



MULTILINGUAL ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Readers of Public History Magazines in Greece: The Case of the Illustrated History

Germanos Vasileiadis, Athanasios Stavrou & Ifigeneia Vamvakidou

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.46886/MAJESS/v8-i1/7337>

DOI:10.46886/MAJESS/v8-i1/7337

Received: 06 October 2020, Revised: 22 November 2020, Accepted: 04 December 2020

Published Online: 23 December 2020

In-Text Citation: (Vasileiadis, Stavrou & Vamvakidou, 2020)

To Cite this Article: Vasileiadis, G., Stavrou, A., & Vamvakidou, I. (2020). Readers of Public History Magazines in Greece: The Case of the Illustrated History. *Multilingual Academic Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 8(1), 280–289.

Copyright: © The Authors 2020

Published by Knowledge Words Publications (www.kwpublications.com)

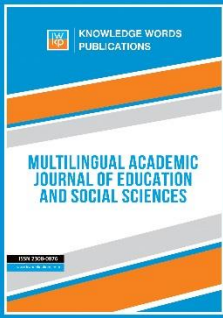
This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 8, No. 1, 2020, Pg. 280 - 289

<https://kwpublications.com/journals/journaldetail/MAJESS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<https://kwpublications.com/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



Readers of Public History Magazines in Greece: The Case of the Illustrated History

Germanos Vasileiadis, Athanasios Stavrou & Ifigeneia Vamvakidou

Pedagogic School, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Abstract

Public history as a “nonacademic narrative” plays an important role in the modern construction of national or historic mentality. A genre of public history are history magazines which have an increasing significance of a commercialized mediation of history within public historical culture and reflects the fact that these representations can have an impact on the younger generation’s understanding the history. In the late 20th and early 21st century there is a peak in publication of public history magazines worldwide. It seems that the increase of leisure time, rising thirst for entertainment and cultural tourism, the need for orientation in a changing world especially in western societies and the increase in mass media representation of history as a means to address collective identities and loyalties, have played a role in this development. We claim that it is imperative to study the readers’ profile as receivers of public history through magazines. In this audience research, we study on «The Illustrated History» as the first Greek historic illustrated magazine (1968-2018) and we focus on its readers. Methodologically, we use an online questionnaire (google forms) in order to study the profile of this magazine’s readers. The research was held from August 2018 up to November 2018. The sample consists of 105 answers and it is structured into four sections a) demographic data b) the relationship with the magazine c) the relationship with history and d) the emotional dimension - evaluation of the magazine.

Keywords: Public History, Magazines, Greece, Audience Research

Introduction

Illustrated Magazines

After the printing press became prevalent in Europe, early publishers began to conceptualize the magazine. Forerunners of the familiar modern magazine first appeared during the 17th century in the form of brochures, pamphlets, and almanacs. Soon, publishers realized that irregular publication schedules required too much time and energy. A gradual shift then occurred as publishers sought regular readers with specific interests. But the early magazine was unlike any other previous publication. It was not enough of a news source to be a newspaper, but it could

not be considered pleasure reading either. Instead, early magazines occupied the middle ground between the two (“Understanding Media and culture,” 2019). The first man in Britain that notices the effect of illustrations on sales and grasp their possibilities was a newsagent in Nottingham, Herbert Ingram, who moved to London in 1842 and began publishing *The Illustrated London News*, a weekly consisting of 16 pages of letterpress and 32 woodcuts. It was successful from the start, winning the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury and hence that of the clerical public. Pictorial journalism grew up alongside advertising techniques, the tabloid, and the documentary film. Modern cameras enabled top-grade photographs to be taken quickly under almost any conditions. Photojournalists were particularly active in Germany, until many had to flee the Nazis. One of them was the Hungarian Stefan Lorant, who developed the photo essay (a story reported through pictures) with *Bilder Courier* in Berlin in 1926 and with the *Münchener illustrierte Presse* in the period 1927–33. He then went to Britain, where he started a pocket picture magazine, *Lilliput* (1937–60), and was the first editor of *Picture Post* (1938–57). Another pioneer was a German, Erich Salomon, who became celebrated for his photographs of the famous, particularly politicians, in unguarded moments. Salomon’s pictures in the *London Tatler* in 1928 prompted *Fortune* to invite him to the United States, where he inspired the Life photographer Thomas McAvoy are wholly free from its influence.

As the 20th century progressed, the old critical review lost some of its former glory, but it often wielded an influence quite out of proportion to its circulation. One may distinguish broadly between the scholarly type of review, the more widely read politico-cultural periodical, and the purely literary magazine. The critical review developed strongly in the 19th century, often as an adjunct to a book-publishing business. It became a forum for the questions of the day—political, literary, and artistic—to which many great figures contributed. There were also many magazines with a literary flavour, and these serialized some of the best fiction of the period. A few marked the beginning of specialization—e.g., in science (“Magazine publishing,” 2019; Khalid, Islam & Ahmed, 2019)

What about the Readers?

As we read about the Skillful Readers and the Poor Readers it seems that one of the earliest efforts in the recent trend to synthesize what we know from reading research, Marilyn Adams' 1990 book, "Beginning To Read" was a landmark review of the research on phonics and reading acquisition (Adams, 1990; Alzgoon, 2019; Umrani, Ahmed & Memon, 2015)

The following checklist is another resource that should be handy to have around while you’re reading a magazine. One way to understand a magazine is to take stock of its many different parts—its anatomy; the following checklist charts that anatomy by grouping the different things you’ll typically find in a magazine into eleven separate categories (“How to read a magazine,” 2019). When fashioning this checklist, we resisted the temptation to number the different categories, since we feared that would turn the list into a series of prescribed steps in an unfolding investigation, and we firmly believe that no such sequence exists for reading magazines in all occasions. One thing we have done, though, is to sort the items within each category into one of three groups: something that may be observed in a single issue of a

magazine- something that may only be observed across multiple issues of a magazine- something that may not be observable but needs to be inferred, interpreted, or researched.

What about the Magazine Itself?

In the process of constructing the specific audience research ("Audience research," 2019) we must focus on the Magazine contents as the signs of the cover and title page: title, subtitle of magazine, featured articles (what overall impression do you get? focus vs. variety) the table of contents: again, what impression of whole? The material in the magazine about the magazine itself: masthead, descriptive summaries of contents and contributors (current or future), etc. the other kinds of verbal texts in the magazine (classified by genre or discipline): e.g., editorial, informative, creative, critical? The visual texts (graphics, images): illustrations, drawings, etchings, photographs, art reproductions, etc. the number and length of texts in the magazine. The proportion of the magazine (number of pages) which is devoted to each kind of text? to individual texts? The advertisements: number, location, ad-size, kinds of products advertised. Which contents are original contributions and which are reprints from other publications? Which magazine contents are recurring/regular departments or columns? which contents are part of a serialization? what sorts of contents does the magazine not publish? The Magazine contributors (authors, artists, etc.), the contributions per author/artist (in one or more issues)? The pages devoted to his/her work (in one or more issues)? the contributor's relationship to the magazine as a whole (member of staff, regular contributor, etc.). The status of contributors today (well-known, respected, popular—or not) and at the time of publication? The demographic info about the contributors: nationality, regional location, gender, race/ethnicity, class, age, etc. the contributors' appearance in the magazine say about it and the kind of content it publishes? People responsible for the magazine as a whole- editors and editorial staff: who makes editorial decisions? what control do the editors have over the paper? publishers: who are they? what is their relationship with the editors? their degree of influence over the paper? patrons: if the magazine relies on patronage, what influence do these patrons have over the paper?

The goal or purpose of the magazine: what is the magazine's big idea (stated or implied)—its agenda, program, or tendency (check editorials) what is its political stance? what are its values? is there consensus or agreement (in outlook, politics, etc.) among various contributors? are there continuing themes and recurring motifs among various contents and issues? are there any patterns in what gets applauded or criticized in the magazine? organization and structure- layout: sequence or pattern of contents, location of the table of contents, grouping by genre, etc.- spatial relationship between texts and images, texts and ads-

Method: Surveying the magazine. In "How to Study a Modern Magazine," Scholes & Wulfman offer a model of how one may arrive at a balanced overview of a magazine, one that surveys its many different elements and then puts the findings together. On the first level the surveys revolve around our describing (as impartially as possible) the magazine, but we might also want to evaluate the magazine in light of our findings (though additional research will almost certainly be necessary). Some questions to consider: What did the magazine accomplish? Did it achieve what its editors wanted to accomplish? Was it good at what it did? What cultural value

or significance did the magazine have in its day, and how is it regarded today? What, if anything, did it change?

If the question is How do people read a magazine, the answer seems simple: in many different ways, almost all of the time. Here's an enumeration of twelve different ways to read a magazine—along with some suggestions for getting more out of your reading. Skimming/browsing- Surveying- Grazing- Sampling- Rooting around- Selective close-reading- Moving in and out- Moving between observation and inference- Seizing prematurely on particulars-Drifting. Circling back.

Popular/Public History Magazines

The market for public history magazines has been booming internationally since the beginning of the 21st century and this commercialized mediation of history creates representations which can have a lasting impact on the younger generation's and generally in readers' perception of history (Bühl- Gramer, 2016; Zin & Ibrahim, 2020).

Factors that have played role in this development are the increase of leisure time, the rising thirst for entertainment, cultural tourism and other cultural needs: *the higher standards of education and the greater amount of disposable income, the demographic development in combination with the changing world, the increase representations of history by the mass media through anniversaries, commemorations, political statements, seems to address new collective identities and loyalties* (Popp, 2015: 15). As Cannadine (2014: introduction) explains, the factors that help the public history boom can be specified by country. For example, the popularity of public history in UK has been combined with political factors such as the millennium, the fall of the empire, events in the royal family etc. The mass public production and the consumption of this form of historical communication have resulted in its categorization as *popular history*. Communicating history to a wide audience requires the adaption of historical events, narratives, ideas and research. This transformation of the academic historical rhetoric into an accessible format, such as magazines articles facilitates its consumption by a large public audience and this is the way that public engages in and with history (Sayer, 2015: 149). Nevertheless popular/public history magazines seem to devote some effort to coming across as more 'academic' or 'scientific' in character, while it has been argued that popular history magazines provide too simple and one-dimensional view of history to be able to develop the historical understanding of its readers. Research has shown that some history teachers find the popular history magazines as quite useful as a tool for learning and inspiration (Thorp, 2015). Thus, history magazines as a research object show interest because they are subject to commercial conditions since they construct and present the history according to commercial rules, they are multimodal material that use text, image, graphics etc. components that enhance readers' comprehension. In a research about popular history magazines, there are eight approaches that give content to the term and must always be in mind. According to Popp (2015: 44-49) history magazine are illustrated periodicals addressing a non-expert audience, they are a phenomenon of a society's historical culture which combine a cognitive dimension with an aesthetic and emotional dimension as well as a political dimension. Moreover, they can be assigned to the area of historical journalism, as the term derives from the Arabic word "makāzin" which means storeroom or storehouse, a distinction that can be made is between "special interest magazines" that deal with history in general and "very special interest magazines" that focus on sub-themes such as certain periods, people, or objects.

Another potential journalistic classification of the popular history magazines either categorized in the field of “popular knowledge magazines” or the areas “arts and culture” or “hobby and entertainment”. History magazines are also to be considered as commercial products that their primary objective is the financial sale success. The last one is the focus of history magazines especially in Greece lies in the national historical culture and emphasizes the national history. History has been commercialized independently of historians, and by understanding the communication and consumption processes that have been subjected to a modern, popular engagement with the past, we will be able to understand this phenomenon. If historians want to protect the historical consciousness of the public, they must first understand how this public is informed. Public culture is under constant conflict and evolution, and the representation of the history is part of this evolution. Heritage consumerism is also a problematic, destructive force, but at the same time these historical products bear within them a potentiality for introducing new ways of conceptualizing the individual and the social knowledge. Consumption practices influence what is packaged as history, and work to define how the past manifests itself in society (Groot, 2016: 6). It is very important to be researched the impact on how the past is displayed in magazines, what is the kind of historic knowledge the media company sets out to acquire about the potential readers. Knowledge about audiences is crucial to the success of media companies and statistic is an important scientific tool to produce that knowledge (Axelsson, 2012). History magazines show remarkable numbers in their circulation. Readers of these magazines tend to be both genders with a percentage prevalence of male readers, over forty and educated. The readers have leading position in private and sector and are often active in voluntary associations. Readers of the prestigious monthly magazines, infers intent and repeated monthly interest in the subject. The diversity of articles suggests an audience able to investigate in a number of historiographical styles and complex historical contexts. So, the target group has a university education and belongs in middle class. The focus is on men with careers and money to spend. Moreover, the connection between male audiences with military and political history seems to be particularly strong. Their writers are a mix of journalists, professionals and academics, so the magazines are good examples of the blurred boundaries between research driven history and work with wider appeal. Articles in the higher quality publications tend to be relatively prestigious and at the same time is a commercial operation, needing to sell copies and earn advertising revenue (Groot, 2016: 50; Axelsson, 2012: 282).

The Research Materials

Public history in Greece has not developed sufficiently in Greece. The country’s universities are not concerned with it and there are only few related projects organized by professional historians. Perhaps the lack of funding is the key reason for the slow evolution of the sector, though it can’t be ignored that some academic historians have faced public history with reluctance. Of course, there are a lot of things to do moving forward. However, the development of public history in Greece is something vital: the knowledge of the past is a right that must be offered to everyone.

The Greek Magazine “The Illustrated History”

The public history magazine titled “The Illustrated History” is the first monthly special history interest magazine in Greece, which has been published for 50 years constantly, a fact that makes

it the longest post-war magazine in the history of the Greek press. The inspirer was the journalist and editor of historical publications of the publishing house "Papyrus" Nikos Aggelis, who presented the idea of a magazine in the standards of the very successful Italian history magazine "Storia Illustrata". The idea was a magazine with light historical themes, with graphics and richly illustrated. In July 1968, during a tough period for the Greek free press because of the dictatorship (1967-1974), the first issue was published in collaboration with Greek and foreign historians and journalists. Up to now the issues of the magazine have reached in 609. Throughout this period, articles cover the period from prehistoric to the 20th century in Greece and international. Subjects, apart from the pure historical refer to archaeology, folklore, art, language, sociology, technology etc. Except from the magazine's contribution to the readers, its contribution to Greek historiography is important. It is a useful scientific aid and tool of knowledge for students, researchers and historians. The sobriety in discourse, the plurality of opinions, the use of sources, the probe of the aspects of each historical event, the important academic work of many contributors give to the magazine the function of a refined popularization and the valid academic knowledge.

Methodology

In this audience research, we are wondering about the profile of the magazine's audience. It is the first research in Greece which studies the public history readers' attitude, so we did not have any former data. The methodologic tool is the questionnaire. Questionnaire surveys are very widely used as a data collection method in social science research. They are a cost-effective method of collecting data from a large number of people in a relatively standardized way. In some situations, self-completion questionnaires allow people to express views on issues about which they may not feel comfortable talking with an interviewer (Strange et al., 2003). Due to the lack of a subscriber list of the magazine, we create an online questionnaire with the help of Google forms to be distributed and be posted in the magazine's official facebook page in collaboration with the publisher who is the admin of the official page.

There are 38.000 members, and the responses we received were only 105, during six months (July 2018- December 2018).

Thus, we propose a structured questionnaire with 34 questions: the 24 questions are multiple choice and the other 10 are five point Likert scale questions, in which readers are asked to rate the degree of agreement ranging from "not at all" to "very much". The questionnaire was structured into four sections, containing basic research questions.

- First section is about demographic and there are included 6 questions about demographic profile of the readers such as gender, age, residence, educational level, profession etc.
- The second section studies the relationship between magazine and readers. There are included 12 questions that investigate readers' choices in relation to the magazine such as what kind of history they prefer and their views on the language and illustration of the magazine etc.
- The third section studies the relationship between history and readers. There are included 7 questions that analyze which is the relationship of readers with the school history and their attitude about the acquisition of historical knowledge etc.
- The fourth section studies the emotional dimension and the magazine's evaluation by the readers. There are included 9 questions that analyze the attitudes of readers to the

reliability of magazine's information and how they evaluate topics, illustration and cost etc.

The SPSS version 25 software application (IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows, Version 25.0, Armonk, NY: IBM Corp) was used to record, process, and statistically analyze our data. The statistical methods that used for the descriptive analysis of the data, we used frequencies and percentages (%). In order to observe the statistical differences between two qualitative variables (control of independence), Fisher exact test (FET) was used when the two qualitative variables examined were from two levels (Table 2X2) otherwise was used the Independence Control χ^2 . For all the analyzes, the level of statistical significance was set at 5% ($p < .05$).

The Results

Indicatively, we present some results of the answers. The sexes of respondents are the following: the percentage of men is 54.3%, women 44.8%, and 1.0% another gender. Regarding the place of residence of the readers, the 45.7% live in a residential area of up to 10,000 inhabitants, the 12.4% live in Thessaloniki (the second bigger town in Greece) and the 26.7% live in Athens. Geographically, the majority of readers 61.0% live in the province in areas with a population of up to 10,000 and 39.1% live in the large urban centers of Thessaloniki and Athens. Thus, it seems that the urban populations are mostly interested in this kind of magazine as targeted and self-selected audience (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006: 61).

Regarding the educational level of the respondents 41,9% have graduated from universities, 40,0% have a postgraduate degree and 4,8% have a PhD degree. The majority of respondents 86.7% have academic education. Thus, it seems that the audience is a targeted one because the magazine covers a specific field of interest.

Regarding the profession of respondents, 46.7% are civil servants, which signifies their specific cultural capital as Bourdieu (1930–2002) defined it (1984: 170- 466). He developed the concepts of 'habitus' and cultural capital to explain the ways in which relationships of social inequality were reproduced through the education system. Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors, and skills that one can tap into to demonstrate one's cultural competence, and thus one's social status or standing in society. In their initial writing on the topic, Bourdieu and Passeron asserted that this accumulation was used to reinforce class differences, as historically and very much still today, different groups of people have access to different sources and forms of knowledge, depending on other variables like race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and even age.

The other one is coming from the private sector as 21,0% are employees and 16,2% are self-employed, 5.7% are retired, 4.8% are students and behavior and 5.7% are unemployed. As for the relationship between respondents and school history, 36.4% said that the relationship was very good, 28.8% said the relationship was good, 28.8% said the relationship was moderate. Thus, it seems that most of the audience remembers the school history. As if the use of other sources to read history, 97.1% replied that they use, while 25.5% of respondents use the internet, 21.1% read books, and 14.0% watch historical films / cinema / documentary. 98.1% replied that

it is important the cognition of history. About whether the magazine meets readers' historical interests, 92.2% said that they are satisfied by the magazine.

As for the Greek newspapers' historical inserts and which of them they would trust more, 38.3% replied "Kathimerini" (right-wing ideology), 17.0% responded "Efimerida Syntakton" (left-wing ideology), 8.5% responded "Ethnos" (center-left ideology), and 8.5% answered "Thema" (center-right ideology).

In the question whether the history they are reading in the magazine relates to the history taught at school, 24.3% answered a little, 51.5% responded moderately and 20.4% responded much.

The statistical analysis also shows that gender contributes to the reader's preference about the type of history. In particular, men tend to show greater preference in political and war/military history, while women tend to prefer economic, cultural and social history. The largest deviation occurred in war / military history (21.5% prefer it versus 9.0% of women). In addition, it is noted that gender seems to contribute to the reader's preference about the type of sources. In particular, men tend to prefer history tv broadcasts, other magazines, historical newspapers' inserts, historical movies / cinema / documentaries, lectures, speeches, while women prefer internet and books.

Moreover, particular interest shows the reader's preferable history thematology in terms of the ideological orientation of newspapers with historical insets chosen by them. Particularly, readers of right-wing and center-right ideological orientation (as found in the newspaper chosen by the respondent) prefer Greek-national and global history, while left- and center-left ideological readers prefer European history.

References

- Adams, M. G. (1990). *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Axelsson, B. (2012). History in Popular Magazines: Negotiating Masculinities, the Low of the Popular and the High of History. *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 4, 275–295.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press
- Bühl- Gramer, C. (2016). Popular history magazines for kids (Online). Available: <https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/4-2016-36/popular-history-magazines-kids/> (Accessed 23 Feb. 2019).
- Cannadine, D. (2004) (ed). *History and the Media*. London: Basingstoke.
- Groot, J. (2016). *Consuming History: Historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Popp, S. (2015). Popular history magazines between transmission of knowledge and entertainment- some theoretical remarks. In Sussane Popp, Jutta Schumann, Miriam Hannig (ed), *Commercialized History: Popular History Magazines in Europe* (pp 15). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition
- Sayer, F. (2015). *Public History: a practical guide*. London: Bloomsbury.

- Strange, V., Forest, S., Oakley, A., & Ripple Study Team. (2003). Using research questionnaires with young people in schools: the influence of the social context. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6 (4), 337.
- Sumner, D. E., & Rhoades, S. (2006). *Magazines: A Complete Guide to the Industry*. New York: Peter Lang Inc., *International Academic Publishers*.
- Thorp, R. (2015). Popular history magazines and history education. *Historical Encounters: A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education*. 2 (1), 102-112. Websites
- How to read a magazine. (2019). Retrieved from http://modjournal.org/teaching/introduction/intro3_howto.html
- Audience research. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/AnnieRose95/audience-research-22808080>
- Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication, (2019). Retrieved from <http://uilis.unsyiah.ac.id/oer/files/original/8efede9fab3616f44809661ebb1c2588.pdf>
- Magazine publishing. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/publishing/Magazine-publishing#ref398357>
- Khalid, N., Islam, D. M. Z., & Ahmed, M. R. M. (2019). SENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(2), 590-593.
- Alzgoool, M. (2019). Nexus between green HRM and green management towards fostering green values. *Management Science Letters*, 9(12), 2073-2082.
- Umrani, W., Ahmed, U., & Memon, P. (2015). Examining the absorptive capacity construct: A validation study in the Pakistani banking context. *Management Science Letters*, 5(12), 1053-1058.
- Zin, M. L. M., & Ibrahim, H. (2020). The Influence of Entrepreneurial Supports on Business Performance among Rural Entrepreneurs. *Annals of Contemporary Developments in Management & HR (ACDMHR)*, 2(1), 31-41.