

Mapping community media organisations in Cyprus: A methodological reflection

Chris Voniati*

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Vaia Doudaki

Uppsala University, Sweden

Nico Carpentier

Uppsala University, Sweden, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

Identifying grassroots or ‘below-the-radar’ organisations, such as community media organisations, is a challenging task that is not always supported sufficiently by methodological literature. The objective of this article is to address this challenge by proposing a structured approach to mapping analysis: (1) driven by an (operational) definition of the social entity; (2) that allows for a population-based mapping process; (3) that uses a particular registration instrument (labelled a Mapping Index Card, or MIC); (4) to process data from multiple sources; and (5) to analyse the information registered in these MICs. By zooming in on the only divided country of Europe – the island of Cyprus – this article then illustrates how to design and conduct a mapping research of community media organisations on a national scale. Other than giving an overview of the community media operating in Cyprus, this mapping exercise aims to provide a methodological guide for mapping civil society and ‘below-the-radar’ organisations in general.

Keywords

Below-the-radar organisations, community media, Cyprus, grassroots organisations, mapping methodology

Introduction

Despite the plentiful academic attention that community media organisations (CMOs) have received in the recent past, very little has been written on how the presence of such organisations, or of other below-the-radar organisations (Soteri-Proctor, 2011) in a particular spatial setting can actually be registered, counted or mapped. Some attempts have been organised, also in the field of community media (e.g. Community Media Forum Europe, 2012), but their methodologies have not often been discussed systematically, and they remain virtually undocumented. This is part of a more general problem, as there is insufficient methodological support for mapping as a method, and there is a lack of substantial reflection about the principles and procedures of mapping analysis.

* Email: Christina.Voniati@vub.ac.be

Moreover, mapping below-the-radar organisations poses a number of significant challenges, and attempts to map community media only confirm this. Community media's diversity and elusiveness, combined with their informal character and sometimes short lifespan, complicate a mapping process, even though basic definitions of community media organisations appear to be quite straightforward. After all, Tabing's (2002: 11) description of community media, as media organisations that are 'in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community', appears treacherously easy to use, but this is only until its complexity is unpacked (which will be done later in this article). Despite the difficulties, we argue that it is highly important to identify and study these organisations. Community media matter because, apart from their often alternative and counter-hegemonic content and discourses, they also give voice to one or more communities, and constitute alternative spaces of (social) organisation, participation and action, thus actively questioning and strengthening democracy (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008; Carpentier, 2017; Howley, 2010). Given the societal relevance of these organisations, it becomes even more important to develop methods to map them in a systematic and scientifically solid manner.

This article wishes to address these gaps by proposing a method for mapping below-the-radar organisations, focusing on community media organisations in order to pay sufficient attention to the specificity of the context. At the same time, we maintain that our discussion on mapping has a broader range of application, and that it has the ability to support other – new and existing¹ – mapping initiatives in a variety of societal fields. For this reason, a more general discussion of mapping analysis is organised here, which is then illustrated by a community media mapping research project conducted in (both parts of) Cyprus. The article provides an overview of how the mapping was actually performed, and may serve as a methodological case study, illustrating a procedure that potentially can be used in other research projects (concerning below-the-radar organisations, such as grassroots refugee aid organisations) and thus have wider relevance. Of course, as we will argue later, the mapping of (Cypriot) community media is important in its own right. This methodology is not to be applied invariably in all cases. Each time, the research design needs to be adapted to the scope and scale of the project, and to the particularities of the type of organisation to be mapped; additionally, the social, cultural and political environment of these organisations needs to be taken into consideration.

Towards a more structured approach to mapping research

A mapping exercise is usually understood as a cartographic process performed to study an area for the creation of a map. It is related to, but is also distinct from, registration (what national statistics agencies do with sectors), categorisation (what libraries do – creating metadata) and inventory creation (Arts Now, 2007; United Nations Development Programme, 2012), taxonomies and cartographies (Lee & Gilmore, 2012). Mapping allows for a better organisation of knowledge, as it facilitates the processing, exploration and comparison of complex information.

Unfortunately, there is not much literature on mapping-as-a-method. One of the problems with elaborating a mapping methodology is that mapping is a generic term used in a diverse range of academic disciplines and for a variety of different purposes. In the field of geoinformatics, for example, mapping designates the use of spatial maps (Wise, 2002). At other times, mapping is used simply to refer to survey research in general (Wheeldon, 2010). Although the term may sometimes be associated with taxonomy and typology (Reed et al., 2009), it is conceptually different in that it precedes any sort, or possibility, of categorisation. That is, taxonomy is a classification generated ex-post from empirical observation of the mapping data (De Propris, 2005: 209), which is different from the mapping itself.

In this article, we propose a more focused approach to mapping research. For this purpose, a series of research projects that use this fine-grained approach were taken into consideration, mostly situated in the field of organisational sociology, including a micro-mapping of organisations operating below the radar (Soteri-Proctor, 2011), a mapping of the regional social enterprise sector (Lyon & Sepulveda, 2009) and a mapping of Scotland's disability organisations (Johnston et al., 2009). Another case considered is that of the Mapping Project of Community Media (mentioned above), in the context of which community radio and television stations operating in European countries were identified, and countries were ranked according to the degree of national commitment to the community media sector (Community Media Forum Europe, 2012). In this case, both mapping and ranking were conducted exclusively via desk research.

The definition of mapping we propose refers to a systematic analysis of a particular type of social entity (in our case, community media organisations). The development of this more structured form of mapping analysis has no intention of reinventing the wheel: It makes use of a series of widely applied research methods and techniques. The specificity of the mapping analysis that is elaborated here lies in the particularity of the articulation of a number of key methodological concepts, and of the ways in which the different components of the procedure are structured.

The following five characteristics of mapping analysis are distinguished. First, mapping analysis is based on a clear definition of the social entity – the object of the mapping. It is of crucial importance to 'articulate the objective as clearly as possible and to have guidelines to fall back on' (Arts Now, 2007: 18). This requires the formulation of an operational definition to drive the procedure. An operational definition 'must be valid for and specific to the research' (Matthews & Ross, 2010: 61), in that it must enable the collection of data that will allow the researchers to address their research questions. Furthermore, decisions on the scale and scope of the mapping – or, in other words, on the area, period and field that will be mapped – are important. For example, researchers need to decide whether the objectives will be best served by focusing on a particular region or by gaining an overview of the entire area (e.g. the country) in question. Time-related questions are, for instance, whether social entities still need to be in existence (or whether a historical approach is used), and whether social entities need to have been in existence for a certain period. An example of a field-related question is whether all social entities are included, or only particular sub-types. Operational definitions and decisions on these areas, periods and fields are always context-specific, in the sense that they are designed for each research project and may not be of direct use in other research projects. In practice, the processes of crafting and operationalising research definitions and delimiting areas, periods and fields entail numerable conceptual dilemmas, and decisions of inclusion and exclusion. As Lyon and Sepulveda (2009: 3) argue, 'rather than being a technical issue, much mapping will always be a socially constructed process with each mapping exercise having to make political decisions of what is included or excluded'.

Second, mapping analysis is population-based – that is, the research does not rely on a sample but on the incorporation of all units of analysis. The need to work with a population rather than a sample is very much captured by the idea (or metaphor) of the map, which implies the production of an overview that represents an entire area. Nonetheless, the focus on populations produces methodological challenges in guaranteeing the completeness of the mapping, and in actually identifying all the relevant social entities. To tackle this, we propose to apply an adjusted version of the snowball method (often used for sampling). Originally developed by Coleman (1958), the snowball method identifies participants through their social networks. Later variations of this technique are Klodahl's (1989) random-walk design and Heckathorn's (1997) respondent-driven sampling. Although they are sampling methods, they can also be used as inspiration for a research strategy aimed at identifying a population of particular social entities, through the interpellation of key informants and documents. Here too,

other methodological principles, such as source diversity and saturation, can be used to guarantee the completeness of the mapping. In this context, source diversity refers to the selection of a diversity of key informants and documents – for instance, from a variety of societal spheres – while saturation implies that a search for social entities can stop when it is clear that no new social entities will be found, as the same ones are repeatedly mentioned by/in the key informants and documents.

Third, mapping analysis is enabled by a particular registration instrument, namely a researcher-completed survey form (a mapping sheet system, or a Mapping Index Card (MIC), as we prefer to call it) to capture the characteristics of the units of analysis. A MIC allows to register all relevant information about the units mapped; it may include questions that the researchers themselves have to answer (about the social entities), on the basis of a wide variety of data-gathering methods. In this sense, a mapping analysis can be understood as a hybrid combination of survey and qualitative analysis, whereby the researcher fills out a questionnaire with open questions, but still structured by a well-crafted form.

Fourth, mapping analysis uses multiple data sources and data-gathering techniques for each MIC (e.g. interviews, document analysis, archive analysis and website analysis). This kind of triangulation serves as ‘a measure of research quality, meaning that if different types of data are gathered to address the same research question, each set of data can be used to check the findings from the others’ (Matthews & Ross, 2010: 480; Silverman, 1994: 369–71). In this manner, the map becomes a ‘vehicle of information’, and as such it can be ‘extremely versatile’, for it ‘can be loaded with many kinds of data that can then be unpacked, isolated and reconfigured’ (Arts Now, 2007: 3).

Finally, when all MICs are filled out, their contents are redefined as data, which can be analysed using qualitative and/or quantitative content analysis techniques. One result of a mapping is a mere count of the number of social entities mapped, but through the filling-out of a MIC, more data on each of the social entities can be collected. By redefining the answers to the MIC questions as data, more information per unit can be generated, allowing for a more detailed map. Depending on the nature of the data, quantitative content analysis techniques can sometimes be used (keeping in mind that a mapping analysis is working with population data, and not a sample). These techniques require the construction of variables and categories, so that data are coded according to standardised procedures (Krippendorff, 2004). Qualitative content analysis (Silverman, 1994) can also be used to give an overview of the mapped social entities, providing information on the nuances of their diversity. In both cases, the MICs, in their entirety, serve as textual material that can be analysed to enrich the map.

Mapping elusive community media

The social entities discussed (and mapped) in this article are the Cypriot community media, which first requires a discussion of the identity of community media organisations, later to be contextualised by zooming in on Cyprus. As already mentioned in the introduction to the article, mapping such organisations is never a straightforward task, because community media are known for their ‘innate heterogeneity’ (Howley, 2010: 15) and elusive nature. Yet, despite the many different forms and shapes they can take – also in relationship to the technologies they use (print, radio, TV, web-based or mixed) – they all share a set of key characteristics, which distinguish them from other types of media organisations. In particular, their being embedded in civil society and their inherent tendency to promote participation, diversity and democracy are important defining characteristics that differentiate community media from public service and commercial media (Fairchild, 2001: 103; Girard, 1992: 2; Uzelman, 2005: 20). In an effective attempt to capture these particular characteristics, Howley (2005: 2) defines community media as grassroots or ‘locally oriented media access initiatives predicated on a profound sense of

dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content, dedicated to the principles of free expression and participatory democracy, and committed to enhancing community relations and promoting community solidarity'. Howley's definition also allows highlighting that community media are usually small in size and, in some cases, belong to the 'below-the-radar' or even 'underground' type of organisations.

Importantly, Howley's definition of community media foregrounds the role of the community, which is also echoed by Berrigan (1979: 8), who defines them as media in which the community participates, 'as planners, producers, performers' and as 'the means of expression of the community, rather than for the community.' Tabing's (2002: 11) previously mentioned definition makes a similar point, stressing that community media are operated 'in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community', emphasising the high levels of involvement and participation of community members both in management and content creation. At the same time, the concept of 'community' is complex, and covers a wide variety of meanings, sometimes linked to locality² and in other cases linked to ethnicity, and in yet other cases grounded in a community of interest. Moreover, community media often serve different communities, in different ways, at the same time (Fraser & Restrepo Estrada, 2001: 18).

Furthermore, community media share some of the characteristics of alternative and activist media (Atton, 2002: 209), as they also tend to be agents of disobedience (Howley, 2010: 233–4). Community media have a repute for challenging and decentring hegemonic discourses, and are said to build alternative (news) agendas to those of the traditional, mainstream media (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008: 29). They are run and produced by volunteers and non-professionals (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008: 20; Gordon, 2015: 248; Lewis, 2015: 183), who enact their citizenship through these media organisations (Rodríguez, 2001: 20). They also keep critical distances from both the market and the state (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008: 18), to safeguard the autonomy of their produced content (Uzelman, 2005: 22–5). Often referred to as a third-sector type of organisation (also described as 'voluntary sector', 'civic sector' or 'community sector'), juxtaposed or contrasted to the public (government, state) and the private sector (business, market) (Salamon & Anheier, 1997), community media are embedded in civil society (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008: 23–5; Rennie, 2006: 7), empowering the voices of the ordinary people who are thought to be under-represented (if not misrepresented) in and through mainstream media (Berrigan, 1977; Howley, 2010: 5).

Precisely on the basis of their agonistic problem-solving strategies (Carpentier, 2017; Carpentier, Doudaki & Christidis, 2015) and their inherent capacity to foster diversity, tolerance and intercultural dialogue (Barlow, 1988; René & Antonius, 2009; Sussman & Estes, 2005), community media have been hailed as privileged partners in peace-building, conflict transformation and rapprochement (Carpentier, 2017; Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014; Rodríguez, 2011), an aspect that has not attracted much academic interest. It is for this reason that the case study presented in the latter part of this article – used to exemplify the methodological guidelines for mapping community media organisations – focuses on Cyprus. It is this combination of participation and peace-building that makes the (study of) Cypriot community media important, together with the fairly recent establishment of the bulk of the Cypriot CMOs in the 2000s and 2010s (see below) and their relatively small number, which renders this case study manageable. This focus also requires us to, albeit briefly, provide an overview of the political and media context of Cyprus.

The political and media context of Cyprus

The locus of this mapping exercise is the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, one of the smallest European Union member states. Other than its sandy beaches and subtropical climate, Cyprus is sadly known for its long-lasting ethnic and geographical division. Since the 1950s, when still a

British colony, the island has been a literal and symbolic battleground between its two main ethnic populations, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. The turbulent history of the conflict includes an armed struggle against British imperialism, a set of treaties related to the independence of the island, which introduced a governance structure that was not accepted, the eventual and bloody breakdown of that constitutional arrangement, active interference from the Greek and Turkish 'motherlands', Great Britain and the United States, a Greek junta-inspired coup d'état and the ensuing Turkish invasion in 1974 (Attalides, 2003; Papadakis, Peristianis & Welz, 2006), which tragically divided the island, with the Turkish army occupying its northern part (about 38 per cent of the total territory). In 1983, this part of the island declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), a state not recognised by the international community, with the exception of Turkey (Kurtulus, 2005).

The official languages of the island are Greek and Turkish. Other than its two main communities, and the small populations of the officially recognised ethnic minorities of Maronites, Armenians and Latinos, an unclear but non-negligible number of foreign residents, estimated moderately around 20 per cent of the total population, live on the island. The population in the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus was 847,000 in 2014 (Ministry of Finance, 2015) that of the TRNC was estimated at 295,165, in 2013 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014: 143).

During recent decades, there have been sporadic and fitful attempts to negotiate a viable settlement of the Cyprus Problem, but none of them has yet come to fruition. Since the beginning of the Problem, mainstream media across the island and on each side of the divide have been encoding and representing the conflict in terms of an almost Manichaean point of view, wherein each community and its members are perceived to be the other's victim, or primordial enemy (Christophorou, Sahin & Pavlou, 2010: 7). The hegemony of such antagonistic and conflict-oriented approaches to the Problem works to silence or censor the voicing, to use a Butlerian concept (Butler, 2006: 1–18), of alternative conceptualisations of the Problem. There is an implicit and yet firm agreement in the Cypriot political scene, and largely within the mainstream media, that one ought not to be too open, apologetic or conciliatory towards the other side's community (Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014: 420), but rather present one's own self and community as victims. Given the mainstream media's conjuncture with many other Cypriot representational systems (such as institutionalised politics), and their strong consensus in generating these antagonistic ideological frameworks, it is no great surprise that they have been – perhaps not always consciously and willingly – feeding on the Cyprus Problem and thus 'cementing' the partition of the island (Bailie & Azgin, 2008).

In contrast, the Cypriot community media offer, at least potentially but also in practice (Carpentier, 2017), the opportunity to un-mute the voices of the ordinary people (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008: 29; Howley, 2010: 5) and simultaneously to contribute to peace-building in Cyprus. Still, community media also do not take a prominent and visible position in Cyprus, whose civil society is not well organised or particularly visible. Moreover, there is no legal recognition of community media in either part of the island (Carpentier, 2014: 95). This lack of recognition and lack of visibility not only act to render the existence of CMOs difficult, but also make the task of mapping these 'underground' organisations challenging. Regardless of these difficulties, though, a map can tell highly relevant stories to different interest groups and stakeholders (e.g. academics, activists, policy-makers) in a dynamic and innovative manner. It can help decision-makers to articulate and implement policies and strategies (De Propriis, 2005: 199; Lyon & Sepulveda, 2009). More importantly, the process of mapping gives a boost to advocacy activities by drawing attention to the existence and potential significance of community media, especially in a context of long-lasting conflict, as is the case in Cyprus.

Mapping community media in Cyprus: A case study

Operational definition and mapping instrument

Before starting out with the actual mapping, the research team³ had to reflect on the very organisational structures that render community media distinct from other types of media and organisations. For that to happen, an operational definition of community media was developed. Given the elusiveness, fluidity and diversity of the term itself, this operational definition consisted of a series of specific selection criteria. In order for a media organisation to be identified as a community media organisation (CMO), all the following characteristics had to be met (Carpentier et al., 2014: 1):

- having an organisational structure, formal or informal, with a degree of autonomy from other entities
- having the substantial involvement of at least two individuals
- producing (distributed) media content as (one of) the CMO's main activity/ies
- giving voice to one or more communities as (one of) the CMO's main objectives
- offering the producers more decision-making powers than in mainstream media, both at the level of CMO content production process and management
- not being a profit-seeking or a statist entity; being embedded in civil society
- having strong degree of autonomy from market and state (in relation to content production and organisational management); some of their resources can still originate from national or international state or market actors
- producing content with at least some degree of regularity (and not only on an occasional basis), using formats that have a degree of stability.

Given CMOs' plurality, some other possible characteristics related to their diverse nature were not used as criteria. More specifically, there was no discrimination in relation to the technologies (or combination of technologies) that were used by CMOs, to the need to have a fixed (registered) address (or location) or to the need to be recognised by state law (or not). We also chose to disqualify media organisations that were fully controlled by the army, dominant political parties or dominant religious organisations (given their proximity to the state in Cyprus). Rather, we argued that CMOs had to have at least some degree of autonomy and self-determination, both in regard to the content produced and to their finances and management.

Beyond the operationalisation of our key concept, a number of other, secondary concepts⁴ needed to be defined in order for the members of the research team to have a common, shared understanding over their meaning (Matthews & Ross, 2010: 61). The research team also developed the MIC, the instrument used to capture organisational and other characteristics of the identified CMOs. The MIC contained thematic areas for which data needed to be collected and filled out by the researchers, on the basis of the interviews, document analysis, archive analysis and website analysis. The MIC's thematic areas were structured around the following questions:

- 1 Which community media organisations are currently operating in Cyprus?
- 2 What is their organisational structure?
- 3 What content do they produce?
- 4 Who are the producers and audience(s) of these organisations?
- 5 Which communities are being served through these organisations?
- 6 What are the relations of these organisations with the wider civil society?
- 7 What are the discourses and ideologies put forth by these organisations?

Crafting the operational definition, the secondary definitions and the MIC as the instrument was not a straightforward task. The course of action followed was to pilot-test these definitions, as well as the MIC, with colleagues, fellow researchers and potential CMO representatives. In this way, the research team ensured that the data-collection procedures were well tested, amending them on several occasions to guarantee the accuracy, reliability and validity of both instrument and method.

Research design development and data gathering

After having operationalised the CMO definition and developed the MIC, the research team crafted a detailed research plan. Data gathering had a total duration of approximately 20 weeks (15 November 2014 to 31 March 2015) and was conducted in three phases. The first phase involved the selection and brief interviewing of key resource people. A target of 60 informants in the south and 50 in the north of the island was agreed upon. The addition of more key informants was dependent on saturation, which turned out not to be necessary. Source diversity was achieved by selecting resource people from a wide variety of societal spheres: activist groups and organisations (NGOs or informal), academia, the legal field, mainstream media, political parties, state agencies and regulators, libraries, cultural centres/clubs, municipalities, schools and other educational organisations, and youth and welfare organisations.

In order to trace and contact these seemingly disparate organisations, groups and individuals, the researchers applied the above-described (adjusted) snowball method. For the first-stage interviews, the operational definition was used to guide the conversation. Interviews on organisations operative in the south were conducted either in Greek or English, according to the preference of the interviewees. Likewise, interviews that involved organisations operative in the north were conducted either in Turkish or English. In addition to the interviews with resource people, each researcher looked for potential Cypriot community media organisations online. This strategy was relevant, as it turned out that more than half of the CMOs identified and selected were web based. Moreover, each researcher looked into different types of archives in search of potential CMOs. In total, 12 different archives were consulted, eight in the south and four in the north of the island.⁵ This first phase had an approximate duration of two months and resulted in: 110 interviews with key resource people (50 for the north, 60 for the south); a list of media organisations that potentially qualified as CMOs and their representative(s), resulting from the interviews with the resource people, and the online and archive research; and an archive of audio recordings of the 110 brief interviews.

The second phase of the mapping involved 62 brief interviews of between five and 10 minutes (all of which were recorded) with representatives of all the media organisations that were identified in the previous phase as potential community media, in order to confirm their status as CMOs (or not) and to inquire whether they knew of other community media organisations. For each identified potential CMO, one additional brief interview with one of their representatives was conducted. The operational definition was used as a topic list for the interview, discussing each component with the representative of the organisation (Matthews & Ross, 2010: 246). As in the first phase, interviews were conducted in Greek, Turkish or English. This second phase had an approximate duration of one month and resulted in: the identification of 109 media organisations that potentially qualified as community media organisations, together with the identification of their representative(s); the registration of the qualification as CMO (or not), for each media organisation identified, combined with an argumentation for this decision; and an archive of audio recordings of all 62 brief interviews.

At the end of the second phase, all potential CMOs were examined using the operational definition, resulting in the selection of 26 organisations that matched the operational definition. This was not an easy part of the process, even if the operational definition provided a clear touchstone for decisions about including or excluding particular organisations as CMOs. In a

number of cases – in particular when it came to the degree of autonomy from market and state, and to the degree of regularity of content production – a more extensive reflection was needed. Some decisions were slightly uncomfortable, because some of the organisations that were considered appeared to be obvious choices, but did not qualify as a CMO. For instance, the Cypriot Independent Media Centre appeared to an obvious choice, but because it had been inactive for a long time, it did not fit the operational definition. In order to cope with this complexity of the decision-making process, the less obvious decisions were extensively motivated and discussed within the research team.

The third phase of the mapping was based largely on in-depth interviews with representatives of the selected CMOs, combined with the collection of all relevant documents and any other relevant material about these organisations (e.g. photographic or video documentation of their working spaces). On the basis of the in-depth interviews, and the document analyses, one mapping index card (MIC) was filled out (by the researchers) for each of the 26 CMOs identified. For this third mapping phase, the in-depth interviews lasted between one and a half and two hours. Apart from more conventional questions, key documents (such as mission statements), program schedules (for audio-visual media) and series of publications (for online and print) of the CMOs were also discussed during these interviews. Some of the documentation (necessary to fill out the MICs) was obtained through the representatives/interviewees, but for each identified CMO an additional online search was carried out, in order to cross-check and triangulate the data already collected. This online search focused on each CMO's legal status, organisational structure, practices, affiliate organisations and so forth. This third phase had an approximate duration of two months and resulted in: 26 in-depth interviews; a filled-out MIC for each of the 26 CMOs; an archive of audio recordings of all interviews; a note summarising each interview; the documentation/material collected on each CMO, an overview list of this documentation, and the signed interview permission forms (for more details on the procedure of data gathering, see Carpentier et al., 2014).

A brief overview of the mapping results

In the first phase, the research team identified 109 media organisations (a number larger than expected) that could potentially be a CMO, conducting 110 brief interviews with resource people and key informants. A total of 62 interviews were conducted for the second phase of the mapping with potential representatives of CMOs. Finally, for the third phase, 26 extended, in-depth interviews were carried out (one for each identified CMO that met the selection criteria set in the operational definition), in order to gather more information and fill out the MICs (Table 1). This implies that 84 (media) organisations were eliminated, for various reasons. Some were excluded because of their dependency and lack of autonomy regarding their finances, content production or management, which sometimes implied that their media activity was part of a larger entity, with different objectives. Others were eliminated because they did not have any organisational structure. Still others were rejected due to low levels of participation by, and/or access to, the members of the community/ies they claimed to represent.

Table 1: An overview of the CMO selection data

<i>Media organisations considered</i>	<i>Stage 1 interviews</i>	<i>Stage 2 interviews</i>	<i>Stage 3 interviews</i>	<i>Identified CMOs & MICs filled out</i>
109	110	62	26	26

The 26 completed MICs contained detailed information about the organisational characteristics, functioning mode, size, type of content, number of producers, politics and finances of the identified CMOs. Interestingly, there were media organisations that understood themselves as being community media when they were not – at least not according to our

operational definition, and there were others that fell into our definition and were surprised to learn that they did.

In order to analyse some of the CMOs' main characteristics, a quantitative content analysis was performed on these characteristics in the MICs that consisted of manifest content and could thus be coded quantitatively. These concerned the CMOs' year of establishment, identity of founders and owners, legal status, main distribution technologies, number of producers, types of income, locus of activity, main objectives and communities served. Three coders were involved in the coding: one coded the variables for the categories of main objectives and communities served; another coded all the other categories; and a third one served as a second coder for the calculation of the inter-coder reliability coefficient. The third coder independently coded the variables for the categories of main objectives, communities served and types of income and expenses, which add up to approximately one-third of the total number of variables.

Krippendorff's alpha was selected to test the levels of inter-coder agreement, since it is applicable to any number of coders and adjusts itself to small sample sizes. The Krippendorff's alpha range for the six variables of the main objective was 0.788–1.000, for the six variables of communities served, it was 0.786–0.918, for the seven variables of types of income, it was 0.793–1.000 and for the eight variables of types of expenses the coefficient range was 0.777–1.000. These levels are considered of adequate reliability.⁶ While the analysis is quantitatively based, to allow for the systematic presentation of the CMOs' main characteristics (again, keeping in mind that a mapping is population-based), it is qualitatively informed where relevant, to enrich the analysis with the qualitative dimensions and diversity of the identified CMOs.

Of the 26 CMOs identified, 11 are web-based, eight are print, five are radio and two are mixed (Table 2). Concerning the CMOs' lifespan (Table 3), most of them were established quite recently, with more than half (14) having started in the 2010s. The oldest of the CMOs and the only one existing before 1990, is *Eleftheri Kythrea*, which was established in 1978. It is a periodical run by Greek-Cypriots that had to abandon their homes in Kythrea (a town located to the northeast of the capital Nicosia) after the Turkish invasion.

Table 2: CMO characteristics: Main type of distribution technology (N=26)

(Only one category applies)	n
Online	11
Print	8
Radio	5
Mixed	2

Table 3: CMO characteristics: Year of establishment (N=26)

(Only one category applies)	n
2010s	14
2000s	6
1990s	5
Prior to 1990	1

CMOs in Cyprus have been established, and are owned in many cases, by small groups of individuals, and less often by NGOs, associations and the like (Table 4), which may be connected to the fact that there is no official recognition of the community media sector on the island, even if some CMOs have some degree of legal recognition (Table 5). Interestingly, in two cases, individuals chose to establish a company as it provides them with a legal shell to operate as a CMO. Moreover, the Cypriot CMOs are small in scale and under-financed: Nine of them have no income. A considerable number (nine) use advertising to generate income, six have

contributions/donations as source of income and five receive some funding from the state or through some project (Table 6). Most operate with only a small number of producers (Table 7). These conditions complicated the CMOs' functioning and sustainability, but also increased the difficulty in tracing and mapping these 'off-the-radar' organisations.

Table 4: CMO characteristics: Establishment and ownership (N=26)

(Only one category applies)	Established by (n)	Owned by (n)
Group of individuals/collectivity	12	8
Educational institution	5	5
Individual*	3	3
NGO	3	3
Company**	0	2
Professional union/association	2	2
Municipality/local government***	1	1
Unspecified	0	2

* The establishment by one individual does not exclude the involvement of other individuals in the CMOs' operation.

** The presence of these two companies in Table 4 creates a paradox in relation to the operational definition, which is why these two CMOs were analysed more in detail. Closer scrutiny revealed that, as mentioned in the main text of this article, both organisations have de facto non-profit objective, and use the company structure as a legal shell. From a legal perspective, they have to be considered companies, but from a sociological perspective they are not.

*** The one municipality mentioned in Table 4 again refers to a more complicated situation than as it appears at first sight. This municipality is the city of Morphou, currently controlled by the TRNC, and the CMO represents the Greek-Cypriot refugees that were forced to leave in the mid-1970s. In cases like these, the municipalities were moved to the territory still controlled by the Republic of Cyprus, where they continued to exist, without ability of exercising any decision-making powers over 'their' territory. In the particular case of this CMO, a degree of autonomy from the state could be established, which allowed us to still consider it as a CMO.

Table 5: CMO characteristics: Legal status (N=26)

(Only one category applies)	n
Legal	15
Not recognised by law/illegal	11

Table 6: CMO characteristics: Type of income (N=26)

(Several categories may apply)	n
Advertisements	9
None	9
Donations/contributions	6
National/EU funding	5
Subscriptions	4
Charged services	1
Unspecified	1

Table 7: CMO characteristics: Number of producers (N=26)

(Only one category applies)	n
<10	12
10<50	10
50<100	1
100+	1
Unspecified	2

Cypriot CMOs largely function as community-driven, alternative, civil-society embedded and fluid organisations, as the mapping also shows. The vast majority of CMOs (19 out of 26) have more than a single main objective (Table 8). Giving voice to, or representing/reinforcing the voices of the communities (towards which the CMO is oriented), is the most common main objective (in 19 cases) among the 26 identified CMOs. The second most often recorded main objective (in 15 out of 26 CMOs) was to promote a culture of active citizenship (wherein individuals become more empowered in relation to societal institutions, such as politics and the media) and to enhance the capacity of citizens to participate in the public sphere in general. Furthermore, 11 out of 26 CMOs were coded as being 'transformative/alternative', meaning that they oppose power structures (e.g. patriarchy, neoliberalism, nationalism, militarism), while also proposing alternative modes of social organisation. Seven CMOs were found to facilitate or promote dialogue between or/and within communities, and one was found to function as an anti-corruption watchdog, revealing political scandals, misuses of power and so forth.

Table 8: CMO characteristics: Main objectives (N=26)

(Several categories may apply)	n
Communicational/representational	19
Democracy-enhancing	15
Transformative/alternative	11
Dialogical	7
Watchdog	1

Another finding is that half of the CMOs identified are not oriented towards a single community but rather claim to be serving a multiplicity of communities (Table 9). A total of 16 of the 26 identified CMOs were found to be serving ethnic/language/religious communities (including Turkish- and Greek-speaking Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites, Iranians, Francophones, etc.), nine CMOs were found to be serving various social and professional groups (e.g. parents, teachers, students, doctors), nine CMOs claimed to be serving socio-political activists of all sorts, (including conscientious objectors, the LGBTQ movement, the peace/reconciliation movement, feminists, ecologists), six were found to be serving different types of refugees and immigrants, and four CMOs were found to be oriented towards cultural groups, such as music lovers, and artistic and literary groups.

Table 9: CMO characteristics: Communities served (N=26)

(Several categories may apply)	n
Ethnic/language/religious	16
Socio-political activists	9
Social/professional groups	9
Refugees/immigrants	6
Cultural groups	4

When it comes to their management and governance, very few of the 26 identified CMOs have an explicitly hierarchical structure, and those that do still allow for more participation than is usually the case in the (Cypriot) mainstream media. The vast majority have decentred and horizontal organisational structures. In particular, the more autonomous, radical and counterhegemonic CMOs identified follow rhizomatic logics, functioning much like meeting points of intellectual and ideo-political zymoses for civil society organisations, socio-political movements and committed activists (see also Santana & Carpentier, 2010).

The location of these 26 CMOs is quite revealing in reference to the interconnectedness between community media organisations and social movements. The locus of activity of more

than half of the CMOs is Nicosia, the island's capital, where social movements are strongest. For instance, one CMO (35–33 Independent Media Collective) was created by activists involved in the Occupy Buffer Zone movement, while other CMOs were inspired by it. Most CMO representatives are media/human rights/reunification/demilitarisation activists, which again highlights the interconnectedness between alternative media and social struggles, and points to the role community media can play in conflict transformation and reconciliation.

Conclusion

Mapping analysis is a significant component of the academic researcher's toolbox. Yet, for many different reasons, such a research endeavour is hardly supported by methodological literature. As a consequence, many different research projects use the mapping concept in very different ways. Aiming to address these challenges, this article proposes a comprehensive approach to mapping analysis, driven by an (operational) definition of the social entity (here the community media organisation) and a clear delineation of the area, period and field in which it is situated. The approach is complemented by the use of a mapping instrument and the analysis of its multi-source data through quantitative and/or qualitative content analysis.

This methodological proposal is, of course, at the same time an invitation for more reflection on mapping as a method, without wishing to foreclose this debate. Mapping analysis, as described here, has the potential to be used in other societal fields as well, although it is not without challenges and limitations, nor can it be applied in all cases and for all types of (below-the-radar) organisations. One set of restrictions is linked to ethical concerns: there is the danger that the visibility created by the research will harm these organisations, whose effectiveness, viability and safety sometimes lie in their staying 'away from the spotlight', due to their often hegemony-challenging discourses and actions, which might not rest well with more dominant and powerful actors. In our particular case – where some of the Cypriot CMOs are committed to a pacifist agenda – too much exposure still risks producing an antagonist-nationalist backlash from the radical-right movements in Cyprus, even though things have calmed down in recent decades. Still, the potential occurrence of harm should remain on the agenda of research teams that engage in mapping analyses: they should always be prepared for the implementation of an alternative research design or even for the abandonment of the planned/ongoing mapping project. Other limitations are produced by the difficulties of finding organisations that do not wish to be found, which might result in negative responses towards researchers approaching them.⁷ In our case study, focused on community media, we had the advantage of looking for organisations that had a communicative objective, which made them at least somewhat traceable. Not all mapping projects have that luxury. In addition, organisations that are not connected to social networks, which function as 'lone wolves' and might simply be known to very small groups of people, are likely to slip through the mazes of the (mapping) net.

The challenges encountered in our case study were not only related to searching for organisations operating below the radar, which is complicated in itself (Soteri-Proctor, 2011), but also conducting research on a divided island with two detached communities who speak different languages. These difficulties were more or less known prior to the mapping. What had not been anticipated was the degree of difficulty in getting people to speak and share information. This was particularly true for the more underground, radical anti-authoritarian community media identified: their representatives were not always eager or open in giving out information and were somewhat reluctant in their responses. We were confronted with several complex cases, for which it was difficult to reach a decision concerning their status as CMOs or not – even if, in the end, the operational definition and the mapping procedure allowed for legitimate decisions. This difficulty is connected with the elusive and heterogeneous nature of community media (Howley, 2010), but also with the hybridity of the broader media landscape itself.

Notes

- ¹ Existing projects are sometimes more rudimentary when it comes to their methodological foundations. Examples are the 'grassroots groups in Greece' mapping exercise (<http://omikronproject.gr/grassroots>), the 'Squatting Europe Kollektive (SqEK) mapping project' (<http://maps.squat.net/en/cities>) and the 'European Map of Humanitarian Action' (<http://hamap.eu>).
- ² One additional complexity is that local media are not necessarily community (or alternative) media. See Williams, Harte & Turner's (2015) discussion of hyperlocal community news, and Hájek and Carpentier's (2015) work on Czech alternative mainstream media.
- ³ This mapping project is part of a Cypriot Community Media Research Programme (CCMRP), which is funded by the Belgian research foundation FWO (research grant number G016114N). The CCMRP focuses on community media and conflict transformation in Cyprus. The research team involved in the mapping consisted out of the authors of this article, together with researcher Hazal Yolga, who is also a staff member of the Cyprus Community Media Center (CCMC), and PhD researcher Nikolas Deferas, who, at the time of writing, had left the research team.
- ⁴ These were: 'community', 'organisation', 'organisational structure', 'medium', 'media content', 'media genre', 'media format', 'media technology' and 'civil society'.
- ⁵ In the south, the archives consulted were those of the following organisations/institutions: Cyprus State History Archive, Cyprus University of Technology Library, Mass Media and Communication Institute, Municipal Library of Nicosia, Union of Cyprus Journalists, Press and Information Office, *Politis* Newspaper, and *Philileftheros* Newspaper. In the north, the archives consulted were those of the following organisations/institutions: National Library, Cyprus Newspaper, Bayrak Radio Television Corporation, and Public Information Office (See Carpentier et al., 2014: 4).
- ⁶ According to Krippendorff (2004: 241), a coefficient of 0.800 shows adequate inter-coder reliability, while 0.667 is the admissible lowest limit for tentative conclusions to be acceptable.
- ⁷ In our research project, this situation fortunately did not occur.

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