannis Mylonas and Elena Psyllakou (eds)

During the last years, research on issues of social class in the media has been growing. Edited volumes and special issues in journals (Deery & Press, 2018; O’Neil & Wayne, 2018; Polson, Schofield Clark, & Gajjala, 2020; Jakobsson, Lindell & Stiernstedt, 2021; Reifova & Hajek, 2021), along with numerous monographs and peer reviewed articles were published (Kendall, 2011; Skeggs & Wood, 2012; Eriksson, 2015; Yilmaz, 2016; Harkins & Lugo-Ocando, 2018; Jakobsson, 2018; Mylonas, 2019), addressing different class-related issues/questions in media-related phenomena at a time of deepening inequalities worldwide. A rather multilayered sociological concept, class is approached differently by various scholarly traditions. Jakobsson, Lindell & Stiernstedt (2021: 2) outline three major approaches to class, the Marxist, the gradational and the culturalist. The Marxian understanding of class division, exploitation, and antagonism is crucial in foregrounding political questions associated with inequality and social change. Influenced by Weber, other scholars emphasize issues related to lifestyles, status and skills, and foreground a rather plural and less conflictual understanding of class, focusing on the role of individual agency for social mobility. Further, some scholars focus on questions of culture, emphasizing on the experiences and the meanings ascribed to class. The combination of different dimensions from these traditions of class analysis is developed by others (Wright, 2015), so as to use the notion of class to address the complexity of late modern, and/or late capitalist social contexts. Simultaneously, class has been an important category in critical studies in media and cultural studies, developed by the British cultural scholars from the 1960s onwards (Williams, 2015; Hall et al., 1978; Skeggs, 2003), and also through the influential work of Bourdieu (2010), while it has also been associated with the critical analyses of the political economy of the media (Fuchs, 2015).

The proposed volume wishes to bring together studies focusing on the Greek realities of class as they appear in and through the Greek media realm. This class-media interplay is thought as structural, performative and affective. While class positions, values and attitudes may affect the interpretation of media messages, the engagement with the media content as well the access to the media system, they are themselves mediated and reconstructed by the variety of media at our disposal (Polson et al., 2020; Tyler, 2010). We are thus interested in exploring the different class cultures that unfold in today’s Greece, by examining the meanings, the performances, and the social relations that underpin/co-articulate the “making” of class through various media practices in the specific country. Research in media and culture in Greece make a growing field that is offering promising scholarship from scholars working in Greece and abroad (e.g., Platzos, 2012; Πουλακιδάκος, 2014; Tziouvas, 2017; Kompatsiaris, 2017; Stamou, 2018; Aitaki, 2019; Siapera, 2019; Doudaki & Boubouka, 2020; Kostopoulos, 2020; Karatzogianni & Veneti, 2020; Papanikolaou, 2021; Smyrnaio, Papaevangelou, Tsimpoukis, 2021; Πλειός, 2021), that bring important up-to-date and critical theoretical perspectives that shed light on a variety of previously understudied topics that concern the realities of contemporary Greece. Little however, has been written on class cultures in this country, particularly while studying the Greek media world. This contribution therefore aims at developing the particular discussion.

A peripheral European state, Greece has nevertheless been at the forefront of European policy-making for at least ten years, catching the attention of European and global media as well, on issues related to the EU's economic and border policies, among other. Simultaneously, Greece has caught the attention of social movements and left-wing political parties from Europe and elsewhere, due to its vibrant and mass left-wing militancy, as well as due to the injustices and inequalities occurring there against the growing impoverished Greek middle and lower classes, and the migrants and refugees stranded in the country due to EU agreements. On the downside of the matter, the European and global far right was also fascinated by the growth of the Greek far right, which found fertile ground to advance during the crisis years and beyond.

Like elsewhere, in Greece too, the prospects for the future seem grim to the majority of the population. Ten years of crisis and austerity saw the growing of the Greek debt - despite (or rather, because of) the neoliberal reforms imposed and applied to the country - the augmentation of unemployment, the developing of new migration waves, and new Greek diasporas. In such a context, the quality of the Greek democracy is steadily diminishing. Simultaneously, the growing of social conservatism is also noted, with nationalism, racism and apolitical individualism to be on the rise in the country. The election of a conservative government in July 2019, implementing a neoliberal authoritative agenda, which involves a program of privatizations of public property and deregulation of labor and socio-political rights alongside an emphasis on nationalist, anti-leftist and "law and order" agendas, hardens the living prospects of the many in the country. Since 2019 especially, besides the Covid-19 pandemic situation and the burdens it posed to the lower classes of a country with minimal welfare resources, the Greek society met a variety of other crisis situations too. These include the eruption of a Greek #metoo movement during the early 2021, after public revelations of physical, psychological and sexual abuse of men and women working in a variety of fields such as sports, the arts, the academia, and the media. During the summer of 2021 many wildfires unleashed an unprecedented environmental catastrophe in Greece, further adding to the country's augmenting environmental problems. In the recent years, an escalation of police violence is also witnessed in the country, involving the brutalization of migrants, youths, and protesters, and cumulating to the murdering of a Roma youth in late October 2021. Last but not least, Greece is also lately observing the rise of a new wave of far-right practices across the country.

The examination of such intersectional complexities through the critical lens of the class-media interplay can deepen the understanding of the Greek public life, the emerging identities and subjectivities, the social hierarchies as well as the counter-hegemonic and subversive practices in the turbulent space of the Greek society. Understanding class as a category of both material and cultural inquiry that reflects fluid power hierarchies and structures, we pay particular attention on how class cultures are entangled with other forms of social organizations, identities, and narrations of the self (Beswick, 2020; Polson et al., 2020). In doing so, we argue that "class" does not only reproduce uneven social relations organically, while legitimizing class-orientated policies and aspirations in the broader social realm, but may also become a point of reference for radical identity politics and collective mobilization in times of crisis. In that sense, a class-media orientated study of contemporary Greek politics and cultures may shed light to the meanings and the values generated, publicly distributed, and also contested on topics of socio-

political importance such as inequality, injustice, and exclusion; growing social problems that concern not only Greece and require a class perspective for their critical understanding and addressing.

The proposed volume welcomes contributions on class-related perspectives regarding Greek media consumption practices and everyday media use (in both “old” and “new” media), media representations of class-related topics, as well as political economy analyses connected with questions of class politics and ownership of media conglomerates in the Greek media realm, and issues related to class dimensions connected with algorithmic biases in the Greek cybersphere.

Proposed topics include the following (while welcoming additional proposals too):

- Media representations of the contemporary working class, work relations, poverty and precarity
- Media representations of welfare
- Class and migration; framing refugees and migrant workers in the Greek media
- Class and gender perspectives; the Greek #metoo
- Framing the middle class
- Class and neoliberal cultures in Greece; cultures of meritocracy, excellence and success
- Class and media consumption / Class and everyday media use
- Greek reality TV and class perspectives
- Shaming and ridiculing in Greek popular cultures
- Class and Greek subcultures and countercultures
- Class aspects and Greek cinema
- Class politics and media ownership in Greece
- Class politics and practices of censorship
- Class, fake news and Greek conspiracy theories
- Class and the far right/alt-right in Greece
- Class and Greek anticommunism
- Class and left-wing media politics
- Class and the Greek diasporas
- Class, orientalism and self-orientalization in Greece
- Class, gentrification, and tourist cultures
- Class conditioning, media literacy and access to the media system
- Class affective structures, relationalities and embodiments in media narrations and everyday media use

Please send a 150-200 word abstract at yiannis.mylonas.hse@gmail.com by Friday, 31 December 2021.

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Suggested literature:

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