

Voices of Disagreement: Participatory Media and Agonistic Democracy in Cyprus

CHRIS VONIATI
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

This article examines how participatory structures within community media organizations (CMOs) in Cyprus shape their capacity to foster agonistic democratic discourse. Drawing on Chantal Mouffe’s theory of agonism and a qualitative multisite case study, it explores the internal dynamics of 6 Cypriot CMOs and their editorial impact. The findings show that CMOs with horizontal, inclusive, and reflexive organizational models tend to generate pluralistic, ethically engaged, and cross-community media content. These outlets legitimize disagreement, amplify excluded voices, and reframe the Other as a legitimate interlocutor. By contrast, CMOs that reproduce hierarchical structures tend to mirror dominant ethnocentric narratives and suppress dissent. At the same time, even the most participatory outlets face internal tensions and self-imposed limits, highlighting that genuine agonistic openness is fragile and continually negotiated. Connecting participatory governance with agonistic representation, the study highlights how grassroots media can incubate democratic culture in deeply divided societies. Though the study is grounded in a specific historical context, its insights resonate with broader efforts to understand how participatory infrastructures in community media can foster democratic pluralism in divided and transitional societies.

Keywords: participatory media, agonistic democracy, community media, Cyprus conflict, post-conflict communication, editorial practices

In societies marked by conflict and division, media play a role that extends far beyond information dissemination. They shape public memory, political subjectivity, and the contours of legitimate discourse. This is especially visible in Cyprus, where decades of division and contested memory continue to shape public communication. Dominant media narratives have long reproduced antagonistic constructions of identity, blame, and national grievance, contributing to what many describe as a frozen conflict in which each community sees itself as a victim and the other as a threat (Bryant & Papadakis, 2012; Papadakis, 2008). Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot outlets have historically operated not just as communicative channels but also as ideological vehicles that entrench ethnonationalist worldviews. While this study is centered on Cyprus, its questions about participation and discourse address wider concerns in divided societies.

Chris Voniati: voniati.christina@ucy.ac.cy
Date submitted: 2025-08-08

Copyright © 2026 (Chris Voniati). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <https://ijoc.org>.

The media's role in Cyprus must be understood within a historically layered political terrain. Across decades of shifting sovereignty—from the late colonial era to the post-1974 partition—media institutions on both sides have repeatedly functioned as instruments of nation building, privileging official historiographies and excluding dissenting voices (Christophorou et al., 2010; Papadakis, 2008). Against this backdrop, community media organizations (CMOs) have emerged as counterhegemonic spaces for narration and participation. Defined by their grassroots ethos and relative autonomy from state and market structures, CMOs in Cyprus and beyond have been celebrated for their potential to democratize communication, amplify marginalized voices, and challenge dominant narratives (Carpentier, 2011; Rennie, 2006; Voniati, 2021), yet as recent scholarship shows, this democratic potential is not automatic. Participation—a core ideal of community media—can become shallow or symbolic without genuine power sharing and editorial openness (Carpentier, 2017; Costanza-Chock, 2020; Couldry, 2010; Fenton & Barassi, 2011).

This article explores the relationship between internal participatory structures and editorial discourse in Cypriot CMOs. It asks: *How do participatory practices within community media influence their capacity to foster agonistic democratic discourse in post-conflict Cyprus?* The analysis draws on Chantal Mouffe's (2013) theory of agonistic pluralism, which reframes democracy not as consensus, but as the institutionalization of conflict—where adversaries contest each other within shared democratic frameworks. In media terms, this implies communicative spaces where disagreement, dissent, and multiple perspectives are actively enabled rather than merely tolerated (Cammaerts, 2009; Dahlgren & Alvares, 2013; Milan, 2013).

The inquiry assumes that in post-conflict settings, media participation is never neutral—it either reinforces or challenges hegemonic orders. Cyprus remains an especially revealing case: Despite decades of civil society activism and peacebuilding initiatives, the mainstream media landscape has shown remarkable continuity in sustaining ethnocentric frames. The persistent absence of critical engagement with in-group wrongdoing or the suffering of the Other renders the public sphere ill-equipped to navigate complexity or imagine shared futures (Bryant & Papadakis, 2012; Sant Cassia, 2005).

Based on qualitative research with six CMOs operating across the Cypriot divide, this article argues that organizational participation and democratic infrastructure are vital enablers of agonistic democratic discourse. Horizontally governed CMOs tend to produce plural and reflexive representations of conflict, whereas hierarchical ones risk reproducing antagonisms. These patterns are particularly salient in contexts like Cyprus, where unresolved trauma and hegemonic narratives continue to constrain public discourse.

By foregrounding the structural dimension of participation, this study contributes to debates on the democratic role of grassroots media in polarized societies. It challenges the assumption that community media are inherently democratic, calling instead for a situated, practice-based analysis of participatory practice. In doing so, it offers theoretical and practical insight into how participation sustains pluralism in divided contexts.

Context: Cyprus, Division, and Media

Cyprus provides a paradigmatic case of a post-conflict society where communication and memory are deeply entangled. Once under British rule, the island gained independence in 1960, but soon descended

into intercommunal violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, culminating in the 1974 coup and subsequent Turkish military intervention. The island remains divided by a United Nations-controlled buffer zone, with each community maintaining separate political, educational, and media systems. This enduring division sustains opposing national narratives and competing victimhoods reproduced through public discourse and ritual commemoration (Avraamidou & Psaltis, 2019; Bryant & Papadakis, 2012).

Mainstream media on both sides have played a decisive role in sustaining these antagonisms. In the south, Greek Cypriot outlets largely align with the hegemonic discourse of national struggle and collective suffering; in the north, Turkish Cypriot media often frame identity through resistance to international isolation and defense of political legitimacy. Studies show that such ethnocentric media ecologies privilege monologic storytelling, restrict cross-communal dialogue, and marginalize dissenting or peace-oriented voices (Avraamidou, 2017; Yüksek, 2020). Journalism is therefore not merely descriptive, but constitutive—it shapes how communities imagine history, justice, and the possibilities of coexistence (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010).

While mainstream journalism remained largely bounded by national frames, a number of peace-oriented and bicomunal initiatives emerged from the late 1990s onward, seeking to counter the logic of separation. Early NGO- and donor-supported reporting workshops laid the foundations for civic and bicomunal media experiments. Subsequent initiatives—most notably the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC) and its online station, MYCYradio—experimented with participatory broadcasting, multilingual programming, and cross-communal collaboration. Alongside other community-oriented outlets mapped in this period, they consolidated a civic media culture that prefigures the CMOs studied here. Despite these interventions, the overall media sphere remained polarized, with memory and identity continuing to function as contested symbolic battlegrounds.

This polarized communicative landscape extends beyond newsrooms to the broader politics of memory. Commemorations, history education, and ritualized remembrance continually reaffirm “our” losses while rendering “their” suffering invisible (Stylianou-Lambert & Bounia, 2016). This competitive memory economy limits empathy and suppresses agonistic engagement. The persistent absence of reflexive engagement with ingroup responsibility reinforces discursive closure that obstructs reconciliation and civic imagination (Bryant & Papadakis, 2012).

It is within this fractured context that community media have attempted to carve out counterhegemonic spaces. Often emerging from activist, artistic, and civil-society circles, these initiatives experiment with horizontal coordination, collaborative authorship, and audience participation, positioning themselves as participatory alternatives to mainstream hegemony (Atton, 2015; Howley, 2010). Their ambition extends beyond representation to reimagining communication as a democratic practice—a means of listening, dissenting, and co-narrating across entrenched boundaries (Carpentier, 2011; Dahlgren, 2009).

However, this potential remains unevenly realized. Some initiatives struggle with limited resources, volunteer fatigue, and internal divisions mirroring the broader political stalemate. Others succeed in fostering cross-communal dialogue and ethically plural narratives, but operate precariously, outside formal

funding frameworks. Their fragility underscores both the promise and the precarity of civic media practice in deeply divided contexts.

Taken together, these historical and communicative dynamics delineate the structural conditions that underpin this study's analytical focus on memory, identity, and justice. The entrenched separation of media systems, the persistence of antagonistic narratives, and the selective visibility of suffering constitute what Mouffe (2013) describes as a hegemonic order that restricts democratic contestation. By situating Cypriot CMOs within this field of symbolic exclusion, the article approaches community media not merely as communicative alternatives, but as potential sites of epistemic repair—where participation and representation intersect to reconfigure who can speak, remember, and be recognized.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This article's conceptual framework engages three overlapping literatures: (1) participation in community and alternative media; (2) media, conflict, and representations of the Other; and (3) agonistic democracy. Together, they illuminate how communication practices can entrench or disrupt power, especially in conflict-affected settings. Building on these strands, the article conceptualizes "agonistic media" as communicative spaces where disagreement and pluralism are institutionally sustained through participatory structures. The analysis treats participation not as a procedural ideal, but as a structuring force—one that configures editorial practices, governance, and discursive norms in ways that shape the production of agonistic democratic discourse.

The Politics of Participation: Between Promise and Practice

Community media are often framed around an alternative ethos—challenging commercial and state-driven logics through horizontal engagement and local empowerment (Rennie, 2006; Rodríguez, 2001). They are seen as correctives to hegemonic systems, particularly where mainstream media reinforce nationalism or suppress dissent. As Lievrouw (2011) notes, alternative media function as critical interventions. Their democratic value lies not just in content, but in process: who decides, who participates, and which voices are legitimized.

At the core of this promise is participation. Carpentier (2011, 2017) distinguishes access, interaction, and participation—warning that real participation redistributes power in both production and governance. Couldry (2010) complements this by emphasizing participation as "voice": not just the right to speak, but institutional recognition of speech. Participation, then, reshapes the conditions under which meaning is made (Jenkins et al., 2016).

However, community media are not inherently open or horizontal. Despite their grassroots positioning (Atton, 2002; Bailey et al., 2008), internal hierarchies persist. Democratic potential depends on institutional design, editorial structures, and cultural norms (Fenton & Barassi, 2011; Rodríguez, 2001). Meaningful participation, therefore, requires power sharing and reflexivity—a commitment to internal deliberation that allows disagreement and minority perspectives to shape collective outcomes.

As Atton (2002) and Couldry (2010) note, participation can be tokenistic if decoupled from power. In polarized settings, CMOs may reproduce dominant hierarchies, selectively excluding dissenting voices (Downing, 2001; Fenton, 2010). Whether participation democratizes or excludes depends on how it is structured. This tension between participatory ideals and institutional realities anchors the article's focus: examining participation not as aspiration, but as organizational practice.

In line with this, the present study consistently uses the term *community media organizations* (CMOs) to denote nonstate, nonprofit, grassroots media projects that embed participation as an institutional principle in both governance and production. We deliberately avoid using alternative labels (e.g., *alternative*, *radical*, *citizens' media*) interchangeably; when cited, they are treated as cognate traditions within a shared normative horizon of participatory, counterhegemonic communication. The evaluation framework, therefore, assesses cases as CMOs according to their participatory design and editorial practice rather than according to self-descriptions or legacy genre categories.

Throughout, community is conceptualized as a communicative and organizational orientation—defined primarily by linguistic repertoire, geographic embeddedness, and audience address rather than by rigid or essentialized ethnic identity. This operational definition aligns the case selection with the study's normative focus on participation and access while acknowledging the island's segmented media ecologies.

Recent research further explores the institutional and participatory limits of community media practice. Fenton and Barassi (2011) show how media infrastructures and individuation logics can hinder engagement. Related work (Voniati et al., 2018) finds governance models and editorial cultures central to sustaining plurality. Doudaki and Carpentier (2024) argue that participatory depth and editorial openness determine inclusion and exclusion. Yüsek and Carpentier (2018), studying the Cyprus Friendship Program, introduce "participatory intensities" to examine how structure, affect, and reflexivity shape conflict transformation. Though centered on interpersonal dialogue, their insights resonate with media production.

Udwan et al. (2020) show how refugee media gain narrative agency through shared editorial control and infrastructural autonomy. Participation, in this sense, must be both ethical and material. Without such embeddedness, as Couldry (2010) and Downing (2001) warn, inclusion risks becoming symbolic—a ritual that leaves power intact. Building on this insight, the present study treats participation as an ethical infrastructure: a system of relationships that distributes agency, accountability, and visibility across media actors, shaping not only production but also how difference and otherness are represented.

Framing the Other: Media, Conflict, and Representation

In conflict and post-conflict settings, media do more than report events—they shape identity, legitimacy, and symbolic boundaries (Bromley, 2011; Steuter & Wills, 2011). It is precisely at the margins of these hegemonic public spheres that CMOs attempt representational repair: by creating low-threshold, participatory channels that admit dissenting testimonies, host cross-community narration, and legitimate counter-memories that mainstream outlets typically exclude. In this sense, framing the Other is not treated

as a purely textual problem, but as a structural outcome of who is authorized to speak, under what participatory rules, and within which editorial cultures.

Mainstream outlets often reproduce ethnocentric frames, elevate ingroup narratives, and suppress dissent (Kolstø, 2009; Papadakis, 2008; Wolfsfeld, 2004). In Cyprus, media on both sides contribute to cycles of blame and denial (Avraamidou & Psaltis, 2019; Baillie & Azgin, 2008; Ioannou, 2020). Studies of Cypriot media show how editorial cultures reinforce exclusion, particularly on issues of identity and migration (Trimithiotis & Voniati, 2025). While focused on mainstream journalism, these findings highlight how editorial norms shape discursive boundaries—a dynamic explored here within grassroots CMOs.

Community media, often operating at the fringes of the official public sphere, are frequently cast as challengers to dominant narratives. Their democratic promise lies in their rhizomatic, locally embedded nature (Bailey et al., 2008) and their ability to amplify marginalized voices and unsettle binary logics (Rodríguez, 2001; Shinar, 2007). Although distinct from the tradition of peace journalism—which prioritizes conflict-sensitive reporting and the de-escalation of strife—this study aligns with its commitment to disrupting hegemonic representations and creating dialogic spaces for the Other (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Peleg, 2018), yet the autonomy of CMOs is not guaranteed. Structural constraints such as funding insecurity, institutional fragility, and audience expectations can complicate or limit their oppositional potential (Howley, 2010; Langlois & Dubois, 2005; Waisbord, 2000).

Even civil society media, as Waisbord (2019) notes, operate under hybrid logics that blur journalism, activism, and institutional power. This often blunts critique. In Cyprus, the politics of memory further complicate expression. Papadakis (2008) shows how official historiographies sustain selective remembrance. Zembylas and Loukaidis (2021) examine how emotional dilemmas breed self-censorship. Hadjipavlou and Mertan (2019) describe how civil society actors navigate mistrust and surveillance.

Affective dynamics also shape media representation. Chouliaraki (2006) shows how humanitarian media create hierarchies of suffering. Papacharissi (2015) emphasizes affect in networked publics. Wetherell (2012) argues that affect regulates what can be felt or said. In this study, such affective and representational constraints are understood as central obstacles to agonistic media: When discomfort and dissent are sanitized, the possibility for democratic contestation is foreclosed.

Media and Agonism: The Democratic Possibilities of Conflict

Chantal Mouffe's theory of agonistic pluralism provides a powerful lens for understanding democratic communication in divided societies. Rejecting liberal models of consensus, Mouffe (2013) argues that democracy depends on institutionalizing conflict in adversarial—not antagonistic—forms. Agonism reframes opponents as legitimate adversaries rather than enemies. In this framework, the role of media is not to erase disagreement, but to render it visible, legitimate, and ethically productive.

For media, this means democratic communication requires more than content diversity. It demands platforms that structure and legitimize dissent. Dahlgren (2009) and Dahlgren and Alvares (2013) argue

that agonistic democracy needs spaces that normalize disagreement and resist depoliticized, technocratic framing. This is particularly salient in polarized contexts, where disagreement is framed as disloyalty.

Agonistic models call on CMOs to build participatory and democratic structures and practices that sustain productive friction—especially around identity, memory, and justice. Milan (2013, 2015) shows how decentralized editorial cultures enable internal contestation, power sharing, and collective authorship. Costanza-Chock (2020) similarly advocates participatory design frameworks that allow ethical conflict to surface.

Together, these insights define what this article terms *agonistic media*—media practices and institutions that cultivate sustained disagreement through participatory, plural, and reflexive structures. Agonistic media are distinguished from merely alternative media by their willingness to host discomfort, recognize adversaries, and transform conflict into dialogue.

Rodríguez and El Gazi (2007) demonstrate how indigenous radio in Colombia enabled agonistic discourse through participatory authorship and community control. What mattered was not just what was said, but who could speak and under what structures. Agonism requires editorial systems that embed discomfort and critique.

Couldry (2010) and Fenton (2010) caution that participation alone is insufficient. Bureaucratic neutrality or open, but unstructured, participation can both suppress dissent. Couldry (2010) stresses that dissent must be institutionally recognized to matter. Fenton (2010) critiques rhetorical participatory claims that obscure structural inequality.

Hence, agonism is not a rhetorical ideal, but a structural condition. It demands editorial cultures that resist closure, share power, and treat disagreement as a democratic necessity. For Cypriot CMOs, this entails transforming participation itself into a mechanism of conflict engagement—a way of practicing democracy through dialogue, tension, and co-presence.

Participation as a Democratic Infrastructure

These literatures converge on a shared insight—that the democratic quality of media content is inseparable from the participatory structure of its production. In post-conflict settings like Cyprus, where dominant narratives remain entrenched and reconciliation is elusive, CMOs offer a rare space for alternative storytelling, yet this potential depends on participation that is inclusive, consequential, and structurally embedded.

This article intervenes in ongoing theoretical debates by examining how participatory governance in Cypriot CMOs shapes their capacity to generate agonistic discourse. Departing from accounts that frame participation as either a normative ideal or a procedural mechanism, this study foregrounds participation as a structuring force that actively conditions editorial reflexivity, narrative complexity, and symbolic inclusion (Carpentier, 2017; Couldry, 2010; Rodríguez & El Gazi, 2007). By conceptualizing participation not merely as access or content creation, but as a relational infrastructure, the article introduces a framework for

analyzing how organizational design and editorial culture co-constitute the agonistic possibilities of grassroots media (Costanza-Chock, 2020; Fenton & Barassi, 2011).

This understanding links the Cypriot case to global trajectories of participatory media. From indigenous broadcasting in Latin America to digital activism networks in Europe, scholars note a recurring pattern: Where horizontal participation thrives, media become laboratories of agonism—testing grounds for democratic practice through storytelling.

Recent Latin American scholarship further substantiates this trend. Ortega Chávez (2025) shows how Colombian news media acted as political mediators during a crisis in the peace process, demonstrating that editorial autonomy and participatory practices directly shape whether coverage enables or constrains conflict transformation. This insight parallels the structural and ethical challenges faced by Cypriot CMOs, situating the Cyprus cases within a broader peace-process media ecology.

Related analyses of transmedial narratives surrounding WikiLeaks and Julian Assange illustrate how alternative media networks can act as rhizomatic interventions that disrupt the epistemic authority of mainstream platforms (Bromley & Voniati, 2026). These decentralized, participatory ecosystems not only contest institutional narratives but also reconfigure the terrain of visibility and voice, offering a media architecture that is both horizontally structured and globally resonant. While the Assange case unfolds on a markedly different geopolitical scale, it exemplifies the same democratic potential and structural vulnerabilities that characterize community media operating in post-conflict or high-risk environments.

Taken together, these examples underscore that the capacity of CMOs to foster agonistic discourse reflects an emergent global shift toward participatory, ethically engaged, and antihierarchical communication cultures.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, multisite case study approach to examine how participatory practices within Cypriot CMOs shape their capacity to foster agonistic discourse. Combining analysis of media content with in-depth interviews, this approach explores both the discursive qualities of the CMOs' outputs and the organizational logics that inform them.

Case Selection and Mapping Process

The six CMOs were drawn from an island-wide mapping project (2013–2015) that developed a five-pillar typology—discursive, organizational, communicative, geographic, and technological—to identify community media across Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot contexts. Data collection for the mapping included desk research, field visits, and interviews with media and civil society actors, producing a database of 26 CMOs.

From this database, six organizations were purposively selected via maximum variation sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2014) to capture diverse participatory models and editorial orientations. The

sample includes two Turkish-language opposition platforms (Ankara Değil Lefkoşa, Radyo Mayıs), three Greek-language activist collectives (Entropia, Defteri Anagnosi, Granazi), and one top-down outlet representing elderly Greek Cypriot refugees (Eleftheri Kythrea). This typological variation enables theoretically meaningful contrasts (Seawright & Gerring, 2008), highlighting how different organizational forms and participatory intensities shape media practices.

The six CMOs span both sides of the island's divide and illustrate the breadth of community and alternative media practice in Cyprus. They differ in medium (print, online, radio), constituency (refugee associations, activist circles, cultural initiatives, bicomunal networks), and ideological orientation (from memory preservation to radical-left activism). What unites them is a declared commitment to participation and dialogue, albeit enacted with varying degrees of horizontality and editorial autonomy. Table 1 summarizes their main characteristics, including the year of establishment, medium, primary constituency, mission, language(s), and general orientation. "Community/constituency" is defined in communicative terms—linguistic, geographic, and audience orientation—rather than as a fixed ethnic identity, in line with the study's conceptualization of community.

Table 1. Organizational Profiles of the Six Community Media Organizations.

| CMO | Year Est. | Medium | Main Constituency/Community | Primary Focus/Mission |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Ankara Değil Lefkoşa | 2011 | Online newspaper | Turkish Cypriot activists | Anti-assimilation, eco-socialist, and feminist critique Investigative journalism, |
| Defteri Anagnosi | 2012 | Online magazine | Broad Cypriot publics | anticorruption, alternative readings of news Memory preservation, community continuity, refugee identity |
| Eleftheri Kythrea | 1978 | Print periodical | Greek Cypriot refugee community | Anti-authoritarian discourse, social movements, antimilitarism |
| Entropia | 2013 | Print & digital magazine | Radical-left/activist communities | Workers' rights, ecology, antinationalism |
| Granazi | 2013 | Print newspaper → digital | Anticapitalist activists, Greek nationals in Cyprus | Peacebuilding, cultural exchange, community broadcasting |
| Radyo Mayıs | 2003 | Community radio | Turkish Cypriot & bicomunal listeners | |

Data Collection

Two primary data sources underpin the analysis. First, a corpus of 111 media texts—editorials, features, commentaries, program transcripts, and selected audiovisual materials—was collected across the six CMOs for the years 2013–2016. Appendix A provides a summary of this media corpus, including each outlet’s item count, predominant formats, and key thematic tags. Texts were purposively sampled for relevance to conflict, identity, memory, dissent, and reconciliation, using archives, digital platforms, and collaboration with the CMOs. This aligns with post-conflict media research that privileges multisource, multilingual, and multiformat sampling (Christou & Karayianni, 2024; Treré & Mattoni, 2016).

Second, 36 semistructured interviews (six per CMO) were conducted with coordinators, producers, and guests. Interviews, lasting 45–90 minutes, explored organizational routines, decision-making structures, participatory practices, internal tensions, and understandings of responsibility in a divided society. They were conducted in Greek, Turkish, or English, translated where necessary, and cross-checked for accuracy. Interviewees were selected from across three role categories: coordinators (those involved in the overall management or editorial direction of a CMO), producers (those actively contributing media content on a regular basis), and guests (those who appeared occasionally or were involved in earlier phases). While this categorization helped organize the sample, it remains artificial. In practice, roles in these small and often horizontally structured organizations are fluid and overlapping. Most coordinators also engage in content production, several producers occasionally take on coordination responsibilities, and even guests may have had past or intermittent production roles. This role elasticity reflects the collective ethos of CMOs, where editorial and operational boundaries are deliberately porous.

Analytical Strategy

The analysis followed an abductive and iterative logic, moving between theory and data to refine concepts and categories. A combined discursive and organizational approach was employed.

Media outputs were examined through qualitative content analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Drawing on theories of agonistic democracy and participatory communication, an initial coding frame focused on representation of self and Other, framing of conflict and responsibility, degrees of reflexivity and historical critique, and the presence of marginalized or dissident voices. Particular attention was paid to agonistic and antagonistic markers, including silences, exclusions, polyphony, and narrative complexity.

Interview transcripts were then thematically analyzed to trace how participation was experienced and enacted. Analytical categories included editorial decision-making processes, openness to dissent, internal gatekeeping, negotiation of political and economic pressures, and how actors understood the role of their CMOs within Cyprus’s conflictual memory regime.

The two data layers were analyzed in dialogue, with the 111 media texts examined alongside the interviews, each source informing and cross-checking the insights derived from the other. Recurrent patterns in editorials, features, and broadcasts guided the refinement of analytical categories such as framing, reflexivity, and representation of otherness, while interview data illuminated how these textual practices were organizationally produced. This triangulated approach enabled a relational understanding of

how participatory structures materialized in discourse, ensuring that the empirical base captured both procedural dynamics and their communicative expression.

Researcher Standpoint and Critical Reflexivity

As a researcher with prior experience in community media and familiarity with both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot contexts, I occupied a position of partial insiderhood. This facilitated access and nuanced interpretation, but also risked reproducing established frames. To mitigate this, reflexive journaling, iterative memoing, and regular peer debriefings were employed throughout the research process. Multilingual triangulation and transparent documentation of coding decisions further supported interpretive rigor. These strategies align with ethical media ethnography and coproduced research in divided societies (Greedy & Robins, 2019).

Temporal and Political Context

Data collection (2013–2016) coincided with stalled, but ongoing, peace negotiations; increased civil society engagement; and gradual normalization of crossings between the two sides of the island. At the same time, nationalist discourses, structural asymmetries, and economic precarity constrained political imagination and media autonomy. The CMOs studied operated within this ambivalent environment: attempting to rehumanize the Other and widen the space for dissent while contending with limited resources, volunteer fatigue, surveillance anxieties, and entrenched memory regimes. The temporal framing is therefore integral to interpreting both their participatory architectures and their editorial choices.

Findings

The analysis draws on interview material and a 111-item corpus of media texts to examine how participatory structures shape editorial practice in the six CMOs. It identifies four interrelated patterns that illuminate how participatory organization influences editorial discourse: editorial openness and collective authorship, narrative plurality and the ethics of empathy, silences and boundaries, and reflexivity and participation. These patterns emerged through cross-case analysis, linking organizational practice with representational form and showing how participatory governance conditions the production—or suppression—of agonistic discourse.

Editorial Openness and Collective Authorship

In CMOs such as Entropia, Defteri Anagnosi, Granazi, Ankara Değil Lefkoşa, and Radyo Mayıs, editorial practices were guided by a deliberate commitment to inclusivity and nonhierarchical participation (see Table 1 for comparative details of participatory features). Decision-making processes were horizontal, open to volunteers, and based on consensus building rather than top-down control. A coordinator from Entropia noted, “We operate as a collective. Disagreements are common, but that’s where the richness lies. We try not to polish things into false harmony.” This openness was also visible in the textual corpus: Defteri Anagnosi deliberately published opposing commentaries within the same issue, turning disagreement into a form of participatory pedagogy.

This structure fostered editorial environments that welcomed internal critique and fostered content reflecting the coexistence of divergent views. As one of the Deferi Anagnosi interviewees explained, “We have published opposing articles in the same issue—one supports bicomunalism; another questions it. That’s our strength, not our weakness.” This editorial polyphony directly challenged mainstream media’s pursuit of coherence and neutrality, replacing it with dialogic engagement. These patterns reveal how horizontal practices foster ethically reflexive editorial cultures, demonstrating how internal diversity strengthens collective authorship.

Plural authorship also extended beyond ethnic representation. At Granazi, contributors sought to include migrant, queer, and working-class voices—challenging homogenizing logics of national memory. As one contributor noted, “If we only include activists and academics, we just recreate the same classist media logic. We want the person who cleans the building to also speak. They live this conflict too.” This heterogeneity marked a clear departure from mainstream patterns, aligning with radical media traditions that democratize both content and authorship.

Narrative Plurality and the Ethics of Empathy

The editorial openness cultivated by participatory CMOs enabled emotionally complex representations of the Other. Entropia’s own publications illustrate this vividly: Its 2013 editorial “Coup, war, refugeedom, the dead, occupation . . .” and its coverage and bilingual reflection on the “Demilitarized Nicosia” marches wove together Greek and Turkish voices of mourning, transforming commemoration into an act of shared empathy.

Several Greek-speaking participants described publishing content that foregrounded Turkish Cypriot experiences—including dissidents, conscientious objectors, and victims of displacement. For instance, a Deferi Anagnosi coordinator recalled publishing a Turkish Cypriot poem during the July commemorations marking the 1974 coup and the subsequent invasion: “We wanted to show that they hear the same sirens.” The poem, titled *Sirens*, was published in bilingual form to mark the 39th anniversary of the “twin crime”—the July 15 coup and the July 20 invasion—and gave poetic expression to the longing for reconciliation across division:

I am a Turkish Cypriot and you are a Greek Cypriot . . .
 When we become one, the sirens will cease to cry;
 the drums of invasion will beat no more,
 nor the bells of death—once you and I become we.

By juxtaposing this poem with a short reflective commentary, Deferi Anagnosi invited readers from both communities to inhabit a fragile common space of remembrance—a space where mourning was shared, but historical difference preserved. Such editorial interventions exemplify how participatory media can cultivate what Zembylas (2024) calls agonistic empathy: an ethics of feeling that acknowledges the pain of the Other without collapsing difference into harmony.

Such interventions sustained tension rather than resolution, creating spaces where conflicting narratives coexisted within shared affect. At Defteri Anagnosi, an editor recalled publishing a profile of a Turkish Cypriot resisting militarization: "Some people assumed resistance was only *our* thing, but by telling his story, we disrupted that narrative." Complementary corpus evidence reinforces this pattern: Defteri Anagnosi's bicomunal testimonies, Granazi's inclusion of migrant and working-class voices, and Radyo Mayıs's broadcasts featuring youth and civil-society callers engaging uncomfortable topics all foreground dissenting and minority perspectives.

These editorial choices reflected an ethics of confrontation rather than harmony, where empathy acknowledged pain across unequal positions. At Ankara Değil Lefkoşa, a Turkish Cypriot outlet, an editor discussed how publishing content critical of the community's own role in the Varosha occupation sparked controversy: "People were angry. They said we were betraying our side, but we knew we had to publish it. Agonism means facing your side's mistakes too." Here, empathy functioned as a political stance that unsettled dominant narratives without collapsing difference into false equivalence—made possible by structural inclusivity and sustained trust.

Silences Within: Taboo and Discursive Boundaries

Even within participatory structures, contributors identified moments of self-censorship and narrative avoidance. At times, CMOs hesitated to publish stories that might destabilize core community relationships or exhaust fragile solidarities.

A guest from Granazi reflected:

We've had moments where someone suggests a controversial piece, and others say: Maybe not this time. We fear backlash—not only from the outside, but from our own. We avoid certain topics not because we're told to—but because we don't want to upset people we work closely with.

Such practices underscore that even participatory spaces regulate openness through emotional bonds and communal trust; cohesion can easily outweigh contestation. These dynamics mirror informal forms of control, where contributors internalize limits on expression to maintain group harmony or legitimacy. In the textual corpus, this dynamic was most evident in Eleftheri Kythrea, whose commemorative pieces circled obsessively around Greek Cypriot loss and return. Typical texts such as "The Burnt Ground of Our Motherland" (Orphanides, 2013) and "In the Lifeless Embrace of His Killed Mother" (Fellas, 2013) fused mourning with a sacred duty of liberation, casting Turks as timeless aggressors and Greek Cypriot refugees as sanctified victims. Later poems, including "The Bones of the Departed" (Orphanides, 2015), repeated motifs of waiting and martyrdom—"and so we buried our dead again . . . there are plenty of others, still missing" (p. 81)—without confronting the violence or responsibility of one's own side. Through this ritualized remembrance, pain became identity; introspection was displaced by repetition, and political responsibility remained unspoken. In contrast, other outlets often tackled such themes directly, albeit cautiously, publishing reflective accounts of complicity and accountability that sometimes provoked audience discomfort.

These patterns underline that even explicitly community-based outlets can reproduce hierarchical closure. In Eleftheri Kythrea, such closure was formalized: A single editor filtered submissions through an ethnonationalist lens, reinforcing precisely the silences evident in its commemorative corpus. “We don’t publish things that cause division,” an interviewee noted. “We focus on our pain, our right to return.” Participation here was symbolic—limited to an ideologically cohesive circle that implicitly excluded dissent.

Some interviewees framed this not as censorship, but as protection—a collective effort to preserve memory amid perceived threat. However, as Downing (2001) warns, radical or community media cannot treat certain narratives as sacred and still democratize representation. These examples confirm that participatory structure alone does not guarantee agonism; its ethical quality depends on editorial courage, willingness to confront ingroup responsibility, and the capacity to withstand discomfort.

Rethinking Editorial Power: Reflexivity and Participation

A critical factor differentiating the more agonistic CMOs from their exclusionary counterparts was a shared commitment to editorial reflexivity. In organizations like Entropia, Deferi Anagnosi, and Radyo Mayis, contributors described practices that promoted internal critique, collective learning, and rotating leadership. A producer from Radyo Mayis explained, “We change who moderates the meetings. It stops anyone from becoming too dominant, and it reminds us we’re building something together.” Reflexivity was also evident textually in editorials acknowledging internal disagreement, in rotating bylines across collective statements, and in participatory broadcast formats at outlets such as Radyo Mayis, where open phone-ins and collaborations with unions and civil-society groups were used to distribute voice and negotiate contentious issues collectively.

This fluidity of roles prevented power concentration and encouraged continual self-questioning. Contributors viewed these practices as ethical commitments to mutual accountability rather than bureaucratic routines. In one notable example from Radyo Mayis, an on-air dispute between two callers was not suppressed, but became the starting point for a more engaged deliberation.

As one volunteer broadcaster recalled:

We had an on-air disagreement between two callers. Instead of shutting it down, we invited them to come in for a roundtable. That episode taught us that our role is not to moderate into silence, but to facilitate messy, but meaningful, dialogue.

This practice exemplified how editorial reflexivity was enacted as dialogic openness—turning disagreement into constructive engagement. At Ankara Değil Lefkoşa, reflexivity extended to decisions about what not to publish. “Sometimes we pause a piece that feels too safe,” one contributor said. “Just because something is popular doesn’t mean it’s right. We ask: Are we saying this because it’s true or because it’s easy?” This editorial deliberation reveals reflexivity as a structural and ethical practice that enables agonistic representation—a means of keeping critique alive within participatory spaces.

Summary of Findings

Findings confirm that participation is not merely procedural, but a material and discursive precondition for agonistic media practice. In CMOs with horizontal governance, plural authorship, and institutionalized reflexivity, structured disagreement flourished—not as rhetorical opposition, but as an embedded editorial ethic. These organizations published stories that legitimized disagreement, challenged taboos, and widened what could be spoken.

In contrast, CMOs with hierarchical control or risk-averse cultures produced symbolic closure. Their stories reproduced hegemonic narratives, omitted dissent, and rendered the Other illegitimate; participation became a facade masking hegemony beneath inclusionist rhetoric.

In this sense, editorial culture is not a background condition, but a determinant of democratic communication: Participation shapes who speaks, how meaning is made, and under what conditions it becomes audible. In post-conflict contexts like Cyprus, where memory and identity remain contested, these internal dynamics are decisive. Community media are not inherently democratic; their potential depends on how participation is structurally embedded, ethically enacted, and collectively sustained. Where participation enables plurality, discomfort, and critique, agonistic democracy becomes thinkable—not as utopia, but as a fragile practice rooted in everyday editorial life.

Discussion and Conclusion: Agonism as Democratic Practice

Structure Matters: Participation as a Condition for Agonistic Media Practice

The findings demonstrate that participation is not merely a procedural value, but a structural condition for democratic communication. Within the Cypriot CMOs studied, participatory organization shaped the very texture of editorial discourse—defining who could speak, what could be said, and how disagreement could be sustained. Horizontally governed outlets, where decision making and authorship were shared, enabled a diversity of voices to coexist without being reconciled into artificial harmony. These findings empirically substantiate the article's central proposition that agonistic democratic communication emerges where participation operates as an infrastructure of inclusion, reflexivity, and ethical tension. Rather than eliminating disagreement, these media cultivate the capacity to live with it.

Agonism, Not Consensus: Making Disagreement Productive

Chantal Mouffe's notion of agonistic pluralism insists that democracy depends on institutionalizing conflict rather than erasing it. The Cypriot cases show what this looks like in communicative practice. Editorial spaces that allowed contestation transformed disagreement into dialogue. When Entropia or Deferi Anagnosi juxtaposed conflicting commentaries within the same issue or when Radyo Mayis rotated moderators to prevent dominance, they enacted agonism as an everyday ethic. These practices redefined editorial power as a collective exercise in accountability—a process of negotiating discomfort and dissent. In contrast, hierarchical or ideologically closed outlets turned participation into ritualized consensus,

reproducing the very antagonisms they sought to overcome. Thus, the democratic promise of community media lies not in unanimity, but in the structured friction that keeps difference communicatively alive.

Silencing and the Limits of Participation

At the same time, the analysis cautions against romanticizing participation. Even within the most inclusive CMOs, silences persisted: Difficult topics were deferred, and affective boundaries were policed through bonds of loyalty and care. This confirms that participation can generate its own forms of regulation—what Yang (2024) terms *participatory censorship*. The challenge for community media is to sustain openness without collapsing into paralysis or fragmentation. Recognizing these limits does not diminish their democratic value; rather, it underscores that agonism is fragile, contingent, and constantly negotiated. Ethical participation requires the courage to host discomfort and the humility to acknowledge when it fails.

From Cyprus to Comparative Insight

While grounded in the Cypriot experience, these findings resonate with broader struggles to democratize communication in post-conflict and polarized contexts. Similar tensions appear in Colombia's peace-process media (Ortega Chávez, 2025), in Bosnian grassroots radio initiatives, and in South African transitional-justice storytelling. Across such cases, participation functions simultaneously as infrastructure and ethos—creating the material and affective conditions for encountering the Other. The Cypriot CMOs thus contribute to a comparative understanding of how participatory media can serve as laboratories of agonistic democracy, transforming communication from a technology of consensus into a practice of coexistence.

The Democratic Work of Community Media

This study set out to examine how participatory structures within community media shape their capacity to foster agonistic democratic discourse in post-conflict Cyprus. The evidence confirms that where participation is deeply embedded—in governance, authorship, and reflexive deliberation—community media can counter hegemonic closure and open space for ethical plurality. In doing so, they render visible what Couldry (2006) called the “space of appearance,” where recognition is not granted by power, but enacted through collective communicative labor (p. 88).

The analysis also exposes the vulnerability of such spaces. Precarity, volunteer fatigue, and political polarization continually threaten their autonomy, yet it is precisely within these tensions that agonistic democracy becomes thinkable, not as utopia, but as a fragile, everyday practice. Community media remind us that democracy depends less on agreement than on the infrastructures that allow disagreement to endure with dignity.

Future research might explore how digital environments, transnational networks, or algorithmic governance reshape these participatory dynamics and whether similar agonistic infrastructures can thrive under different technological and political conditions. For now, the Cypriot CMOs demonstrate that the democratic work of community media lies not in resolving conflict, but in keeping conversation possible.

References

- Atton, C. (2002). *Alternative media*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Atton, C. (Ed.). (2015). *The Routledge companion to alternative and community media*. London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315717241>
- Avraamidou, M. (2017). Exploring Greek-Cypriot media representations of national identities in ethnically divided Cyprus: The case of the 2002/2004 Annan Plan negotiations. *National Identities, 20*(5), 439–461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2017.1297783>
- Avraamidou, M., & Psaltis, C. (2019). Blocking the solution: Social representations of threats and (non)dialogue with alternative representations in Greek-Cypriot newspapers during peace negotiations. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 49*(4), 460–479. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12222>
- Bailey, O. G., Cammaerts, B., & Carpentier, N. (2008). *Understanding alternative media*. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw Hill/Open University Press.
- Bailie, M., & Azgin, B. (2008). A barricade, a bridge and a wall: Cypriot journalism and the mediation of conflict in Cyprus. *The Cyprus Review, 20*(1), 57–92. <https://cyprusreview.org/index.php/cr/article/view/259>
- Bromley, R. (2011). Beast, vermin, insect: “Hate” media and the construction of the enemy—The case of Rwanda, 1990–1994. In N. Billias & L. Praeg (Eds.), *Creating destruction: Constructing images of violence and genocide* (pp. 39–60). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Rodopi.
- Bromley, R., & Voniati, C. (2026). Keeping the story afloat: Transmedial narratives and counter-narratives weaving the story of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange. In V. Giannakopoulou & E. Sütiste (Eds.), *Devised truths and the transmedial construction of worlds* (pp. 227–261). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-93083-6_10
- Bryant, R., & Papadakis, Y. (2012). Introduction: Modalities of time, history and memory in ethnonational conflicts. In R. Bryant & Y. Papadakis (Eds.), *Cyprus and the politics of memory: History, community and conflict* (pp. 1–26). London, UK: I. B. Tauris.
- Cammaerts, B. (2009). Radical pluralism and free speech in online public spaces: The case of North Belgian extreme right discourses. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 12*(6), 555–575. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877909342479>
- Carpentier, N. (2011). *Media and participation: A site of ideological-democratic struggle*. Bristol, UK: Intellect.

- Carpentier, N. (2017). *The discursive-material knot: Cyprus in conflict and community media participation*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2006). *The spectatorship of suffering*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Christophorou, C., Şahin, S., & Pavlou, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Media narratives, politics and the Cyprus problem* (PRIO Report 1–2010). Nicosia, Cyprus: PRIO Cyprus Centre.
- Christou, A., & Karayianni, C. (2024). Translanguaging decoloniality in a divided island as post-colonial pedagogic praxis: Cyprus and cultural subversions. *The Geographical Journal*, 190(3), Article e12608. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12608>
- Costanza-Chock, S. (2020). *Design justice: Community-led practices to build the worlds we need*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Couldry, N. (2006). *Listening beyond the echoes: Media, ethics, and agency in an uncertain world*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Couldry, N. (2010). *Why voice matters: Culture and politics after neoliberalism*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Dahlgren, P. (2009). *Media and political engagement: Citizens, communication and democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahlgren, P., & Alvares, C. (2013). Political participation in an age of mediatisation: Towards a new research agenda. *Javnost—The Public*, 20(2), 47–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2013.11009114>
- Doudaki, V., & Carpentier, N. (2024). From stakeholders to joint knowledge production partners: The participatory development of guiding principles and toolkit to structure the participation of non-academic partners in academic research. *Conjunctions: Transdisciplinary Journal of Cultural Participation*, 8(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.7146/tjcp.v8i1.121109>
- Downing, J. D. H. (2001). *Radical media: Rebellious communication and social movements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Fellas, S. (2013, January–August). In the lifeless embrace of his killed mother. *Eleftheri Kythrea* (103–104), 111. <https://www.eleftheri-kythrea.com/portfolio/issue-103-104/>
- Fenton, N. (2010). Re-imagining democracy: New media, citizens and the state. In N. Fenton (Ed.), *New media, old news: Journalism and democracy in the digital age* (pp. 19–34). London, UK: SAGE Publications.

- Fenton, N., & Barassi, V. (2011). Alternative media and social networking sites: The politics of individuation and political participation. *The Communication Review*, 14(3), 179–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2011.597245>
- Gready, P., & Robins, S. (Eds.). (2019). *From transitional to transformative justice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hadjipavlou, M., & Mertan, E. B. (2019). A multilevel intervention: The case of the Cyprus Gender Advisory Team (GAT) achievements and challenges. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 14(2), 125–137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542316619843258>
- Hoskins, A., & O'Loughlin, B. (2010). *War and media: The emergence of diffused war*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Howley, K. (Ed.). (2010). *Understanding community media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Ioannou, G. (2020). *The normalisation of Cyprus' partition among Greek Cypriots: Political economy and political culture in a divided society*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & boyd, d. (2016). *Participatory culture in a networked era: A conversation on youth, learning, commerce, and politics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Kolstø, P. (2009). Discourse and violent conflict: Representations of "self"–"other" in the Yugoslav successor states. In P. Kolstø (Ed.), *Media discourse and the Yugoslav conflicts: Representations of self and other* (pp. 1–20). Farnham, UK: Ashgate.
- Langlois, A., & Dubois, F. (2005). Introduction. In A. Langlois & F. Dubois (Eds.), *Autonomous media: Activating resistance and dissent* (pp. 9–15). Montreal, Canada: Cumulus Press.
- Lievrouw, L. A. (2011). *Alternative and activist new media*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Lynch, J., & McGoldrick, A. (2005). *Peace journalism*. Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press.
- Milan, S. (2013). *Social movements and their technologies: Wiring social change*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137313546>
- Milan, S. (2015). Mobilizing in times of social media: From a politics of identity to a politics of visibility. In B. Cammaerts, A. Mattoni, & P. McCurdy (Eds.), *Mediation and protest movements* (pp. 53–71). Bristol, UK: Intellect.
- Mouffe, C. (2013). *Agonistics: Thinking the world politically*. London, UK: Verso.

- Orphanides, N. (2013, January–August). The burnt ground of our motherland. *Eleftheri Kythrea* (103–104), 55–56. <https://www.eleftheri-kythrea.com/portfolio/issue-103-104/>
- Orphanides, N. (2015, September–December). The bones of the departed. *Eleftheri Kythrea* (111), 79–81. <https://www.eleftheri-kythrea.com/portfolio/issue-111/>
- Ortega Chávez, J. D. (2025). Understanding the role of the Colombian news media in a peace process during crisis times: The 2015 escalation of the conflict. *Media, War & Conflict*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352241307012>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Papadakis, Y. (2008). Narrative, memory and history education in divided Cyprus: A comparison of schoolbooks on the “history of Cyprus”. *History & Memory*, 20(2), 128–148. <https://doi.org/10.2979/his.2008.20.2.128>
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Peleg, S. (2018). Media as conflict environment: Peace journalism and the de-escalation of strife. In Y. İnceoğlu Giritli & E. Erbaysal Tırşe (Eds.), *Journalism "a peacekeeping agent" at the time of conflict* (pp. 1–24). Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
- Rennie, E. (2006). *Community media: A global introduction*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Rodríguez, C. (2001). *Fissures in the mediascape: An international study of citizens' media*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Rodríguez, C., & El Gazi, J. (2007). The poetics of indigenous radio in Colombia. *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(3), 449–468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443707076185>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Sant Cassia, P. (2005). *Bodies of evidence: Burial, memory and the recovery of missing persons in Cyprus*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

- Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 294–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912907313077>
- Shinar, D. (2007). Epilogue: Peace journalism—The state of the art. *Conflict & Communication Online*, 6(1), 1–9. https://cco.regener-online.de/2007_1/pdf/shinar_2007.pdf
- Steuter, E., & Wills, D. (2011). Drawing dehumanization: Exterminating the enemy in editorial cartoons. In S. D. Ross & P. M. Lester (Eds.), *Images that injure: Pictorial stereotypes in the media* (pp. 322–336). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Stylianou-Lambert, T., & Bounia, A. (2016). *The political museum: Power, conflict, and identity in Cyprus*. New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315521053>
- Tréré, E., & Mattoni, A. (2016). Media ecologies and protest movements: Main perspectives and key lessons. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(3), 290–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1109699>
- Trimithiotis, D., & Voniati, C. (2025). (Un)reporting xenophobia: Normalising and resisting officials' discriminatory discourse on migration in online journalism in Cyprus. *Journalism Practice*, 19(7), 1517–1537. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2279336>
- Udwan, G., Leurs, K., & Alencar, A. (2020). Digital resilience tactics of Syrian refugees in the Netherlands: Social media for social support, health, and identity. *Social Media + Society*, 6(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120915587>
- Voniati, C. (2021). *Community media and conflict transformation: Taming ethnonationalist antagonism in Cyprus through agonistic representations of victimhood* [Doctoral dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Brussel]. Vrije Universiteit Brussel Research Portal. <https://researchportal.vub.be/en/publications/community-media-and-conflict-transformation-taming-ethnonationali-2>
- Voniati, C., Doudaki, V., & Carpentier, N. (2018). Mapping community media organisations in Cyprus: A methodological reflection. *Journal of Alternative & Community Media*, 3(1), 17–35. https://doi.org/10.1386/joacm_00037_1
- Waisbord, S. (2000). *Watchdog journalism in South America: News, accountability, and democracy*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Waisbord, S. (2019). *Communication: A post-discipline*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Wetherell, M. (2012). *Affect and emotion: A new social science understanding*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

- Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). *Media and the path to peace*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Yang, T. Z. (2024). Participatory censorship in authoritarian regimes. *Comparative Political Studies*, 57(13), 2106–2145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140241302762>
- Yüksek, D. (2020). *Transformations of antagonism into agonism: Community media as a participatory contact zone in Cyprus* [Doctoral dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Brussel]. Vrije Universiteit Brussel Research Portal. <https://researchportal.vub.be/en/publications/transformations-of-antagonism-into-agonism-community-media-as-a-p/>
- Yüksek, D., & Carpentier, N. (2018). Participatory contact zones and conflict transformation: The participatory intensities of the Cyprus Friendship Program. *Conjunctions: Transdisciplinary Journal of Cultural Participation*, 5(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.7146/tjcp.v5i1.105286>
- Zembylas, M. (2024). Rethinking emotional engagement in human rights education through affective justice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 26(2), 77–93. <https://doi.org/10.52214/cice.v26i2.12440>
- Zembylas, M., & Loukaidis, L. (2021). Affective practices, difficult histories and peace education: An analysis of teachers' affective dilemmas in ethnically divided Cyprus. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 97, Article e103225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103225>

Appendix A: Media Corpus Summary.

| Outlet (CMO) | Number of items analyzed | Predominant formats | Recurrent topical tags (illustrative) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Entropia | 19 | Cultural essays, poetry, op-eds | Commemoration, cross-community grief, antimilitarism |
| Defteri Anagnosi | 17 | Editorials, paired commentaries | Bicommunal dialogue, memory justice, historiography |
| Granazi | 12 | Features, interviews | Migration, labor, intersectional critique |
| Ankara Değil Lefkoşa | 20 | News features, commentary | Accountability, anti-authoritarian critique, governance |
| Radyo Mayıs | 17 | Program transcripts, promos | Youth participation, dialogic call-ins, civil society |
| Eleftheri Kythrea | 26 | Editorial notes, commemorative pieces | Displacement/return, heritage, community remembrance |

Note. Counts and tags summarize the analyzed sample and are provided to indicate patterns.