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IN-BETWEEN CATEGORIES: DOCUMENTING THE GREEK CHILDREN'S LEGAL BELONGING IN THE SUEZ CANAL REGION¹

Abstract

This paper looks at the complex manner in which children were documented in Ottoman Egypt and their access to citizenship later in postcolonial Egypt. It discusses the making of social and political categories, like citizenship and statelessness, and how Greeks moved through those categories. This paper also analyzes how these categories were imposed, first by the Ottoman Empire and then by the Egyptian nation-state. The end of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, and the declaration of the Egyptian Republic in 1953, the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Arab-Israeli Wars in 1967 and 1973, and the new labor laws of the 1950s and 1960s, among other events, impacted Greeks and others who lived in Egypt at that time. The impact among Greeks in Suez Canal cities was particularly evident in the community's cohesion, as most evacuated the cities in 1967 with almost everyone else following in 1973. These economic and political factors, and the social processes the community underwent, defined Greek children's relation with the Egyptian postcolonial state.

خلاصة

تتناول هذه الورقة الطريقة المعقدة التي تم بها توثيق الأطفال في مصر العثمانية وحصولهم على الجنسية لاحقاً في مصر ما بعد الاستعمار. وتناقش تكوين الفئات الاجتماعية والسياسية، مثل المواطنة وانعدام الجنسية، وكيف تنقل اليونانيون ما بين تلك الفئات. وتحلل هذه الورقة أيضاً كيف تم فرض هذه الفئات، أولاً من قبل الإمبراطورية العثمانية ثم من قبل الدولة القومية المصرية. ولقد أثرت نهاية الإمبراطورية العثمانية عام 1922، وإعلان الجمهورية المصرية عام 1953، وأزمة السويس عام 1956، والحروب العربية الإسرائيلية عامي 1967 و1973، وقوانين العمل الجديدة في الخمسينيات والستينيات، من بين أحداث أخرى، على اليونانيين وغيرهم ممن عاشوا في مصر في ذلك الوقت. كان التأثير على اليونانيين القائمين في مدن قناة السويس واضحاً بشكل خاص في تماسك جاليتهم حيث هاجر معظمهم من هذه المدن في عام 1967 وتبعهم الجميع تقريباً في عام 1973. وقد حددت هذه العوامل الاقتصادية والسياسية، والعمليات الاجتماعية التي مر بها المجتمع، علاقة الأطفال اليونانيين بالدولة المصرية ما بعد الاستعمار.



INTRODUCTION

Chryssoula Sava was a first-generation Egyptian Greek, born in 1947 in Port Tawfik, Egypt, where she resided with her family. Her father, a migrant from the island of Kastellorizo, Greece, arrived in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century and worked as a mechanic in an unidentified company at the Suez Canal. Chryssoula was born with no citizenship status. On her birth certificate, Chryssoula's *ra'īya maḥallīya* (which translates to "local subject (flock)" or "local residency") was recorded. This categorization, which marks the only piece of information on her *ra'īya maḥallīya*, indicates that she was a local resident of Port Tawfik. However, some years later, her status changed, as the *ra'īya maḥallīya* stated on her student card, generated when she attended fifth grade at the Suez and Port Tawfik Greek Community School in 1963–1964, noted Egyptian citizenship. These two documents affirm that her father had gained Egyptian citizenship at some point in the 1950s or early 1960s. Just as she had inherited a lack of citizenship from her Greek immigrant father, once her father took Egyptian citizenship, Chryssoula became an Egyptian citizen as well, consequently providing her with opportunities in the job market as a future employee and access to state resources afforded to other Egyptian nationals.²

In this article, I examine the Greek community in the Suez Canal region to analyze how Greeks moved through categories of legal belonging—namely, citizenship and statelessness—and how these categories were imposed, first by the Ottoman Empire and then by the Egyptian nation-state. Specifically, I discuss the categories of Ottoman and post-Ottoman subjects, as well as Greeks living with Italian papers due to Italian occupation, and how they moved, or not, into categories of legal belonging. I employ the term "legal belonging," coined by Jessica M. Marglin, as it captures the complexity and diversity of ligatures between states and individuals in the late nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.³

Why was Chryssoula's father without citizenship in 1947? And what factors may have encouraged him to take Egyptian citizenship in subsequent years? With the creation of the modern Egyptian state and new forms of documentation and surveillance, a noticeable number of Greeks, among other foreigners in Egypt, did not fit easily into Egyptian or Greek citizenship. By examining these cases, this article reveals how categories of legal belonging changed over time and how certain individuals fell through the cracks of such categorizations. In addition, I question what implications, obstacles, or opportunities for a child's social and economic participation these changes entailed.

Furthermore, I discuss what it may have meant, in terms of economic and social access, for a child of Greek origin to become an Egyptian citizen in the 1960s and 1970s—a period of economic and social change in Egyptian society. Last, I examine how the political and economic developments in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean demarcated non-Egyptian nationals' experiences of employment, citizenship, and access to state resources. Intriguingly, the ways in which the Egyptian state documented children allow historians to trace how Greek families navigated citizenship and belonging across the tumultuous decades before and after World War II. Furthermore, oral histories reveal that individuals who were children in the 1960s and 1970s realized the implications of legal belonging for their families.

In order to examine how political, economic, and social changes shaped Greeks' labor practices and experiences of class and citizenship, my analysis studies a collection of different forms of identifications, all housed in the archive of the Greek community in Cairo. These documents, written in mostly Arabic and Greek (and sometimes Italian) came from Greek communities residing in cities across the Suez Canal region, such as Suez, Port Tawfik, Port Saïd, Port Fouad, Ismailia, Kantara, and Sinai. These archival records include registration documents, such as passports, birth certificates (*shahāda al-milaād*), and health certificates/health ID cards of Greek children who were born and registered in Suez and Ismailia, as well as student cards (*biṭāqa madrasīya / atomiko deltio mathētou*) of the Suez and Port Tawfik Community School.

Alongside the archival material, I discuss thirteen oral accounts, conducted with eight male and five female interlocutors of Greek descent who were born between the 1940s and 1960s and grew up in Cairo, Alexandria, and the Suez Canal cities. These interlocutors, who now live in Athens, Greece, differ in socioeconomic status, profession, political viewpoints, and origins. The oral accounts were based on a semi-structured questionnaire with both open and closed questions, which provided the interlocutors with space to share a range of feelings and reflections on different aspects of their life in Egypt. In my attempt to create a broader historical interpretation, I grouped the accounts around certain themes and placed them in a wider sociopolitical context.⁴

Children, as much as adults, contribute to the development of modern states in social and political terms. Indeed, modernizing states of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries adopted a new interest in children and consequently cultivated new tools to manage them and their families. For instance, as the modern states fashioned

their identities and sought to cultivate national senses of belonging, they introduced new tools of governmentality, such as birth certificates, which aimed to track and control children, especially the marginalized ones. Whether select children were abandoned, orphaned, or simply fell through the cracks of categorizations concerning legal belonging, the new states assume "control" over said individuals as a way to fashion their modernist projects and reform agendas. Categorizations not only demarcated how new states envisioned and sought to shape future loyal citizens but also, as this article explores, influenced how young people understood their positions in society.⁵

Children are political actors (even before receiving adult political rights) as well as social and economic actors (even before entering the job market). Nevertheless, historians have not often perceived them as active historical figures who, as Nazan Maksudyan notes, "deserve a history of their own."⁶ More recent scholarship has examined children as members of a social category with agency—an agency that is an effect of the social relations young individuals form through their status as "children," rather than as opposites to adults or outside "adult" society.⁷

To both understand childhood as a social category and discern the political and social contexts that shape these categories, one should investigate several variables, such as gender, social class, ethnicity, and religion. In this article, I look at how variables like ethnicity and social class intertwine with categories of citizenship and statelessness to demarcate children's social and economic participation in Egypt. As I analyze below, children with Egyptian citizenship were particularly important in building the new Egyptian postcolonial state. However, children's future social and geographic mobility were impacted by several political and economic events that took place in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean. Those events defined Greek children's relationship with the Egyptian postcolonial state as well as their future presence in Egypt.⁸

GREEK MIGRATION TO EGYPT: THE SUEZ CANAL REGION IN FOCUS

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Greeks, like other Europeans, started to settle in Egypt. Other settlements of different non-Egyptian communities, such as the Armenians and Jews, developed as a consequence of the *millet* system of Ottoman administration.⁹ Waves of immigration increased in the following decades, and by the late nineteenth century, Greek islanders—

especially from the Dodecanese Islands, like Kastellorizo and Symi—and Greek Cypriots constituted most of the foreigners in Egypt. The Greek population was a mosaic in terms of citizenship, local origin, economic status, and labor activities. Economic and social factors primarily drove Greeks' immigration. First, there were the privileges and protection extended by Muhammad Ali (r. 1805–1848) under the system of the Capitulations (*al-Imtiyāzāt*). The Capitulations were bilateral agreements between the Ottoman Empire and European countries that provided extraterritorial privileges to those who could demonstrate legal belonging to a foreign state. Therefore, some ostensibly Ottoman subjects classified as “foreigners” were protected by their respective consuls. Affected individuals received privileges, such as exemption from taxation and conscription, and addressed their legal issues to the Mixed Courts, which were regulated by international agreements for the trial of “mixed” cases. Greeks, Jews, Armenians, and other non-Muslims within the empire were best situated to benefit from the Capitulations.¹⁰

Second, infrastructure projects, such as the construction of the Suez Canal which commenced in 1859 (the actual opening took place in 1869), coupled with the 1860s cotton boom attracted many labor migrants from the Eastern Mediterranean, including Italians and Greeks. Greeks settled throughout Egypt, primarily in Cairo, Alexandria, and the Suez Canal region, as well as around the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt. Their numbers grew after the Balkan Wars and peaked after World War I. Specifically, in 1917, Greeks numbered 56,731 and by 1927, their number had increased to 76,264.¹¹

The ambitious project of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French diplomat and founder of the *Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez* (henceforth the Suez Company), sought to open a new channel through the Isthmus of Suez. Created in 1858, the Suez Company was an Egyptian joint-stock company whose main stakeholder was the British government (starting in 1875). Since its opening to navigation in 1869, the Suez Canal represented technological progress that could support European industrialization and access to Asia. The territory of the canal embodied capital flow and enabled movement of goods and people that could create possibilities for further trading across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Indeed, the opening of the Suez Canal aimed to place the Mediterranean Sea once again at the heart of global economy and trade.¹²

Besides building the canal and its ports, the Suez Company had to build offices and construct several cities to accommodate the large number of workers employed at the canal. To serve these needs, several

cities were created: Port Said in 1859, Ismailia in 1862, and Port Tawfik in 1867. Those cities attracted many migrants to Egypt, primarily from the Eastern Mediterranean and Southern Europe but also from France and Great Britain. In addition, many sailors and merchants, among others, passed by or resided in the canal cities, thereby making them, and especially Port Said, well-connected industrial hubs with “cosmopolitan” characters.¹³

As a project of colonial expansion, the opening of the Suez Canal signaled the “imperial politics of mobility.”¹⁴ As Valeska Huber shows in her work, multiple mobilities were manifested in the canal, which emerged within several hierarchies and sovereignties: imperial, local, commercial, and international. The British, as the colonial power at that time in Egypt, and the French-administered Suez Company had an important role in shaping mobility in the canal region. Together with the Egyptian government and its police force, several consulates of the international community, and private mining and shipping companies, among others, these bodies represented the multiple sovereignties and hierarchies at play.¹⁵

Colonial and nationalist projects and technological achievements, together with urban development and architecture presented as European accomplishments, became predominant narratives in the historiography of the canal. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars and observers sketched the canal and its cities in utopian and romantic colors, and veiled any political, social, and economic tensions and asymmetries. Lucia Carminati supports the idea that the histories of the canal acted as “outlets for different political projects” painted in nationalist or colonial colors. Such accounts sketched the cities of the canal on a superficial level, as if they were empty of the lived experiences of the people there.¹⁶

Accounts of the working-class communities, who were predominant in the cities of the canal, were particularly excluded from those narratives. As I explore below, Greeks’ labor practices were characterized mainly by working-class networks, primarily in the shipping industry and construction, and employed either by the Suez Company or by foreign- or Greek-owned contractor companies. Greeks’ historical experiences, especially in the period of childhood, were shaped by economic and political developments in Egypt and the broader Eastern Mediterranean. In particular, the end of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent formation of the Egyptian state, the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Arab-Israeli Wars in 1967 and 1973, and changes in Egyptian labor laws in the 1950s and 1960s impacted those Greeks who

lived as young children in the cities of the canal by demarcating their social and economic presence in Egypt.

BETWEEN OTTOMAN CITIZENSHIP AND *CITTADINANZA EGEA ITALIANA*

Despite the British occupation of Egypt in 1881, Egypt remained a *de jure* Ottoman province until 1914. Thus, Greeks who arrived in Egypt from elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, such as Asia Minor, the Dodecanese Islands, and Cyprus, shared Ottoman nationality with their Egyptian counterparts. As Anthony Gorman states, more than a quarter of the Greeks in Egypt had Ottoman nationality prior to 1914. Despite their status as Ottoman subjects, the 1907 and 1917 Egyptian censuses categorized Ottoman subjects of Greek, Syrian, Armenian, and other descent as foreigners. The 1917 census, issued three years into the World War I British Protectorate, estimated the Ottoman Greek population to be 4,258 persons.¹⁷

Ottoman subjects of Greek origin did not cross international borders, as they came from other parts within the Ottoman Empire, and even though Egypt was occupied by the British in 1882, Ottoman identifications were still at play. Will Hanley notes that “subjecthood was the concept of membership” in the nineteenth century, with the Ottoman sultan seen as the shepherd of a flock (*reaya* in Ottoman Turkish), and with notions of loyalty and protection rather than sovereignty defining the sultan’s relationship with his subjects. Ottoman subjecthood changed during this period as a result of the empire’s attempt to appeal to its diverse population and the state’s efforts to create more direct relationships with individual subjects.¹⁸

As concepts of legal belonging changed, so too did territory and jurisdiction. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, Ottoman subjects lost their nationality and were listed in some documents as *apatrides*, meaning stateless people in Greek. Indeed, changing territories and jurisdictions influenced Greeks’ lives in Egypt decades after arriving in the Suez Canal zone. In some cases, it took decades for Greeks to obtain papers from the Egyptian state, consequently rendering them in a state of ambiguous nationality.¹⁹

In principle, those former Ottoman subjects could claim Egyptian citizenship under 19/1929 Law, which aimed to naturalize every foreigner who was born and permanently resided in Egypt. This process, however, was not automatic; individuals had to initiate it themselves. As Angelos Dalachanis notes, either out of ignorance (in the sense of not knowing what steps to take) or because some expected

that they would obtain Greek nationality instead, many Ottoman subjects did not claim Egyptian citizenship, remaining stateless for years. For instance, one of my interlocutors, Alekos, recalled that his grandfather arrived in Egypt from Cyprus as a child with his family in 1905, and only obtained Egyptian citizenship in 1950. Until then, he could not leave Egypt, as he did not have any papers.²⁰

As the case of Chryssoula Sava indicates, the *apatrides*, or those with a *ra'īya maḥallīya* rather than citizenship status, were still present not only in post-1922 Egypt but even in 1950s and 1960s Egypt; however, by then their number had shrunk. In 1953, six years after Chryssoula's birth, the Greek consulate authorities estimated that there were eighty *apatrides* of Greek origin in Suez. Alongside these eighty *apatrides*, the authorities estimated that there were 2,325 Greek nationals, and 270 British and 100 Egyptian nationals with Greek origin, thereby totalling 2,775 persons of Greek origin.²¹

The presence of the *apatrides* can be traced on the birth certificates of Greek children born and registered in Suez and Ismailia in the 1950s and the 1960s and without citizenship status. On some birth certificates, no citizenship status was written; rather it was only the *ra'īya maḥallīya* that was recorded. Indeed, there is no straightforward link in the archival records I examined between the *ra'īya maḥallīya* and those former Ottoman subjects who had the stateless status of the *apatrides*. Nevertheless, the fact that the Ottoman state identified its subjects as *reaya* (Ottoman Turkish) or *ra'īya* (Arabic), meaning "the Ottoman flock," which was the equivalent of the *ra'īya maḥallīya* of the Egyptian state for the *apatrides*, suggests the similarity of these two. The documented change in legal belonging from having no citizenship on birth certificates to having Egyptian citizenship on their student cards indicates that the Egyptian state granted access to citizenship in the 1950s and 1960s to those Greeks and others who were stateless, as in the case of Chryssoula and her father. As I discuss below, changing Egyptian laws would have made Egyptian citizenship attractive to those who were stateless, as employment, geographic mobility, and access to resources hinged on documented status.

Aside from those Greeks who arrived in Egypt as Ottoman subjects and at times became *apatrides*, those specifically located in the Suez Canal region also identified as having *Cittadinanza Egea Italiana*, which translates to "Italian Aegean citizenship." As mentioned above, many Greeks who lived in the Suez Canal zone, as in other places in Egypt, originated from places that did not become part of the Greek state until long after its foundation in 1830. For example, the

Dodecanese Islands, from which most Greeks arrived in the canal region, were under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire until the Italo-Turkish War in 1911. In 1912, Italy occupied the islands (except Kastellorizo, which passed into Italian control in 1921) until the end of World War II. The fascist Italian regime officially annexed the archipelago in 1923, under the Treaty of Lausanne. When the Italians left, the Dodecanese fell under German and British occupation until it became part of the Greek nation-state in 1947.²²

As part of its attempts to restore its past glory as a Mediterranean empire and show that the islands' inhabitants were not under colonial rule, Italy's fascist regime created the Italian Aegean citizenship for those Dodecanese islanders who resided in the archipelago at the time of its official annexation in 1923. In practice, the *Cittadinanza Egea Italiana* was far from being actual citizenship. Dodecanese persons did not have the right to vote and were not considered legal Italian citizens. Yet they could not claim Greek nationality either, as the fascist regime prevented them for doing so. Moreover, the archipelago's residents were also subject to the Italian fascist discourse. Indeed, if they collaborated with the fascist regime by expressing loyalty and serving in its military army, they could become full Italian citizens.²³

Thus, those Dodecanese Greeks who arrived in Egypt at the time of the Italian occupation were Italian Aegean subjects. The Italian passport of Themis Cathopouli is an example (see fig. 1, 2, 3). Themis, originally from the Dodecanese island of Kalymnos—Provincia di Egea, as the passport notes—held Italian papers while living in Egypt. Themis likely resided in Suez (or in nearby canal cities), as the city's Italian consulate issued her visas for traveling. Her frequent movement between Kalymnos and Suez was consistent between 1934 and 1937, showing the strong connections between the place of origin and that of arrival. Besides the personal and traveling information included on her passport, the phrase "*Imperatore d'Etiochia*" was added in pen under the official signature of the King of Italy (fig. 2), an intentional nod to fascist Italy's goals of colonial expansion in Africa. Indeed, fascist Italy was trying to revive its imperial presence in the Eastern Mediterranean through the Dodecanese Islands, and in Africa through its colonies in Ethiopia and Libya. Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, together with its fascist propaganda and activities within Egypt, alarmed Egyptian nationalists, such as members of the Wafd Party, who were concerned that Egypt could become the epicenter of an Anglo-Italian war.²⁴

Until 1940, holding Italian papers did not bring any legal issues for those archipelago Greeks. However, Italy's involvement in World

War II distressed both Italian citizens and Italian Aegean subjects of Egypt, as the British authorities arrested more than 5,000 adult Italian males in Egypt and detained them in camps. The story of one of my interlocutors, Kostas, reveals how categories of legal belonging changed even when they were strictly imposed and, furthermore, highlights the variety and arbitrariness of methods that one could use to claim and reject Egyptian nationality.²⁵



Figure 1: Themis Cathopouli's passport, front cover



Figure 2: Themis Cathopouli's passport, first page

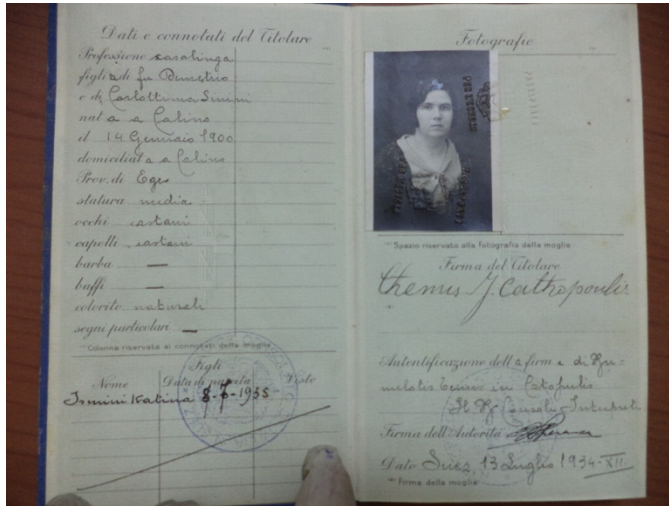


Figure 3: Themis Cathopouli's passport information

Kostas, a first-generation Egyptian Greek born in 1943 in Alexandria, received Egyptian citizenship once he retired in 1988. Until then, he stayed in Egypt with his ten-year residence permit, a common practice for many Greeks born prior to 1956. As he was the only one from his family to obtain Egyptian citizenship at that time, he attempted to claim it for his wife, too. To his surprise, he discovered that his wife was already an Egyptian citizen since birth. The officer on duty told him: "Why do you request Egyptian citizenship for your wife? She is already an Egyptian national, as both her parents are Egyptians." Kostas tried to explain to the officer that his parents-in-law were Greek, having migrated from the Dodecanese island of Kastellorizo sometime in the 1930s. Though his wife, Elvira, was born in 1945 in Egypt, her nationality should have corresponded to that of her parents. The officer did not pay much attention to Kostas' story, explaining to him that though he should investigate why this happened, what mattered was that his wife had Egyptian citizenship, which Kostas could have claimed too after they got married.

In fact, Kostas solved the mystery of the Egyptian citizenship after asking his father-in-law about their papers. Yorgos, Kostas' father-in-law, explained to him that he and his wife, Polyxeni, had Italian papers when they migrated from Kastellorizo to Egypt. Their daughter, Elvira, was born in 1945, when Italy's involvement in World War II was still ongoing. To avoid facing any danger (including imprisonment, as Kostas noted), the patriarchy issued Egyptian papers for the whole family once their daughter was born. As a child and then as an adult, Elvira never knew about her actual (first) papers and was unaware of

the fact that she could have claimed Egyptian citizenship and had access to the Egyptian labor market and other state resources without any limitations. Indeed, she assumed herself to be a Greek citizen. Once the Dodecanese passed under Greek control in 1947, Yorgos's family, like others from the archipelago who until then had Italian papers, acquired Greek citizenship. Since dual citizenship was not allowed at the time, Yorgos and Polyxeni opted to claim Greek rather than Egyptian citizenship. Clearly their change in status had gone unnoticed by the Egyptian state.²⁶

During the intense political upheaval of the mid-twentieth century, Dodecanese Greeks—like Yorgos, Polyxeni, and Elvira—moved through different documentary regimes and categories of legal belonging with the help of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate. The patriarchate's role was instrumental in protecting Dodecanese Greeks between 1940 and 1945 by lying about their Italian papers and instead issuing them Egyptian ones. Under the *millet* system, the Greek Orthodox Church held religious and political power over the community. Elvira's example demonstrates that the church's power somehow continued even after new state identifications emerged. Indeed, individuals often resorted to religious authorities to sort out issues concerning their legal belonging.²⁷

The cases of the Ottoman and Italian Aegean subjects in post-Ottoman Egypt expose the aftermath of the creation of modern states and resultant new forms of governmentalism. They shed light on the complex ways individuals were documented and surveilled in Ottoman Egypt and demonstrate what their access to citizenship looked like in post-1922 Egypt. Such cases highlight how state identifications were imposed on populations amidst colonization and state-building. Nevertheless, the Greek Orthodox patriarchate's role illustrates that secular authorities and official government were not the only bodies that had power over their subjects. The church still held jurisdictional power, even after the dissolution of the *millet* system and the Ottoman Empire. As the case of Yorgos and Polyxeni illustrate, though categories of legal belonging can be imposed, Greeks in Egypt also managed to strategically opt into and out of such labels. As I explore below, when the nationalizing Egyptian state of the mid-twentieth century began to directly tie labor opportunities to Egyptian citizenship, Greeks once more moved through categories.

FOREIGNERS IN THE LABOR MARKET

The number of Greeks in Egypt started to decrease after the 1930s. The official abolishment of the Capitulations at the Montreux Convention

of 1937, Egypt's slow decolonization, the aftermath of World War II and the economic stagnancy it brought, and new Egyptianization policies in the labor market, such as the Company Law 138/1947, affected Greeks' opportunities in Egypt and led to several waves of departures of foreigners. The number of Greeks dropped further at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s as they questioned their future presence in Egypt, due in part to additional laws that favored Egyptian nationals in the labor market, the Suez Crisis in 1956, and the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973. Overall, the number of Greeks dropped to 57,500 in 1947 and to 17,000 in 1967.²⁸

Prior to 1950, the process of claiming Egyptian citizenship was relatively easy. The Egyptian state sought to limit the number of foreigners who benefitted from the Capitulations and therefore was eager to naturalize its non-citizen population. Consequently, Law 12, passed in 1929, granted Egyptian nationality to those already assimilated to Egyptian society with a common linguistic, cultural, or religious background. Though the Capitulations were officially abolished in 1937, it was not until 1949 that they were fully phased out. In 1950, Law 160/1950 replaced Law 12/1929, and made the naturalization process more complicated. Under this new law, foreigners could apply for and obtain Egyptian citizenship only if they met certain criteria, such as knowledge of the Arabic language, and were approved by the Ministerial Council.²⁹

During the process of Egypt's decolonization, part of which included the abolition of the Capitulations, Egyptianization policies were introduced to strengthen the position of Egyptian nationals, especially youth, entering the labor market. New labor laws aimed to promote Egyptian employees' access to the job market, which consequently worsened the position of non-nationals. Specifically, Company Law 138, passed in 1947, demanded an increased percentage of Egyptian workers in companies (90 percent) and made a clear distinction between nationals and non-nationals.³⁰

Furthermore, the social and economic position of non-nationals felt "unsafe" once laws regarding the residence permits changed. According to my interlocutors, any child (non-Egyptian national) born after 1956 could no longer obtain a ten-year residence and work permit, as was the case in the past. The 1956 laws introduced by Nasser limited residence and work permits to one year. This restriction complicated non-Egyptian nationals' access to the Egyptian job market and possibly meant unemployment. As some of my interlocutors commented, if one only had a one-year or other type of restricted, residence permit, a young graduate's opportunities in the workplace were limited.³¹

One of my interlocutors, Giannis, noted that one of the main problems the Greek youth faced was that only a small proportion of them completed their higher education in Egypt. Most Greeks chose to study elsewhere (in Greece, for example). Studying outside Egypt disadvantaged them in the labor market compared to Egyptian nationals, who obtained their degrees from Egyptian universities or technical schools. Therefore, most Greeks were limited to working either in the Greek community's institutions, in Greek companies, or companies operating in Egypt where employees with dual language skills (Greek and Arabic) were preferred.³²

Indeed, until the late 1950s, the Greeks' education was oriented less towards the Arabic language and more towards the Greek state, striving to keep strong connections to the Greek language and Christian Orthodox faith. In addition, the community's schools, which primarily controlled the Greek community's education, focused more on classical studies rather than technical training. Hence, in addition to the laws introduced by Nasser, the limitations derived from the Greek community's education and broader environment, which reinforced their Greek identity more than the Egyptian one, also defined the relationship between young Greeks and Egyptian society and the labor market once they graduated from school.³³

The 1956 Suez Canal War and the nationalizations that followed demarcated a period of government interventions. One year later, in 1957, the Egyptian state began its first five-year industrial plan focusing mainly on state enterprise. The government's interventions intensified after 1961, although the private sector still performed most of the country's economic activity. The nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser aimed to finance the Aswan High Dam project by using revenue from the canal. In October 1956, Israel crossed into the Sinai Peninsula with the encouragement of Britain and France. British and French planes began to bombard the canal zone, an event known in history as the "Suez Crisis." The post-World War II situation had already created an unemployment crisis, which continued after the Suez Crisis. Indeed, once the Allies left Egypt after the war, a number of non-Egyptian enterprises, specifically bars and restaurants that employed Greeks, closed and dramatically affected foreign laborers' prospects. Foreigners who were involved in military service and demobilized after the war also faced unemployment, as a new law reinforced and strengthened young Egyptians' position in the labor market.³⁴

In addition, the position of non-nationals in the job market worsened in the late 1950s, as more Egyptianization laws were introduced. The Egyptianization laws 22, 23, and 24, passed in 1957,

targeted specific sectors, such as banking and commercial, and mandated that the directors of companies and administrative boards related to these sectors had to be Egyptian nationals. However, they did not dictate the nationality of the personnel—Egyptian or otherwise—like the Company Law 138/1947. Even though the 1957 laws did not specifically target non-Egyptian workers, it did intensify the insecurity of foreign employees in the Egyptian job market. This insecurity deepened and led to more departures when Ministerial Decree 263, which addressed the position of foreigners in the labor market, was issued in 1960. Hence, the new laws in the 1950s and 1960s demarcated a new relationship between the Egyptian state and non-Egyptian nationals, as they increased the need for obtaining Egyptian citizenship, a need made even more pressing for this period's children who would enter the labor market once they finished school.³⁵

CHILDREN AS FUTURE EMPLOYEES IN THE JOB MARKET

In 1960s and 1970s, the Egyptian government regarded children, regardless of their origins, as future employees in the Egyptian labor market. Likewise, children's labor potential was recognized by several international companies that operated in the Suez Canal region. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the second president of Egypt from 1954 to 1970, emphasized the public sector's growth and the government's economic interventions, which were implemented in several phases. Indeed, in Nasser's economic planning, the public sector was central to the drive for industrialization and nationalization. The public sector employed millions of people, including university graduates and individuals from Egyptian society's lower strata. Hence, it was not surprising that children were seen as possibly useful economic actors that would equip the public sector once they finished school.³⁶

In addition, the Suez Company and other international shipping and construction companies that operated in the canal region needed skilled personnel. Employers assumed that Greek islanders' familiarity with the sea made them the most suited for the type of work needed by those companies. Indeed, until the 1920s, Greeks comprised the largest group of employees at the Suez Company within the category of "Europeans." Several of my interlocutors commented that their children could find jobs more easily as divers and workers on ships, or, if they were more highly educated and skilled, as pilots and seamen. They too framed Greeks as most suited to shipping industries. One of them commented, "Egyptians were afraid of the sea, and most of them did not know how to swim." Hence, young islander Greeks were seen as the best fit for such jobs. Besides their suitability for jobs

in the shipping industry, the fact that Greeks belonged by citizenship to a state that was not in conflict with the British or French made them desirable candidates in periods of political crisis such as World War II.³⁷

Following the mid-twentieth-century legal changes to work and residence permits, some companies in the Suez Canal region conditioned employment on Egyptian citizenship. One of my interlocutors, Nikolas, who was a former resident of Suez, commented that companies that specialized in mining, road construction, and engineering, specifically around the Ataqa Mountain, demanded after 1956 that their employees hold Egyptian citizenship. Nikolas recalled that his father, who worked as a contract engineer in and outside Suez, was not requested by the contractor company he worked for to obtain Egyptian citizenship because he was under a short-term contract. Since for Nikolas' father there were no direct implications for not having the Egyptian citizenship, Nikolas recalled that as a child he did not experience any instability in his family environment that would have necessitated relocation or even migration. Despite his young age and the relative stability of his family, Nikolas was aware of how such laws influenced other Greeks. He recalls that his father's colleagues, who worked at the company for longer periods, were subject to this condition.³⁸

Egyptian citizenship was supposedly requested by and granted to employees working for the Suez Company. The archival records I examined capture this changing status. Several Greek children first appeared with Greek citizenship on their birth certificates; however, when they later attended school, they are listed as having Egyptian. One of these cases is that of Nikolaos Patros, a Greek child born in 1949 in Port Tawfik. According to Nikolaos' birth certificate, his father was a migrant from the island of Symi who arrived in Egypt as a Greek citizen. Nikolaos' father worked as a sailor (*bahhār*), for the Suez Company, as many other Greeks did, since the company was one of the main employers for Greek migrants. By the time Nikolaos attended fifth grade at the Suez and Port Tawfik Greek community school in 1960, his citizenship status had changed from Greek to Egyptian, as stated on his student card. Most likely Nikolaos' father had requested and obtained Egyptian citizenship sometime in the late 1950s. Presumably, his status as an employee of the Suez Company contributed to his successful naturalization. In turn, Nikolaos was automatically granted Egyptian citizenship through his father.³⁹

Nikolaos' school records ceased with his graduation in 1967. Though it is clear that Nikolaos held Egyptian citizenship, at this stage

of research, I do not know whether Nikolaos entered the Egyptian labor market, making use of his Egyptian citizenship, as his father did, or whether he departed in 1967 from Port Tawfik, as other Greeks did, following the 1967 War. Indeed, even if he had decided to remain and work in or around the Suez Canal region, it is likely that he left Egypt eventually, as the 1973 Arab-Israeli War forced Greeks and others to evacuate the canal. Because of the 1967 and 1973 wars, the canal remained closed for navigation for eight years (1967–1975). As my interlocutors commented, some of the Greeks who left the canal at that time relocated mostly to Cairo but on a temporary basis. Greece became the main destination for most of them, regardless of whether or not they held Egyptian citizenship. Therefore, Egyptian citizenship did not bind most Greeks to Egypt nor prevent the “return” of diaspora Greeks, but instead mostly solved practical issues for the period they lived there.⁴⁰

Egypt-based international companies seemed to have similar prerequisites with regard to Egyptian citizenship. Another interlocutor, Michalis, commented that the international company Shell obliged his brother-in-law, who was an employee there for many years, to obtain Egyptian citizenship in order to keep his post. This person applied for and obtained citizenship and hence was able to remain in his post until 1973 when the war drove him, like others, from the Suez Canal region.⁴¹

Indeed, as the archival records and the oral accounts testified, Greek children in the Suez Canal region were able to obtain Egyptian citizenship because of their parents’ work contracts. Furthermore, political developments also influenced the access one could have to citizenship and the strategies of Greeks working in the canal zone. As an aftermath of the Suez Crisis, the Egyptian government expelled all British and French nationals from Egypt. Among those nationals, many Cypriots held British citizenship. Even though Decree 206 issued by Nasser in 1956 exempted Greek Cypriots and Greek Jews from all measures targeting British citizens in Egypt, many tried to change their citizenship to Greek out of fear of possible expulsion. According to archival records I examined, two out of five Cypriot children with British citizenship written on their birth certificates appeared later as Cypriot nationals on their student cards; others who had held Cypriot citizenship in the past were given Greek papers to avoid expulsion.⁴²

For example, the birth certificate of Themelina Zachariadou, who was born in 1950 in Suez, stated that she was originally from Cyprus and held Cypriot citizenship. However, when Themelina was a teenager attending the second grade of gymnasium at the community

school of Suez and Port Tawfik in the 1963–1964 academic year, her Cypriot citizenship changed to Greek, as written on her student card. Seemingly, Themelina's father requested and was granted Greek citizenship because of the political situation after 1956; as such, his citizenship also passed to his daughter.⁴³

In addition, the political stance the Suez Canal Greeks adopted during the Suez Crisis and the solidarity they expressed towards Egyptians during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War influenced their relationship with the Egyptian authorities and offered them possibilities that other Greek communities and other non-Egyptian nationals did not have. As my interlocutor Nikolas mentioned, the Suez Canal Greeks showed solidarity towards Egyptians by remaining in their posts and not departing. Greek pilots (navigators) led the ships between Suez, Ismailia, and Port Said, and trained Egyptians who had no prior experience in the field. Egyptian newspapers, such as *al-Ahram* and the *Egyptian Gazette*, showed the appreciation of the Egyptian government toward the Greeks, as they supported Egypt's struggle against the imperialistic powers. Furthermore, the Port Said Greek community did not leave the city during the 1967 war, expressing solidarity towards Egyptians. Indeed, Egyptian national newspapers once again praised the Greeks for their political stance. The governor of Port Said, Farid Toulan, even granted the Greek community unlimited permits and a special unemployment benefit, which no other foreign community had at that time. These two examples illustrate the diverse historical experiences among non-Egyptian nationals in Egypt as well as the unexpected opportunities afforded to some Greek community members and their children because of political developments.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The Suez Crisis, and even more the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars, greatly impacted the social fabric of the Suez Canal cities. The wars not only affected the Greeks in Egypt, but they also caused displacement and a migration crisis for everyone living in the canal zone. In 1967, most Greeks left the cities. The war, coupled with the fact that the conflict pushed the Greek consulate's move to Cairo, made Greeks reflect on whether they could stay permanently or if the only solution was to depart. By 1973, all Greeks had left the canal zone. Foula Margaraki was the only Greek to remain behind, and after a few years she relocated to the community's home for the elderly in Alexandria.⁴⁵

The economic and political developments in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean demarcated Greek children's experiences of

statelessness, citizenship, and access to employment and state resources. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Capitulations at the beginning of the twentieth century, Egypt's decolonization and the new labor laws in the 1950s and 1960s that protected the position of Egyptian nationals in the job market, together with the 1956 Suez Crisis and the two Arab-Israeli Wars (1967 and 1973) all impacted the Greek community's cohesion in the Suez Canal cities and defined its relation with the Egyptian postcolonial state.

For some children, Egyptian citizenship came as a condition of their parents' work environments, where employees were forced to ask for it so as to not lose their jobs. For others, their stateless status could not continue in postcolonial Egypt, where nationality became "the primary element of all identification."⁴⁶ Greek children with Egyptian citizenship were granted access to Egyptian labor market and state resources, such as subsidized healthcare, in a period in which economic policies seemed rigid and Egyptian citizenship was difficult to acquire. Nevertheless, many young Greeks hesitated to obtain Egyptian citizenship because of the 1960s and 1970s political situation in Egypt, which cultivated fears of war and army conscription with long terms of service. Those who applied, however, did so for primarily practical reasons, like work, as they saw permanency in their life in Egypt. Identification documents cannot necessarily capture the reasons individuals and families opt or reject naturalization. Nevertheless, tracing the legal status of Greek children in Egypt and engaging with the oral histories of those who left offers insight into how Greeks responded to changing regimes of legal belonging and navigated the social, political, and economic opportunities of postcolonial Egypt.⁴⁷

NOTES

¹ I would like to thank the editors of this volume and the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback on this article, as well as Joseph Viscomi for his help with navigating the Italian archival sources.

² It was not defined in the archival material whether Chryssoula's father worked for the Suez Company or a company contracted to work for the latter. *Shahāda al-milāād* (birth certificates), Mathētes (students) file, Scholika (schools) file, 1961–1963, 1966–1967, Koinotēta Suez (Suez community), Archeio Ellēnikēs Koinotētās Kairou (Archive of the Greek community in Cairo, henceforth AEKK). Will Hanley referred to this term as *reaya*, meaning "the Ottoman flock." Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans*

and *Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 239.

³ Jessica M. Marglin, "Extraterritoriality and Legal Belonging in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean," *Law and History Review* 39, no. 4 (2021): 679–706.

⁴ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 270.

⁵ Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 12, 20–21. On the role of the Greek institutions in Alexandria toward benevolence to children, see Eftychia Mylona, "Maintaining Philanthropy: The Greek Alexandrian Institutions after the Exodus of the Early 1960s," in "Diasporas, Charity, and the Construction of Belonging: A Connected History of Practices of 'Goodwill' in Egypt during the Imperial Age (19th–20th centuries)," eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Annalaura Turiano, special issue, *Diasporas*, no.42 (2023).

⁶ Nazan Maksudyan, "Children and Politics in Turkey: Role-Playing, Unchilding, Victimization," in *Childhood in Turkey: Educational, Sociological, and Psychological Perspectives*, eds. Hilal H. Şen and Helaine Selin (Cham: Springer, 2022), 109.

⁷ Heidi Morrison, *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). Chiara Dianna supports that children formulate their cognitive development after having social interactions with adults, something that helps them build their political and social roles. Diana, "Children's Citizenship: Revolution and the Seeds of an Alternative Future in Egypt," in *Wired Citizenship: Youth Learning and Activism in the Middle East*, ed. Linda Herrera (New York: Routledge, 2014), 61, 63. Florian Esser, "Neither 'Thick' or 'Thin': Reconceptualising Agency and Childhood Relationally," in *Reconceptualising Agency and Childhood: New Perspectives in Childhood Studies*, eds. Esser, Meike S. Baader, Tanja Betz, and Beatrice Hungerland (New York: Routledge, 2016), 49.

⁸ Diana, "Children's Citizenship," 62.

⁹ *Millet* is the term for the confessional communities in the Ottoman Empire. Under the *millet* system, the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople was the head of the Ottoman Greeks exercising both religious and political power over the community.

¹⁰ On the extraterritorial legal identities in Egypt, see Ziad Fahmy, "Jurisdictional Borderlands: Extraterritoriality and 'Legal Chameleons' in Precolonial Alexandria, 1840–1870," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 2 (2013): 305–29. On the Mixed Courts, see Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, "Legal Pluralism in the Mediterranean: The Case of the Mixed Courts of Egypt: 1875–1949," in *The Intangible Heritage of the Mediterranean*:

Transmission, Adaptation and Innovation (Oslo: Department of Culture Studies, University of Oslo, 2002), 169–80. For further information as to who was a foreigner in Ottoman Egypt, see Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality*, 63.

¹¹ Angelos Dalachanis, *The Greek Exodus from Egypt: Diaspora Politics and Emigration: 1937–1962* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 3.

¹² On relevant literature concerning the opening of the canal, see Caroline Piquet, *Histoire du Canal de Suez* (Paris: Perrin, 2009); Valeska Huber, *Channeling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Piquet, “Le canal de Suez face aux évolutions de la marine marchande: un siècle et demi de défis techniques,” *Artefact* 10 (2019): 175–91; Lucia Carminati, “An Unhappy Happy Port: Fin-de-siècle Port Said and Its Connections and Disconnections of Water and Iron,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 54 (2022): 731–39; Kevin A. Tang, “A Venice of the Desert: The Successes and Failures of the Suez Canal in Revitalising Mediterranean Trade,” in *Italy and the Suez Canal, from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Cold War*, ed. Barbara Curli (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Lucia Carminati, *Seeking Bread and Fortune in Port Said, 1859–1906* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023).

¹³ On the portrayal of Port Said as a cosmopolitan city, see Salma Mobarak, “L’imaginaire cinématographique de Port-Saïd,” *Sociétés & Représentations* 48, no. 2 (2019): 95–108. On cosmopolitanism, see Will Hanley, “Cosmopolitan Cursing in Late Nineteenth Century Alexandria,” in *Cosmopolitanisms in Muslim Contexts: Perspectives from the Past*, eds. Derryl N. MacLean and Sikeena Karmali Ahmed (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2013); Hanley, “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies,” *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008): 1346–67.

¹⁴ Huber, *Channeling Mobilities*, 14.

¹⁵ Huber, “Connecting Colonial Seas: The ‘International Colonization’ of Port Said and the Suez Canal during and after the First World War,” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D’histoire* 19, no. 1 (2012): 145; Huber, “Multiple Mobilities, Multiple Sovereignties, Multiple Speeds: Exploring Maritime Connections in the Age of Empire,” *International Journal Middle East Studies* 48 (2016): 764.

¹⁶ Lucia Carminati, “Suez: A Hollow Canal in Need of Peopling: Currents and Stoppages in the Historiography, 1859–1956,” *History Compass* 19, no. 5 (2021): 1–14. Carminati critically examines scholarly works that idealized the lived experiences of workers at the Suez Canal company, but also those works in Egyptian historiography that unveiled the trauma of such experiences for nationalist agendas. See, for example, Hubert Bonin, *History of the Suez Canal Company, 1858–2008: Between Controversy and Utility* (Geneva: Droz, 2010). Similarly, for an analysis on the workers of the Aswan High Dam and their experiences in building this national project, see Alia

Mossallam, “‘We Are the Ones Who Made This Dam ‘High’!’ A Builders’ History of the Aswan High Dam,” *Water History* 6 (2014): 297–314. Henk Driessen has highlighted that only specific categories of people were included in “cosmopolitanism,” like merchants and seamen, leaving other categories out. Driessen, “Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered,” *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2005): 138.

¹⁷ Anthony Gorman, “Foreign Workers in Egypt, 1882–1914: Subaltern or Labour Elite?,” in *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (New York: Routledge, 2008), 239. The 1907 and 1917 Egyptian censuses can be found in the work of Will Hanley. Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality*, 240–41.

¹⁸ Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality*, 239.

¹⁹ I refer here to those Greeks with a stateless status. The term *apatrides* appeared both in my discussions with some Greeks and in scholarly works. See, for example, Angelos Ntalachanis, “Les archives grecques de Suez: un fonds inédit,” *Annales Islamologiques* 45 (2011): 310. On the implications of being an Ottoman subject and the deportation of Ottoman Greeks from the United States, see Chris Gratien and Emily K. Pope-Obeda, “The Second Exchange: Ottoman Greeks and the American Deportation State during the 1930s,” *Journal of Migration History* 6 (2020): 104–28.

²⁰ On the Egyptian citizenship, see Dalachanis, “The Solutions of Egyptian Citizenship,” in *Greek Exodus*, 92–100; Alekos K., interview with the author over email, 29 March 2015.

²¹ Ntalachanis, “Les archives grecques de Suez,” 310.

²² Valerie McGuire, “From Ottoman to Mediterranean Empire: Italian Colonial Rule in the Dodecanese Islands and the Second Treaty of Lausanne,” in *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, eds. M. Hakan Yavuz and Feroz Ahmad (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 998–99.

²³ McGuire, “From Ottoman to Mediterranean Empire,” 1003–4.

²⁴ Diavatēria (passports) file, Koinotēta Suez, AEKK. On the role of the fascist regime towards the Italian community in Italy, see Joseph Viscomi, “Mediterranean Futures: Historical Time and the Departure of Italians from Egypt, 1919–1937,” *Journal of Modern History* 91, no. 6 (2019): 367.

²⁵ Viscomi, “Mediterranean Futures,” 377; Kostas V., interview by the author, Alexandria, 11 January 2016.

²⁶ Kostas V., interview by the author, Alexandria, 11 January 2016.

²⁷ Marglin, “Extraterritoriality,” 696; Kostas V., interview by the author, Alexandria, 11 January 2016.

- ²⁸ *Apodēmoi Ellēnes* (Athens: Ethnikon Kentron Koinōnikōn Ereunōn, 1972), 70. On the possibilities for Italian futures in Egypt, see Viscomi, "Mediterranean Futures."
- ²⁹ Dalachanis, *Greek Exodus*, 92, 96; Gianluca P. Parolin, *Citizenship in the Arab World: Kin, Religion and Nation-State* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 81.
- ³⁰ Dalachanis, *Greek Exodus*, 94–95.
- ³¹ Interviews conducted by the author with Greeks in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt, between June 2015 and January 2016. The issue of residence permits had already been addressed in 1953 by Muhammad Naguib, Egypt's first president. Dalachanis, *Greek Exodus*, 96.
- ³² Giannis A., interview by the author, Cairo, 8 January 2016.
- ³³ For further information on the Greeks' education, see Eftychia Mylona, " 'Our Greek Dignity and Our Educational Autonomy': Arabic Language Teaching in Greek Schools, 1950s to 1970s," in *Colonial Vocabularies: Teaching and Learning Arabic in Europe (1870–1970)*, eds. Sarah Irving, Karène Sanchez, Lucia Admiraal, and Rachel Mairs (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).
- ³⁴ Khalid Ikram, *The Political Economy of Reforms in Egypt: Issues and Policymaking since 1952* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2018), 165–67; Angelos Ntalachanis, "The Emigration of Greeks from Egypt during the Early Post-War Years," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 35, no. 2 (2009): 35–44; Dalachanis, *Greek Exodus*, 90–92.
- ³⁵ Dalachanis, *Greek Exodus*, 61. On the Ministerial Decree 263 of 1960, and the crisis it brought to the Greek community, see Eftychia Mylona, "Greeks in Egypt: Negotiating Presence, Identity and Belonging after the 1960s," in *Cultural Exchanges in the Eastern Mediterranean: Asia Minor, Cyprus and Egypt*, eds. Stelios Irakleous, Michalis Michael, and Athanasios Koutoupas (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), 21–23.
- ³⁶ Sara Salem, "Haunted Histories: Nasserism and The Promises of the Past," *Middle East Critique* 28, no. 3 (2019): 272. On the role of the Egyptian public sector, see also Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022).
- ³⁷ Although Greeks were a good fit for this job because of their skills and familiarity with the sea, their actions and demands were not always welcomed by the Suez Company. Greeks were some of the pioneers of strikes and labor movements in the 1880s and 1890s and were often characterized as troublemakers. Thus, in some cases, they were laid off from their job and faced deportation. On this matter, see Huber, *Channeling Mobilities*, 113–15; Barbara Curli, "Dames Employées at the Suez Canal Company: The 'Egyptianization' of the Female Office Workers, 1941–56," *International Journal Middle East Studies* 46 (2014): 554; telephone interviews

conducted by the author with Greeks in Athens, who were originally from Suez, Port Said, and Ismailia, April 2021; Angelos Dalachanis, "Transnational Labour in Conflict: The Italian and Greek Personnel of the Suez Canal Company and the Second World War," in *Italy and the Suez Canal, from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Cold War*, ed. Barbara Curli (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 31.

³⁸ Nikolas K. (former resident of Suez), telephone conversation with the author, 2 April 2021.

³⁹ Mathētes file, Scholika file, 1961–1963, 1966–1967, Koinotēta Suez, AEKK. Greeks were the largest group working for the Suez Company. See, for example, Curli, "Dames Employées," 554; Dalachanis, "Transnational Labour," 326.

⁴⁰ Telephone interviews conducted by the author with Greeks in Athens, who were originally from Suez, Port Said, and Ismailia, April 2021.

⁴¹ Michalis B. (former resident of Suez), telephone conversation with the author, 4 April 2021.

⁴² Mathētes file, Scholika file, 1961–1963, 1966–1967, Koinotēta Suez, AEKK.

⁴³ Mathētes file, Scholika file, 1961–1963, 1966–1967, Koinotēta Suez, AEKK.

⁴⁴ Anthony Gorman, "Egypt's Forgotten Communists: The Postwar Greek Left," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 20, no. 1 (2002): 14; Konstantinos Daratzikis, *O Ellēnismos Diōrygos tou Suez kai Kairou kata toys polemous 1967 kai 1973* (Athens: University of Crete, 1994), 19; Nikolas K., telephone conversation with the author, 2 April 2021.

⁴⁵ One of my interlocutors, Nikolas, shared with me the story of Foula Margaraki. Nikolas K., telephone conversation with the author, 2 April 2021. The consulate of Port Said remained closed after the war and until 1976. Thus, its activities were managed by the consulate in Cairo, where the consulates of Mansoura and Suez were also located. Daratzikis, *Ellēnismos Diōrygos*, 19–21. On the migration crisis due to the Arab-Israeli Wars, see Mohamed Abdel Shakur, Sohair Mehanna, and Nicholas S. Hopkins, "War and Forced Migration in Egypt: The Experience of Evacuation from the Suez Canal Cities (1967–1976)," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2005): 21–39.

⁴⁶ Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality*, 16.

⁴⁷ The concerns over army conscription were particularly the case for the residents of the Suez Canal region. Due to the 1967 and 1973 wars, Suez Canal Greeks were very hesitant in obtaining Egyptian citizenship, as this would mean conscription into the army. Telephone interviews conducted by the author with Greeks in Athens, who were originally from Suez, Port Said, and Ismailia, April 2021.