

# Articulating Participation and Agonism: A Case Study on the Agonistic Re-articulations of the Cyprus Problem in the Broadcasts of the Community Broadcaster MYCYradio

NICO CARPENTIER<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The article starts with a discussion on the material and discursive components of conflict transformation, arguing for the need to complement the dominance of material and psychological approaches with a more discursive-cultural approach. This plea contextualises the analysis of a series of broadcasts of the Cypriot web community radio station, MYCYradio. Supported by the Mouffé's (discourse-) theoretical conceptualisations of antagonism and agonism, the analysis focuses on the broadcasts of three MYCYradio shows. For each show, 10 episodes, broadcast between September and November 2013 are analysed, using discourse-theoretical analysis. Through this analysis, four main re-articulations are identified in the MYCYradio shows: the overcoming/decentralising of the divide, the deconstruction of the self (and the enemy), the reconfiguration of time, and the elaboration of the cost of the conflict. The analysis shows that community media, despite the many different problems they face, have particular abilities to support agonistic discourses.*

**Keywords:** community media, participatory media, Cyprus Problem, conflict transformation, discourse theory, agonism, antagonism, discourse-theoretical analysis, constructionism

## Introduction

In past decades, community media have received considerable attention, not least from academic researchers, where it has been argued that these media organisations are vital

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assets to the respective media landscapes to which they belong. But seldom has community media's role in relation to violent conflict received a similar degree of attention. Nevertheless, as the rare studies into this subfield (see e.g. Rodriguez, 2011) indicate, community media identities and practices can indeed structurally contribute to conflict transformation.

For a thorough and in-depth analysis of this role of community media, it is necessary to focus on a particular conflict, and even on a particular community media organisation, to cope with the complexity that always characterises conflicts (and community media). This article thus focuses on a web radio station, MYCYradio, located in Nicosia, Cyprus; an island which is typified by a combination of long-lasting conflicts and crises. The study concentrates on the so-called Cyprus Problem, which refers to the decades of intercommunal tensions and violence that eventually resulted in the geographic and ethnic divide of the island in 1974, when Turkey invaded and occupied the north. This long-lasting political crisis still plays a significant role in contemporary Cypriot politics and cannot be seen in isolation from other crises such as the recent financial crisis in the Eurozone. The Cyprus Problem has impacted on the economic development of the island, in particular on the north, which saw its export capacity restricted by an embargo and which still requires Turkish financial support. Ironically, the north's isolation and its weaker economic development somewhat protected it from the banking crisis of 2012–2013, which predominantly and severely affected the south: In 2013, the banking crisis led to the dissolution of the Cyprus Popular Bank (or Laiki Bank) and to a 'haircut' on uninsured deposits. The economic effect of this crisis in the south was intense, as the decrease of the Gross National Income with almost 5% in 2013 demonstrates (World Bank, 2014).

Within the particular context of the Cyprus Problem – in articulation with a series of other crises – this case study further focuses on the content of three MYCYradio programmes: the Turkish Cypriot *One Percent*, the Greek Cypriot *Downtown Choris Bakira* and the mixed-community *Cyprus Oral History Project*. In order to understand how these programmes contribute to conflict transformation (and what the limits of their contributions are), the article starts with a number of theoretical reconfigurations, that emphasise the importance of the discursive (while the more classic models of conflict resolution tend to combine the material components with only the psychological approaches) that, as Mouffe (2005, 2013) explains, define conflict as an ontological condition of the social and explore the transformation of antagonism into agonism. Through this discourse-theoretical lens, the three MYCYradio shows are analysed for the presence and nature of particular agonistic re-articulations of the antagonistic model of war.

### Material and Discursive Dimensions of Conflict Transformation

Conflict itself, as a concept, has a wide variety of meanings, as Pondy (1967, p. 298) remarked: ‘The term “conflict” has been used at one time or another in the literature to describe: (1) antecedent conditions [...], (2) affective states [...], (3) cognitive states of individuals [...], and conflictual behaviour, ranging from passive resistance to overt aggression.’ Important in the context of this article are the differences in the definitions of conflict as violent behaviour, as antagonistic positions and as societal contradictions (Wallensteen, 1991, p. 130). If conflict is defined as violent behaviour, it is easy to think its cessation, and the conflict’s resolution is its transformation from a violent to a non-violent state. When conflict is seen as antagonistic positions between actors, as defined by Wallensteen (*ibid.*), as ‘subjectively experienced or objectively observable incompatibilities’, then these antagonisms are not necessarily resolved when violent behaviour disappears. For Wallensteen (*ibid.*, p. 131), resolution is then the ‘transcending [of] a basic incompatibility between the parties in conflict in such a manner that they (voluntarily) express their satisfaction with the outcome [...]’. Finally, if conflict is seen as societal contradictions, conflict is not resolved ‘until more fundamental changes are made’, and before that occurs, conflicts ‘may shift between more latent or manifest phases [...]’ (*ibid.* p. 130).

Frequently, the emphasis in conflict and conflict resolution theory is placed on the more material dimensions of conflict. For instance, Galtung’s (1969) influential distinction between personal violence and structural violence as a way to reflect on peace research, is operationalised by reverting to material versions of concepts such as, on the one hand, bodily harm, tools, actors, organisations, and targets, and on the other, power distribution, inequality, actors, systems, structures, ranks and levels (Galtung, 1969, pp. 174–175). Galtung’s (2009) equally important conflict triangle model connects three concepts, namely conflict, attitude and behaviour. Conflict is viewed here as incompatibilities or contradictions, as he explains in the description of his 2009 version of this model: ‘Conflict has been defined in terms of incompatibilities, of contradictions, and that should not be confused with the attitudinal and behavioral consequences of conflict’ (Galtung, 2009, p. 105). Similarly, Mitchell’s (1981) triadic conflict structure, which was inspired by Galtung’s model (see Demmers, 2012, p. 5), also has three components, (i.e. situation, attitudes and behaviour), and uses an equally materialist approach towards conflict, which is seen as ‘any situation in which two or more “parties” (however defined or structured) perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals’ (Mitchell, 1981, p. 17). Even more recent models – such as the ‘hourglass’ model of conflict resolution responses (Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse, 2011) – tend to emphasise the material aspect. In this ‘hourglass’ model a more temporal dimension (and escalation and de-escalation phases) is added to Galtung’s approach, which allows the

authors to distinguish between conflict containment, conflict settlement, and conflict transformation. Interestingly, the cultural is present in this model through the notion of cultural peacebuilding, but only connected to conflict transformation.

Despite their material emphasis, we should not disregard the importance that the psychological, and thus, although indirectly, the cultural, plays in these models. Galtung's conflict triangle model places considerable importance on the notion of attitude, which he sees as the 'mental states of the actors', as distinct from the 'somatic states of the actors in the action-system', a distinction which is grounded in 'the age-old body-soul division between the somatic and the mental states' (Galtung, 2009, p. 36). These attitudes become articulated with the notion of perception, both of the self and the enemy, where Galtung emphasises the structural similarities of these perceptions: 'There are important symmetries in the perception, they are to some extent mirror images of each other, through imitation and projection' (*ibid.*, p. 105). These examples show how individualistic and actor-based Galtung's approach is, even if he acknowledges that actors can be collectivities, but then attitude refers 'to the attitudes of the members' (*ibid.*, p. 37). Attitudes also play a significant role in Mitchell's (1981, p. 27) work. He defines conflict attitudes as 'those psychological states (both common attitudes, emotions and evaluations, as well as patterns of perception and misperception) that accompany and arise from involvement in a situation of conflict'. Despite his starting point that 'such emotions and cognitive processes are essentially characteristic of individuals', he does acknowledge a societal dimension, as 'they can be shared by a large or small group of people' (*ibid.*, p. 71). Also in Mitchell's case, we can find significant attention expended on perception, which brings in the representational angle, particularly because of Mitchell's (*ibid.*, 99ff) emphasis on images of the self and the enemy. The images that Mitchell describes are the virile and moral self and the alien intruder within the self-images on the one hand, and the black-top and puppet (enemy) leadership, the 'pro-us' (enemy) people and the unified enemy images on the other.

Despite the presence of the more psychological aspects in some seminal works on conflict and conflict resolution, the need to strengthen the cultural components remains. However significant the work of authors such as Galtung and Mitchell is, their focus on the psychological (more than on the cultural and the discursive) feeds into a more individualised approach, grounded in a realist paradigm. One significant consequence is that the interactive relations between the cultural-discursive and the material (or behavioural) remain underrepresented. More in particular, both the role of the discursive in providing meaning to the material (and behavioural) and the contingencies in these signifying processes, which allow space for agency and avoid the full closure of structure, are not thematised. Demmers (2012, p. 119) summarises this difference as follows: 'The discursive approach rejects both individualist and structuralist theories of violent conflict'.

Other authors have emphasised these discursive dimensions, as is illustrated by Keen (1986, p. 10): 'In the beginning we create the enemy. Before the weapon comes the image. We think others to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them'. Or, as Jabri (1996, p. 23) writes: 'knowledge of human phenomena such as war is, in itself, a constitutive part of the world of meaning and practice'.

Arguably, this approach can be further enriched and strengthened by making use of discourse theory, a particular strand in discourse studies which allows not only to emphasise the significance of the discursive from within the logic of contingency, but also to revert to a broadened ontology of conflict. In discourse theory, a discourse is viewed as a structured entity in which meaning is constructed, but also constantly negotiated. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 105) described discourse as a structured entity that is the result of articulation, which itself is defined as 'any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice'. Discourses are contingent structures that allow us to think, understand and communicate the social, without ever being capable of replacing the material. A world of existence, which is external to thought, and independent of any system of social relations has to be acknowledged, but discourses remain very necessary to attribute meaning to this world of existence. Discourse theory thus rejects the 'classical dichotomy between an objective field constituted outside of any discursive intervention, and a discourse consisting of the pure expression of thought' (*ibid.*, p. 108), but seeks to explain how both categories interact. When discussing the discursive, it is important to emphasise its contingent and political nature, because the always existing possibility of re-articulation, or dis-articulation, renders discourses structurally susceptible to change. This does not imply that the discursive is incessantly fluid and void of any fixity. The implication of discursive contingency is that the fixation, stabilisation and sedimentation of meaning is a particular social construction and a political intervention. This in turn means that alternative articulations could potentially come into existence, but that this potentiality is not necessarily translated in actual practice, and that despite its particularity, specific articulations can rigidly maintain their presence. In cases where a particular discourse or articulation achieves dominance, the Gramscian notion of hegemony is used in discourse theory.

Following this discourse-theoretical position, its approach towards the political and its affinity with the sociologies of conflict, conflict is very much seen as an ontological condition which structures the social and the political. Mouffe's (1997, p. 3) definition of the concept of the political clarifies this, as she perceives the political as a 'dimension of antagonism that is inherent to human society', in order to argue that the political touches upon our entire world, and cannot be confined to institutionalised politics.

Consequently, the issue is not to suppress conflict, but to encapsulate it in a democratic order. Mouffe (2005) here refers to the work of Schmitt (1996), and his friend/foe distinction, in order to theorise the need to shift from an antagonistic enemy model to an agonistic adversary model. As Schmitt (1996, p. 27) wrote, the enemy is whoever is 'in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible'. This antagonistic model of conflict<sup>2</sup> is grounded in a series of dichotomies, which glorify and homogenise the self, and demonise the enemy. Agonism then transforms this antagonistic conflict into a 'we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents' (Mouffe, 2005, p. 20). In other words, an agonistic conflict does not hide the differences in position and interest between the involved parties; they are 'in conflict' but 'share a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place' (Mouffe, 2005, p. 20; see also Mouffe, 2013, p. 7).

From this perspective, the notion of conflict resolution should be handled with more care, as (ultimately) conflict can never be resolved. Conflict transformation seems to be a more appropriate concept to be used in a discourse-theoretical context, because this concept allows emphasising that 'conflict is normal in human relations, and conflict is a motor of change' (Lederach, 2003, p. 5). The argument proposed in this article is that conflict transformation consists out of the transformation of antagonistic conflicts into agonistic conflicts. Lederach's (2003, p. 14) definition of conflict transformation, which is seen to consist out of 'constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures', and that respond to 'real-life problems in human relationships', can be used to make this point. If we look closely at this definition, then we can identify this definition as an operationalisation of agonistic conflict, which is built upon the avoidance of physical and structural violence and on the recognition of all actors as operating within the same democratic, legal and social sphere, without ignoring the diversity of their positions.

### **Media, Conflict and Agonism**

This transformation of antagonistic into agonistic conflicts has both material and discursive dimensions, where the latter is affected by a variety of discursive machineries, social structures that circulate and perform discourses, and where the iterations of these discourses – in a very Butlerian (1993) sense – always affect their nature. One rather significant type of discursive machinery is the mainstream media. The multitude of

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2 When, in earlier work, discussing antagonism in connection to war, I have labelled this the ideological model of war (Carpentier, 2008).

discourses that these media organisations circulate is frequently contradictory and instable, although moments of cross-media consensus and hegemonic articulations do exist here. As an example, in the case of war, strong discursive alignments tend to occur, as has been documented frequently (i.e. Hjarvard and Kristensen, 2014). As most discursive machineries, mainstream media organisations have a certain but varying degree of autonomy, but they are, at the same time, not outside dominant discourses (Hall, 1973). Though many involved in mainstream media organisations like to believe that they are outside the operations of ideology – what Schlesinger (1987) has called the macro-myth of independence – ideology as such, and the workings of the ideological model of war with its antagonistic logics, are difficult to escape, not least because, as Kellner (1992, p. 58) frames it, mainstream media organisations are ‘a crucial site of hegemony’, which also implies that they are significant targets for the propaganda efforts of involved parties. At the same time, we should acknowledge that mainstream media still have the possibilities of developing counter-hegemonic discourses, including agonistic discourses that have the potential to question the taken-for-grantedness of antagonism.

But arguably, community media are frequently more geared towards agonistic discourses for a number of structural reasons. Before discussing their capacity for the voicing, performance and circulation of agonistic discourses of conflict, it is necessary to briefly elaborate on the identity of community media, as they can take many different forms and can use various technological platforms (print, radio, TV, web-based, or mixed). Despite their differences, community media share a number of key characteristics, which distinguish them from other types of (mainstream) media organisations like public service or commercial media. Their close connection to civil society and their strong commitment to maximalist forms of participation and democracy, in both their internal decision-making process and their content production practices, are especially important distinguishing characteristics that establish community media as the third media type, distinct from public service and commercial media. One way to capture their diversity and understand what unites them is to combine the four approaches that have been used in the literature for the study of community media (discussed in Carpentier, Lie and Servaes, 2003; see also Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2007; Carpentier, 2011). Taken together, these four approaches allow the complexity and rich diversity of community/alternative media to be unveiled, together with the role of participation:

- The community approach focuses on access by, and participation of, the community; the opportunity given to ‘ordinary people’ to use media technologies to have their voices heard; and the empowerment of community members through valuing their skills and views;
- The alternative approach stresses that these media have alternative ways of organising, alternative ways of using technologies, carry alternative discourses

- and representations, make use of alternative formats and genres, and remain independent from market and state;
- The civil society approach incorporates aspects of civil society theory to emphasise that citizens are being enabled to be active in one of many (micro-) spheres relevant to everyday life, using media technologies to exert their rights to communicate;
  - Finally, the rhizomatic approach uses Deleuze and Guattari's (1984) metaphor to focus on three aspects: community media's elusiveness, their interconnections (amongst each other and, mainly, with civil society), and the linkages with market and state. In this perspective, community media are seen to act as meeting points and catalysts for a variety of organisations and movements.

At the same time, it is necessary to avoid an approach that is too celebratory towards community media. Community media do not provide catch-all solutions for all societal problems, although they can play a significant role in strengthening the democratic tissue of a society, and, as the following part will argue, in contributing to the transformation of antagonistic conflict into agonistic conflict.

As discussed with Doudaki in an earlier article (Carpentier and Doudaki, 2014), the main argument here is that their participatory nature and their ambition to be an alternative to mainstream media organisations, also facilitates their societal role as producers of both internal and external diversity. Fraser and Restrepo Estrada (2001, p. 18) argued this in relation to community radio in the following way: '[c]ommunity radio, through its openness to participation to all sectors and all people in a community/ies, creates a diversity of voices and opinions on the air'. Community media are not homogeneous organisations serving a homogeneous community, but allow a diversity of people, embedded in civil society, to produce media content that relates to a variety of societal groups and sub-communities, mixing minority and majority cultures, ethnicities and languages often in the same community media (Barlow, 1988; René and Antonius, 2009; Sussman and Estes, 2005), creating rhizomatic networks of alternative content creation.

Obviously, this capacity to stimulate intercultural dialogue is not to be taken for granted as it very much depends on the embeddedness of the media organisational culture in a participatory-democratic ideology. It is also complicated by linguistic differences. Moreover, organising dialogue within a context of diversity generates many thresholds and difficulties. One significant problem is generated by the risk of non-democratic voices and actors entering and damaging these realms devoted to democracy and participation. At the same time an equal number of creative democratic practices have been developed to deal with these challenges. To use the example of language diversity, and the difficulties it creates for enhancing dialogue: A wide variety of techniques has been developed by



organisations like the Swiss radio school *klip+klang*, which has been experimenting with organising multi-linguistic dialogues in close collaboration with Swiss community radio stations like the Zurich-based Radio Lora (see *klipp+klang*, 2009).

This capacity to foster diversity, intercultural dialogue, and tolerance has made community media privileged actors in peace-building, conflict transformation, and reconciliation projects. In contrast to the more general and widely recognised capacity to stimulate intercultural dialogue, there is much less academic research into the more specific role of community media to strengthen the transformation of antagonistic conflict into agonistic conflict, although there are many particular projects, mainly located in the global South. In one of the rare academic publications, Anheier and Raj Isar (2007, pp. 323–324) suggest that community media can indeed play a mediating role in conflicts. Moreover, Rodríguez (2001, p. 147; 2011) attributes a central role to community media in peace-building efforts and conflict transformation. In a groundbreaking research project in the Colombian Magdalena Medio region, researchers from four universities and a regional network of community radio stations joined forces and provided unrivalled evidence for this central role of community media in a struggle for peace (Cadavid and Moreno Martínez, 2009; see also Rodríguez, 2011). One of Rodríguez's (2011, p. 255) key conclusions of her analysis of Colombian community media activities stresses the performance of peace-building: 'Instead of transmitting messages about peacebuilding to audiences, Colombian citizens' media involve audiences in, and subject audiences to, the felt, embodied experience of peace.'

The lack of attention from academic researchers does not imply that no community media projects aimed at peace-building and conflict transformation have been organised. Different international institutions have been instrumental in supporting peace-building activities of community and especially UNESCO, with its Community Media Programme, has been at the forefront of these initiatives (Mainstreaming the Culture of Peace report, 2002; The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa report, in Matoko and Bofo, 1998). In addition, AMARC<sup>3</sup> has been actively promoting the capacity of community media to support peace-building, especially through its women's network(s). But not all initiatives have been sustainable, for instance the UN peacekeeping radio stations have been critiqued for combining the lack of sustainability with the lack of local embeddedness (Orme, 2010).

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3 AMARC is the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, or, in French, l'Association Mondiale des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires.

## CCMC and MYCYradio in Cyprus

As mentioned in the introduction, this article aims to contribute to filling some of the gaps mentioned in the first part of the study by focusing on the discursive dimension of conflict transformation and by looking at the agonistic discursive work performed by a community web radio station, MYCYradio in Cyprus. This web radio station is part of the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC), which was established in 2009 and is located in the UN-guarded Buffer Zone in Nicosia. Initially it was not a broadcasting organisation, but centred on providing training, loaning equipment to member organisations (that are part of the Cypriot civil society), creating productions for other organisations, staging public events, and offering media advice to members. Only in 2013 did CCMC's web radio station, MYCYradio, begin broadcasting, despite the fact that at present there is no explicit recognition of community, or alternative media, in either part of Cyprus.<sup>4</sup> In its *Foundation Charter*, the mission of CCMC (2009) is pithily summarised as '[e]mpowering a media literate and active society', which positions its emphasis on community participation and empowerment. But the organisation also aims to contribute to conflict transformation, especially in the description of CCMC's ten core values where the link to conflict transformation is made explicit. Similarly, MYCYradio's (2013a) *Foundation Charter* also refers to inclusiveness, diversity and participation: 'MYCYradio aims to engage with and serve all communities living in Cyprus, by providing a platform for a diversity of voices to be heard. It aims to highlight cultural and linguistic diversity, encourage social integration thus promote a culture of active citizenship and participatory democracy'. With these objectives, MYCYradio further aims to provide an alternative to the Cypriot mainstream media, wherever 'one-sided legitimacy or status superiority, stereotypical positions of the own side's good intentions and the other's wrong doings dominate' (Christophorou, Sahin and Pavlou, 2010, p. 169).

As mentioned in the introduction, the radio broadcasts of three MYCYradio shows are analysed: the Turkish Cypriot *One Percent*, the Greek Cypriot *Downtown Choris Bakira* and the mixed-community *Cyprus Oral History Project*. More specifically, the analysis centres on 10 episodes of each show, broadcast between September and November 2013. During this period, the Turkish Cypriot *One Percent*, produced by Doğukan Müezzınler, discussed the 'problems that the Turkish Cypriot community faces' (MYCYradio, 2013b), sometimes with a guest. In the interim, the MYCYradio programme schedule changed, and *One Percent* was replaced by another programme

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4 Neither the internationally recognised Cyprus Radio and Television Authority (CyRTA), nor the Higher Broadcasting Authority in the northern part of Cyprus have made legislative provisions for analog or digital frequencies to be made available to community media organisations.

(*Cyprus 360*), which involved Doğukan Müezziner until he left Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot *Downtown Choris Bakira* focused on the urban realities of Nicosia's inner city. In the course of the research, this programme had three producers – Orestis Tringides, Yiannis Ioannou and Yiorgos Kakouris. The latter two producers subsequently left the radio station and the programme was produced solely by Orestis Tringides until September 2014, when it stopped. Finally, the *Cyprus Oral History Project* was grounded in Frederick University's *The Cyprus Oral History and Living Memory Project* (2011), and was one among many Cypriot oral history projects (Briel, 2013). Its producer, Nicoletta Christodoulou, re-edited a selection of these interviews for the MYCYradio broadcasts. This programme ran until July 2014.

The broadcasts of these three radio shows were transcribed, translated into English – from Greek or Turkish – when necessary<sup>5</sup> and then analysed. The analysis of the broadcasts is further contextualised by interviews with their five producers. The method that has been used for the data analysis, is a discourse-theoretical analysis (Carpentier and De Cleen, 2007) supported by the basic principles of qualitative research (Wester, 1987, 1995; Maso, 1989). As a form of respondent validation or feedback analysis, the five producers were asked to comment on both an oral summary of, and a full draft paper on, the analysis.<sup>6</sup>

### Representing Conflict on MYCYradio

In this case study, the emphasis will be placed on how the discourses at MYCYradio support the transformation of antagonism into agonism. In other words, this case study examines the ways the friend/foe distinction is re-articulated into a discursive model of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot relations that overcome the dichotomisations inherent to the friend/foe perspective. Through the discourse-theoretical analysis, four main re-articulations have been identified in the programmes: the overcoming/

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5 Most of the *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcasts were in English (although there were three Greek broadcasts), all *One Percent* broadcasts were in Turkish, and most *Downtown Choris Bakira* broadcasts were in Greek (one was in English, and two combined Greek and English). Greek and Turkish broadcasts were translated into English. All citations in this article are rendered in English, and only special cases of (multi-) language use are indicated.

6 For this purpose, interviews were organised with Yiannis Ioannou (9 June 2014), Yiorgos Kakouris and Orestis Tringides (19 June 2014), Nicoletta Christodoulou (26 June 2014) and Doğukan Müezziner (2 July 2014). During these interviews, all five producers expressed their agreement with the analysis. Afterwards, the five producers, together with CCMC ad interim manager Michael Simopoulos, received a draft version of this paper. Two producers, and the ad interim manager, provided additional feedback. In one case, a particular fragment was discussed extensively, which rightfully led to more emphasis on the playful nature of *Downtown Choris Bakira*.

decentralising of the divide; the deconstruction of the self, and the enemy; the reconfiguration of time, and the elaboration of the cost of the conflict. The four areas are discussed in this part of the article.

### *Overcoming/Decentralising of the Divide*

Re-articulations that overcome or decentralise the divide are frequently present in the broadcasts: There is a wide variety of subtle narrations on how the separations and distinctions between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots – and sometimes between Greece and Turkey – are overcome or bypassed. Many of these narrations concern the discursive and material practices of contemporary everyday life in Cyprus and its many spheres, such as educational, professional, linguistic, relational, culinary and identity. Other accounts mention the ways that institutions overcome the divide, while others contain narrations that structurally decentre the divide. These re-articulations are often very implicit, and almost always made *en passant*. One example, which demonstrates how the overcoming of the divide within the educational, professional and linguistic spheres of the everyday is represented, occurs when a guest on *One Percent* initially describes himself as someone who was born in Turkey ('My family is from the last Greeks that stayed in Istanbul' – *One Percent*, broadcast 18 September 2013), undertook his PhD in Athens, worked as a journalist for the (northern) Cypriot desk of a Greek newspaper, and – as an academic – wrote a book in Turkish about Cyprus. In discussing this book, the guest also invokes a discourse of friendship, when he refers to the possibility of having his book translated into Greek, for 'our Greek friends' (*One Percent*, broadcast 18 September 2013). Moreover, in other cases, the relational sphere is seen as a location where the divide is overcome, not in general, as in the previous example, but in more specific terms, when Turkish Cypriots refer to *their* Greek Cypriot friends, and *vice versa*. By way of illustration: The following story is told, mostly in English, by a retired Greek Cypriot teacher in a *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast:

'And I remember once my sister didn't have black shoes to go to the church and the ... this Turkish [Cypriot] girl told her: Maroulla, να σου δώσω τα δικά μου είναι καινούργια [Greek in original – I'll give you mine, they are new] – her father was a doctor and they were rich. [...] And I remember Maroulla telling her: no, I am not going to accept them. [The girl then replied:] I give them to you because you are my best friend' (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 30 September 2013).

The overcoming of the divide is also grounded in other affects, such as empathy and remorse. In the above-mentioned *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast, the interviewee summarily captures these emphatic sentiments in the following way: 'they suffered like we suffered' (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, 30 September 2013), which recognises the

suffering of the other, and not only focuses on the 'own' suffering (and the vilification of the other as perpetrator). Empathy can also be found in narrations concerning the visits by dislocated Cypriots to their original houses, as in the case of this retired Greek Cypriot civil servant:

'The Turkish Cypriot woman came near me to hug me. Then she was afraid of seeing me, crying like this, she came and went [...] The Turkish lady, I had nothing against her, it wasn't the Turkish lady's fault that she was inside. I truly didn't mind at all. I didn't have even the tiniest bit against her, so to speak. Because I said to myself, she has built her life for the second time too. Of course I didn't know this when I entered, [but] she had also lost a son in Istanbul' (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 7 October 2013).

In some instances, empathy is explicitly grounded in a humanist stance, where the divide is overcome by emphasising that all are humans, as is the case in the following fragment:

'it's how you see your fellow human and the environment. You can't tell them apart. You must know to get in the other person's shoes. And Turkish Cypriots also have this problem, they are the same – we do not differ at all from the Turkish Cypriots [...] They sit, they eat, they drink. [...] We are humans, we are not Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, it's how you see your fellow human' (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 12 September 2013).

At the same time, the humanity of all is sometimes protected by creating a distinction between 'fanatics' and ordinary Cypriots, which is again used as a way to overcome the divide as both sides are seen to be equal in 'having fanatics'. In the *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast of 4 November 2013, the interviewee, a Turkish Cypriot biology teacher, says:

'we are Cypriots that couldn't find a way to protect ourselves, to protect our neighbors ... I mean ... against any [of the] fanatical movements'.

But in yet another *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast, this dichotomy between fanaticism and normalcy is undermined, as the interviewee explains, in detail, how his 'nationalistic feelings' led him to commit (minor) acts of vandalism as a child, and later, when he was a student, to consider planting a bomb in a factory. His entire interview is framed by his transformation from a Turkish Cypriot nationalist into a peace activist, despite the pressure from relatives, who were saying:

'how can you work with Greeks, to help the peace. With Greeks, when you know that they tried to kill your sister' (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 23 September 2013).

Over and above that, the programmes contain narrations on how the divide is materially overcome, by people moving into the ‘other’ space. Some of these crossings of the material divide are highly emotional, as the above-mentioned stories have shown in the visits of dislocated Cypriots to their original houses. Another story about an earlier visit is the following:

‘We went to the village in 1975. When the people saw us arriving in the village, they were all surprised. About one hundred people were crying, shouting, ... They shouted and said “τα παιδιά του Ιωσήφ ήρθαν” [Original in Greek – Josephs’ children came]’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 30 September 2013).

Years later, when several ‘border’ crossings were opened in 2003, moving across the divide became easier and more integrated in everyday life, as the following citation displays:

‘We would talk about our most favourite places of both sides. On the other side, of course, we love Büyük Han every Saturday around 11 o’clock. If anyone goes to Büyük Han, there is a long table there and I highly recommend everyone to go [...]’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 10 October 2013).

In addition, the space of the Buffer Zone, and in particular the Ledra Palace crossing, plays an important role in materially overcoming the divide, because it is defined not as a zone ‘with nothing in it’, but as a space that has structures and allows:

‘people who love peace and want to discuss [their thoughts] with a lot of people from different places in Cyprus can come’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 19 September 2013),

as one guest of the *Downtown Choris Bakira* programme – a representative of the German-Cypriot Youth Exchange Programme – remarked.

Likewise, on a much more discursive level we can find narrations in programmes that overcome the divide through the identification with a unified Cypriot identity and culture. Sometimes these references are subtle, for instance, when a guest – an academic – invites ‘all the islanders’ (*One Percent*, broadcast 18 September 2013) to the presentation of his new book. However, in other cases the articulation of a unified identity is more explicit and celebratory. For instance, in a *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast, the interviewee, a Turkish Cypriot from Nicosia, says:

‘Because Cyprus is a very beautiful island, we love our island, our country. Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, we have common ways, we love kebab, souvlaki, we love ...’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 14 October 2013).

Here, the climate, nature, food, history, architecture and the Cypriot language (a variation of Greek) are used to construct this unified Cypriot identity.

The programmes do not simply concentrate on the ways that the divide is overcome at the more everyday level, but they include references to how the divide is overcome in more institutionalised societal spheres. Here, we note that a multitude of societal fields are mentioned, including politics. The producers point in these scenarios to the existing collaborations between north and south, for example, in relation to sewage processing in Nicosia. One of the producers of *Downtown Choris Bakira* remarks that ‘Unification comes from the underground, my friend’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 19 September 2013). What is more, other fields feature in the programmes: civil society and activism, academia, medicine, sports, and in particular the arts are mentioned as institutionalised locations for overcoming the divide. In one of the *Downtown Choris Bakira* broadcasts, this is made explicit as follows:

‘But we are here – Artists are here to create a much better environment to bring the communities together’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 31 October 2013).

A variation of the overcoming of the divide articulation is its decentring, where the status of the Cyprus Problem, as a master signifier that gives meaning to all Cypriot realities, is reworked. The centrality of the Cyprus Problem is sometimes jokingly undermined, as portrayed in a *Downtown Choris Bakira* broadcast, where one of the producers describes a German Cypriot exchange programme when questioning the significance of the Cyprus Problem and stating the need to see beyond it:

‘one year a group of German [visitors] come here and check[ed] us out, to see what is going on and to see what is going on with the stupid Cyprus Problem, and the society of course, beyond the Cyprus Problem [...]’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 19 September 2013).

Statements are alluded to which point to the hybrid cultural origins of Cyprus, the external explanations for the Cyprus Problem (e.g. colonialism and imperialism are mentioned), the many different ethnicities that live on the island and the integration of Cyprus into Europe, and in particular the EU, can be seen as decentring the Greek Cypriot/Turkish Cypriot dichotomy and the centrality of the Cyprus Problem. The strongest reformulation of this centrality comes from a guest in *Downtown Choris Bakira* who has recently returned from covering the civil war in Syria. In a rather insensitive way, he questions the severity of the Turkish invasion, by comparing it to the Syrian civil war:

‘Look, we haven’t actually had a war here. Here, Turkey invaded for 4–5 days and it was over. I mean, that is not war, but a cakewalk and – on the one hand, people got killed, but

on the other hand, you cannot compare the magnitude [of that conflict] with [what is going on in] Syria' (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 24 October 2013).

### *The Deconstruction of the Self (and the Enemy)*

The second re-articulation of antagonism in agonism deconstructs the self (and the enemy), a process that is based on processes of anti-homogenisation and pluralisation. In the ideological model of war, the self becomes glorified and homogenised – as the self is seen as united in its courageous battle against the enemy. Deconstructions of the self, in the MYCYradio broadcasts, firstly consist of critiques or ridiculisations of particular components of the self (such as the 'own' political system, the army, the church, the media, ...), or of the entire 'own' culture and ideology, where the passive and uncritical nature of Cypriot society, the 'victim psychology' (*One Percent*, 20 November 2013) is shown, and its consumerist and intolerant characteristics are frequently mentioned.

Nonetheless, the critique on the 'own' political system is especially severe. Although nuances are sometimes made, politicians are described as both impotent and power hungry, incompetent, corrupt and unethical. Furthermore, they are described as playing games and being involved in intrigues. They serve private interest, and their actions lack transparency; their policies are repeatedly critiqued for being nonsensical. Moreover, they brain-wash and manipulate people, pitching them against each other. One of the guests in *One Percent* captures it quite clearly: 'Yes, the politics is dirty; yes, it's degenerated' (*One Percent*, broadcast 13 September 2013). Also, the 'own' allies (mostly Turkey in the Turkish Cypriot programme) and the 'own' historical leaders are not spared, as is evidenced by the following ironic conversation on the (Greek) Cypriot presidents:

- 'Producer 1: Look, there's something else, of course. We know that, as is well known, Makarios lies in a big jar full of formaldehyde  
Producer 2: Not a jar, that other thing, what's it called?  
Producer 1: A capsule  
Producer 2: Yes, a capsule, but it's a big one. Yes, yes, on the throne. Ok, as usual, presidents come and go there. But what we don't know is that the head of Spyros Kyprianos is wired in the city [where] the presidential [estate is located] [Laughter]  
Producer 1: No, the head of Spyros Kyprianos is like that of the villain from the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ...'  
(*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 7 November 2013).

Different other 'own' institutions are also critiqued, sometimes in a more serious tone, sometimes jokingly. The position of the 'own' military and police is put into question by linking the paramilitary forces of the 1960s and 1970s to fanaticism and terrorism. In one



example, the heroism of ordinary people is celebrated, and (later) juxtaposed to militarism:

‘I met a fifteen-year-old [...] who literally crawled on the ground for 45 meters in order to retrieve a woman who had been shot and who nobody could get close to’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 24 October 2013).

But the critique affects present-day military and police forces as well where the police is linked to police brutality, and the competence of the army is questioned. In *Downtown Choris Bakira* especially, the Greek Cypriot army is – rather playfully – ridiculed; something which is triggered by one of the producer’s absences because of his duties as a reservist. Here, irony is frequently used, with the others addressing that particular producer as ‘General’ and the producer himself stating: ‘I’m ready for war!’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 24 October 2013). The same discursive logic applies to the ‘own’ media and religious institutions, where the former’s lack of independence (in relation to both politics and the market), quality, relevance and respect, and the latter’s business and political interests, are critiqued. As a pun based on the word βρωμάριος – a wordplay that combines βρώμα (which means ‘bad smell’) with Makarios (the first president of the Republic of Cyprus) – in the *Downtown Choris Bakira* broadcast of 17 October 2013, shows that these critiques which desacralise the key figure of contemporary Cypriot politics, are sometimes communicated through humour.

The homogeneity of the self is also sometimes re-articulated through the emphasis on internal diversity such as the (often suppressed) left-right divide or the distinction between ‘fanatics’ and ordinary people. This emphasis on the internal divide is partially contemporary – ‘Of course, immediately, the press, or rather the public in general, is split’ (*One Percent*, broadcast 6 November 2013) – and partially historical, as is illustrated by the story of a Greek Cypriot interviewee in the *Cyprus Oral History Project*, in relation to how she took shelter in a coffee shop when trying to get home during the 1974 coup:

‘We went there, we tried to be aware for the people of EOKA [B] because that coffee shop belonged to the AKEL. There the Greek soldiers were shooting at us [...] Because EOKA [B] was the extreme right and AKEL the extreme left. So at that time the coup was against AKEL as well. That’s why the soldiers were shooting [...] They didn’t have the intention to shoot everybody, at least I think that they wanted to frighten us. I remember, I had [to] hide under the table’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 21 October 2013).

### *The Reconfiguration of Time*

In the third re-articulation, time is reconfigured. In one variation, there is a nostalgic return to the pre-conflict past, which becomes represented as an idyllic era of co-

habitation and peace. This can mostly be found in the *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcasts, where interviewees talk about the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, a Turkish Cypriot pharmacist talks about visiting a ‘beautiful children’s garden’ in the Greek Cypriot part of Nicosia, and then, ‘after coming back to Nicosia – our side’ always being offered an ice cream in a Ledra street shop by her father (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 9 September 2013). A Greek Cypriot retired civil servant recounts that:

‘Our life was very good in Lapithos, and our neighbourhood was very nice. The relationships among the people were very nice’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 7 October 2013).

In some stories, the conflict is already more present, but it is described how, before the actual division of the island, Turkish and Greek Cypriots would defend each other:

‘I know some villages that I really admire for protecting each other. [These villagers said:] “Those Turkish Cypriot villages are neighbours and they cannot touch them unless you kill us”’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 4 November 2013).

In the second variation of this time-based re-articulation, the focus is placed on the future, which includes explicit discussions about the solutions for the Cyprus Problem, and the requirements for their implementation. This variation contributes to the agonist re-articulation through the communication of the implicit belief that solutions can be realised and that a future without the Cyprus Problem can be imagined. Some of the strategies that are discussed are highly individual, such as the need to raise one’s child with a high degree of autonomy, so that she/he is not dependant on anybody. The producer of *One Percent* expressed himself in the following way: ‘it is clear that each individual has its own responsibility for solving the problems’, to which his guest, an academic, then replied by acknowledging the need for ‘mindfulness’ (*One Percent*, broadcast 13 September 2013).

Other strategies are more encompassing. Sometimes, more political solutions are mentioned such as the establishment of a federation with the two communities, the island’s demilitarisation, or the provision of guarantees since:

‘we want the rest of our lives to be secure somehow, at least for the elements we cannot control. It [is] the same for both sides’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 11 November 2013).

Similarly, small scale political solutions like establishing a bazaar in the Buffer Zone are discussed. Not surprisingly, different, and sometimes contradictory positions are defended when discussing these political solutions. For example, in dealing with the

problem of returning the lost properties, some defend a compensation model, while others simply say:

‘we want our houses, we want the places in which we were born and grew up, and let the Turk[i]s[h] [Cypriots] have their own houses back’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 11 November 2013).

In a few other cases, the solution is placed in more (politico-) culturally oriented solutions such as the need for a ‘moral rebirth’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 12 September 2013); for Cypriots ‘to be more questioning as a community’ (*One Percent*, broadcast 25 September 2013) or to ‘focus on more local or smaller things. To experience this, we can start to manage ourselves in neighbourhood-wide [schemes]’ (*One Percent*, broadcast 20 November 2013). Here, we find a strong emphasis on the argument for Cypriots to take control themselves:

‘I think it is up to Cypriots to come together and to work together to have a big future – a better future for all of us’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 14 October 2013).

A variation of this type of re-articulation can be found in the references to a post-conflict Cyprus, which attempt to imagine the country – and in particular the still divided capital city of Nicosia – after the conflict has been resolved, where both national – the urban development of Limassol – and international examples (i.e. Berlin) are used to show the potentially bright future of Cyprus and Nicosia.

### *The Elaboration of the Cost of the Conflict*

Finally, the fourth re-articulation consists of a straightforward narration of the cost of the conflict and the division. The narrations of the conflict, especially in the *Cyprus Oral History Project* programme, are very detailed memorialisations of the fear, pain and destruction that characterised the intra-communal violence in the 1960s and the Turkish invasion in 1974. More than attributing blame, these memorialisations demonstrate the suffering caused by war, which ironically unifies both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, without privileging the suffering of one side – a frequently occurring process that Papadakis (2006) calls ‘ethnic autism’. For instance, in the *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast of 7 October 2013, a Greek Cypriot refugee, whose husband is still missing, says the following about her status as refugee:

‘But still, it troubles me very much. I mean, not only the fact that I’ll never go back to my house, but the future of our country, what our children will inherit, where our children and our grandchildren are going to live.’

In the *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast of 14 October 2013, one week later than the previous citation, a Turkish Cypriot refugee tells her story:

‘In 74 we became a refugee once again, for the second time. [...] Because we had to move again, in this stage to a Greek Cypriot home. And it was [a] very bad experience, again, because ... since we lived this situation in 63 we knew how it feels to leave your family, leave your house and go away.’

At this juncture, it is important to add that the programmes show that the trauma has not disappeared, but it is still part of the everyday lived experience, and it also concerns everyday routines:

‘Look, the fact that you go to the supermarket and you buy 1 kg. of cucumbers, 1 kg. of tomatoes and 15 cans, that is not something that happens in countries that have not suffered war. This is a small issue and it sounds really funny, but this thing is essentially the refugee’s syndrome’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 31 October 2013).

These narrations of the impact of war, in past and present, are complemented by references to the cost of the divide, which, for instance, draw attention to the political isolation of the north, the political instability and uncertainty generated by the divide, and the lack of access to property and – for a long time – to people. In a *Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast (31 October 2013) it is explained that the divide not only impacts on material access, but also has a discursive dimension:

‘you always tend to hit a wall which has been erected, not only as a result of the special political circumstances that are in effect now – that [Nicosia] is a divided city – but also due to conceptions about what this or that person will say etc.’

In addition, we find discussions on the everyday consequences of the divide as well. A typical example is the impossibility of taking a pet for a walk to the other side, or of providing medical assistance:

‘for many years no one could find practical ways to get an ambulance [English in original] across [the Green Line] in cases of medical emergency’ (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 31 October 2013).

These re-articulations are not without internal tensions and contradictions, which limit the programmes’ capacities to support agonism. One significant limit consists out of the different interpretations linked to the narrations on the cost of the conflict and the divide, as these narrations could potentially serve an antagonistic model, particularly when only the suffering of the ‘own’ side is emphasised. Although in many cases this is compensated

by expressions of empathy by the same person in the same broadcast, and by other persons in other broadcasts, we can, in some cases, find more self-centred narrations which only articulate the self as victim, and the other as perpetrator, or at least as uncivil and uncaring. The following cynical statement of a Greek Cypriot retired civil servant shows the presence and strength of these kinds of narrations:

‘Ok, so what did we learn? You simply find out how the strong prevail and [what] the fate of the weak [is]. I mean, we are weak, we have right on our side but we are still doomed by the strong. I believe this is a principle that applies to all peoples. You just realise what this world is and how it works’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 7 October 2013).

A second problematic discourse that we find in the broadcasts is the normalisation of violence and militarism, fed by nationalistic ideologies. For instance the violent 1974 National Guard coup, initiated by the Greek Junta, is downplayed by one Greek Cypriot interviewee as the actions of ‘a political party [that] tried to change the government’, which is something that ‘happens every day in every country’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 18 November 2013). Likewise, the denial by the same interviewee, of the existence of pre-1974 violence, which disproportionately affected Turkish Cypriots, is an example of this problematic discourse:

‘This is 1974, I was happy, I have anything I looked for, I live in a nice town, and enjoy the beauty of the town, I was enjoying my vacations, my family and it was not a country where it was anarchy or dictatorship. We live in democracy and everything was peaceful’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 18 November 2013).

Thirdly, within the island-wide Cypriot identity discourse, we can also ascertain traces of a new constitutive outside that is the foreign immigrant. The latter not only includes the Turkish settlers in the north, but also (and mainly) immigrants from other regions of the world that are subjected to negative, sometimes racist, judgments. In one *Cyprus Oral History Project* broadcast, the Turkish Cypriot interviewee, a pharmacist, talks about ‘unregistered’ immigrants in the following way:

‘Most [...] are very poor people, and illiterate, and coming here just to work. So they are not living in [...] good conditions. They destroyed everything. They are not clean’ (*Cyprus Oral History Project*, broadcast 9 September 2013).

One other constitutive outside that is mentioned in the broadcasts – mostly in the programme *One Percent* – are gay people, but these discriminations are fiercely dismissed by all who are present in the studio, and the negative consequences of these discriminations are highlighted, making these references much less problematic and

antagonistic. Nevertheless, it remains important to reiterate that the presence of these three problem discourses weaken the programmes' agonistic capacities, even when they rarely occur and when their existence within Cypriot society at large cannot be denied.

## Conclusion

The discourse (theoretical) approach allows light to be shed on the processes of meaning-making that are intrinsically part of the logics of conflict. Through this approach, it becomes clear that conflicts are more than material practices and psychological processes, and that the collective dimension of meaning-production needs to be incorporated for a richer understanding of conflict. Constructing the enemy, and the self, is not a purely individual process, but a highly complex interaction of individual agencies, social structures, and material and discursive-ideological practices. In more technical terms, this implies that an exclusive focus on a constructivist approach, which highlights how persons are actively engaged in the creation of meanings (Burr, 2003, p. 18) is not desirable. The constructivist approach needs to be complemented by a more *constructionist* approach, which focuses on the construction of meaning as a social process (Burr, 2003, p. 9). This constructionist approach renders visible the ways that groups and communities produce always particular discursive structures, and identify with them in always particular ways. Moreover – and this is where discourse theory shows its strength – we should not assume that these discursive constructions, or their identifications, are stable, but in contrast, we should be attentive towards the political struggles that make them contingent.

Arguably, this is not different in the case of war and armed conflict, where these discursive-ideological constructions, for instance, of the conflict and the identities of the parties involved, play an equally significant role. For this perspective, antagonism is a construction, and a lethal one. But again, correspondingly, the creation of antagonism, with its particular articulations of the other as enemy, is the outcome of a particular political struggle. This implies that this outcome is not set in stone, and that re-articulations of this ideological (antagonistic) model of war are always possible – a position which carries much hope. Although these re-articulations cannot position us outside conflict – as diversity, and the contradictions and contestations it generates is ubiquitous – they can produce alternative ways of thinking the other, not as enemy. As the case study has shown, these re-articulations are very real in the way that they agonistically make sense of the Cyprus Problem, by describing the many ways the divide is already overcome, by decentering it, by deconstructing the homogeneous and united self, by reverting to an idyllic past before the conflict, by envisaging a future and by showing the cost of war and the divide.

This finally returns us to the role that community media can play, as discursive machineries that allow these re-articulations to surface and circulate. Here, it could be

argued that having these re-articulations voiced and performed is already important in itself. Moreover, the participatory structure of community media facilitates these discourses being voiced, by generating respect for diversity in and amongst communities, for collaboration based on power-sharing and for substantive democracy, which thus creates the conditions of possibility for the transformation of antagonism into agonism. At the same time, community media face many different problems and imperfections of their own, and they should not be considered a panacea. One of their main problems is that community media have often difficulties with reaching large audiences, which is also the case with MYCYradio. Their participatory logics do not guarantee them an audience. We should not downplay the importance of these problems, as discourses need circulation to gain social impact, but we should also not ignore the importance of these discourses being voiced and performed in the first place. This paradoxical situation allows emphasising that community media do have particular abilities to support agonistic discourses, and that, for this reason, they deserve more attention, acknowledgement and (considered) support.

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