

Abstract

Throughout the twentieth century, Cyprus witnessed violent confrontations driven by the ethnic-nationalist movements of its two main communities: Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. These conflicts profoundly shaped the lives of every man, woman, and child on the island. In this context, childhood becomes deeply entangled with nationalist discourses, as each warring party seeks to align representations of children with its own constructions of the Self and the Other. Hence, in this context, the children's magazines reflect not only the pervasive violence but also the hegemonic discourses that exacerbated the conflict.

This study investigates the discursive construction of Turkishness in Turkish Cypriot children's magazines published between 1955 and 1988, a period marked by significant turning points in the history of the island. Beyond exploring how Turkishness is discursively constructed, the study identifies the key nodal points around which this identity is articulated, examines the hegemonic discourses embedded in the magazines, and traces how events in Turkey and Cyprus are reflected in these publications.

The research adopts discourse theory (DT) as developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), which posits that all social phenomena acquire meaning through discourse, which is understood as "a structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed" (Laclau 1988: 254). Within this framework, Turkishness is approached as a subject position that Turkish (Cypriot) nationalist discourse attempts to fixate.

Methodologically, the study employs Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA), an analytical extension of DT elaborated by Carpentier and De Cleen (2007). DTA follows a retroductive approach (Glynos & Howarth, 2007), involving iterative cycles between theory and empirical data. It relies on sensitising concepts from both DT and related theoretical traditions to guide but not constrain the analysis. Discourse, as a theoretical concept, along with other discourse theoretical concepts, such as the concept of the nodal point, serves as the central sensitising concept in DTA (Carpentier, 2018), combined with 'external' sensitising concepts related to the construction of national identity, childhood, and conflict. DTA is further supported by Qualitative Content Analysis and a discourse-theoretical re-reading of relevant literature. Given the study's focus on the Cyprus Problem, the analysis is also contextualised within the island's historical framework.

The analysis draws on seven Turkish Cypriot children's magazines published between the 1950s and 1980s: *Afacan* [Impish], *Çocuk* [Child], *Çocuk Dergisi* [Child's Magazine], *Okul* [School], *Okul Çocuk Dergisi – MEKB* [School Children's Magazine by the Ministry of National Education], *Öğrenci* [Student], and *Tuncer*.

The discourse-theoretical analysis reveals that Turkishness in these magazines is articulated around three nodal points: (1) belonging to the broader Turkish nation, (2) being part of the Turkish Cypriot political community, and (3) maintaining a hybrid relationship with the Turkish state, with the 'Other' serving as a constitutive outside and bringing complexities to the meaning of the Self. These nodal points are embedded in the hegemonic discourse of nationalism and conflict, which permeates the magazines' narratives. The analysis also demonstrates how these discursive formations are shaped by broader historical and political developments in Cyprus and Turkey, and how they (re-)construct the meaning of childhood in alignment with nationalist ideologies. These intersections highlight the inherently political nature of childhood discourse during periods of conflict.

Keywords

Children's magazines; Discourse-Theoretical Analysis; Nationalism; National Identity; Cyprus Problem; Turkishness

Title

Constructing Turkishness in Cyprus: A Discourse-Theoretical Analysis of the Turkish Cypriot Children's Magazines Published between the 1950s and 1980s