

Call for articles

The Transformations of the Book Publishing in Post-Socialist Spaces (ex-USSR, post-Yugoslav space, Czech Republic and Slovakia)

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Karolinum Bookshop, Prague, 2019 © Anne Madelain

The period of 1989-1991 famously marked the end of the socialist regimes, which, in turn, profoundly affected the publishing industry and book distribution in the post-socialist space, including Central and Southeast Europe. Among the most visible transformations that occurred, the end of state control, the appearance of private actors (publishers, distributors, booksellers) and the influx of translations of works by Western authors can be emphasized (as substantial). These transformations have also coincided with the digital revolution that has disrupted publishing and reading practices all over the world (*Symbolic Goods 2020*, Curry & Lillis 2010, Hayles 2016, Epron & Vitali-Rosati 2018).

It has been widely acknowledged that in France, Germany, and the English-speaking world, publishing and bookselling are familiar objects of study for historians and sociologists. Both the history of the book and the sociology of publishing and translation have become research fields in their own right, generating a specialized literature for which extensive bibliographies can be compiled (Mollier 2015; Thompson 2010). Conversely, however, the social sciences have paid little attention to the transformations of publishing industries in the post-socialist countries.

Therefore, we welcome the contributions exploring transformations in the publishing industries in those countries and geographic areas that have experienced both the end of socialist regimes and the reorganization of their national borders as a result of the dissolution of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia in the early 1990s. In these contexts, the

transformations of publishing and the publishing professions are a heuristic object for several reasons. On the one hand, in a period of technological revolution and acceleration of international circulation, these transformations concern the reconfiguration of production and cultural and intellectual players. On the other hand, they also touch on questions of language policy, the circulation of cultural goods, and the symbolic construction of the new States.

The comparative approach makes it possible to understand some common phenomena such as privatization and disappearance of State-controlled publishing conglomerates, the emergence of small independent publishers and reorganization of the retail channels. However, many national specificities can also be observed, whether in the national publishing systems of the socialist period (control over the printed production, political censorship, relations with the outside world, the role of translations of the foreign literature) or during the transitional period to the free market after 1989, which was highly influenced by the international players. Other differences are linked to the long-term cultural phenomena, such as reading habits, the level of education of the reading population or the symbolic place given to the book in the process of national building. The reorganization of the distribution channels in the former socialist federations is also an interesting axis of comparison because the solutions adopted by the actors of the book industry could be very diverse depending on the local political, cultural, and geographical contexts.

Finally, these different post-socialist fields make it possible to analyze, from a context considered peripheral, the contemporary mutations of the world publishing: the atomization of a majority of actors and the appearance of new dominant (inter)national publishing conglomerates (Schiffrin 2000), self-publishing and piracy, bestsellers and its impact on the field of translation.

We would like to focus on the transformations of the key players (publishers, publishing professionals, firms, booksellers, libraries etc.), the links between publishing and academia, the financing of the sector, in particular that of translations, but also in structuring of the post-socialist publishing markets, public policies regarding book industries, and recomposing of distribution channels in the different linguistic areas. We invite the potential contributors to cross different disciplinary approaches from such fields as sociology, history, cultural and social history and economics in particular.

We are interested in contributions on the history and sociology of publishing in the post-socialist spaces in order to generate a multidisciplinary and comprehensive set of papers which will be published in the special issue of the open access peer-reviewed journal [Connexe. Exploring Post-communist Spaces](#) by the end of **2024**. The articles (50 000 signs, or 8000 words max.) can be submitted in **English** and **French**.

The selected contributions for the special issue will be discussed during a workshop which will be held in **INALCO in Paris** in the **end of January, 2024**. The organizers may cover some of the travel and / or accommodation costs, however the amount of available coverage is limited.

Application Procedure:

Please submit your abstracts (max. 500 words) in English or French and a brief bio by **October 25, 2023**. Prospective contributors will be notified by November 15, 2023. The selected contributors are expected to send the draft versions of the articles before the workshop. **Deadline for final papers submission** is March 15, 2024.

For additional information, please contact Anne Madelain (anne.madelain@inalco.fr) or Daria Petushkova (petushkovadaria@gmail.com).

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