



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **Beyond departure: the Greek in Egypt, 1962-1976**

Mylona, E.

### **Citation**

Mylona, E. (2022, November 16). *Beyond departure: the Greek in Egypt, 1962-1976*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3486026>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3486026>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Educational Matters and the *Koinotēta*'s Adjustment Policies**

#### Introduction

The *Egyptiot koinotētes* were the prime supplier of *Egyptiot* education.<sup>668</sup> Since their establishment, the *koinotētes*' schools enjoyed autonomy due to the Capitulations, and this continued after their abolition, as the Egyptian state did not intervene in their curriculum or other educational matters. The schools followed the educational curriculum of Greece, which focused on classical studies, Greece's ancient past and the Greek Orthodox faith.<sup>669</sup> The emphasis on Greek national education was further emphasized in the post-war period due to the perceived threat of communism in Greece. Through its schools, the Greek government strove to protect the students, and the *Egyptiot* community at large, so they would not fall victim to the 'communist threat.'<sup>670</sup> They did this through the preservation of the Greek national character of the *Egyptiot* students. Another goal was to prepare the students for a place in the labor market after the completion of their studies.

*Egyptiot* education was tied more to the Greek state's reality and needs than to those of the Egyptian state. Consequently, until the late 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, there was less focus on learning the Arabic language and culture by the *koinotētes*' schools.<sup>671</sup> In addition, the schools neglected the orientation towards a more technical training, by focusing on classical or commercial studies. However, as I discussed in chapter two, the new

---

<sup>668</sup> For example, in 1955, the *Egyptiot koinotētes* had under their control 57 out of 83 Greek schools. Leonidas Markantonatos, *Ta en Aigypto ellēnika ekpaideutēria*, (Thessaloniki: Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1957), 16. Even though the *koinotētes* were mostly responsible for *Egyptiot* education, it was not uncommon for *Egyptiots* to study in Egyptian or western (British, French etc.) schools, either due to mixed marriages or in order to excel in certain foreign languages, among other reasons. Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 197-198.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid., 187. The same applied to the Italian schools in Egypt. They followed mostly the curriculum of Italy, focusing on classical studies. Joseph Viscomi and Annalaura Turiano, "From immigrants to emigrants: Salesian education and the failed integration of Italians in Egypt, 1937-1960," *Modern Italy*, 23/1(2018) 1-17, 9.

<sup>670</sup> Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 188.

<sup>671</sup> Only in 1926 did the *koinotētes*' schools introduce the Arabic language in their curriculum. Law 40/1935 made it obligatory for the students of foreign schools to learn Arabic and take national exams in the language. Ibid., 209.

socioeconomic realities, for example Gamal Abdel Nasser's focus on industrial development, where more technical personnel were needed, and the government's focus on the Arabic language brought again to the fore discussions on the *Egyptiots'* adjustment to Egypt,<sup>672</sup> and specifically to the labor market,<sup>673</sup> and lead to reforms in *koinotētes'* education and curriculum.

In 1957, Dimitris Lambros, the Greek ambassador to Egypt, reported to the Greek Foreign Office after a community meeting at the Greek embassy in Cairo that *Egyptiot* residency in Egypt could be secured on three conditions: the learning of the Arabic language, especially for young *Egyptiots*; the orientation towards a more technical education; and last, the *en masse* acquisition of Egyptian citizenship.<sup>674</sup> Therefore, in order to secure the *Egyptiot* presence, the *koinotētes* had to prioritize the technical orientation and command of Arabic that could better serve the needs of the labor market. However, during Anwar Sadat's presidency in the 1970s, the priorities of the *koinotētes* changed, since Sadat had a more liberal attitude to the *koinotētes'* freedom of education.

This chapter discusses the EKA's role, as both a local and diasporic institution, on matters concerning *Egyptiot* education, specifically its changing attitude towards the teaching of the Arabic language and the orientation towards a more technical education.<sup>675</sup> By

---

<sup>672</sup> The concerns around the learning of the Arabic and the future of the *Egyptiots* in the labor market did not suddenly appear with the decrease of the *Egyptiots* in the 1960s. Rather, they were present since the interwar period, and especially once discussions about the abolition of the Capitulations intensified. Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 177. Moreover, those concerns and strategies were not exclusive to the *Egyptiot* community. For example, the Italian community found vocational training to be one of the few solutions to secure Italians' presence there. Joseph Viscomi and Annalaura Turiano underline in their work that in the late 1930s the consular authorities emphasized that vocational schools were the only solution to guarantee young Italians in Egypt. Viscomi and Turiano, "From immigrants to emigrants," 9.

<sup>673</sup> The increase in vocational schools and the focus on technical training are proofs of the emphasis Gamal Abdel Nasser's government put on this part of education. As Mahmud A. Faksh underscores, in the period 1965-1966, vocational secondary schools increased fourfold compared to of 1953-1954. Mahmud A. Faksh, "The Consequences of the Introduction and Spread of Modern Education: Education and National Integration in Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2/16 (1980), 42-55, 45.

<sup>674</sup> Sophianos Chryssostomidis, "The Left, Nasser, and the Exodus of the Greeks from Egypt," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Special Issue, 35/2 (2009): 155-159, 157.

<sup>675</sup> As noted in chapter four, the EKA's schools were divided into four categories: nursery schools, primary schools, schools for technical education and secondary schools. Here I discuss *Egyptiot* education through the

examining the EKA's concerns, steps and policies around these two topics, this chapter argues that firstly, the moral and financial support of the Greek government to the EKA and secondly, the shift from Gamal Abdel Nasser's strict educational policies to Anwar Sadat's more lenient ones reaffirmed the EKA's privileged position, allowed it to negotiate its position on education, and maintained its right to imagine and fashion the community's identifications and belonging. In addition, this chapter demonstrates the diversity, opposition and many layers of autonomy within the *Egyptiot* community, by showing the EKA's role and decisions in relation to education not only vis-à-vis the Egyptian government, but also its own members and other *Egyptiot* communities, in this case the Cairo *Egyptiot* community.

### 5.1 The Arabic Language in Focus

The education system of the *Egyptiot* and other foreign schools officially changed in 1955 (Law 583/1955), when the Egyptian government introduced its new curriculum.<sup>676</sup> During his presidency Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970) built on the goals of the 1955 law, under which education became a tool to “modernize and industrialize Egypt,” and support the interests of the lower and middle classes.<sup>677</sup> Therefore, the education sector expanded and provided access and opportunities to all Egyptians. In addition, in his efforts to fight linguistic

---

EKA's primary and secondary schools. These were the three primary schools of Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios, Averofeio-Familiadeios, and Aristofroneios. Concerning technical secondary education, the schools were four in number: the school of fashion design (Scholē Amfieseōs), the day and night vocational schools, and the evening language tutorials. The Averofeio gymnasium, the Salvageios Commercial school and the Averofeio girls'school (Anōtero Parthenagōgeio) were also part of the EKA's secondary education. The Averofeio gymnasium was divided in the third grade into two departments, those of classical direction and department of sciences.

<sup>676</sup> Two of the main curriculum's goals were to emphasize Arabic and technical education. For more details, see: Heather Kathleen Browne, “Education reform in Egypt: Reinforcement & Resistance,” (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2011), 123-124.

<sup>677</sup> Nadim Mirshak, “Authoritarianism, education and the limits of political socialisation in Egypt,” *Power and Education*, 1/12 (2020), 39-54, 42.

imperialism, Arabic became the second major focus of the foreign schools, some of which were nationalized by Abdel Nasser's government.

As part of the new curriculum, Arabic language and Egyptian education (*Aigyptiakē Morfōsē*)<sup>678</sup> were introduced as major courses in *Egyptiot* schools, next to the other courses previously taught. Consequently, *Egyptiot* students had to graduate with both the Greek and Arabic degrees, and excel in both languages when they finished primary school.<sup>679</sup> In addition, the Egyptian Ministry of Education appointed Arabic instructors to all foreign schools and introduced language inspections to ensure the compliance of the schools with the new laws.<sup>680</sup>

According to this new curriculum, students had to learn Arabic starting in the first grade of primary school, instead of the sixth, as in the past. The directors of the Alexandrian *koinotētas*' schools expressed their concern regarding the difficulties of this new system and the confusion it caused for students to the head of the school board and the president of the EKA throughout the 1960s, and especially in the first five years of its implementation. The EKA was used in the past to negotiating its educational matters autonomously. As discussed in chapter four, the Greek government provided financial and moral support to the EKA, especially for its schools, to keep the community's 'Greekness' and educate the nation, something that granted power to the EKA. Thus, as I explore below, those concerns often seemed to be less about the pedagogical aspects of the new curriculum, and more about the loss of control and autonomy over their curriculum and execution. They demonstrated how the EKA negotiated its space and agency in educational matters, and how education was a

---

<sup>678</sup> There were no references in the archival material I examined as to what this course entailed.

<sup>679</sup> Galanis to Theodorakis, January 29, 1963, protocol no: 289, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 1-2.

<sup>680</sup> Frédéric Abecassis, "L'enseignement étranger et les élites locales (1920-1960): Francophonie et identités nationales," (PhD diss., University of Aix-Marseille, 2000), 741.

national issue, one of the EKA's ways of defining its place as both a local and diasporic institution.

For example, some of those concerns were raised in 1964 in a letter addressed to the head of the school board, Ioannis Oikonomou, by the director of the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary school, Vasilis Galanis.<sup>681</sup> Galanis noted the difficulty of the first-grade students in coping with both the Greek and Arabic languages at such a young age. Thus, he complained that students confused the two languages, writing Greek from right to left instead of left to right. According to him, this new system had led to student fatigue, as they were overloaded by both the Arabic and Greek curricula.<sup>682</sup> According to him, their performance was noticeably lower, compared to the previous years, and he could foresee that their poor performance would continue in the following classes too.<sup>683</sup>

Galanis's letter also highlighted his need to justify to Oikonomou the low performances of his students, pointing at supposed structural problems rather than the teachers' performance and school's efforts. In another letter, dated the year before, Galanis had expressed similar concerns to Anastasios Theodorakis, president of the EKA at that time, concerning the confusion of the curricula, and asking Theodorakis for solutions.<sup>684</sup>

Galanis was not the only one to communicate his concerns to the head of the school board. Similar issues regarding the overloaded curriculum and the students' linguistic

---

<sup>681</sup> Galanis to Oikonomou, June 17, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>682</sup> Even though only two new courses were added to the new curriculum, Arabic language and Egyptian education, the EKA's board members in their correspondence referred to these two courses as an additional curriculum, the Arabic curriculum (*Arabiko programma*). See, for example: *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 9-10.

<sup>683</sup> Galanis to Oikonomou, June 17, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>684</sup> In addition, Galanis suggested that the Arabic language exams should not take place in the sixth grade of primary school, but rather in the first or second year of Gymnasium, so students could have more time for preparation. Galanis to Theodorakis, January 29, 1963, protocol no: 289, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 1-2.

poverty, as well as their overall low results, were expressed by the director of the Aristofroneios primary school, Georgios Tzamtzis, in his report to Oikonomou.<sup>685</sup> Tzamtzis, like Galanis, complained about the poor results and the difficulty of the dual curriculum students had to follow. The situation was different for the Salvageios Commercial school, demonstrating the variety amongst the EKA's schools. There, the level of foreign languages of the graduates was always very high due to the many hours and dedication to foreign languages taught in class.<sup>686</sup> A report to Theodorakis sent by the director of the school, S. Symeonidis, communicated the positive outcome of the school exams, the visit of the Arabic language inspectors, and the results of the students.<sup>687</sup>

Even though Galanis showed that he understood the needs of the new curriculum, he seemed to be more concerned about the “gradual erosion of our (the *Egyptiots*’) educational system,”<sup>688</sup> and how this could be avoided, rather than how students would successfully excel in Arabic, as in Greek. The old structure of the EKA's schools and the autonomy they enjoyed in the past, and the fact they were gradually losing it, were among the main issues for the school representatives in the 1960s. Moreover, the frequent onsite inspections by the Egyptian language inspectors added more pressure on the EKA's schools to perform well, and sometimes both disappointment at the fact that they were losing control and fear towards the Egyptian authorities.

---

<sup>685</sup> *Ekthesis Aristofroneios Dēmotikē Scholē*, Tzamtzis to Oikonomou, June 18, 1964, protocol no: 29, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>686</sup> *Ekthesis Pepragmenōn*, May 1964, S. Symeonidis to Theodorakis, June 10, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>687</sup> Symeonidis stressed how all students, male and female, of the Salvageios fifth grade class passed the exams in Arabic language and Egyptian education. *Ekthesis Pepragmenōn*, May 1964, S. Symeonidis to Theodorakis, June 10, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias. The successful outcomes at the Salvageios school, which were always much higher compared to the outcomes of the other EKA schools, were stated throughout the 1960s in the EKA's annual reports. See for example the EKA annual reports for 1964 and 1965. *Logodosia Etous 1964; Logodosia Etous 1965*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive.

<sup>688</sup> Galanis to Theodorakis, January 29, 1963, protocol no: 289, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 1-2.

Indeed, part of the educational system's reforms was the frequent unprecedented inspections by governmental authorities, specifically the Egyptian language inspectors. In their visits to the EKA's schools, the inspectors evaluated the application of the new educational system, and the performance of the students. In the EKA's annual reports there was no reference as to what would happen if the schools did not pass the inspection. Nevertheless, when the schools' performance was satisfactory, there was always a reference in the reports, in order to highlight that the schools were working in the right direction. In addition, the correspondences between the school boards demonstrated that there was pressure on the schools to perform well in the Arabic-based curriculum, which indicated that it mattered to the Egyptian authorities that the foreign schools comply with the new curriculum. Hence, both the school boards' correspondences and the references to school performance in the EKA reports indicated that the *Egyptiot* schools aspired to satisfy the demands made by the Egyptian government, as consequences might follow if they did not. These inspections and the government's new educational policy demonstrated the attention the Egyptian government paid to the alignment of foreign schools with its Egyptian curriculum. The autonomy of the Greek and other foreign schools had in the past diminished, as they felt compelled to comply with certain rules determined by the Egyptian government.<sup>689</sup>

In one of the Egyptian government's onsite inspections of the Averofeio-Familiadeio and Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary schools, the Egyptian language inspectors found the students' results very low.<sup>690</sup> Following the report of Mohammad Fahmy al-Karaksy, the

---

<sup>689</sup> Angelos Dalachanis underlines that during the 1950s the Egyptian government made limited interventions in the curriculum of foreign schools. Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 185. As Mahmud A. Faksh notes, this changed after the 1956 Suez crisis, when the foreign schools went under strict control. Mahmud A. Faksh, "The Consequences of the Introduction and Spread of Modern Education: Education and National Integration in Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2/16 (1980), 42-55, 47.

<sup>690</sup> The report was discussed in the last school board meeting (January 14, 1963), which the directors of all the *koinotētas*' schools attended. *Ekthesis Scholeiōn*, Mohammad Fahmy al-Karaksy to *Eforeia Scholeiōn*, January



language inspector, the schools' directors sent letters to the EKA president, Theodorakis, to explain and justify the low results. Galanis, the director of the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary school, stated in his letter that the students of his school were not particularly weak, compared to the students of the other EKA schools.<sup>691</sup> He did admit, however, that the students of the last two classes of the primary school had scored very low, as the language inspector noted.

Galanis explained that this situation was beyond his control, as one of the language teachers had been transferred to another school, and another, who was assigned to teach higher levels, had not done this before, something that according to the coordinator of the program, Mohammad Houssein, could not be done differently. In addition, he noted that a teacher's sick-leave had made the situation especially difficult for students to cope with the material.

Galanis seemed concerned and very proactive in finding solutions concerning the low performance of his students in Arabic. After the report he sent to Theodorakis, he called for a school board meeting on January 16, 1963.<sup>692</sup> At that meeting, he suggested to the directors of the other EKA schools the introduction of two evening Arabic language tutorials for students. Galanis shared the meeting's minutes with Theodorakis, and he communicated to him that the school board decided to extend the tutorials for another month or two, hoping that the students would reach a higher level.<sup>693</sup> In addition, on March 16, 1963, the EKA added one

---

10, 1963, protocol no: 331, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>691</sup> Galanis to Theodorakis, January 15, 1963. protocol no: 282, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>692</sup> The meeting was mentioned in another letter Galanis sent to Theodorakis. Galanis to Theodorakis, February 16, 1963, protocol number: 306, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>693</sup> After receiving Theodorakis' permission on the tutorials, the EKA agreed to cover partly their fees. The other part would be covered by the parents. *Ibid.*

more hour of the Egyptian education course to the school curriculum.<sup>694</sup> The tutorials had lasted for two months, and took place three times a week.<sup>695</sup> The school's initiative was intensive, expressing its willingness, but also its concerns to improve the students' progress.

While the results of the June exams were not stated in the correspondence of Galanis with Theodorakis, Galanis did express his positive attitude towards them. However, the September re-sit exam results were low, with 60% of the students still failing the Arabic course.<sup>696</sup> In addition, only 21% of the sixth-grade students succeeded in Arabic<sup>697</sup> and 77% in Egyptian education in the 1964 June exams in the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary school.<sup>698</sup> This noticeably low outcome in Arabic language generated discussion among the director of the school, the head of the school board, and the parents. The director of the school, Galanis, wrote a letter to the head of the school board, Oikonomou, to explain the situation, give him insights and justify the low results of the students in Arabic.<sup>699</sup>

Galanis tried to defend his students, and his role as principal of the school, making excuses for their failure and even going so far as to justify empty papers. He openly stated the mistakes and limitations of the structure of the examination to Oikonomou, blaming the Egyptian examiners for not giving clear guidelines on how students should engage with the exercises or enough time for students to complete the exam. Galanis mentioned that after distributing the papers to the particular class, the examiners left to dictate orthography to a

---

<sup>694</sup> Galanis wrote again a letter to Theodorakis stating that the tutorials would be cancelled, as their continuation would be difficult. In addition, since students would have one extra hour of the course at school, the tutorials were no longer needed, as their goal was fulfilled. Galanis to Theodorakis, March 16, 1963, protocol number: 319, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>695</sup> In the first month each lesson lasted for two hours, and in the second month for an hour and half.

<sup>696</sup> The success rate was four out of ten students. The results were mentioned in a letter Galanis sent to the head of the school board, Spyridon Georgitsis. Galanis to Georgitis, September 17, 1963, protocol number: 393, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>697</sup> The 21% corresponded to 15 students out of 70 in total.

<sup>698</sup> Galanis to Oikonomou, June 16, 1964, protocol number: 669, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*

different class. However, the students of the first class were not aware that in the meantime they had to work on the grammar exercises, while the examiners were away. Instead, they were waiting for the examiners to finish with the other class, without doing any work in the meantime. Galanis described how no guidelines were given to students on what to do, while the examiners were away. Consequently, when the examiners came for the orthography, they were expecting students to have worked on the grammar exercises. Instead, they found empty papers from almost everyone and gave them only five minutes to finish this task before the dictation.

Galanis stated that the outcome of the exams could only reflect in reality the results of the dictation, and not the ones of the grammar exercises, as students had not been given time for this. Thus, he justified the success of some students (21%) in passing the course as due to their swiftness to completing the grammar exercises, and to the disobedience of others, who acted independently and worked on the exercises in the first twenty minutes, without getting any guidelines. Moreover, he stressed the disappointment of students and their parents to have received such results, especially for those students who were used to scoring highly in exams. He concluded his letter by pointing out that such practices would only lead to the faster dissolution of the community.

Galanis used the departures of *Egyptiots* to pressure Oikonomou to take action and solve the issue of the exams. According to Galanis, the structure of the examination, as part of the new educational system, would disappoint the *Egyptiots* of Alexandria, and potentially could force them to leave the country. Such threats or pressures for action were not isolated phenomena. Since the community started to decrease, a common practice for some officials

to attract attention and push matters towards the direction they wanted was to warn of more departures and the faster dissolution of the community.<sup>700</sup>

A fierce response to Oikonomou and Theodorakis regarding the exam came from Ntinou Koutsoumis.<sup>701</sup> Koutsoumis, a recognized journalist and editor of the *Egyptiot* newspaper *Tachydromos*, published in Alexandria, was also the parent of one of the students who failed the course. Koutsoumis first blamed Oikonomou for negligence concerning the failure of 80% of the student body. He then blamed the Egyptian examiners for indifference and lack of organization. Koutsoumis had visited Oikonomou in his office the day before, but without having received the attention he wanted on this matter, he wrote to him this letter to push forward the discussion.<sup>702</sup>

According to him, the unwillingness of Oikonomou to take this issue to the Egyptian authorities was either due to Oikonomou's fear of exposing the Egyptian examiners and pushing forward the issue, or his lack of care of the students. In either case, Koutsoumis expressed his strong disappointment as a parent and a journalist of the community. Oikonomou responded to Koutsoumis, in person, that he would avoid such situations in the future, by changing the structure of the exam. Nevertheless, Koutsoumis was very disappointed to hear this, as it did not change the results of the past exams. Koutsoumis finished his letter by expressing his expectation that Oikonomou would respond to his request, or he would take this issue to the Egyptian authorities. Besides the pressure Koutsoumis intended to put on Oikonomou to solve this issue, the fact that he wanted to

---

<sup>700</sup> See, for example, the letter that Giagkos Chrysovergis and Alexander Kazoullis addressed to Dimitris Lambros. Chrysovergis and Kazoullis to Lambros, October 17, 1960, protocol no: 150/60, Chambre de Commerce Hellenique D'Alexandrie, Archeio Emporikou Epimelētēriou Alexandreias.

<sup>701</sup> Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, June 18, 1964; Koutsoumis to Oikonomou, June 18, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias. Both letters were also sent to the General Consulate of Greece in Alexandria and the Greek Ministry of Education in Athens.

<sup>702</sup> Koutsoumis to Oikonomou, June 18, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

communicate this to the Egyptian authorities demonstrates that the hierarchy between the latter and the EKA had changed. The Egyptian state grew in power and could intervene further into the everyday affairs of the *Egyptiot* community. As such, members of the community could use the Egyptian authorities to address hierarchical relations and power structures within their own community.

Koutsoumis communicated in another letter the outcome of the exams to Theodorakis too, but with a different tone.<sup>703</sup> Because Theodorakis was not directly involved in the exam procedures, Koutsoumis wanted to draw Theodorakis' attention to this matter, despite the fact that the latter had already received the oral testimonies of the directors of the Tositsaias and Aristofroneios primary schools. Koutsoumis, highlighting once again his dual role as parent and journalist, stated that the students were led to "slaughter," (*eis sfageion*) having been abandoned by the school board, which accepted without any complaints the insulting behavior of the Egyptian examiners towards the school's teachers.<sup>704</sup> He thus asked Theodorakis what were his intentions on this matter, and what kind of measures he would take.

Koutsoumis, while raising the issue of the *Egyptiot* students' examination to Theodorakis, found the opportunity to complain about the new educational system and the control the EKA and its schools was losing as a result of this. In his letter to Theodorakis, Koutsoumis emphasized that the latter belonged to the "old guard" (*palaiian froura*) of the EKA board, meaning he was one of the oldest board members, and hence, he had the moral obligation not to accept this new system of Egyptian control, which as Koutsoumis stated: "severely affected our Greek dignity and our educational autonomy (*ekpaideutikēn mas*

---

<sup>703</sup> Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, June 18, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>704</sup> Koutsoumis referred to the fact that the examiners neglected the role of the school teachers, who complained about the structure of the examination, so students would not submit empty papers. The examiners did not allow any teachers to interfere into their examination. Ibid.

*autoteleian*).<sup>705</sup> Koutsoumis' references to the past, when the *Egyptiot* community was more in control of its educational system, indicated that the EKA should not accept the new education system Abdel Nasser introduced, but instead should preserve its former structure that gave more autonomy and power to the institution. In addition, it was clear in his letter that he had discussed this issue with other parents, as well as the directors of the schools, and that there was a common feeling that the *Egyptiot* schools were losing their "dignity and autonomy."<sup>706</sup>

The desire to preserve "Greek dignity and educational autonomy"<sup>707</sup> echoed the wish to preserve 'Greekness,' discussed in the previous chapter, which the Greek government supported in the form of financial aid to the EKA so it could continue teaching Greek language and education to a sufficient level. As highlighted earlier, the EKA's activities that kept the community's 'Greekness' alive had been compared in the past by both the EKA and Greek government representatives with other Greek *koinotētes* of the Greek diaspora; these had failed to maintain such programs, as they did not receive similar levels of financial support.<sup>708</sup> Indeed, the EKA, as both a local and diasporic institution, was tasked by the Greek government with maintaining the nation in Egypt. The EKA, through its communal elites, nurtured the community's identifications as imagined by the EKA's board, by preserving its cultural capital.<sup>709</sup> In doing so, the EKA embodied certain ideas in the eyes of the *Egyptiot* community, among them dignity and autonomy, and it was deemed responsible for their fashioning. Hence, Koutsoumis's letter stressed all these aspects that were seen as being

---

<sup>705</sup> Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, June 18, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid.

<sup>708</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, December 7, 1973, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>709</sup> Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions," 110.

taken away from the *Egyptiot* schools (and the EKA) when they were placed under Egyptian control.

### The New Educational Reality in the 1970s

The orientation of the new government by Anwar Sadat was clearly different with regards to national education and its relationship to the foreign schools, compared to the Nasser regime's positioning. Sadat's orientation towards the West did not appear only in the form of economic liberalization (*infitāh*), but also in educational and cultural spheres, where foreign schools gained back their power. Indeed, the growth of the private sector was translated into more available jobs for the graduates of foreign schools; an element that impacted the graduates of public schools, since they now faced disadvantages in the private market.<sup>710</sup>

Thus, from the discourse of foreign cultural invasion and resentment at foreign influence that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s, the government's policies changed in the 1970s and 1980s to favor foreign investment, privatization, and foreign influence in education. Accordingly, since *Egyptiot* education was seen as foreign, and in line with Sadat's foreign influence, the situation for the EKA schools started to change in the late 1960s, and into the 1970s, as is visible in the changes to examinations, and the decrease in focus on the Arabic language and Egyptian education courses. As I demonstrate below, the *Egyptiot* community and its leadership took advantage of the reduced supervision and more lenient rules under Sadat to adjust their educational provision to their own needs and regain their autonomy.

Already in 1965, the Egyptian government had decided to reorganize the final examination by allowing students to take the exams in their own schools, integrating school

---

<sup>710</sup> Browne, "Education reform in Egypt," 130. See also chapter five in: Judith Cochran, *Education in Egypt*, (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986).

teachers into the form and execution of the exams. The EKA's representatives perceived this change as very positive, as stated in the EKA's annual report:

With great joy and relief, we welcomed the cancelation of the official exams in Arabic language and Egyptian education (*Aigyptiakē Morfōsē*). The students of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of the Tositsaia primary school took the exams at their school and in their classrooms, where the environment is familiar to them. The exams took place in the presence of one inspector, while the exam questions were formed together by the inspector and our coordinator, Mohammad Hussein. The results were satisfactory.<sup>711</sup>

The positive changes related to the fact that the exams took place at the community's schools, allowing the coordinator of the school's Arabic program, Hussein, to formulate the exam questions. This granted more control to the EKA, compared to previous years. On the one hand, this change concerned the EKA's prestige, or in Koutsoumis' words it returned "dignity and autonomy"<sup>712</sup> to the institution; on the other hand, practical matters were solved, as the schools regained control over the exam's content and level of difficulty, and students did better in a more familiar environment answering questions of the kind they were used to. Even though no written response from Oikonomou or Theodorakis was found, and as such, one cannot be sure to what extent the complaints mentioned above impacted the structure of the examination, the fact that the examination system changed one year after the incident, and that the EKA board had tried several times in the past to put pressure on the Egyptian government to change the examination,<sup>713</sup> this may demonstrate the agency of the EKA and its schools to negotiate in areas important to them.

---

<sup>711</sup> *Logodosia Etous 1965*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 45.

<sup>712</sup> Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, June 18, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>713</sup> See, for example: *Logodosia Etous 1964*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 18.



The Arabic language and Egyptian education courses decreased in hours in the late 1960s.<sup>714</sup> The EKA supplemented the hours in the curriculum with a new course, ‘Elements of Democracy’,<sup>715</sup> that was introduced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of Gymnasium, and with the ‘Hygiene course’<sup>716</sup> that was introduced to the male students of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gymnasium grade, both for one hour a week.<sup>717</sup> The reduction of hours spent on Egyptian education continued after 1967, and as stated in the Averofeio report of 1970, students of all classes had one less hour on this subject. This cut was announced in one of the EKA’s meeting in November 1970,<sup>718</sup> one month after Anwar Sadat was sworn into office as the new president of Egypt, following the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in September 1970,<sup>719</sup> indicating the orientation of the new government. Egyptian education was removed completely from the curriculum in 1973.<sup>720</sup> From that year onwards, students were only taught Arabic language, with fewer hours.<sup>721</sup>

---

<sup>714</sup> Specifically, in the 1966-1967 annual report of the Averofeio high school, it was stated that the hours for Arabic language decreased from 6 to 5 for all the Averofeio classes, and the hours for Egyptian education from 3 to 2 for the 1st and 2nd grade of Gymnasium. The annual report was sent by the headmaster of the Averofeio Gymnasium, Apostolos Koutsoukos, to the EKA’s president, Anastasios Theodorakis. *Logodosia Averofeiou Scholeiou 1966-1967*, Koutsoukos to Theodorakis, July 5, 1967, protocol number: 180/104 File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3.

<sup>715</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Averofeiou Scholeiou*, November 23, 1970, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3.

<sup>716</sup> The ‘Hygiene course’ belonged to the broader educational policy the EKA’s schools implemented. The assessment of the students’ moral development was also part of this policy. This was not exclusive to the *Egyptiot* schools. In other countries in the Middle East, for example in Mandate Lebanon and Syria, the French included in their educational policy oversight of the schools’ curriculum development, teachers’ training, the sanitation and hygiene of students, and their moral development. Nadya Jeanne Sbaiti, “Lessons in History: Education and the Formation of National Society in Beirut, Lebanon, 1920-1960s,” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2008), 45; 50.

<sup>717</sup> The course on ‘Elements of Democracy’ was already taught in secondary schools in Greece, but it was only introduced in the Alexandrian schools during the 1966-1967 academic year. Once the dictatorship in Greece came to power in 1967, it removed the course from the curriculum of schools in Greece on May 5, 1967. There is no reference in the correspondence between the headmaster of the Averofeio and the EKA president whether this applied to the Alexandrian schools too.

<sup>718</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, November 23, 1970, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3.

<sup>719</sup> Anwar Sadat assumed power in October 1970, and ruled until his assassination in October 1981.

<sup>720</sup> The removal of the Egyptian education course was not limited to the students of the Averofeio school. As stated in the EKA’s minutes, this change applied to all students across Alexandrian schools. It was not stated in the minutes whether the removal of the course was made at the request of the Egyptian government. *Praktika Synedrias Averofeiou Scholeiou*, October 2, 1973, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 4.

<sup>721</sup> *Ibid.*

As shown in the EKA minutes of June 1972, there was a mutual understanding and ‘silent agreement’ between Sadat’s new government and the Alexandrian *Egyptiot* schools concerning the use of Arabic in schools, and its benefits (or not) to students, the general orientation schools should have, and their autonomy.<sup>722</sup> Since there was no longer a requirement by the Egyptian government for the *Egyptiot* students to reach the same level of Arabic as Egyptian students, the EKA’s board members took the opportunity to introduce their own initiatives with regards to their education. In that meeting in 1972, Nikos Perakis, the school commissioner, after explaining the situation concerning Arabic and the low level of the EKA’s students to the board members, he used the words of the Egyptian government to push for the independence of the *Egyptiot* schools. Rather than calling for measures that would raise all students’ level in Arabic to meet the Egyptian government’s and schools’ standards, instead Perakis proposed reforms that emphasized the EKA’s right to decide on a curriculum that best served its student population.

Perakis stated the students’ general poor results, with an average pass rate of 30% for the gymnasium classes, and 40% for the lyceum classes.<sup>723</sup> He highlighted that a large percentage of the successful results were by students who were taking extra Arabic classes privately at home and, therefore, had extra support in learning the language.<sup>724</sup> Referring to the unsuccessful learning of Arabic at the EKA’s schools, he stressed that the Arabic course needed to be taught in accordance to today’s reality, so students would benefit from systematic and pragmatic learning of the language. Finally, he stressed that the grades given to students did not correspond to their actual level and thus, to their actual acquisition of the Arabic language.<sup>725</sup> After stating the limitations of the schools in teaching Arabic, and in

---

<sup>722</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreas, 9-10.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

<sup>724</sup> The phenomenon of private lessons appeared during the 1970s. Browne, “Education reform in Egypt,” 132.

<sup>725</sup> In addition, Perakis underscored some limitations of the teaching of Arabic. First, he mentioned that the teaching material between the classes had no link. The material was never completed, so students did not have a

order to validate his point that the current style of Arabic teaching was of little use to EKA students even further, Perakis presented five points the Egyptian government recognized in relation to the EKA's schools in order to show how the organization might regain its autonomy concerning its educational curriculum. These points were:

“1. Our schools are entirely Greek. 2. The teaching material is provided by the Greek Ministry of Education, and it is in accordance to its curriculum. 3. The exams of the schools are in accordance with the curriculum of the Greek Ministry of Education. 4. The admission of our graduates to Egyptian Universities is based on their performance tested by the Greek examination committee, regardless of their grades in the Arabic courses during the gymnasium classes.<sup>726</sup> 5. The learning of Arabic by our students is difficult.”<sup>727</sup>

After mentioning the points that the Sadat's government recognized in relation to the *Egyptiot* schools, Perakis made three proposals: 1) the separation of the Greek and Arabic curricula, since students' graduation from school did not require them to pass Arabic; 2) students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of primary school until the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of the gymnasium should be taught the material of Egyptian primary schools but with a lesser focus on grammar; and 3), the EKA should introduce specialized tutorials, three hours a week, for students of the last three grades of the gymnasium (the lyceum) who wished to continue studying in the Egyptian universities.<sup>728</sup>

---

flow in their learning. Secondly, he referred to the Egyptian Arabic language teachers, who were 'detached' from the EKA's main educational zone, and who were also paid by the hour, something that caused a financial burden on the institution. Perakis mentioned that each Egyptian language teacher cost the EKA 32 EGP per year. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 9-10.

<sup>726</sup> Gymnasium here is considered to contain six grades, as Gymnasium and Lyceum together.

<sup>727</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 10.

<sup>728</sup> The second proposal was linked to point 5. Since students found the Arabic course difficult, Perakis' proposal was to keep the teaching of the Arabic language, but in a 'lighter' version. The third proposal was linked to point 4. It was a service to students who would like to continue to Egyptian universities, and by having some extra hours of Arabic at school, hoped they would perform better at university. *Ibid.*, 10-11.

After Perakis' suggestions, the board decided to form a small committee consisting of EKA board members to think about how they should proceed on these topics. A little over a year later, in October 1973, the EKA board decided to approve some of the suggestions made by Perakis in June 1972. After having approved the decrease in teaching hours in Arabic, as stated above, the board also approved the second proposal.<sup>729</sup> Hence, the EKA board members took advantage of the opportunities created by Sadat's government, of lenient policies and less supervision of their schools, to implement their own measures. Indeed, the Sadat government left the *Egyptiot* institutions with a great deal of power to decide their education system, when necessary. The EKA schools could thus maintain their autonomy, since there was no real reinforcement by the Ministry of Education of their compliance with the rules.

As the discussions on the low level of Arabic among *Egyptiot* students continued after the reforms were implemented, debates on the general unsatisfactory level of their graduating students occurred in the EKA meetings as well.<sup>730</sup> Sandis, the president and head of the educational committee of the EKA, called for a board meeting in December 1973 to draw attention to the low level of the students when they entered university, and the limitations of the EKA schools in not preparing them well for their tertiary education.<sup>731</sup> The discussions that took place in the EKA meetings reflected the organization's problems beyond the teaching of the Arabic language. The lack of technical orientation in its schools was equally important, as it strongly impacted the success of *Egyptiot* students in the labor market. As such, the following section discusses how the EKA approached technical education in its schools, and the initiatives it took towards its implementation from the early 1960s.

---

<sup>729</sup> There was no reference as to whether the board approved the third proposal. Ibid.

<sup>730</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, November 30, 1973, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 12.

<sup>731</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, December 20, 1973, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 2-6.

## 5.2 Technical Education in Focus

In addition to his focus on the primacy of the Arabic language, Gamal Abdel Nasser gave more attention to the development of technical education (and less on humanities). This was because one of his main objectives was to industrialize Egypt, and his government needed to equip those industries with skilled and qualified personnel.<sup>732</sup> The Egyptian national education system and education in the foreign schools had to be prepared to serve the new needs of the labor market.

As has been noted at the beginning of this chapter, the *Egyptiot koinotētes* had traditionally neglected technical education in favor of theoretical/humanities based subjects.<sup>733</sup> The two main reasons for this lay in the *koinotētes*' effort to shape *Egyptiots*' 'national consciousness' through a classical education that was focused on the Greek nation, and with that education they would better serve the needs of the *Egyptiot* labor market.<sup>734</sup> To a large extent, *Egyptiots* worked for their fellow *Egyptiots*. Especially in the period prior to the 1960s, when important *Egyptiot* capital was still present in Egyptian cities, the community's elite was the main employer for *Egyptiots*, as well as playing a leading role in the *koinotēta*'s affairs. Therefore, for decades, the school curriculum served the needs of a kind of 'internal' market that was beneficial for *Egyptiot* elites and employers.<sup>735</sup>

*Egyptiot* employers were primarily interested in clerical/administrative positions and in employees who had a good command of foreign languages such as English and French.

---

<sup>732</sup> On this matter, see: Louis Awad, *Thakāfatnā fī muftaraq al-turuk*, (Beirut: Dar al-Adaab, 1974).

<sup>733</sup> There were many instances when *Egyptiots* criticized the community's leadership for not preparing the community for the new changes and needs of the labor market. One of those took place during Konstantinos Karamanlis's visit to Egypt in 1960, during which the Union of Greek Employees of Public (Retail) Stores in Cairo blamed the community's leadership for not creating enough vocational schools and not focusing on teaching the Arabic language. Kitroeff, *Greeks and the Making*, 191.

<sup>734</sup> As Angelos Dalachanis underscores, the shaping of the national consciousness by the *koinotētes* not only had to do with their self-identity and belonging to the Greek nation, but also with their identification towards the 'other.' This 'other' was both the Egyptian Muslim and any other foreigner. Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 200-201.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

Thus, it was not surprising that clerks and other kinds of employees constituted the backbone of *Egyptiot* labor market, as I demonstrated in the second chapter. The focus on classical or commercial studies was therefore expected, as it served better the needs of the *Egyptiot* labor market. However, with the decrease of the community's numbers, the withdrawal of *Egyptiot* capital, and the new needs in the labor market, *Egyptiots* had to reevaluate their educational system and find ways to adjust better to that market. Therefore, the question that arises and I explore below is how the EKA and the Alexandrian *Egyptiot* community responded to these changes, and what the policies were that the institution undertook in educational matters. Following these two questions, this section also discusses how the EKA imagined, as a local and diasporic institution, it should best serve the Greek nation. Was it by offering a traditional classical Greek education, as supported by the Greek government, thereby maintaining Greekness for *Egyptiots*, even though this no longer seemed sustainable as the community got smaller and could not absorb such educated *Egyptiots*? Or by providing modernized technical education, in which there were more jobs and which the Greek government through its consular authorities suggested, in order to preserve a healthy sustainable integrated *Egyptiot* community?

Indeed, a more technical education, or at least a less theoretical and humanities-based one, was the EKA's focus soon after the *en masse* departures in the early 1960s,<sup>736</sup> in the EKA's attempt to comply with the move to technical education driven by the Egyptian government. As I show below, the community's decrease did not necessarily negate the EKA's power, as it could still invest in founding new schools. The EKA's initiative and power were emphasized in the need to provide a new curriculum for its schools as their graduates had to be groomed for a different labor market. For example, one of the new

---

<sup>736</sup> As with the Arabic language, here too, those discussions existed prior to the 1960s, but they intensified with the community's decrease.

schools the EKA established in 1960 was the Daily Vocational Technical School, the first students of which graduated in 1963-64.<sup>737</sup> The Daily Vocational Technical school was a popular choice among students in the first years of the 1960s.<sup>738</sup> In the EKA's 1963 annual report, the Daily Vocational Technical school lost the least amount of students from departures, meaning that the student body remained steady, compared to the other EKA schools.<sup>739</sup> According to the report, this was proof that the Alexandrian community understood the usefulness of the school, as its graduates were easily absorbed into the labor market.<sup>740</sup>

Several EKA representatives embraced this new initiative and expressed their support. For example, P. Falalis, the Daily Vocational Technical School's director, detailed the support he received from Ioannis Oikonomou, the head of the school board,<sup>741</sup> and Georgios Krystallidis, the technical school superintendent, upon their visit to the school.<sup>742</sup> Krystallidis also showed his practical support, and promised the administration of the school that he would help its graduates to find a suitable job in the labor market.<sup>743</sup> In addition, the teachers of the Tositsaia and Ibrahimia primary schools, in their efforts to promote studies at the Daily Vocational Technical School, brought 100 male graduating students to visit the school and

---

<sup>737</sup> *Logodosia Etous 1963*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 5-6.

<sup>738</sup> The total number of students across all the EKA's schools for the academic year 1963-1964 was 1,925 students. From them, 531 students attended technical education/vocational schools (including the Evening Language Tutorials). The largest number of students (642) attended the humanities-based Averofeio Gymnasium. 163 students attended the Salvageios Commercial school, and the rest of students were at the primary schools of Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios and Aristofroneios (589 in total). *Logodosia Etous 1963*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 29.

<sup>739</sup> The same positive outcomes were stated for the Evening Technical School. *Ibid.*, 52-54.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>741</sup> Indeed, Ioannis Oikonomou seemed to be a fervent supporter of technical education. As shown also in the correspondence Oikonomou had with the director of the technical schools, Byron Papadopoulos, the latter expressed his gratitude in a letter, saying that he and his students felt indebted towards Oikonomou for his support of the technical schools, and this support would remain unforgettable to students, even after their school years. Papadopoulos to Oikonomou, July 5, 1967, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>742</sup> *Ēmerēsia Teknikē Scholē: Deltio Mēnōn Maiou kai Iouniou*, P. Falalis, June 20, 1964. File: *Ēmerēsia kai Nycherinē Epaggelmatikē Teknikē Scholē*, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*

have a tour of its departments from its teaching staff. As written in Falalis's report, students left with very good impressions after this visit.<sup>744</sup>

Another step towards the EKA's focus on technical education was the organization of Evening Language Tutorials (*Esperina Frontistēria Glōssōn*) during the academic year of 1961-1962.<sup>745</sup> Vasilis Galanis, the director of the tutorials, stated in his report to Oikonomou that the goal of these tutorials was to equip students with language and technical skills for the new needs of the labor market. In the section on the *koinotēta*'s goals, Galanis explained that the primary purpose of these tutorials was "to cure the *koinotēta*'s needs."<sup>746</sup> He stressed that regardless of the *en masse* departures of the *Egyptiots*, those who remained and attended the tutorials were working towards a better life and making an extra effort to acquire the necessary skills for the job market.

Indeed, the tutorials were specifically designed for those who for various reasons had not finished their primary education in the past. The students were offered Arabic, English, and French languages, commercial studies, and typewriting classes four times a week for two hours, to be better equipped for the labor market. The response to these tutorials was very positive, as shown in the reports for the academic years 1962-63 and 1963-64. Specifically, for the academic year 1962-63, there were 227 registered students, and 195 for the following academic year.<sup>747</sup> All students (ranging between 15 and 50 years old) who attended the

---

<sup>744</sup> The report also included the visit to the Alexandrian Daily Technical school by the graduates of the Daily Technical school of Cairo, and the visit of the students of the Alexandrian Daily Technical school to an aluminum factory. *Ēmerēsia Teknikē Scholē: Deltio Mēnōn Maiou kai Iouniou*, P. Falalis, June 20, 1964. File: *Ēmerēsia kai Nycherinē Epaggelmatikē Teknikē Scholē*, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>745</sup> The Evening Language Tutorials (E.F.G) were formed in the academic year of 1961-1962, as a combination of several schools, such as: the EKA Language School, the Evening Schools of the "Aischylos-Ariōnos", and the Evening Schools of the Association of Greek Women (*Nycterinai Scholai Syllogou Ellēnidōn*). *Ekthesis Pepragmenōn Esperina Frontistēria Glōssōn, Scholikou Etous 1962-1963*, July 5, 1963, protocol number: 34, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>746</sup> Ibid.

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.; *Ekthesis Pepragmenōn Esperina Frontistēria Glōssōn, Scholikou Etous 1963-1964*, June 17, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.



evening tutorials worked during the day. The director of the tutorials highlighted in his report to the head of the school board that regardless of their fatigue after work, students were enthusiastic about learning new skills.<sup>748</sup>

In addition to the efforts made by the Daily Vocational Technical School and the Evening Language Tutorials, the Salvageios Commercial School also strove to further train its students.<sup>749</sup> The Salvageios Commercial school, which by its nature followed a more practical curriculum as a school, responded faster to the needs of the labor market. This was obvious from the constant positive references in the EKA's annual reports about the applicability of the school's curriculum to the labor market.<sup>750</sup>

The more theoretical and humanities-based schools, like the Averofeio Gymnasium (Lyceum classes included), emphasized technical education far less, however. *Egyptiots'* preference towards the Averofeio school, and in general towards humanities-based education, stemmed from the cultural capital it enjoyed and the class component attached to it. As Angelos Dalachanis noted, until the late 1950s, second and third generation *Egyptiots*, who mostly had clerical positions or freelance occupations, were against the idea that their children should follow a technical education and end up being manual workers.<sup>751</sup> A humanities-based education and the degree students could obtain after it had a specific cultural and economic capital attached to them, and a certain reputation and prestige that could give students access to social mobility and economic resources. In addition, *Egyptiots'* choice of the humanities or theoretical education reflected a melancholic longing for a time

---

<sup>748</sup> *Ekthesis Pepragmenōn Esperina Frontistēria Glōssōn, Scholikou Etous 1963-1964*, June 17, 1964, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>749</sup> For example, S. Symeonidis, the director of the Salvageios Commercial School, asked the head of the school board, Ioannis Oikonomou, to add extra hours to the courses in accounting and mathematics, as the level of students in the first grade of Lyceum was not consistent, since their prior education during the Gymnasium years differed. Symeonidis to Oikonomou, February 12, 1967, protocol number: 13, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias.

<sup>750</sup> See for example the section 'work placements' (*topothetēseis eis ergasias*) on the EKA's annual report of 1963. *Logodosia Etous 1963*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 6.

<sup>751</sup> Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 207.

when this type of education was the most desirable and led to the best jobs. Hence, it would both enable them to have a cultural “pedigree”<sup>752</sup> and class status, and determine their future in the labor market.

Even though the Averofeio Lyceum classes established a technical section during the academic year of 1963-1964, its curriculum actually remained practically the same as the theoretical one.<sup>753</sup> Only one course, technical drawing, was added to differentiate the two curricula.<sup>754</sup> As no other course was added, the Averofeio school did not implement any substantial structural change towards a more technical education, and as such, did not strive for more applicability to the labor market. Nevertheless, the Averofeio Gymnasium and Lyceum classes<sup>755</sup> continued to be the most sought-after school for *Egyptians* throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as the table below indicates:

---

<sup>752</sup> Nadya Sbaiti explores the cultural, economic and political capital attached to the French and Lebanese baccalaureate in the Mandate Lebanon. Similar to the *Egyptian* case, Sbaiti demonstrates that there was a specific educational pedigree Lebanese strived for by obtaining these baccalaureates. In addition, vocational schools did not enjoy the same intellectual prestige that liberal education did. Nadya Sbaiti, “‘A massacre without precedent’: Pedagogical constituencies and communities of knowledge in Mandate Lebanon” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh, and Andrew Arsan, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 323; 328.

<sup>753</sup> *Katalogoi Mathētōn Averofeiou Gymnasiou* (students’ lists), 1961-1975, Files: Averofeio Gymnasio, 1961-1975, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandrias.

<sup>754</sup> The hours of the course could not equip the students sufficiently, as stated in a letter addressed to the director of the Averofeio school, E. Xatzanestis, by the instructor of the course, Georgios Mitsou. Georgios Mitsou asked E. Xatzanestis to increase the hours of the course to two continuous hours instead of forty-five minutes, as that time was not enough to cover the material. Mitsou to Xatzanestis, September 18, 1963, protocol number: 7237/5584, File: *Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963-1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandrias.

<sup>755</sup> Averofeio was split into Gymnasium and Lyceum classes during the academic year of 1965-1966, according to a governmental decree issued in 1964.

Schools	Year: 1963-1964 <sup>756</sup>	Year: 1972-1973 <sup>757</sup>	Year: 1973-1974 <sup>758</sup>
Daily Vocational Technical School	158	7	13
Evening Vocational Technical School	99	21	9
School of Dressmaking and Design ( <i>Scholē Amfieseōs</i> )	79	10	3
Evening Language Tutorials <sup>759</sup>	195	N/A	N/A
Salvageios Commercial School <sup>760</sup>	163	N/A	N/A
Averofeio School	642	172	181

Indeed, as I examined in chapter two, in spite of the community's decrease, *Egyptiots* still continued to be employed, especially by their own network, in clerical/administrative jobs. Therefore, even though job opportunities had lessened in number, it was still possible for them to find such jobs with a humanities education. In addition, the relative unpopularity

<sup>756</sup> A detailed reference to the registered students of the academic year 1963-1964 was mentioned in the EKA annual report of 1963. *Logodosia Etous 1963*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 29.

<sup>757</sup> In the EKA's meeting's minutes mentioned the registered students for the academic year of 1972-1973. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, November 28, 1972, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētās Alexandreias, 12.

<sup>758</sup> The EKA's meeting minutes mentioned the registered students for the academic year of 1973-1974. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, November 30, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētās Alexandreias, 5.

<sup>759</sup> I assume that the evening tutorials provided classes to working students only during the 1960s, as nothing was written about them later in the 1970s. The closing of the evening tutorials might have happened due to the decreasing number of students.

<sup>760</sup> The Salvageios Commercial school closed in 1972.

of the vocational schools was not a phenomenon limited to the *Egyptiot* community. Despite Nasser's efforts to focus on technical education to serve his economic policies, and the increase in vocational schools in Egypt, Egyptians continued to prefer a more humanities-based education, since this could secure them a place in a prestigious university.<sup>761</sup> Therefore, the *Egyptiot* community was not an exception to this. Their preference for a humanities education was an example of the *Egyptiot* community integrating as Egyptians, since they wanted, at least class-wise, the same thing as part of the Egyptian society strove for in its education.

At the beginning of the 1970s, a constant discussion among the EKA's representatives was the *Egyptiots'* preference for the theoretical/humanities education of the Averofeio school, and the lack of interest in more technical education.<sup>762</sup> For the EKA's members, technical education would better serve *Egyptiots'* place in the labor market. The board members accordingly decided that they needed to emphasize the utility of a technical education and its relationship to the labor market to the parents of *Egyptiot* community. In addition, they suggested a special announcement to be made in the press concerning this matter.<sup>763</sup>

Despite the EKA representatives promotion of the idea that the vocational schools were very beneficial and were serving the needs of the *Egyptiot* community, *Egyptiot* parents did not change their preferences and did not use them.<sup>764</sup> The majority of Alexandrian

---

<sup>761</sup> Faksh, "Consequences," 45. In addition, this phenomenon was not exclusive to Egypt. As Nadya Sbaiti shows, in Mandate Lebanon, the type of education, either through vocational/technical schools or through the liberal/humanities-based ones, would define the type of employment and someone's place in the labor market. Sbaiti, "Massacre without precedent," 323.

<sup>762</sup> See for example: *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, October 2, 1972; July 27, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias. Also, the number of those who registered in the technical/vocational schools did not reflect the number of those who actually attended the classes. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, July 27, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 6.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid.

*Egyptians* did not express a vivid interest in the technical schools in the 1970s, as they had done in the 1960s, when the new laws concerning the labor market and employment were introduced, and also, when the waves of departures were increasing. Indeed, the 1960s popularity of technical education, imposed by Abdel Nasser's government, together with the labor laws introduced in that decade and the EKA's initiatives towards a more technical orientation, made the *Egyptian* community in Alexandria respond positively to technical education, as registrations in the technical schools showed. However, when in the 1970s the new government of Anwar Sadat adopted a new orientation in the economic and educational spheres, promoting private education and thus, the private sector and market, and focusing much less on the industrialization of the economy, the Alexandrian *Egyptians* responded to this change by not choosing the technical orientation that had been suggested in the 1960s. *Egyptians* and others could find job opportunities in the growing private sector without needing necessarily a technical education.

In addition, they did not want to abandon in the long term the cultural capital that the Averofeo school enjoyed and the future opportunities this might provide their children to study in a prestigious university, as many Egyptians did, at least those coming from a specific class and mostly from the urban centers. Most *Egyptian* parents in Alexandria still wanted high prestige classical/humanities-based education not only to preserve the idea of 'Greekness' for the nation and the attached cultural capital, but rather to preserve the nostalgia for a lost *Egyptian* past in Alexandria, due to the social and economic changes. Therefore, the case of technical orientation demonstrates that the EKA and the Alexandrian *Egyptian* community that it served represented a multitude of experiences and attitudes within *Egyptian* society.

Nonetheless, the teaching staff of the vocational schools continued in the 1970s to highlight the links between their curriculum and the labor market. They organized school

trips and visits to industrial exhibits and factories, in order to equip their students with more practical knowledge and application to the field.<sup>765</sup> The EKA supported such initiatives, including funding these trips.<sup>766</sup> Besides the efforts made by the teaching staff in promoting the vocational schools, the Greek consulate authorities and the EKA board members also kept mentioning, in almost every meeting they held, their concerns about education, and the need for a more technical orientation to prepare students for the labor market.<sup>767</sup> Indeed, the consul-general of Greece and EKA honorary president, Christos Papadopoulos, attended some of these meetings, where he stressed that the *Egyptiot* community should continue to adapt its activities to the new reality, and, as such, it should try to find solutions to adjust to the new needs.<sup>768</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Papadopoulos underscored the privileged position of the EKA, in comparison to other diasporic communities worldwide, as it continued to receive generous financial support from the Greek government.<sup>769</sup> As such, the EKA and its schools had the means to implement changes, since they had the financial and moral support of the Greek authorities which other *koinotētes* lacked. EKA schools should therefore strive to provide a high level of ‘Greekness’, next to any adjustments they needed to implement to connect

---

<sup>765</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, March 27, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3. In another meeting, the educational visits of students to the aluminum factory ‘PURAL’ and the Milopoulos marble factory were mentioned. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, March 7, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 8.

<sup>766</sup> For example, the EKA covered exclusively the visit of students to the industrial exhibition in Cairo. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, March 27, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3.

<sup>767</sup> Some examples were the meetings that were held on May 9, July 27 and December 7, 1973. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, May 9, 1973; July 27, 1973; December 7, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

<sup>768</sup> Message of the General Consul of Greece, Christos Papadopoulos, to the EKA’s board. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, March 27, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 5-9. Papadopoulos stressed again the need for readjustment of the community’s reality later that year. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, May 9, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 5-6.

<sup>769</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, March 27, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 5-9.

better to the labor market.<sup>770</sup> Nevertheless, as I demonstrate below, the EKA did this on its own terms, manifesting its agency and the ways it negotiated its place, as both a local and diasporic institution. It strove to maintain its right to preserve its cultural capital and autonomy, this time both vis-à-vis the Greek government and the *Egyptiot Cairo koinotēta*. Within the *Egyptiot* community there was a plurality of voices and different understandings of the community's place in Egypt. As the following example demonstrates, the EKA, in order to maintain its power, adopted a conservative approach for its community and its future, which in practice was not beneficial for either.

#### The EKA's Autonomy and the Merging of Schools

Papadopoulos visited the technical/vocational schools of Alexandria in May 1972, as he was concerned about the *Egyptiots'* educational activities.<sup>771</sup> Some of the representatives of the Greek *koinotēta* of Cairo, such as Lazaridis, Lioufis and Ampelikiotis, and some of the EKA's board members and its president, Theodorakis, accompanied Papadopoulos in his visit. In a meeting that followed, Papadopoulos suggested merging the technical/vocational schools of Alexandria with those of Cairo, as the numbers of students were dramatically decreasing and the performance of the remaining pupils was not satisfying. According to him, this would be the best solution for the *Egyptiot* community's future, in adjusting more closely to the needs of the new reality.<sup>772</sup> However, the merging of the schools was seen by some of the EKA board members as a move that would decrease its power. After the board voted on the proposition, the majority of them did not welcome Papadopoulos's suggestion, as they

---

<sup>770</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, December 7, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 3.

<sup>771</sup> The visit took place on May 6, 1972. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 7-9.

<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*

thought that such a merger would have “a negative impact on the community’s morale”.<sup>773</sup>

Still, a heterogeneity of voices was reflected in the results. This exposed the plurality of attitudes among *Egyptians* and underscored the fact that the EKA’s members understood the community’s place in Egypt differently.

Some of the EKA’s members felt that its agency was threatened and that they needed to maintain ‘morale’ as well as preserving ‘Greekness’ as I discussed in the previous section. ‘Morale,’ for many EKA board members, encompassed certain ways of life and practices the Alexandria community had enjoyed in the past, such as its autonomy and power to imagine and decide its collective identification. As Tölölyan has underlined, some communal elites create consciously a “cultural territorialization” by not becoming a collective diasporic subject.<sup>774</sup> Rather, they try to maintain their differences and produce their own identifications and articulations of belonging. In this case, the majority of the EKA’s board members rejected a collective solution, which would benefit the *Egyptian* community as a whole, as they wanted to maintain their right to decide the ways they imagined and fashioned their communal identifications.

In response to the vote, the board, together with the president, Theodorakis, agreed to keep open the technical/vocational schools in Alexandria and not to merge them with those in Cairo for the academic year 1972/1973.<sup>775</sup> Nevertheless, discussions on the low performance of the students continued in the coming months, especially with the new EKA president, Kostas Sandis, who was also the *Egyptian* schools’ superintendent. Elected in May 1973,

---

<sup>773</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 7.

<sup>774</sup> Tölölyan, “Elites and Institutions,” 110.

<sup>775</sup> In addition, they decided not to start new classes, unless the number of students justified expansion, and to continue encouraging the parents to register their children in the schools. Finally, they mentioned that they would send a thank you letter to the *koinotēta* of Cairo for their support and willingness to cooperate with the Alexandrian schools. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias, 7-9.



Sandis initiated changes in both the EKA and its schools. For example, in September 1973, he suggested free education in the Alexandrian schools, a policy that the *Egyptiot* schools of Cairo had already implemented, as well as the primary school of the Ibrahimia *koinotēta*.<sup>776</sup> Free education had already applied to schools throughout Greece as well, so it was only a matter of time before the Alexandrian schools were likely to follow. Among the EKA's board members, there were voices that did not agree with Sandis' proposal, as they thought it would financially burden the already indebted EKA.<sup>777</sup> However, since these voices were a minority, the proposal for free education prevailed.<sup>778</sup>

In addition, Sandis brought up again the low attainments of the community's students and the question of merging the Alexandrian schools with those of Cairo.<sup>779</sup> In one of the EKA's meetings, Sandis stressed the low level of students that entered university, and as such, the problems and limitations of the schools in preparing students for tertiary education.<sup>780</sup> Specifically, he mentioned that their graduates, and especially those who followed more technical studies, faced serious difficulties when they entered university, either Egyptian or Greek, with many of them quitting after their first year. As an example, he mentioned the 1972-1973 academic year, when from the 8 students who entered Egyptian universities, only one continued to the second year.<sup>781</sup>

Considering that the most preferred school among the *Egyptiot* community was the Averofeio school, which did not really equip students with more technical knowledge, even

---

<sup>776</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, September 4, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 13.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>778</sup> Because of this initiative, Sandis was announced as one of the 'greatest benefactors' of the *Egyptiot* community a month later. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, October 2, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 2.

<sup>779</sup> In one of the last meetings of 1973, the EKA's board members agreed to further consider the merging of the schools. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, November 30, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 5-6.

<sup>780</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, December 20, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 2-6.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

though it had introduced a technical orientation for its students, it came as no surprise that the level of graduates in technical studies was very low. In addition, the low attendance of students in the technical/vocational schools indicated that as graduates they would face difficulties in completing university degrees in advanced technical institutions.

The board members discussed this issue, blaming partially the parents who tended not to give the right direction to students, pushing them to choose tertiary education that was not suitable for them, or simply not paying enough attention to their progress during their gymnasium and lyceum years.<sup>782</sup> Other reasons that were mentioned included the overloaded curriculum, the lack of teaching staff, and, for some board members, the easy examinations students took in their primary school before their admission to secondary education. Discussions continued by suggesting changes in the curricula, such as the increase in the number of technical courses in practical (non-theoretical) direction, and of the theoretical courses to the Classical/Theoretical direction. In addition, there were suggestions for teachers' seminars, to better prepare the teaching staff and improve the level of teaching.<sup>783</sup>

Until the end of 1973, no concrete decision had been taken by the board members on whether the EKA should proceed with the merging of the Alexandrian schools with those in Cairo. Instead, discussions on merging the schools were constantly postponed, and extended to upcoming meetings, indicating that this was an issue that the EKA board members wanted to avoid. The closing of the Alexandrian technical/vocational schools in 1985<sup>784</sup> indicated that the EKA could no longer sustain the limited attendance and low interest of the *Egyptians* in these schools, and that it refused to merge with the Cairo community.

---

<sup>782</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, December 20, 1973, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, *Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētas Alexandreias*, 3-6.

<sup>783</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>784</sup> Souloyannis, *Ē Ellēnikē koinotēta Alexandreias*, 159.

Even though the EKA had stronger cultural, political and economic capital, and as such an enviable reputation, compared to the other *Egyptiot koinotētes*, being also the oldest among them, and despite the financial and moral support it had received for years, which made it the most privileged *koinotēta* in relation to the Greek authorities, it lagged behind in implementing changes that would benefit the institution. It rejected the practical solution of merging the technical/vocational schools of Alexandria with those of Cairo with the claim that this would “hurt the morale”<sup>785</sup> of the *Egyptiot* community, even though the Greek authorities and the EKA president supported this solution. This was an indication that the EKA was divided between more progressive voices that strove for change, and others that held it back, neglecting its actual needs where they differed from its past reality. By choosing not to “hurt the morale” of the community, the EKA’s decision ‘hurt’ the community itself, as the schools closed. This decision reflected the fear of losing control and power vis-à-vis the Cairo *Egyptiot* community, next to the prestige the institution enjoyed and had claimed for its members since its establishment. As such, the EKA overlooked on this matter what was in practice beneficial for the community’s future.

Nevertheless, this decision manifested once again the EKA’s agency. Even though the institution decreased in power by following a conservative approach in not merging the schools with the Cairo ones, due to the EKA’s internal dynamics, it still revealed its ability to decide whether and when it would be in control. The EKA strove to maintain its right to imagine its communal identifications and preserve its cultural capital, this time vis-à-vis other *Egyptiot* communities. Hence, the rejection of the merging of the schools was an articulation of power and one more manifestation of how the EKA, as both a local and diasporic institution, negotiated its place and agency in Egypt.

---

<sup>785</sup> *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, June 28, 1972, File: *Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970-1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreas, 7-9.

## Conclusion

From the beginning of its establishment, the EKA seemed to fight for autonomy and independent decision making, using the economic, political and cultural capital of its members to achieve this. As this chapter has demonstrated, this fight for autonomy was expressed towards different actors, namely, the Greek government, the Egyptian government and other *Egyptiot koinotētes*, in this case the Cairo one. Its most noticeable support (financial and moral) came from the Greek government, which for years sent aid to the institution for its schools and other needs. Due to this support, the EKA had a privileged position compared to other *koinotētes* across the Greek diaspora, which did not receive the same treatment by the Greek government. With the departure of the *Egyptiot* majority from Alexandria, the EKA was confronted with various important issues concerning its existence and activities. The focus of this chapter was on the community's education, specifically on the technical education that related more to the labor market, and on the use of the Arabic language in the community's schools.

This financial and moral support empowered the EKA's cultural, political and economic capital, and reaffirmed its agency, in periods where the institution was confronted with important decisions for its wellbeing and future presence in Egypt. This agency and cultural capital enabled the EKA to negotiate its place in Egyptian society, in this case, on matters concerning the community's education. Therefore, and despite the shrinkage of the community, the EKA maintained its right to imagine and fashion autonomously the community's identifications and belonging. In addition, the shift from the strict policies of Gamal Abdel Nasser on education, towards the more lenient policies of Anwar Sadat, left the institution with a great deal of power to negotiate its matters independently. Hence, even though the 'readjustment' with regards to the community's education was the principal goal in the 1960s, once the revocation of these policies took place in the 1970s, the EKA found the

opportunity to implement measures that served best its interests and allowed it to decide its own positions.