Nationalism and Reconciliation in Cypriot Documentary Film, 1976–1987

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Abstract
This article examines the production of documentary films about the Cyprus conflict produced between the late 1970s and late 1980s. Two films have been selected for analysis: *Cyprus: The Other Reality* (1976, dir. Lambros Papadimitrakis and Thekla Kittou), an anti-nationalist documentary produced in the immediate aftermath of the Turkish incursion of the island, and *A Detail in Cyprus* (1987, dir. Panicos Chrysanthou), which looks back at the social effects of the incursion and the estrangement of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Based on original interviews with their directors, this article gives an account of the production histories of the two documentaries and looks at their means through which they were distributed to the public. The article also examines the ways in which these two films represent the Cyprus conflict, in particular their engagement with the prevailing nationalist ideologies at work in both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and the alternate concept of Cypriocentrism. Finally, this article examines the ways in which both films were politically suppressed following their release within the Republic of Cyprus.

Keywords
Cypriocentrism, Cyprus, documentary, nationalism, production history

There is a long history of documentary production in Cyprus. Indeed, the earliest films to be made on the island were non-fiction films commissioned by the British colonial government and designed either to promote Britain’s imperial project to a domestic audience or to influence the behavior of the colonized Cypriot population (Stubbs, 2015). However, the end of colonial rule and the subsequent escalation of intercommunal conflict on the island provided a new subject for Cypriot documentarians. This article takes as its subject two major documentaries produced following the Greek Junta Coup and the Turkish military incursion into the island in the summer of 1974. In this period, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities were further divided as the island underwent a violent partition. Many documentaries that emerged from this context were explicitly nationalist in their orientation. However, the documentaries under consideration here adopt a different perspective, questioning the dominant nationalist ideologies and histories and providing space for the reconciliation of the island’s two largest ethnic communities. The examination of the concepts of Greek nationalism and Cypriotism in Greek Cypriot society has shown that the construction of cultural and political identity is represented differently in these two documentary films. When ethnonationalism has been historically considered an obstacle to bi-communal cooperation, “Cypriotism” or Cypriot consciousness is seen as a driving force for peaceful coexistence (Avraamidou, 2018, p. 441).

Accordingly, Panayiotou defined Cypriot consciousness as a modern politicocultural phenomenon which ethnonationalists in both communities treated with suspicion; Cypriotness emphasized independence, as a means of Cypriot emancipation from British colonialism, contrary to the goals of union with Greece and partition (cited in Avraamidou, 2018). While ethnic nationalism provided researchers with a lens to examine the conflict, the division of the island, and the ways in which Greek and Turkish Cypriots created exclusive communities of belonging, examinations of civic nationalism gave researchers insight into the ways in which Greek and Turkish Cypriots reimaged their respective political communities independent from their respective motherlands and constructed notions of belonging based on notions of a common “Cypriot” identity (Boone, 2016, p. 51).

This article begins by briefly summarizing the historical context of nationalism, Cypriocentrism, and the Cyprus conflict. This is followed by a review of literature concerning the use of documentary as a political tool. Then, the article analyzes the first film *Cyprus: The Other Reality* (1976), a film

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which is still relatively unknown by both Greek and Turkish Cypriot audiences and which was suppressed by the government of the Republic of Cyprus at the time of its production due to its rejection of nationalist ideology. The second film under consideration is *A Detail in Cyprus* (1987). This documentary was perhaps even further removed from Greek nationalist aspirations but was released into a less turbulent political atmosphere. In each case, analysis of these two films is based on an account of their production history and their distribution, using interviews conducted with their respective directors. In this way, I have been able to determine how the conditions in which the films were produced was reflected in their content. Proceeding from this point, the article examines how these films represent the Cyprus problem and, more broadly, their participation in a Cypriocentric ideology in Cyprus.

**Method**

The documentaries *Cyprus: The Other Reality* and *A Detail in Cyprus* will be studied using the following techniques: analysis of production history, textual analysis, and analysis of distribution. Interviews with documentary practitioners were used as a research instrument to outline the stages of production and the reception of the films in question. As Schostak (2006, p. 54) suggests, an interview is an extendable conversation between partners that aims at having an “in-depth information” about a certain topic or subject, and through which a phenomenon could be interpreted in terms of the meaning interviewees bring to it.

Primary data for this article were collected from face-to-face personal interviews with the directors of the films under analysis. Apart from outlining the stages of production history, my analysis also addresses the content of the films. To describe and interpret the characteristics, content, and the structure of the selected documentaries in this article, textual analysis will be used to study the political functions of films and the messages they express. Finally, my analysis directs attention to the distribution of the films. Within the limitations of this study, I asked how much attention was given to a documentary upon its release and how it was portrayed in the media. In this respect, understanding where these documentaries were screened would play a significant role in explaining their impact on the communities in which they were produced.

**Nationalism, Cypriocentrism, and the Cyprus Conflict**

From the period of British colonial rule until the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, the island of Cyprus experienced an increase in nationalist movements. In the process, Cyprus became a concentrated war zone in the ongoing Greco-Turkic conflict and the battle against colonialism. Under colonialism, both Greek and Turkish nationalist identities became fully politicized. After 1930, the anti-colonial reaction among the Greek Cypriot community on the island became focused on “Enosis” or union with Greece due to the influence of nationalist ideologies. However, British authorities were not fully capable of addressing these issues among both communities in Cyprus until 1940. During this time, the nationalist tendencies on the island were strengthened. In 1940, when these measures were relaxed and the close relationship between Greece and Turkey was encouraged by the British authorities as a result of the war conditions, the nationalist aspirations among Greek Cypriots resurfaced more strongly (Kadioğlu, 2010).

From the late 1940s until the 1950s, both the Greek Cypriot community and the Republic of Greece tried to take the case of de-colonization to UN. As a reaction to colonization on the island increased in the mid-1950s, Cyprus witnessed the conception of the nationalist organization EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston), which aimed to put international pressure on Britain. By late 1957, Britain’s proposal for the political involvement of Greece and Turkey had been rejected by Greek Cypriots as they believed it would lead to the partition of the island. From this perspective and with the support of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish Cypriot community promoted the concept of TAKSIM (partition) on the island and were prepared to fight to achieve this. Hence, concepts of nationalism were commonly manifested by both Greek and Turkish Cypriots in this period of Cypriot history. This led to the challenge between an independent Cypriot state with the co-operation of the two ethnic communities and the struggles of nationalist organizations (Kadioğlu, 2010).

The establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 did not positively affect a consociation of the two Cypriot communities. Although the external powers expected a liberal atmosphere whereby power would be shared between the communities in every sense, many Turkish and Greek Cypriots preferred to maintain closer relations with their respective mainlands, which prevented political solidarity. Yakinthou (2009) states that in the 1960s, Cyprus was the forerunner to greater tension in that arena. Complicating the issue, the domestic elites of both communities presented the roles of their motherlands in Cyprus. Britain used its authority to force the Greek and Turkish Cypriot representatives to come together to discuss a common solution (Richmond, 2002). As a result, agreements signed in Zurich and London in 1959 led to the creation of a new republic in Cyprus. In 1960, via the Treaty of Guarantee, territorial independence was preserved in the Republic of Cyprus and this agreement divided the communities on the basis of ethnic origin, where Turkish Cypriots were accepted as a minority group of the republic.

The period after 1963 marked the start of total separation and intercommunal division in the island, which resulted in the establishment of the Provisional Turkish Cypriot Administration (PTCA). Subsequently, the period 1964 to 1974, which has to be accepted as the peak of conflict in
Cyprus, culminated in Turkey’s military incursion. The military incursion of the Turkish army in Cyprus on July 20, 1974, following a coup d’état led by the Greek military junta on July 15, 1974, resulted in the division of the island and displaced more than one quarter of the total population of the two ethnic communities. Although the events of 1974 were perceived differently by the Greek and Turkish Cypriots as well as in the international arena, this event led to the total separation of the two communities and the continued partial division of Nicosia following the 1964 ethnic struggle.

To clarify the problem of this study, it is also necessary to understand the development of Cypriocentric tendencies in post-1974 Cypriot politics and its impact on documentary production. According to Peristianis, the events that followed 1974 are characteristic examples of a “Cypriocentric turn” in that period, which placed an emphasis on beginning to “think first as Cypriot and then as Greek or Turks” and the need to promote “love of country, understanding between its communities, [and] the consolidation of a democratic way of life” (2006, p. 104). For Kızılyürek (2005), the Cypriocentric idea was not the objective from the beginning. As he noted, the Cyprus Republic was established on the Hellenic and Turkic concepts and citizenship of the republic was linked to the ethnic communities instead of common citizenship. So the formation of Cypriotism for Mavratsas refers to the idea that Cyprus has its own particular character that is different from the motherland’s characteristics (cited in Gülseven, 2020). In this context, Hadjipavlou (2010) says that “both main ethnic communities looked to outside parties to realize their visions. The absence of a common political culture of sense of Cypriotness created the ethnic nationalisms that led to a culture of intolerance, mutual suspicion, and fear” (p. 78). Avraamidou and Kyriakides argue that Cypriocentrism should focus not [merely] on the divisions between the two forms of nationalism (the territorial/civic and Hellenocentrism) in Greek Cypriot community. They suggest that collision between exclusionary and inclusionary forms of Cypriotism in the Greek Cypriot community is a more salient development where there is evidence that exclusionary significations of the state tend to focus on civic identity (Avraamidou & Kyriakides, 2015). In the last decade, a new history teaching program in Cyprus promoted a united federal Cyprus, and Cypriotism was mainly promoted by incorporating the territorial element into the collective identity and by reducing the “self-other” confrontation (Dembinska, 2017, pp. 400–401). As a means of affecting the nationalist tendencies and making Turkish Cypriot community’s national feeling closer to Turkish nationalism, Rauf Denktaş played an important factor during his leadership in Cyprus history. Kızılyürek (2005) noted Denktaş’s expressions:

I am an Anatolian boy. Every part of me is Turkish and my roots are in Central Asia. I am Turkish in my culture, my language, my history, with my entire existence. I have a nation and a homeland. The culture of Cyprus, a Turkish Cypriot, a Greek Cypriot, federal Republic, this is all nonsense. If they have Greece, and we have Turkey, why should we live under the roof of the same republic? . . . There is neither a Turkish Cypriot nor a Greek Cypriot, nor even a Cypriot. Don’t ever ask if we are “Cypriots.” This might be considered as an insult and some misunderstanding may occur. Why? It is because there is only one Cypriot living in Cyprus and it is the donkey of Cyprus. (cited in Saybaşılı, 2008, p. 94)

However, recent surveys by SCORE in 2015 funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicated the growing of popularity of the Cypriocentric ideology among both ethnic communities. According to this survey, 54% of Greek Cypriots and 43% of Turkish Cypriots preferred to identify themselves as “Cypriots.” In this respect, the problematic issue in this work involves the determination of the levels of Greek or Turkish Cypriot nationalism (connected to their mainland), postcoloniality, and the lack or existence of Cypriocentric aspects in the documentary productions that support reconciliation in Cyprus. As a stereotypical image of the “other” for both communities on the island, bi-communal issues, particularly bi-communal documentary films, gradually led to a reduction in the nationalist feelings. The problem with nationalist aspects in the political and historical contexts is that such interpretations may exclude the narrative accounts of “others,” and the hermeneutics of nationalism also inform how one should understand and work with others. Hence, the transformation of conflict may require a sensitive approach to historical problems such as in Cyprus due to the deeply contested historical understanding of the present situation.

**Documentary as a Political Tool**

While this work mainly encompasses documentary productions that were made between the years 1976 and 1987 with the central theme of reconciliation, it is important to present the literature of documentary filmmaking from the perspective of specific political circumstances. According to Whiteman (2004), the making of a documentary film is essentially an intervention into an ongoing social and political process, and the production may act as a catalyst in many different ways. His expressions are important to understand the political impact of documentary filmmaking during periods of conflict.

The use of documentary for political purposes may lead to the identification and critique of dominant narratives and ideologies in society within the sociopolitical context in which they occur. As a rhetorical force of social change, documentary film is not a new concept but one that is rarely interrogated by theorists. While documentaries of the 1930s often challenged the policies and politics of established governments, many filmmakers developed new ties with governments to make films advocating progressive goals (Musser, 1996).

Documentary film as a text can be understood as both a product of existing social conditions and a form of critical
opposition; this dialectic can be useful in understanding the function of documentary in the process of social change. Hence, on a larger scale, documentary filming plays the subversive function of keeping political and social discussions alive. According to Rotha, propaganda appears to present an alternative to the hard cash basis for film production. For him, it will doubtless be maintained that propaganda is a sterner end to serve than profit and that the demands of the propagandist will further restrict the development of the film and the activity of its makers (Rotha, 1939). The artistic sophistication of interwar cinema in the 1920s and 1930s had its formidable power as means of propaganda and persuasion, which are direct results of its achievement as industry and artistry during the First World War (Stojanova, 2017).

The earliest documentaries about Cyprus go back to the late-1920s after the island became a British colony. Recent research in this area shows that at least 12 nonfiction films were produced during colonial period of Cyprus (Stubbs, 2015). According to Stubbs, the earliest documentary film produced on the island was called Cyprus (1929), which was produced by British Instructional Films, UK. This film was followed by Almost Arcady (1930), A Mediterranean Island (1932), Cyprus Is an Island (1946), Farmer and Goatherd (1949), The Land of Cyprus (1950), Travels in Cyprus (1953), United We Stand (1953), Report on Cyprus (1955), This Land of Cyprus (1955), Island Fortress (1956), and Image of Cyprus (1958) (Stubbs, 2015).

Among these productions, Cyprus Is an Island is perhaps the most significant and it is the only one on which a director is credited. Directed and produced by Ralph Keene, the film focuses on the positive social and economic impact of colonial rule on the island from a distinctly British point of view. Although it does highlight Cyprus’ diverse cultural heritage, the film offers few clues about the conflicting political aspirations of Cyprus subjects in the time of its production.

Since the introduction of state film support policies in the mid-1980s, film production in Cyprus can largely be characterized as a “festival cinema” (including Turkish-Cypriot focused films). Highlighting the modern context of film production on the island, Constandinides (2015) suggests that the dominant Greek-Cypriot cinema is mainly state-subsidized and that funds are allocated to five broad practices of film production: (a) high budget feature-length films, (b) low-budget feature-length films, (c) film documentary, (d) film shorts, and (e) animation. Documentary film thus occupies a relatively minor position within Cyprus’ national film culture.

Documentary is a powerful tool that can be used as a conversation starter, one that activates powerful modes of questioning that may create significant momentum into a series of shifts both on the individual and within collective reality (Faulcon, 2012). When considering the documentaries that were produced immediately after the coup d’état in 1974, the documentary film Attila ’74: The Rape of Cyprus (1976) created a collective memory in among many Greek Cypriots and in the international arena in which the events of 1974 were represented as an incursion of the island as a nationalist production. In this regard, the lack of documentary filmmaking in the northern part of the island for several years during this period prevented the Turkish Cypriot community from using documentary as a powerful tool for creating and/or representing their own nationalist narratives.

By contrast, the production of Cyprus: The Other Reality (1976) and A Detail in Cyprus (1987), which I examine in this article, suggests that popular public expectations of documentary film enable the recent history of Cyprus to be told from a different perspective. These documentaries reflect the social and political atmosphere of Cyprus in opposition to the dominant nationalist narrative. For D’Souza (2012), social and political documentaries share certain commonalities, in that they are often involved in representing those whose voices have been muted by the powerful within society. In this respect, Nichols (1992) states that individuals’ thinking is potentially mutable through films’ influence: “ideologies will also offer representations in the form of images, concepts, cognitive maps, worldviews, and the like to propose frames and punctuation to our experiences” (p. 8). The remaining sections in this article will examine these documentary productions in detail.

**Cyprus: The Other Reality (1976)**

**Synopsis**

Cyprus: The Other Reality begins by presenting historical background information regarding the geopolitical significance and historical reference of Cyprus, the national rights of Cypriot people, British colonization, and the island’s dependence on Greece. To clarify the idea of the conflict in the island for the viewers, the documentary shows broader archival footage from the British Colonial period of Cyprus. At the beginning of the documentary, the dominant nationalist narrative is highlighted; however, this was subsequently undermined by presenting an alternative point of view that focused on the negative impact of the 1974 war.

In the following scene, we witness women crying for their relatives in footage from the cemetery in Nicosia in which Greek Cypriot men were buried during the 1974 war. The interview with the representative at the cemetery shows the real story of what happened during the Greek Junta Coup and the events following the Turkish military incursion. In this respect, the name of the production Cyprus: The Other Reality is meaningful in that it examines a narrative that was marginalized by the Greek Cypriot state at that time.

The documentary film is based on experiences of Greek and Turkish Cypriots gleaned from personal interviews, in which they discuss communal unity and the terrible impact of the 1974 war. The footage of those forced to live in tents aims to show the challenging conditions that resulted from the military incursion, the migration, and Greek Cypriot suffering. An interview with a Turkish Cypriot woman in Zygi
village demonstrates that the pain and loss caused by the 1974 war was not limited to Greek Cypriots. Another interview with a Greek Cypriot, in which only his back can be seen, adds a sense of objectivity to the interview as it reflects the conflict among the Greek Cypriot community. The archival footage of the exchange of captives and Archbishop Makarios’s first speech immediately after the military incursion is also given significant emphasis.

**Production Stage**

Research for the film started in July 1974 and production began in November the same year. The scriptwriters and the directors conducted in-depth research prior to the filming stage, including study at the London Imperial War Museum and the Cyprus Press and Information Office (PIO). During filming, interviewing the victims of EOKA-B fighters proved to be difficult. *Cyprus: The Other Reality* contains many interviews, including the voices of the Turkish Cypriots, which had never been shown before in such a context. The co-director of the documentary, Papadimitrakis, states that “this documentary is the only one which reflects what the EOKA-B fighters did to the Turkish Cypriots, and how this became the justification of the ongoing events in Cyprus” (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, April 18, 2017). In this way, Kittou’s and Papadimitrakis’s documentary aimed to demolish the one-sided history written by Greek Cypriots.

After a lengthy preproduction and production work, the editing process began at the beginning of summer 1976. The documentary mainly focuses on the idea that Turkish and Greek Cypriots are the same and equal, and they had previously lived together for many years. Papadimitrakis presents those ideas in his documentary intentionally because the solution in Cyprus would not exist without Turkish Cypriots. According to Papadimitrakis, he and Kittou strongly “support the representation of unity among Greek and Turkish Cypriots in order to rebuild a common life together” (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017).

Before beginning production, Papadimitrakis and Kittou felt a need to experience life in both communities to understand the facts of the coup and subsequent incursion. During the shooting period, the directors also identified other facts that were regarded as important. According to the political circumstances, they realized that “the meaning of Archbishop Makarios is a hero for the lower/working class for the Greek Cypriot community on the island” (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017).

In examining the interviews of the documentary during and immediately after the war period, Papadimitrakis noted that the chosen spaces and stories for documentary filming were related to those who had experienced the events of 1974. Regarding the material they gathered, *Cyprus: The Other Reality* was based on three different orientations. As he notes in his interview, the first is the initial status of Cyprus and can be seen in the analysis of the social problems and the war, which created issues like immigration and missing persons. The second orientation is linked with Greece, indicating that the mainland of the Greek Cypriots created problems. Finally, the third orientation that the documentary aimed to examine is the possibility of achieving a solution. In their documentary production, the directors aimed to identify a solution that could be achieved with the involvement of Cypriots and Greece, not politicians (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017).

According to Papadimitrakis, both he and his co-director realized that the relations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities were different to the representations in the school books and education systems in both communities. Moreover, they realized the relationship between the two ethnic communities was harmonious, in a practical way (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017).

**Distribution**

The reception of *Cyprus: The Other Reality* at the 1976 Thessaloniki Film Festival in Greece was very positive and it received several awards during this period. After the screening of the documentary, several cultural organizations also screened it in other locations. On the contrary, because of political obstacles, the Greek Cypriot government prevented the circulation of the film and suppressed it for 7 years. With the restrictions of the former president Makarios and AKEL (Progressive Party of the Working People), *Cyprus: The Other Reality* was the only documentary film that could not be screened; protests were made by many artists and journalists via newspapers and through various activities. In the document released by PIO, the Cypriot state indicated that this documentary was against Greek Cypriot politics, as it created a conflict between the ethnic communities in Cyprus. The documentary was also censored in mainland Greece. According to Papadimitrakis, “these reasons listed by the government were all a big lie” (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017).

After the presidential elections and the victory of Kiprianos Kiprianou, the political atmosphere changed in the southern part of the island. As Papadimitrakis notes, the screening of this documentary on the Greek television channel ERT led the new presidential office to examine whether this documentary film had been screened in Cyprus or not, and contacted the co-director Thekla Kittou. As a result of the explanation given by the co-director, the censorship was lifted and the open-air cinemas in Paphos, Limassol, Nicosia, and Larnaca screened the documentary (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017). More recently, *Cyprus: The Other Reality* was screened at the European University Cyprus on October 2017 for university students and academic staff.

**Analysis**

The factor that enabled this documentary to stand as anti-nationalist was the presentation of Turkish Cypriot images.
and their experiences of the 1974 war. *Cyprus: The Other Reality*, the earliest and actually the first documentary that was produced by the Greek Cypriot directors immediately after the coup d’état, mainly aimed not to present the image of Turkish Cypriot as the “other,” but portrayed them in the same light as Greek Cypriots.

By presenting the interviews with Turkish Cypriots, the documentary relates the stories of their lives during the period of war as an unpleasant experience and is therefore a tool that sheds light on the secret past for the Greek Cypriots. This documentary not only reflects the viewpoint of Greek Cypriot political rhetoric, but it also comprises the unity of the two ethnic communities during the period of war. The opposing political stance is the Cypriocentric position: Cyprus is placed at the center of history, with Greece and Turkey posited as external political actors, whose interventions have had negative impacts on the island (Constandinides & Papadakis, 2015).

During the postwar period, it was almost impossible to find a Cypriot documentary that transmitted a common cultural and political heritage and that created a common record in questioning evidence of the conflict in Cyprus, except *Cyprus: The Other Reality*. The story narrated by a Turkish Cypriot woman who witnessed EOKA-B fighters raping a young girl in Zygi village in this documentary film is a good example for the change in this one-sided history for Greek Cypriot society. Instead of reflecting ethnic dominance, Greek Cypriot directors of the documentary raised the Cypriocentric ideology and gave voice to the untold story of rape committed by EOKA-B fighters. In an interview with the co-director of *Cyprus: The Other Reality*, Lambros Papadimitrakis noted that they received a letter from the PIO in which they were officially informed that their documentary film was against the interests of Greek Cypriot politics (Papadimitrakis, personal interview, 2017). The PIOs on each side of the island bear the same name and responsibilities. As Yiannis Papadakis (2006) notes, the PIOs have remained historically stable and unchanged even as political goals and regimes have shifted.

By comparison, in Papadimitrakis’s and Kittou’s postwar documentary, the concept of *majority/minority* among the ethnic communities is never addressed. The Greek Cypriot political mainstream also pointed to the Turkish Cypriot community as a minority in Cyprus, and this mainstream led *Cyprus: The Other Reality* to be suppressed for 7 years under these Greek Cypriot nationalist policies. The dominant nationalist narrative of Greek Cypriot policy was shaped by the organization *New Cyprus Association* in the first post-1974 years. This association’s primary role was to pressure the official Greek Cypriot leadership to denationalize the Republic of Cyprus and to assume an explicit policy of independence (Mavratsas, 1997).

By using “the other reality” in its title, the directors of the documentary tried to direct the attention of the audience to look at the 1974 war from a different perspective than it had previously been presented. As it represents the “other reality,” this documentary challenges the Hellenistic nationalist point of view. Here, the Greek Cypriot directors undermined the dominant nationalist narrative by representing the Turkish Cypriot community in a similar manner to the Greek Cypriot community to convey that both communities suffered from nationalism on the island. The relevant interviews presented in the documentary (Figure 1) clearly reflect the cooperation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots’ cooperation during the war period.

The use of “other” in the title of this documentary also builds awareness and confidence among the two communities as a main objective. This objective breaks the Greek Cypriot political image that maintains the negative image of Turkish Cypriots. In terms of reflecting the cooperation between the two ethnic communities in Cyprus, *Cyprus: The Other Reality* must be accepted as an alternative narrative toward the dominant nationalism and an opposite stance to the conflict on the island. When referring to the nationalist conflict in the case of ethnically divided Cyprus, Harry Anastasiou (2002) notes,

> Any understanding of the complexity of the communication process across the “great divide” that separates the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot minds must be preceded by a grasp of the major structural dynamics of the conflict. There are two interrelated parameters that define the framework of the conflict, which in turn effectively conditions the mode of communication between the two sides. (p. 581)

Discussing the “peaceful coexistence and cooperation” by the two communities in this period became another mantra of Greek Cypriot political rhetoric through the publications of the PIO. In fact, the rise of Cypriotism was followed by the Turkish incursion (Constandinides & Papadakis, 2015; Loizides, 2007; Mavratsas, 1997). The past Greek Cypriot rhetoric of peaceful coexistence was an explicit political
statement that Cyprus should be reunified since “the past proves that the two communities can coexist” (Constandinides & Papadakis, 2015, 120). From another perspective, banning this documentary film prevented similar productions from being made in Cyprus for many years.

By referring to traumatic experiences of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities in 1974, Cyprus: The Other Reality encompasses humanitarian suffering experienced by many Cypriots throughout the island. Because the documentary did not attempt to determine “who is guilty in the 1974 war” and it not construct only the Greek hegemonic identity on Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot authorities prevented its release. In other words, this is an example of a prohibited documentary that highlights the stance against the patriotic movement created in Cyprus in the postwar period.

Analyzing Cyprus: The Other Reality within the framework of Greek Cypriot leadership politics, it can be said that the film contains many elements related to common cultural heritage and it questions the violent past on the island. Looking at post-1974 politics from today’s political atmosphere, the film also shows that many changes have occurred in terms of the creation of new Greek Cypriot perceptions regarding the 1974 coup and the Turkish incursion that followed.

A Detail in Cyprus (1987)

Synopsis

A Detail in Cyprus presents the experiences of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot people during the Cyprus conflict. The film recounts the times of peaceful coexistence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the village of Ayios Sozomenos and the tragedy that resulted in their separation and the abandonment of their homes in 1964, which are now in ruins.

The film begins with a woman—Marina Kittou—driving car back with her daughter to the Nicosia walled city from her destroyed village. The main frame of the documentary is based on the feelings that Marina experienced during and after her visit to the abandoned village. By introducing archival photos in the documentary, the director tries to show the essence of the village of Ayios Sozomenos before it was abandoned. In addition, the introductory part of the documentary A Detail in Cyprus demonstrates the good relationships that existed in the village between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

One of the interviews conducted with the Greek Cypriot villager—Michael Stavri—in the documentary is important evidence that demonstrates how the conflict began in Ayios Sozomenos and how Turkish Cypriot villagers saved the lives of their Greek Cypriot co-villagers. Another interview performed with a Greek Cypriot woman—Christina Nicholas—also takes the viewers back to the historical period in which the villagers were able to co-exist in same environment where cultures were shared and people helped each other. The good relations among Turkish and Greek Cypriots were also highlighted by other interviewees—Nicholas Paphidis and Chrystalla Loizou.

While the documentary presents a large amount of panoramic footage of the Ayios Sozomenos village, it also shows the detailed scenes of political slogans written on walls that support the themes of partition of the island like “partition or death” and like “What a joy to be a Turk.” The phrase “Are all these things a detail from our life?” is an expression on which the name of the documentary is based. With this statement, the film aims to show that villagers in the documentary still cannot accept the abandonment of the village and the partition of the island. The archival footage at the end of the documentary shows the events that led to the village being engulfed in fire, which ultimately resulted in its evacuation. The structure of the film fundamentally shows how villagers were forced to escape from their village due to an ethnic conflict in which they had no involvement.

Production Stage

In the earlier periods of the 1974 war, presenting a Turkish Cypriot living in the southern part of the green line would have been dangerous and unimaginable. This documentary was also
obstructed by the PIO in the Republic of Cyprus. Although funding was provided by the Greek Ministry of Culture for the production of this documentary, the PIO officials in the south were ashamed of the film, and the cultural institutions of the Republic of Cyprus never acknowledged its existence (Davis, 2015). Panicos Chrysanthou stated that his intention to produce this documentary was based on his desire to present the lives of Turkish Cypriots in a humanitarian way on the southern part of the green line. Rejection of the PIO’s suggestion that the Turkish Cypriots should be excluded from the documentary resulted in the screening of the film being prevented (Chrysanthou, personal interview, August 3, 2016).

The examinations of the conflict in Cyprus and the PIOs’ historical deconstruction in the south have been criticized by Chrysanthou. One of the reasons for the prevention for this documentary screening might be seen as the construction of memories in line with the Greek Cypriot officials’ preferences. Publishing only the selected data by PIO would result in the construction of history from the perspective of the public in the way that the Greek Cypriot authorities intended.

Chrysanthou talked about the footage of events in 1964 that he included in the film. This footage, which he found in the PIO archives, did not show the village itself but was from another location in Cyprus, although he said that it was a good representation of what happened in the village in 1964. Black-and-white and color film clips, mostly in the form of newsreel, show people running down a Nicosia street in panic, men crawling across fields with rifles, men shot dead, their bodies lying on the floors of houses while others stand around aimlessly, men being arrested, wounded men being taken away in ambulances, and UN soldiers patrolling village streets (Davis, 2015).

As Elizabeth Davis (2015) notes, contemporary films about the conflict in Cyprus clearly aim to expose historical secrets, to highlight neglected dimensions of the conflict, and to provoke new reflections on personal and social responsibility for violence and division. This statement draws attention to public screenings of reconciliation-themed documentaries in enlightening the dark side of the history. In Cyprus, circulation is as difficult as the production stage for these types of documentaries.

The other important aspect of this documentary is that it was produced immediately after the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until this time, the film and documentary productions were only made by PIK (Greek Cypriot Official Television Channel). With the new regime on the northern part of the green line, a committee of the PIO suggested that more productions should be made to fight with the established regime in the north.

In explaining the reason for choosing Ayios Sozomenos village as a core example representing the conflict on the island, the director of the documentary states that this village was one in which the church and mosque can be seen together, different eras of history exist in the same place, and there were many remnants in this empty and ruined village that could accepted as symbols of Cyprus. According to Chrysanthou, the village represents both Turkish and Greek nationalistic aggression (Chrysanthou, personal interview, 2016). Hence, a documentary production in this village may have been beneficial for understanding the relations between the two ethnic communities, thus paving the way for the reconciliation process.

Distribution

As previously mentioned, this documentary faced many obstacles after the production stage because it includes a provocative interview with a Turkish Cypriot female Fikriye, and consequently, A Detail in Cyprus was never broadcast on television in Cyprus. When Chrysanthou was permitted to screen his first postwar documentary in Ledra Palace, he was faced with obstruction from the Turkish Cypriot premier Rauf Denktaş. In his interview, Chrysanthou states that Denktaş did not give permission to Turkish Cypriots to cross the line for the screening (Chrysanthou, personal interview, 2016).

The first screening of this documentary took place in London. Chrysanthou was particularly surprised by the presence of many Turkish Cypriots at the screening. From the director’s perspective, it was important that the documentary was watched by both communities of the island. Therefore, he made considerable efforts to ensure that there were bicomunal screenings. In the northern part of the green line, this documentary was screened on three occasions in Side Streets, in the northern part of Nicosia. In his interview, the director notes that many former Ayios Sozomenos villagers attended the screening and it provoked an emotional response for them (Chrysanthou, 2016).

Analysis

The film opens with striking images of the divided capital Nicosia, with the symbols of Turkish and TRNC flags and soldiers guarding the border. The appearance of a Greek Cypriot woman and her daughter’s return from their former village Ayios Sozomenos to the walled city is supported by a voice-over by the narrator. Instead of using the images of intercommunal violence between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities, the director focused on witnessing personal stories of people after partition. Chrysanthou also devotes a section to the children who experienced the ethnic conflict in 1964 directly, which can also be seen to be a major theme in his work. He indicates that children represent the communities of Cyprus, being innocent victims of the conflict who suffered and are opposed to politicians.

The interviews throughout the documentary, with references to the “good neighbors,” are intended to point toward the reunification of the island. By presenting the Turkish Cypriots’ image as equal as with Greek Cypriots, this clearly showed that the director Chrysanthou aimed to reflect that
For the documentaries that were produced in the southern part of the green line in Cyprus before 2003, there was no opportunity for circulation or press discourse in the northern part of the island. *A Detail in Cyprus* had limited circulation and was not reviewed by the press on either side of the green line. Because of the inclusion of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots in examining the political similarities in the documentaries produced before the checkpoint openings, both productions did not accept the Turkish Cypriot community as enemies. The Turkish incursion resulted in displacement of Cypriots on the one hand and created a tragedy on the other with the division of the two ethnic communities into two enclaves and missing persons from both sides. Moreover, both documentaries commonly stated the issue of the rapes committed by the Turkish army during the 1974 war.

Another important aspect clarified in this work is the inclusion of the Turkish Cypriot image between these two documentaries where *Cyprus: The Other Reality* and *A Detail in Cyprus* enabled the pains of the Turkish Cypriot community to be expressed via interviews. Although the theme of reconciliation was far from prevalent during the period of these documentaries, their distribution also faced many difficulties where the politics were completely shaped under the national feelings in Cyprus. The barriers preventing the circulation of *Cyprus The Other Reality* and *A Detail in Cyprus* were continued by both authorities until political changes occurred on the island. These films, which were produced in the earliest years of total separation on the island, made the case for Greek and Turkish Cypriot communal coexistence and presented models for reconciliation.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

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