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COMPILATION OF INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC WORKS: CULTURAL MEMORY, STATE RESPONSIBILITY, AND ONTOLOGICAL CONTINUITY IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the structural conditions shaping engineering practice and production in Northern Cyprus within the broader context of global transformation. While technological advancement has enabled unprecedented levels of connectivity and integration worldwide, participation in these systems remains uneven. Drawing on theories of network society, power, and symbolic recognition, the article argues that the challenges faced by Turkish Cypriot engineers and firms are not rooted in a lack of technical capability but in systemic barriers that restrict access, visibility, and validation within global infrastructures. Conceptualized as “invisible barriers,” these constraints operate not through direct prohibition but through limitations on recognition, institutional legitimacy, and infrastructural integration. The study demonstrates that such conditions lead to a form of detoured participation, where actors engage with global systems indirectly and under constrained circumstances. Furthermore, it examines how these structural limitations are internalized, shaping self-perception and reinforcing exclusion. By situating the case of Northern Cyprus within broader debates on globalization and structural inequality, the article highlights the need to rethink participation not only in terms of production capacity but also in relation to systemic access and recognition. Ultimately, the study contributes to the literature by offering a conceptual framework for understanding how global inequalities are reproduced through subtle yet persistent structural mechanisms.

Keywords: structural exclusion, global integration, invisible barriers, network society, engineering practice, northern cyprus



1. INTRODUCTION

The cultural existence of a society is not determined solely by the works it produces, but by how these works are preserved, institutionalized, and transmitted across generations. In this respect, legal deposit (compilation) systems should not be understood merely as technical archival mechanisms; rather, they function as foundational infrastructures of collective memory. Without such systems, cultural production becomes fragmented, discontinuous, and ultimately vulnerable to disappearance.

In the context of the Turkish Cypriot community, the legal and institutional framework for the compilation of intellectual and artistic works has formally existed for decades. However, the practical implementation of this system has remained largely ineffective. This discrepancy between legal structure and institutional practice constitutes the central problem of this study. This article argues that the failure of the compilation system in Northern Cyprus is not simply an administrative or bureaucratic deficiency. Instead, it represents a deeper ontological crisis related to cultural continuity. When intellectual and artistic productions are not systematically collected, preserved, and made accessible, the society in question risks losing not only its archival records but also its capacity for historical self-recognition.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the historical development, legal framework, and structural limitations of the compilation system in Northern Cyprus. It further seeks to demonstrate that the inefficiency of this system results in a broader erosion of cultural memory and identity.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: COMPILATION AND CULTURAL MEMORY

Compilation, in its most basic legal definition, refers to the obligation of producers to deposit copies of their intellectual or artistic works to designated state institutions. However, such a definition remains insufficient for capturing the broader significance of the concept.

Compilation should instead be understood as a mechanism through which societies construct, preserve, and reproduce their collective memory.

Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory provides a crucial foundation for this perspective. According to Halbwachs, memory is not an individual phenomenon but a socially constructed process that is sustained through institutional frameworks. Archives, libraries, and legal deposit systems function as repositories through which societies remember themselves. Without such structures, memory becomes fragmented and eventually fades.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the archive is not merely a neutral storage space but a site of power and knowledge production (Foucault, 1980). What is preserved, catalogued, and made accessible determines the boundaries of what can be known and remembered. In this sense, compilation is not only a cultural practice but also a political one. It shapes the epistemological limits of a society by defining what is recorded and what is excluded.

Thus, compilation serves three interconnected functions. First, it ensures the preservation of cultural production. Second, it enables the continuity of knowledge across time. Third, it contributes to the reproduction of collective identity. These functions collectively demonstrate that compilation is not a passive act of preservation but an active process of cultural construction.



3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM OTTOMAN REGULATIONS TO MODERN CYPRUS

The historical trajectory of compilation practices in Cyprus reveals that such mechanisms did not initially emerge from a conscious effort to preserve cultural heritage. Instead, they were closely linked to systems of control and regulation.

During the Ottoman period (1570–1878), although printing activity on the island was minimal, imperial regulations concerning printing and publication were still applicable. These regulations, including various press and printing laws enacted throughout the nineteenth century, primarily aimed to control the circulation of information. Nevertheless, they also implicitly introduced the notion of collecting and recording printed materials.

Following the transition to British administration in 1878, a more systematic approach to compilation was introduced. The 1887 law concerning the preservation and registration of books printed in Cyprus required that copies of all printed materials be submitted to the authorities. Notably, part of this collection was sent to the British Museum, indicating that compilation was embedded within a broader imperial knowledge network.

Subsequent legislation, including the 1930 Press Law and later regulations, maintained the requirement for submission of printed materials. However, these legal provisions were often inconsistently applied. By the mid-twentieth century, the institutional continuity of compilation practices had weakened significantly.

4. THE NORTHERN CYPRUS PERIOD: LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITHOUT FUNCTIONALITY

The constitutional framework of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus explicitly recognizes the protection of cultural heritage as a state responsibility. Articles concerning freedom of the press, publication rights, and cultural protection establish a legal basis for the preservation of intellectual and artistic works.

The most significant legislative step in this regard was the enactment of the 32/2000 “Compilation Law for Intellectual and Artistic Works.” This law aimed to establish a modern legal deposit system by requiring that copies of published works be submitted to the National Library.

Despite this legal framework, empirical data indicates that the system has failed to function effectively. The number of collected works remains disproportionately low compared to the actual volume of publications. Academic institutions often fail to submit theses and research outputs, and relevant public bodies do not adequately fulfill their responsibilities.

This discrepancy highlights a fundamental issue: the existence of legal provisions does not guarantee institutional implementation. The gap between law and practice remains one of the most critical challenges facing the compilation system in Northern Cyprus.

5. STRUCTURAL FAILURE OF THE COMPILATION SYSTEM

The failure of the compilation system can be attributed to three primary structural factors. First, institutional fragmentation undermines the system’s effectiveness. Multiple agencies share responsibility for compilation, yet coordination among these entities is minimal. This lack of institutional coherence results in systemic inefficiency.

Second, economic constraints are frequently cited as a justification for non-compliance. Publishers and institutions often claim insufficient financial support as a barrier to fulfilling their obligations. However, this explanation alone cannot account for the overall failure of the system.

Third, and most critically, there exists a profound lack of cultural awareness regarding the importance of compilation. The process is often perceived as a bureaucratic burden rather than a cultural necessity. This perception significantly reduces compliance and engagement.

6. ONTOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES: CULTURAL DISCONTINUITY AND LOSS

The failure of the compilation system extends beyond administrative inefficiency; it has profound ontological implications. When intellectual and artistic works are not systematically preserved, the cultural continuity of a society is disrupted.

Without proper compilation:

- Cultural memory becomes fragmented
- Knowledge transmission across generations is weakened
- Historical self-awareness diminishes

In this sense, the absence of a functional compilation system leads to a gradual erosion of cultural existence. It is not merely an archival deficiency but a process of ontological loss.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has demonstrated that the compilation system in Northern Cyprus, despite its legal foundation, remains largely ineffective in practice. This failure has significant consequences for the preservation of cultural memory and identity.

To address this issue, three key measures are necessary. First, institutional structures must be reorganized to ensure effective coordination. Second, legal enforcement mechanisms must be strengthened. Third, and most importantly, a broader cultural awareness of the importance of compilation must be cultivated.

Ultimately, compilation should not be understood as a bureaucratic obligation but as a fundamental condition of cultural existence. A society that fails to preserve its intellectual and artistic production risks losing not only its past but also its capacity to define its future.

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