

A Synopsis

The Discursive-Material Knot: Cyprus in Conflict and Community Media Participation

A book by Nico Carpentier

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See <http://nicocarpentier.net/dmk>

Innumerable scholars—Cypriots and non-Cypriots alike—have taken on the study of the Cyprus conflict and the attempts of its transformation into a more peaceful and non-militarized situation. But never before has an extensive study been conducted on the role of Cypriot community media—and in particular of the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC)—in conflict transformation.

Structurally constructed as a triptych, the author, Nico Carpentier, has produced three intertwined platforms, radically combining high theory and empirical research. The first two platforms provide the theoretical backbone of the study, while the author puts these theoretical tools to work in Platform 3. In this third platform, he first analyzes the historical context of the Cyprus problem, and then zooms in on CCMC and its affiliated community webradio station, MYCYradio.

In a first part of Platform 3, the author focuses on how CCMC and MYCYradio function as a **participatory assemblage**. He explains how CCMC and MYCYradio position themselves (through their practices) as alternatives to the Cypriot (and international) mainstream media. CCMC and MYCYradio are different because they facilitate the participation of Cypriots (and non-Cypriots) in the structure of the organization and in the MYCYradio broadcasts.

Nico Carpentier then analyzes how the organizational practices of CCMC and MYCYradio, and the webradio's broadcasts, **contribute to peace-building**. MYCYradio's broadcasts not only subtly disrupt the idea of the other-enemy, but CCMC and MYCYradio also create a form of material togetherness, where the different communities meet, collaborate and co-decide together. The book does not shy away from showing the problems that CCMC and MYCYradio have to face, but the book simultaneously highlights the many merits of CCMC and MYCYradio.

The main argument of this study, though, is that there is a **natural alignment between these two elements**—between participation and peace-building. CCMC and MYCYradio, as a participatory assemblage, plays an important role in peace-building because it is a community media organization, radically committed to maximizing participation. This commitment to participation, for instance, produces high levels of inclusivity, supported by principles of equality and respect for diversity. It allows for the creation of an alternative community of ordinary people outside the logic of antagonistic nationalisms and for alternative (horizontal) structures that facilitate collaboration, and for the deployment of multi-layered forms of citizenship and networks of like-minded civil society organizations.

Even though the book also takes a step forward in developing a theoretical reconciliation between discourse studies and new materialist theory, and makes headway in the further elaboration of community media theory, participatory theory and conflict theory, an equally important contribution lies in its detailed analysis of how community media organizations contribute to a **culture of peace**.