



FACULTY  
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Charles University

## Record of the dissertation thesis defence

Academic year: 2024/2025

**Student's name and surname:** Mazlum Kemal Dağdelen  
**Student's ID:** 40007121

**Type of the study programme:** doctoral  
**Study programme:** Media and Communication studies  
**Study ID:** 683359

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

**Thesis department:** Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism (23-IKSZ)  
**Language of the thesis:** English  
**Language of defence:** English  
**Supervisor:** doc. Nico Carpentier, Ph.D., mimořádný profesor Univerzity Karlovy

**Date of defence:** 22.09.2025    **Venue of defence:** Praha  
**Attempt:** regular

**Examination proceedings:** The chairperson, doc. Vaia Doudaki, D.Phil., welcomed everyone, introduced the opponents, Assoc. Prof. Benjamin De Cleen, PhD, and Assoc. Prof. Dr Aysu Arsoy, and the rest of the committee members, Dr Phil. habil. Ulrike Lütke Notarp, PhD, and doc. Nico Carpentier, PhD. (supervisor) and briefly described the procedure of the exam.

The chairperson then asked Mazlum Kemal Dağdelen to present his PhD dissertation. Mr Dağdelen explained that his analysis explores the discursive construction of Turkishness in Turkish Cypriot children's magazines published in Cyprus between 1955 and 1988. The study adopts discourse theory as its main theoretical framework, drawing on the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. For the analysis, the study employs Discourse Theoretical Analysis, which involves iterative cycles between the theoretical framework and empirical analysis that mutually inform and refine each other. His analysis indicates that the discourse of Turkishness in Turkish Cypriot children's magazines is articulated around the nodal points of belonging to the broader Turkish nation, being part of the Turkish Cypriot political community, and maintaining a hybrid relationship with the Turkish state.

Then, the supervisor, doc. Nico Carpentier, PhD, was asked to introduce Mr. Dağdelen and his work. Dr Carpentier said that Kemal's thesis is of very high quality and praised the amount of work Kemal has done, not only the extensive literature review, theory and analysis, but also the intensive archival research of children's magazines. He mentioned how Kemal's PhD trajectory has been clean and well-rounded, with Kemal's involvement in multiple

organisational roles, plenty of conferences, and successful publications.

The chairperson then asked the first opponent to present her review and address her questions. The opponent, Assoc. Prof. Dr Aysu Arsoy recognised the high quality of Mr. Dağdelen's thesis and praised his writing skills. She asked Kemal about his approach to 'Turkishness' and how he used the concept in his thesis. Mr. Dağdelen explained that the construction of Turkishness that the thesis employed emerged from the analysis and that it has components from both the hegemonic approach to Turkish identity and from the specifics of the Turkish Cypriot identity.

The chairperson then asked the second opponent to present his review and questions. The opponent, Assoc. Prof. Benjamin De Cleen, PhD, congratulated Kemal on a strong and interesting thesis, which focuses on important and original research. As Dr. De Cleen argued, the thesis is thoroughly written, especially the discourse-theoretical part. He praised Kemal on his way to being very nuanced in his writing. As he argued, the text is built very logically and is elegantly written and is a pleasure to read. His first question considered nodal points - is 'hybridity' a nodal point, or hybridity reflects Kemal's analysis of the tensions in the identity relationships, still not being a nodal point in discourse-theoretical terms? Kemal responded that he sees nodal points as signifiers, but not as words, but as ideas. He concluded this on the basis of the empirical data he analysed. Nodal points and discursive elements can be integrated. That's why he decided to keep 'hybridity' as one of the nodal points in the analysis.

In the second round of questions by the opponents, the opponent, Assoc. Prof. Dr Aysu Arsoy said that Kemal has very good data with which he can recategorise the hegemonic approach to Turkishness. Kemal explained that he focused on hegemonic Turkishness, which is mostly influenced by Turkish nationalism. Here he was deliberately using it not only as Turkish nationalism, but as Turkish Cypriot nationalism. But if he is asked which Turkishness he is talking about, he would still say it is a unique combination of Turkishness and Turkish Cypriotness.

Then the opponent, Assoc. Prof. Benjamin De Cleen, PhD, mentioned that the discourse on childhood itself is not as strongly focused on, while the analysis focuses strongly on nationalism. He invited Kemal to provide some analytical clarity on this observation. Kemal argued that the construction of childhood is still part of the analysis, but the main emphasis of the research is on the construction of national identity. This analysis stems from the framing of his research questions. He said that he agrees with this comment and that if he were making the research again, he would focus more heavily on the construction of childhood.

Then the chairperson invited the rest of the committee members to address their questions. Dr Phil. habil. Ulrike Lütke Notarp, PhD, praised the originality and the writing style of the thesis. She asked about one of the PhD thesis aims, which was the advancement of discourse theory through this analysis. Her main question was: Is the concept of the nodal point a part of the language of description, or is it part of the discourse itself? She also asked if there are any aspects of the theoretical framework that should be challenged in the context of the undertaken research. Kemal responded that his main theoretical contribution is in the field of nationalism, by engaging in different theories of nationalism. Also, the concept of the nodal point is part of the discourse-theoretical sensitising concepts that drove the analysis in this research.

The chairperson, doc. Vaia Doudaki, D.Phil., congratulated Kemal on the impressive piece of work. She asked Kemal if he could briefly reflect on the concept of citizenship and the concept of a child as a citizen, as it emerges from the analysis. Kemal said children are seen as future citizens, and citizens tend to be mobilised in the case of future conflict. As he argued, the analysed texts create this identity in children as citizens in the making, as little soldiers in the making.

The supervisor, doc. Nico Carpentier, PhD, said that one of the strengths that he didn't mention earlier is Kemal's focus on iteration. He then asked if Kemal believes he should have pursued further the iterative work, as it concerns e.g. the theoretical framework or the formulation of the research questions. For instance, Kemal is talking about sacrifice in his research, and his supervisor believes that the idea of antagonistic nationalism, where the individual is sacrificing themselves for the nation, is an important part of this analysis. Kemal responded that this is an important part of it, but this would not be in the scope of this project; he would create another project for that kind of research.

After the completion of the PhD thesis defence session, the chairperson asked the audience and the PhD student to leave the room and the examination committee members deliberated and decided on the PhD thesis evaluation.

The committee then invited the PhD student and the audience back into the room and informed the PhD student about the evaluation, which was Pass.

**Result of defence:** pass (P)

**Chair of the committee:** Doudaki Vaia, doc., D.Phil., Ph.D. (present) .....

**Committee members:** Carpentier Nico, doc., Ph.D., mimořádný profesor Univerzity Karlovy (present) .....

Lütke Notarp Ulrike, Dr. phil. habil., Ph.D. (present) .....

Arsoy Aysu, prof. Dr. (present) .....

De Cleen Benjamin, prof., Ph.D. (present) .....