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

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With its analysis of the construction of Turkishness in Turkish-Cypriot children's magazines 1955-1988, this thesis focuses on a significant, original and under-researched topic. The thesis is based on a thorough literature review on discourse theory, nationalism, the Cyprus issue, as well as methodology. The analysis is systematic, interesting and nuanced. The text is built up logically and elegantly written and a real pleasure to read. I congratulate the author with the result and **without any reservations recommend this thesis for public defence.**

In this report I develop a brief appreciation of each of the chapters. Having also been an evaluator of the *small defence* version of the thesis, this report will be partly structured around reflections on revisions made based on the evaluation of that earlier version. The report also repeats some comments made on that earlier version. The significant revisions made by the author have strengthened the quality of the thesis, particularly as regards the focus on children and the specificity of children's magazines.

The introduction clearly sets out the research question and sub-research question as well as main dimensions of the analysis. The choice to focus on children's magazines as well as major theoretical and methodological choices are legitimized well. The research question is good, although the analysis actually focuses not only on the discursive construction of Turkishness (as the title and research question seem to indicate) but also on Turkish Cypriotness (with the relation between those two, as the author nicely shows, being intricate and nuanced). Compared to the small defence version, the focus on children's magazines is better legitimized and contextualized. The discussion of academic relevance (which in itself is unquestionable) remains slightly underdeveloped, with limited attention to how the thesis aims to contribute to the literature on children's magazines, nationalism, Cyprus and discourse theory (the same remains true for the conclusion).

Chapter 2 on discourse theory does a very good job at introducing the main principles and concepts of Essex school discourse theory, and at developing the thesis' ontological

and epistemological starting points. The author shows a good grasp on the conceptual framework. The argument is built up logically, making it a nice read.

Chapter 3 on nationalism is good. Whilst not really developing an original contribution in itself to the literature on nationalism (which it also doesn't aim to make), it does show a good understanding of theories of nationalism. The discursive conceptualization of nationalism forms a solid basis for the study of the Cypriot case.

Chapter 4 on the construction of childhood, which in the earlier version of the thesis was underdeveloped, has been strengthened significantly. It now provides a much more solid basis for the study of children's magazines' discourses on national identity. The review of literature on nationalism and childhood does remain slightly superficial considering the topic of the thesis. In some parts, the chapter lacks some synthesis and argumentative coherence, e.g. on p. 81-82 the paragraphs feel a bit additive and are insufficiently connected through each other. A small comment: Because of the move of part of the original chapter 3 on Cyprus to chapter 5 (in itself a logical change), the section on Cyprus and children at the end of chapter 4 now lacks some prior contextualization.

Chapter five on the history of the Cyprus problem presents a detailed picture of the history of the problem and provides a strong contextual basis for the analysis.

The **sixth chapter** on **methodology** works well. All choices are clearly explained. The section on positionality is good. The author has analyzed seven Turkish Cypriot children's magazines, resulting in a sizeable corpus. The analytical process is clearly explained (much more so than in the earlier version of the thesis).

The analytical **chapter seven** presents a systematic, detailed, and nuanced picture of the discursive construction of Turkishness – and Turkish Cypriotness – in Turkish Cypriot children's magazines. The analysis is very convincing and shows significant analytical competences and maturity, not in the least in the ability to deal with complexity and tension. In comparison to the previous version, this version of the analysis indicates a much more completed iterative cycle. The analysis is presented in a convincing manner, with a good use of illustrations, and a good balance between empirical detail and analytical-interpretive depth.

Let me return here to the two main more critical comments I gave on the small defence version of the thesis.

1. The first comment was that the analysis, given the focus on children's magazines, did relatively little with the **specificity of children and children's magazines**. This has been **significantly improved** in the final version of the thesis, with the

analysis now reflecting consistently on the interpellation of children and the specificity of children's magazines. The results is a much stronger analysis. One more critical remark here would be that the analysis, whilst focusing on children in nationalist discourse, does not do much with the discourses about childhood per se (and does not refer much to the chapter on childhood). The analytical focus on the discursive construction of national identity in children's magazines is in line with the aims of the thesis and legitimate, but at some points the analysis could have benefited from reflecting on tensions between nationalist discourses and **discourses about childhood** (rather than treating these tensions (especially 'militarized innocence' as tensions *within* nationalist discourse per se).

2. My second more substantial comment had to with labelling the four main components of the analysis as **nodal points**. These four were, in the first version, 1) 'belonging to the broader Turkish nation', 2) 'being part of the Turkish Cypriot political community,' 3) 'being in a hybrid situation with the Turkish state', 4) 'the Other and its complexities as the constitutive outside'. This comment had both a conceptual and analytical dimension.

Briefly put, the author has responded well to the analytical criticism (even if some space for improvement remains) whilst dealing more minimally with the conceptual criticism (which does also entail to some analytical limitations).

- a. Let me start with the analytical way of putting the criticism. My original comment was as follows:

« The choice to label all four analytical claims 'nodal points', gives them all the same status and flattens the analysis in terms of the relation between major ingredients of the discourse under study. 'Turkey' becomes equivalent/at the same level of centrality as 2) being part of the Turkish Cypriot political community, 3) being in a hybrid situation with the Turkish state, 4) the Other and its complexities as the constitutive outside. When reading the actual analysis, it is clear that this is not actually the case, and that these four dimensions are not of the same nature.

To this reader, it seems that the discourse under study rests on three main components: Turkey, Cyprus, and Greece (and a few other more derivative outsides) [...] It is the intricate relation between these three components that seems to make up the discourse under study. Framing the analysis more like that could, I feel, significantly improve the degree of insight into the discourse.

Looking at the analysis like this, would seem to indicate that the sections are about 1) Turkey (the real nodal point), 2 and 3) the relation between Turkey (the nodal point) and Cypriot (a derivative or secondary nodal point?) with tensions between Turkishness and

being a distinctive community, 4) the outsides of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot (the constitutive outsides that allow constructing the nodal point(s)). »

The main revision in response to this comment has been to no longer call the fourth nodal point a nodal point but instead 'constitutive outside'. This works better now, with the fourth section now much more convincing. The relation between the four components of the analysis has also been developed more clearly. The three first analytical components are, however, still called nodal points. This is a legitimate choice of the author, but it does open the analysis more conceptual/theoretical criticism. At the very least, the author could have reflected a bit more explicitly on the way this thesis operationalizes the notion of nodal point and how that relates to discourse theory.

The question here is: are these three components really 'nodal points' in the discourse-theoretical sense? Aren't nodal point supposed to be signifiers (or at least concepts that could be referred to with different signifiers, e.g. Turkey/nation)? The author himself (e.g. p. 44) defines nodal points as "privileged signs", in line with the discourse-theoretical conceptualization of discourse as "the structuration of elements (signs) into a meaningful system of moments". Given this definition of nodal points, how can 'belonging to the broader Turkish nation', 'being part of the Turkish Cypriot political community,' and especially 'being in a hybrid situation with the Turkish state' be considered nodal points? These do not seem to be signifiers (nor even concepts that could be labelled using different signifiers). It seems that, as far as the first two components go, Turkey/Turkishness and (Turkish)Cypriotness could be considered nodal points, even if "being part of" or "belonging" would not be part of this nodal point per se. 'Hybridity', however, rather than being a nodal point, seems to be the author's interpretation of the discourse under study rather than a nodal point of that discourse itself. In this sense, my original comment remains valid: "The third nodal point (on hybridity) creates most problems as this is really about the articulations and sometimes tensions between Turkish and (Turkish) Cypriot. » To be clear, I am not disagreeing with the analysis per se but with the way this is presented and conceptualised as 'nodal points', which creates tensions between the analysis and (also author's own reading of) the discourse-theoretical framework.

There are also three other, smaller, comments on the analytical chapter that have not really been dealt with in any detail in the revised version that are worth repeating here:

1. « One concept that appears quite regularly but is not really conceptualized (in a discourse-theoretical manner) is 'myth', e.g. in 'myth of the military nation'. «
2. « Some short reflections on a) developments over time, b) differences between magazines would be good. This could be done after the four sections, or integrated

in the main analytical sections a bit more consistently and explicitly. The latter would probably be the more pragmatic option. «

3. A more minor critical comment on the analysis remains the lay-out of the argument. My original report suggested the following: “Given the length of the sections on each of the nodal points, it could be an option to divide the findings chapter into four separate chapters, each dealing with one of the nodal points/analytical dimensions. This is not a must, but it would create some space and air and highlight structure. At the very least, I would suggest the author start each major analytical section on a new page. » The final version of the thesis has not really dealt with this comment, which does not allow the major argumentative steps of the analysis to stand out visually for the reader.

The **eight and concluding chapter** has been developed significantly and now forms a strong ending to the thesis. I found especially the reflections about what the analysis teaches us about the nature of discourse more generally (p. 228) to be very interesting and to show a profound understanding of the discursive approach. The contributions to the literature on nationalism are better developed than in the earlier version but this remains relatively light (in line with relatively limited reflection on contributions to the literature the introduction).

All in all, this is a strong and convincing thesis that shows mastery of all the necessary competences of a PhD researcher. Some more critical comments notwithstanding, this is a strong thesis that without any doubt meets the standards of a PhD thesis and makes a real contribution to the literature. Let me end by again congratulating the author with the high-quality work.