

THE CYPRIOT WEB RADIO *MYCYRADIO* AS A PARTICIPATORY MÉLANGE. OVERCOMING DICHOTOMIES IN THE ERA OF WEB 2.0

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Abstract. This article is aimed to study the meeting point of online and audiovisual media by analysing a Cypriot community radio station that exclusively uses web streaming, but that still is embedded in the architecture and materiality of the more “traditional” audiovisual media. As a participatory media organisation, MYCYradio allows representatives of the different communities on the island to voice their opinions, play their music, tell their stories and become part of a public space in Cyprus. As a web radio, it uses the online to stream its broadcasts, but also to archive what has already been broadcast. In addition, MYCYradio is a radio station that is very much embedded in the bi-communal movement in Cyprus, bridging the different communities on the still divided island, and linking participation to the representation of diversity. The article also uses findings and data coming from a field research on the MYCYradio case.

Keywords: *Web Radio; Cyprus; Participatory Media; Social Movements; Public Sphere.*

1. Introduction

The focus on online media has in many cases resulted in myopia towards “traditional” audiovisual media, and towards the many articulations and re-articulations that take place, not only at the level of technology, but also at the levels of production and consumption practices and cultures. This is particularly the case for more participatory audiovisual media, whose histories are still threatened with erasure¹. Moreover, the emphasis on digital (social) media has shifted our attention away from the importance of the media *organisation* in structuring and supporting participatory processes, by focussing instead on the group, community, multitude or crowd.

This article wants to study the meeting point of online and audiovisual media by analysing a Cypriot community radio station that exclusively uses web streaming, but that still is embedded in the architecture and materiality of the more “traditional” audiovisual media. As a participatory media organisation, MYCYradio allows

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¹ The exception is community and alternative media studies itself, which is quite a thriving subfield of communication and media studies, although its achievements are rarely noticed by other communication and media studies subfields, in particular online (new) media studies.

representatives of the different communities on the island to voice their opinions, play their music, tell their stories and become part of a public space in Cyprus. As a web radio, it uses the online to stream its broadcasts, but also to archive what has already been broadcast. In addition, MYCYradio is a radio station that is very much embedded in the bi-communal movement in Cyprus, bridging the different communities on the still divided island, and linking participation to the representation of diversity.

Grounded in the earlier developed four theoretical approaches model (Carpentier, Servaes and Lie 2003), this article will use a discourse-theoretical analysis of the broadcasts of two MYCYradio radio shows (the Turkish Cypriot *One Percent* and the Greek Cypriot *Downtown Choris Bakira*), contextualised by interviews with their producers. This analysis will consist out of two parts: First, the radio shows' discourses on participation will be analysed, raising the question how the producers articulate the identity of this community radio station as a participatory organisation, in and through their broadcasts. Second, the show's references to, and usages of social media, as they move beyond mono-platform usage, will be discussed. Both parts of the article illustrate the complexities of the contemporary media landscapes, and the need to think beyond dichotomies such as participatory/non-participatory, old/new, modern/traditional and media organisation/community.

2. The participatory organisation

The literature on media and participation has produced many different positions (see e.g. Jenkins and Carpentier (2013); Allen et al. (2014) for two recent debates). Arguably, two main approaches to participation can be distinguished in these debates: a sociological approach and a political approach. The sociological approach defines participation as taking-part in particular social processes, a definition which casts a very wide net. In this approach, participation includes many (if not all) types of human interaction, in combination with interactions with texts and technologies. One example here is Melucci's (1989, 174) definition, when he says that participation has a double meaning: «It means both taking part, that is, acting so as to promote the interests and the needs of an actor as well as belonging to a system, identifying with the "general interests" of the community». This approach is closely related to what is labelled cultural participation, defined as individual art (or cultural) exposure, attendance or access, in some cases complemented by individual art (or cultural) creation. As Vander Stichle and Laermans (2006, 48) describe it: «In principle, cultural participation behaviour encompasses both public and private receptive practices, as well as active and interactive forms of cultural participation». In contrast, the political approach produces a much more restrictive definition of participation, that refers to the equalisation of power inequalities in particular decision-making processes (see Carpentier 2011; Carpentier, Dahlgren and Pasquali 2014). Here, participation is distinguished from interaction through its alignment with power relations in decision-making processes. Participation then becomes defined as the

equalisation of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal or informal decision-making processes.

The political approach also allows emphasising that participation is an object of struggle, and that different ideological projects (and their proponents) defend different participatory intensities². More minimalist versions of participation tend to protect the power positions of privileged (elite) actors, to the detriment of non-privileged (non-elite) actors, without totally excluding them. In contrast, more maximalist versions of participation strive for a full equilibrium between all actors (which protects the non-privileged actors). One domain of the social where this struggle can be observed is democratic theory (and practice). More particularly, this struggle revolves around the always-present balance between representation and participation, or between the delegation of power and the exercise of power.

This power struggle over participation can be found in many social domains (as argued elsewhere, see Carpentier (2011), including the media domain. In this domain, we can find these struggles in the ways that mainstream media privilege media professionals, even when (minimalist) forms of participation are organised, such as, for instance, through audience discussion programmes (Livingstone and Lunt 1994; McNair et al. 2003). At the same time, the mainstream media model is resisted by alternative and community media, as they have the increase of participatory intensities as their explicit objective. This is nicely captured by Tabing's (2002, 9) definition of a community radio station as «one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community». But also other contestations have occurred, as online technologies were discovered for their participatory affordances. Interestingly, organisations have not necessarily been seen at the forefront of these participatory activities, and more emphasis has been placed on groups and communities. Groups and communities (and not organisations) are seen as the structuring components of the forms of collaboration and co-creation made possible by Web 2.0, and the invisible hand of group belonging, driven by common interest, seems to make governance unnecessary. Shirky (2008, 47), for instance, uses the concept of the post-managerial organisation, but in practice he refers to «loosely coordinated groups [that] can now achieve things that were previously out of reach for any other organizational structure [...]».

Online (or new) media theories' focus on community, and the (at least partial) discrediting of the concept of the organisation, necessitates a thorough reflection on the importance of the organisation in relation to more maximalist participatory processes (a point that was raised before, in Carpentier (2013)). This does not imply that the notion of *community* should necessarily be discredited, nor does it mean that the connections between community and organisation should be ignored. For instance, Jenkins's (2006) work – and especially his reference to adhocracies – shows

² One complication is that the concept of participation itself is part of these power struggles, which renders it highly contingent. The signification of participation is part of a “politics of definition” (Fierlbeck 1998, 177), since its specific articulation shifts depending on the ideological framework that makes use of it.

how closely related communities and organisations are. Moreover, as Williams (1981, 76) puts it in his *Keywords*, communities can materialise in organisations:

«The complexity of community thus relates to the difficult interaction between the tendencies originally distinguished in the historical development: on the one hand the sense of direct common concern; on the other hand the materialization of various forms of common organization, which may or may not adequately express this».

But arguably, the organisation remains an important social structure, different from the community (and the group) because of its logics of functionalisation, coordination, finalisation, formalisation and centralisation (Etzioni 1961; Hatch 1997). Reducing the concept of the organisation to the antipode of the multiplicity, to a necessary position of minimalist participation or non-participation, would be too simple. The community/alternative media organisational models, in particular, show that it is possible to attribute a significant role to the organisation as a tool for, and location of, the more maximalist forms of participation.

In its focus on community/alternative media, this article defines them as a particular type of participatory media organisation. Community and alternative media can take many different forms and can use various technological platforms (print, radio, TV, web-based, or mixed). Even in their labelling, many differences can be found. Apart from community and alternative media, they have been described through a variety of concepts, including citizens' media, associative media, free media, autonomous media, rhizomatic media, radical media and civil society media. Despite their differences, community and alternative media share a number of key characteristics, which distinguish them from other types of media organisations like public service or commercial media. Especially their close connection to civil society and their strong commitment to (maximalist forms of) participation and democracy, in both their internal decision-making process and their content production practices, are important distinguishing characteristics that establish community and alternative media as the third media type, distinct from public service and commercial media. One way to capture their diversity and understand what unites them is to combine the four approaches that have been used in the literature for the study of community and alternative media (discussed in Carpentier, Servaes and Lie 2003; see also Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier 2007; Carpentier 2011). Taken together, these four approaches allow theorising the complexity and rich diversity of community/alternative media, but they also show the role of participation:

- the community approach focuses on access by, and participation of, the community; the opportunity given to “ordinary people” to use media technologies to have their voices heard; and the empowerment of community members through valuing their skills and views;
- the alternative approach stresses that these media have alternative ways of organising, alternative ways of using technologies, carry alternative discourses and representations, make use of alternative formats and genres, and remain independent from market and state;

- the civil society approach incorporates aspects of civil society theory to emphasise that citizens are being enabled to be active in one of many (micro-) spheres relevant to everyday life, using media technologies to exert their rights to communicate;
- finally, the rhizomatic approach uses Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) metaphor to focus on three aspects: community media's elusiveness, their interconnections (amongst each other and (mainly) with civil society), and the linkages with market and state. In this perspective, community media are seen to act as meeting points and catalysts for a variety of organisations and movements.

3. MYCYradio and the Cypriot context

The case study in this article focuses on MYCYradio, a web radio station that is based in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus. This island is one of the European countries characterised by a long-lasting conflict. Cyprus has been geographically and ethnically divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north and occupied more than one third of the island, after decades of intercommunal tensions and violence. Since then, the two major communities, the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot have been living in two different parts of the country: the officially recognised by the international community Republic of Cyprus in the south and the Turkish-held auto-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the north, recognised only by Turkey. The majority of the population on the island is Greek Orthodox (78%), with 18% of Muslims, and an overall 4% of Maronites, Armenian Apostolics, Catholics, and so forth (Vassiliadou 2007, 201). The official languages are Greek and Turkish. During the past decades there have been ongoing negotiations for a peaceful solution. The last peace plan proposed by the UN for the reunification of the island in 2004, known as the "Annan Plan", in the form of a federation of two constituent states, was rejected by referendum in the Greek Cypriot community and accepted in the Turkish Cypriot community. As it had to be accepted by both communities in order to be applied, the island remains divided up today, although negotiations are still on-going.

At present, there is no explicit recognition of community (or alternative) media in either part of Cyprus. Neither the internationally recognised Cyprus Radio and Television Authority (CyRTA), nor the Higher Broadcasting Authority in the northern part of Cyprus have made legislative provisions for analog or digital frequencies to be made available to community media organisations. Nevertheless, in 2009, the first community media organisation was established in Cyprus in the form of the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC), located in the UN-guarded buffer zone, in Nicosia. Initially not a broadcasting organisation, it focussed on providing training, loaning equipment to member organisations (that are part of the Cypriot civil society), creating productions for other organisations, staging public events, and offering media advice to members. Only in 2012, CCMC started a web radio station, MYCYradio.

In its *Foundation Charter*, the mission of CCMC (2009) is pithily summarised as «[e]mpowering a media literate and active society», which shows its emphasis on

community participation and empowerment. But the organisation also aims to contribute to conflict resolution, especially in the description of CCMC's ten core values where the link to conflict resolution is made explicit. The first item on the list of core values is to «[u]nite people and communities through community media based on coexistence, dialogue, inclusion, reconciliation, and respect for diversity». In addition, the fifth core value emphasises the inclusiveness of CCMC («We value and respect the contributions of all people in society and aim to provide a forum for diversity, multiculturalism, and social inclusion through community media production based on creativity, dialogue, and innovation») and the ninth core value refers to CCMC's opposition toward «all forms of discrimination based on concepts of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, creed, and/or religious belief and views». Similarly, also MYCYradio's (2012) *Foundation Charter* refers to inclusiveness, diversity and participation: «MYCYradio aims to engage with and serve all communities living in Cyprus, by providing a platform for a diversity of voices to be heard. It aims to highlight cultural and linguistic diversity, encourage social integration thus promote a culture of active citizenship and participatory democracy».

This diversity becomes also visible in the MYCYradio programme schedule. In November 2013, MYCYradio had 32 programmes, which used, apart from Greek, Turkish and English, also Arabic, Cameroonian, French, Lingala, Persian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Swahili and Tamil³. Despite the dominance of Greek and English (and to some degree Turkish)⁴, we can still find a strong focus on linguistic minorities in the programme schedule (MYCYradio, 2013), where, for instance, the programme *Al Jalia* describes itself as «a bridge between Arabs themselves, the local society and other communities in Cyprus»; *Cypriots' Corner* «invites you to find out about the true diversity of Cyprus, exploring the issues affecting minority groups in Cypriot society, and in particular the religious communities of Armenians, Maronites, and Latins», and *Rangarang* is seen as «a platform where people can access information about the Iranian community in Cyprus». Also issues related to other social groups, such as LGBT and women's rights, feature in the programme schedule, as the objective of the programme *Kaleid 'Her' Scope* shows: «giving a voice to voiceless women' – women for women, women to women, women about women!».

The participatory dimension is not exclusively linked to the creation of content, but also to the participation of radio producers in the management of the organisation. MYCYradio's (2012) *Foundation Charter* outlines the two-tier governance structure of the organisation, which consist out of the MYCYradio Programme Committee and the MYCYradio Management Committee. The MYCYradio Programme Committee includes all radio producers and has an advisory role. Moreover, the Programme Committee selects the two representatives of the radio producers in the Management

³ These are the linguistic labels that are used on the MYCYradio website. In some cases (e.g. Cameroonian), the label is not entirely clear, but still used as it could be found on the website.

⁴ 12 programmes use Greek, half of them in combination with English. 11 other programmes also use English, as exclusive language, or in combination with other languages (two programmes use Spanish, French and Cameroonian in combination with English). Three programmes use Turkish, five programmes another language, and one programme plays non-stop music.

Committee, which has the oversight of all programming, and runs «the station as not-for-profit, safeguarding its independence». Apart from the two radio producers' representatives, the Management Committee also includes three members of the CCMC Governing Board⁵, a representative of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus and the MYCYradio Station Manager. Although the Station Manager and the Management Committee hold strong power positions, the radio producers still participate in the governance of the radio station through the Programme Committee and their representatives in the Management Committee.

This article, though, aims to focus on the actual MYCYradio broadcasts, the ways how the radio producers articulate the participatory identity of MYCYradio, and how they align this community media identity with social media, both in discourse as in material multi-platform media usage. The data will consist of the broadcasts of two MYCYradio radio shows,⁶ where 10 episodes of each show, broadcast between September and November 2013, were transcribed, translated into English (from Greek or Turkish)⁷ and then analysed. The Turkish Cypriot *One Percent* is a programme produced by Doğukan Müezziner, who discusses (sometimes with a guest) the «problems that the Turkish Cypriot community faces» (MYCYradio 2013). The Greek Cypriot *Downtown Choris Bakira* has three producers (Orestis Tringides, Giannis Ioannou and Yiorgos Kakouris) and focuses on the urban realities of Nicosia's inner city. The analysis of these 20 episodes, together with the Facebook pages of the two programmes and their four producers, were contextualised by interviews with producers. The method that is used, is a discourse-theoretical analysis (Carpentier and De Cleen 2007) supported by basic qualitative research principles (Wester 1987; 1995; Maso 1989).

4. Articulating a participatory identity

4.1 Alternativeness

The nodal point of MYCYradio's participatory identity is its alternativeness, which is defined by articulating MYCYradio in contrast to mainstream media organisations, turning the latter into constitutive outsides. In other words, the radio shows contain a series of elements that emphasise the difference between mainstream media and MYCYradio and through this difference the identity of MYCYradio is defined. A first element is the lack of independence, which is used to critique the mainstream media's affiliation with the political system. In the following extract from

⁵ The CCMC Governing Board in turn currently includes 7 representatives of its NGO members.

⁶ Also the mixed-community *Cyprus Oral History Project* programme was originally included in the analysis, but this analysis produced few relevant results for the particular research questions on participation, organisation and technology, given the programme's focus on the pre-recorded narrations of the history of the conflict in Cyprus.

⁷ All citations are rendered in English and were translated from Greek or Turkish, unless indicated otherwise.

One Percent, we can find an exchange between the host and his guest, a university professor at the Eastern Mediterranean University. Here, they not only emphasise the dependence of the mainstream media, but also articulate their media professionals as incapable of affecting the policies of their organisation.

Guest: A big mission is for the media, but the media themselves are in distress. So if we talk about their role in politics, at least I think that unfortunately the media are not independent...

Host: They are not.

Guest: ...No. So this is not a fourth power. This is a branch of some other powers, generally.

Host: Yes

Guest: And it is manipulated. Of course, I absolve ... I generalise.

Host: Of course, we always generalise.

Guest: I absolve the employees, in general. Because there are employees working there and they are not determining the politics of that institution at all. (*One Percent*, broadcast 25 September 2013)

Related critiques towards the mainstream media focus on their lack of honesty, respect and freedom, which form the second articulation of MYCYradio's alternativity. The mainstream media's affiliations are seen to impede on their capacity to engage in truth-speaking, while MYCYradio is articulated as an alternative where people can «talk about things in all honesty» (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 5 September 2013). In this articulatory logic, honesty sometimes becomes juxtaposed to politics, as the fragment below shows. Moreover, this fragment also illustrates the definition of mainstream media as lacking respect, not (always) treating their objects of attention in very humane ways.

Host1⁸: Here is your chance and our chance to talk about things in all honesty, without any politics, without those well-known and unknown [things] you hear in other shows, ok? And we'll talk even more without accusing anybody, we are not interested in intrigue, as I said [...] (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 5 September 2013)

The emphasis on truthfulness is combined with a particular – alternative – ontology, which does not align well with factuality. Instead, the radio show producers often express their uncertainty about 'the' facts. For instance, in the case of *One Percent*, we can find a careful reference to football matches between Turkish and Greek Cypriot teams, that took place in Limassol, a city on the south coast of Cyprus: «Even this year I think there were two footballs matches in Limassol. I'm not sure». (*One Percent*, broadcast 6 November 2013) In contrast, at the more argumentative (and ideological) level, the producers use a more outspoken positionality, exemplified

⁸ In case there are several hosts in one radio show, "host" is combined with a number to refer to a particular host.

by this rather clear statement from the *One Percent* producer: «I agree with the Biologists Association» (*One Percent*, broadcast 30 October 2013), when discussing the association's critique on the (too) elaborate possibilities for hunting on Cyprus. A similar position we can find in this evenly explicit call for being critical, where the producer addresses the audience: «Don't form opinions without questioning the issue, without learning the realities and be careful for information pollution». (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013)

Thirdly, the radio shows also construct MYCYradio's alternativity by pointing to the social relevance of their content, which is focussed on everyday life (in contrast to the mainstream media who are seen to be disconnected from, and disinterested in, the everyday). In *Downtown Choris Bakira*, a programme that discusses issues related to the centre of Nicosia, one of the producers says: «[...] we see that many things happen in the old city which the [mainstream] media don't cover». A few sentences later, he continues «[...] however, as I understand it, TV doesn't cover many things that are of interest to the public». (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 3 October 2013) Also in *One Percent*, we can find references to the relevance of the everyday, and the alternative news values it encompasses: «So when a person writes on Facebook, "Today when I was on the road, when I was walking, I saw a car hit a dog or a car park on the sidewalk", this is something that is actually newsworthy, and this is one of the issues that concerns the public». (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013). Some of the ways through which MYCYradio is constructed as alternative are more form-related. Here the mainstream media's professionalism, supported by the mastery of technologies to their perfection and their awareness of their social significance and central position (see Couldry's (2003) critique on mainstream media's self-articulation as centre) offers a counterpoint. Some care is needed. As Downing (2002, 322) argues, sophisticated technologies have become more available for community broadcasters, which results in the «hitherto unbridgeable chasm between aesthetically pleasing and culturally significant video is closing up [...]». Moreover, it is wise to «to envisage a spectrum running from the non-professional to the professional» (Downing 2002, 323), and not to dichotomise mainstream and community/alternative media producers. But at the same time we should not ignore community/alternative media's tendency to question what Downing (2002, 323) calls "canonical procedure". In the case of the MYCYradio programmes, we find a relaxed and self-relativising way of presenting the programmes. When, for instance, in *One Percent*, tea is brought into the studio, the host tells his guest: «Let's have a little break if you want. After having some tea, we can continue to talk». (*One Percent*, broadcast 13 November 2013) Also in relation to technology, we can find this self-relativising attitude, where «a phone [that] is ringing somewhere in the back» (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 26 September 2013) is just mentioned, but not problematised. In general, mistakes are seen as natural, and not a violation of professionalism, as this short fragment of *Downtown Choris Bakira* describes:

Host1: What I'm doing right now is that I've found the webpage and I am copying and pasting it on the *Bakira* website, but I always make this mistake of putting the description in the comments section whereas I

should be putting it higher up. Now I'm about to do it again. Don't mind me [in English], I'm just doing it again. (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 17 October 2013)

The same relaxed attitude is displayed when it concerns late arrivals or absences of radio producers. This material reminder of the voluntary position of the radio producers, who also have other commitments, which is very much part of the practice of participatory media, is again not problematised, but simply communicated to the audience, as it considered normal that they sometimes cannot make it to the live broadcast. Examples of statements like this are: «[Host2] had some business to attend to and he didn't come» (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 24 October 2013), and «[Host1] is in Amsterdam, so he's hopefully listening and I hope he regrets not being here with us» (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 31 October 2013).

This participation of volunteers, and their commitment to the community media broadcaster, is the last way in which MYCYradio's identity is constructed as an alternative towards the mainstream media. The producers rarely discuss their position in the MYCYradio broadcasts; it is the materiality of their voices, structured by MYCYradio's programme schedule, that makes them, and the participatory identity of the radio station, visible. There are a few exceptions, where producers do talk about the backstage of CCMC and MYCYradio. In particular one *One Percent* broadcast (on 27 November 2013) discusses the expertise of the CCMC staff, articulated as friends, but also describes the training of the volunteer producers to use the equipment.

Host: I think we have a core staff team of 6 people in the centre. These are friends who have expertise in areas such as media communication, journalism etc. and everybody in here has the necessary theoretical and practical know-how for multimedia content production. For example, the colleagues in here taught us how to use this radio equipment. So the fact is that a large environment exists, where voice has been given to society, by having them learn new skills. (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013)

It is important to stress that the producers, in their articulations of the identity of MYCYradio as alternative, ground its constitutive outside in an organisational reality. When referring to mainstream media, they are seen as organisations, with employees, that use distinct technologies (television, newspapers, etc.) to produce media content. The last citation shows that also MYCYradio is seen as an organisation, although of a different kind, with a "core staff team" and with many volunteers that together create an environment in which the enabling of participation, giving "voice to society", is one of the main objectives.

4.2 Community, civil society and rhizome

This emphasis on the participatory organisation, as an alternative to the mainstream media, raises questions about the actors that participate, and in particular about the relationship between the broadcasters and the community/ies MYCYradio seek(s) to represent. The articulations of MYCYradio as an organisation that serves the community/ies are not very dominant in the analysed programmes, and in many cases absent. Again, there are a few exceptions, that can mostly be found in the *One Percent* broadcast of 27 November 2013. In this broadcast, the host points to the many languages that are used, and to the «many different topics [that] are talked about», resulting in a “multicultural environment”, ranging «from Greek to Turkish, from Arabic to other languages». (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013) Here we can see MYCYradio being defined through its connection to different linguistic-ethnic communities, but without specifying the exact nature of this connection.

At the same time, the host of *One Percent* emphasises the empowerment of the community/ies, by defining MYCYradio as «a “platform” that can make the community’s voice heard in order to strengthen civil society [...]». (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013) He explicitly emphasises the organisational nature of CCMC and MYCYradio, and the importance of the community controlling the media organisation. But again, when clarifying the nature of community control, he shifts back into the alternative media approach. MYCYradio becomes defined as being different from commercial and public media, thus implicitly black boxing the community that MYCYradio is expected to serve.

Host: Now the Cyprus Community Media Centre, as indicated by its name, is actually a media organisation made and controlled by the community for the community. So what does it mean “controlled by the community”? It means a media approach which is not seeking profit like the commercial press, or that is not a public organisation owned by the government. Therefore it is not facing political pressure. So this is the meaning of community media. (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013)

Articulating the relationship between MYCYradio, the radio show producers and the community/ies runs into other signifiatory difficulties, as the audience measurements indicate very low audience ratings, and “the” community does not seem to be very interested in the work of the producers. When, in the case of *Downtown Choris Bakira*, the producers get word that they have ten listeners, they first label the ten “heroes”, then address them jokingly by using fictitious names, but finally call on “the community” to “embrace” them. In this last part, we can find an invitation towards the community to accept the producers as their symbolic representatives, showing the difficult relationship between those community members that can participate in and through the media organisation on the one hand, and those community members that, in principle, can only interact with the content.

Host3: Guys, 10 persons are listening to us.
 Host1: Yes, yes, that's what Natalie [CCMC staff member] said.
 Host3: She's listening to us.
 Host1: No, it's not 10 persons that are listening to us, it's 10 heroes.
 Host2: 10 heroes
 Host3.: This is where we say "good afternoon to our listeners, or 10 of you" [phrase in quotes in English]
 Host2: This thing exactly
 Host1: So, in person, good afternoon Giota ...
 Host3: Nikos, Theodore
 Host2: Giorkis, Giannis
 Host1: And Natalie, and possibly Christos
 Host2: Michael
 Host3: Guys, this is a show about the community. It is up to the community to embrace us. When we represent it, [the community] will talk about us [using] word of mouth [in English], share [in English] something, tell other friends, Kostas, Martha etc., "You have to check it out." [in English] In any case, it is up to you who are listening to us, guys. (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 5 September 2013)

This representational problem becomes (partially) mediated through the emphasis on civil society as a replacement for community. The citation that was already mentioned above – defining MYCYradio as a “platform” that can make the «community’s voice heard in order to strengthen civil society [...]» (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013) – is indicative of this shift from community to civil society, where the audience itself becomes seen as an “organised audience” (Reyes Matta 1981; 1986). Again, the materiality of the organisational embeddedness of the radio producers, and especially the guests, illustrates the importance of civil society, as a considerable number of producers and guests are active in civil society, and/or represent civil society organisations. In one case, a guest uses the time allocated to him at the end of the broadcast to even call on civil society organisations to participate in a EU grant proposal (*One Percent*, broadcast 11 September 2014), again indicating the importance of civil society as a short-hand for Cypriot communities. Simultaneously, this also shows the workings of the rhizome, where a variety of civil society organisations (and other social structures) meet within the radio station, turning it into a crossroads for civil society. Secondly, we also see a glimpse of the interconnection of Cypriot civil society with state actors, such as the EU (and, in the case of CCMC and MYCYradio, their funders: the European Commission Representation in Cyprus, and before, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)).

5. Social media relationships

The radio producers use social media in their attempts to reach out to their audiences (and communities), which allows them to transcend the restrictions of the web platform of the radio station and engage more closely with their listeners and supporters. The effort to gain a presence on social media is considerable, as MYCYradio itself, the *One Percent* and *Downtown Choris Bakira* programmes and the four radio producers all have, for instance, Facebook pages. In particular *Downtown Choris Bakira* regularly uses Facebook (and Twitter) to communicate to the outside world, announcing the topics and guests before their live broadcasts take place, uploading pictures taken in the studio during the broadcast and making links, related to the studio discussions, available online. At the same time, the producers of both programmes refer in their broadcasts to their Facebook pages as a source of information about their programmes.

Although these postings and announcements – as illustrated by the posting rendered below - could be seen as purely promotional, an alternative reading is that they are invitational towards audience and community members, flavoured by a degree of (self-)irony: «Do like our page. Apotheosise us and tell girlfriends and friends how great we are. Great and ...» (Facebook page *Downtown Choris Bakira*, 12 September 2013) In the radio programmes themselves, we can find support for the more invitational strategy, as in both cases, the openness of the programme is strongly emphasised. For instance, in *One Percent*, the producer of another MYCYradio programme called *Gravity*, who is a guest in this *One Percent* broadcast, invites listeners to respond in the following way: «If you want to talk, or if you have some views on different topics, you can also send them to us, through the Facebook page or by mail. Yes, that's how it will be an open radio program». (*One Percent*, broadcast 18 September 2013) In the first broadcast of *Downtown Choris Bakira*, when calling on audience members to respond – with the following words: «If you think of something, there's Facebook, upload it, we've got Twitter, upload it, and we've also got an email [address]» (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 5 September 2013) – two of the radio producers make their outreach and proximity to the community very explicit:

Host1: [...] We reach out to all of you. In this show, we do it for you. Ok, we also do it for fun – it's something we love to do and we devote our very soul to this endeavour, but we are you. Come close ...
Host2: Don't go back, [don't] keep us in the dark (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 5 September 2013)

In another case, one of the producers of *Downtown Choris Bakira*, on his own Facebook page, launches a call for new candidate-producers for radio shows on MYCYradio, again showing their invitational use of social media.

Want to have your own web radio show? Have something to say/present (that you usually don't get from other radio stations/media

outlets)? Use any language that you'd like? Apply! (deadline is Dec. 2)
(Facebook page Orestis Tringides, 13 November 2014)

Despite these efforts to link up with their audiences (and community/ies), the producers run into the limitations triggered by the small number of listeners, which also reflects on their Facebook pages. Postings rarely received more than 10 likes, and only very few comments. On 15 February 2014, the total number of likes of the *Downtown Choris Bakira* Facebook page was 347. On 22 May 2014, it had increased to 435. *One Percent*, on the same day, only had 33 likes. Nevertheless, the use of social media does (sometimes) allow listeners to interact with the radio producers and, to a very limited degree, participate in the broadcast. One example is *Downtown Choris Bakira*'s broadcast of 24 October 2013 on the Syrian civil war, where a listener's message is mentioned in the broadcast:

[...] a link sent to us by our friend Petrakis from France, thanks a lot my friend Petrakis. [The link] is to the BBC and it's a "Guide of the Syrians rebels" [title in English], and everything is described there. And he writes that this is a sign of how fucked up the situation is. (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 24 October 2013)

Even when they are rare, also on the Facebook pages of *Downtown Choris Bakira* and its producers we can find conversations between producers and audience members, where the latter, for instance, congratulate the producers, comment on pictures, or ask for technical advice. In one case, the producers posted a picture on the *Downtown Choris Bakira* Facebook page. This picture was sent to them by a listener, Nikos Malekos, and portrayed the three producers as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, labelling them the Green Zone Turtle Ninjas, something which was extensively discussed during the 5 September 2013 broadcast.



Fig. 1 – Fan art on *Downtown Choris Bakira* Facebook page
© Nikos Malekos

Finally, apart from using social media, the programmes also discuss the societal and democratic role of social media in their broadcasts. Here, it is particularly *One Percent* that points to the importance of social media, drawing explicit parallels between community media and social media: «Now when we say “community media” and think about its meaning, in fact, community media are almost similar to social media. [...] in fact, you give directly the microphone, or the digital newspaper, or the radio to the community». (*One Percent*, broadcast 27 November 2013). And again, mainstream media form a constitutive outside that supports this parallel. The communicational freedoms of both community and social media – «In today’s environment, everybody is their own publisher», as one of the *One Percent* guests remarks (*One Percent*, broadcast 25 September 2013) – is juxtaposed to mainstream media, where one is «supposed to be friends with a boss of a newspaper to spread an idea». (*One Percent*, broadcast 25 September 2013) This again places the emphasis on the alternativity of MYCYradio.

6. In conclusion: Overcoming dichotomies

The MYCYradio case study shows the importance of organisational structures for enabling participatory processes, and the need to avoid constructing a dichotomy between mainstream organisations and participatory non-organisations. As an organisation, MYCYradio provides both the discursive and material safe haven for non-professional broadcasters to exercise their right to communicate, and creates a meeting place for a variety of people, affiliated to many different communities and civil society organisations, to physically meet and work together. Although MYCYradio’s broadcasts are obviously important, the space that the material locality of the CCMC building offers, facilitating collaboration and dialogue within, is (at least) of equal importance.

But all this does not mean that the relationship between the community media organisation, its producers, its audiences and the community/ies it aims to serve, is not complex. Here again, we need to be careful in avoiding dichotomising logics, but also steer clear from homogenising logics. For MYCYradio, it is relatively easy to be a different – more participatory – kind of organisation, rhizomatically connected to civil society and strongly driven by an identity of alternativity. Building a deep representational relationship with the variety of communities that exist on Cyprus is less easy. Even if one of the producers says: “we are you” (*Downtown Choris Bakira*, broadcast 5 September 2013), the producers remain structurally different from their communities (even if we only consider their position in having access to the production facilities), and they face difficulties in both creating (symbolic) representation and facilitating participation for the members of the community that are *not* radio producers, despite many good intentions and attempts. The end result is a mixture, a *mélange*, of minimalist and maximalist forms of participation, co-existing within the same organisation.

Moreover, this case study also shows the complex usages of technologies by MYCYradio staff and volunteers, with varying degrees of success, where the more

“traditional” setting of radio production is combined with “new” streaming and archiving technologies, and furthermore supported by equally “new” social media to serve the organisation’s participatory objectives. Again, dichotomies between old and new, and between traditional and modern should be handled with care, as they do not seem to allow us to describe the multilayered nature of the technology use in MYCYradio. MYCYradio, and its producers, integrate and articulate different technologies in ways that allow them to achieve their objectives. Arguably, this is not so much a matter of (technological) convergence, which projects a time-path of technological change ahead, in the future, but more of the always particular and fluid integration and articulation of technologies within the organisational participatory-democratic context. Producers put these technologies to work for them – to the best of their skills – mobilising the technologies in ways that sometimes push these technologies beyond the safety zone of their affordances. This interaction between producers and the discursive and material environment (very much centred around the radio studio) makes these technologies all blend in quite naturally, as necessary components for the realisation of MYCYradio’s participatory objective, but also as objects of pleasure. After all, we should keep in mind that participation is very much about humans, and much less about technology.

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