

The influence of anglicization over the cypriot community history essay

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The following chapter discusses the influence of Anglicization over the Cypriot emigrants in London. It will analyze if there was a British influence towards Cypriots and to what extent did they change their customs and tradition. The Cypriot tradition and religion were the most fundamental Cypriot foundations and as a consequence the emigrant generation during 1950s and 1970s tried to instill its values to the next generation.

Furthermore, this chapter will examine the ways in which the Greek language was influenced by the British language and in what cases was the creation of Greek schools a solution against Anglicization and a necessity for the Cypriot emigrants. (i) The Greek Cypriot Language and how it was Influenced by Anglicization To begin with, the official language of Cyprus is Standard Modern Greek. The language derives from Greece which is a country that has related customs and ethics with Cyprus. Cypriots are officially Greek-Cypriots because of the ancient connection between the two countries and the similarities they have in their customs and identity. Above the fact that Modern Greek is the official language of Cyprus, the country has its own dialect, the Greek Cypriot Dialect that derives from the Greek language. According to Penelope Chloros, GCD is an autonomous language because it is the traditional language of the majority of a country.[1] Even though the students of Cypriot schools are being taught the Greek language, they keep their dialect and use Modern Greek only when they write.[2] It has to be mentioned that Cypriot emigrants in Britain only use the Greek-Cypriot dialect, while their children consider the English language as their mother tongue and use the Cypriot dialect only to communicate with their relatives. [3] The English language influenced the dialect of Cypriot emigrants through

the years. Cypriot emigrants tended to replace difficult words of the Greek vocabulary with English ones and made phonetical and morphological changes to the English language in order to be suitable in their own dialect. [4]The complex dialect of Cypriot emigrants reveals that Cypriots were influenced by Anglicization; although they did not transform their language totally since they preferred to add in their dialect new English words. As a result they created a unique language in which they used Greek and English words in one sentence; the dialect of Cypriot emigrants is difficult to be understood by their countrymen in their homeland.[5]Cypriot emigrants were able to master both languages at an equal level and above all the difficulties they protected their language by adding English words in Cypriot dialect.[6]The first generation of Cypriot emigrants managed to learn a few English words and used them for their basic needs.[7]For example, Mr. Mitsides arrived in London in 1936 and stated that Cypriots of 1940s who lived in specific areas of London, spoken Greek and faced the struggle of the English language together.[8]In addition, Mrs. Christodoulou arrived in London in 1950 and stressed the belief that Cypriot emigrants should be proud of their language and customs and supported the belief that family structure played an essential role in the strength of the Cypriot dialect. [9]The Cypriots of London believed that their language was a significant way to keep their culture alive and protect it from Anglicization. Following this belief, they tried to teach their children the Cypriot dialect and culture, and pointed out the pride they should have for their country.[10]For example, Mr. Michael was born in London in 1972 and he is a British citizen since he lived in Britain all his life. However, he speaks Greek, feels like a Cypriot and does

not forget the origins of his family, his Cypriot identity and customs.[11]On the other hand, Mr. Agathocleous, was also born in London from Cypriot parents and as a member of the later generation of Cypriot emigrants in Britain, he mentioned that Cypriots of previous generations had to learn English in order to communicate in their work and daily life.[12](ii)

Anglicization's Influence through the Educational System and the Reaction of the Cypriot Emigrants
Anglicization's influence over education was a daily fear for the Cypriot emigrants. They adopted this feeling from the time they were in Cyprus, where the British were trying to change Cypriot schools and transform them into British. By 1956 the British government in Cyprus managed to buy all the private schools and establish its control over the public schools. If the governing body of a school refused to follow government's actions, it was replaced by officials of the state.[13]These actions threaten the Greek curriculum that was later replaced by the British one. In accordance to keep their language strong, Cypriot emigrants in Britain decided to create Greek schools in order to teach their children and next generations the Greek language. Cypriots in London placed a high value on education and were willing to make many sacrifices to facilitate an education for their children.[14]They believed that the best way to influence their children was to create Greek schools which could teach them Greek and the history of their motherland. In accordance they hoped that through this way they would create strong ties between Cyprus and second-generation Cypriot emigrants. According to Floya Anthias, British schools failed to recognize the needs of Cypriot children and appreciate their different cultural context. Furthermore, she accused British teachers for their failure to

communicate with Cypriot parents in order to help these children who were from a different country and culture.[15]The first emigrant generation faced enormous problems until the creation of the first Greek school. First of all they did not have enough capital to build schools in all the areas of London where Cypriot emigrants were settled.[16]Also, Greek teachers were outnumbered in contrast with the number of Greek students. Greek parents took drastic measures and created the Greek Parents Association in 1952, in which Cypriot parents were united with the aim of keeping their language and culture strong; maintaining at the same time the ethnic identity of their children.[17]In the same year, the Greek Parents Association raised money and built the first Greek-Cypriot school in Camden Square. The Greek schools were built to generate national consciousness in Cypriot children and connect them with Cypriot customs. Also, through Greek schools, children could live in a Cypriot environment even for a few hours, and could learn more about their motherland, and prevent the assimilation that threatened Cypriot emigrants.[18]Until the late 1950s, Greek schools were not well known in the Cypriot community. Teachers of the school held meetings among the Cypriot community to emphasize the importance of sending the children to a Greek school and stated that children would not only be taught Greek and history, but also learn the values of their country. By 1960 a bus service was available for Greek schools, which collected children, drove them to school and then back home. During those years, children were happy to go to school and learn more about the place they came from.[19]In addition, the teachers were closer to their students and motivated them to learn Greek and Cypriot history.[20](iii) Cypriot identity and cultureAccording to

Mr. Agathocleous, " Cultural assimilation in the British way of life exists and is healthy".[21]As a result of Anglicization, many Cypriot emigrants adopted British identity and accepted England as their country. Although they loved Cyprus, they felt that they have no connection with it since Britain is the place they have spent their whole life and raised their children and grandchildren. This was confirmed by a journalist in 1958 in Haravgi. It has been written in the newspaper that many Cypriot emigrants forgot their language and spoken only English. Also, they overlook their customs and motherland. As a result, their children followed their parent's steps, ignored their Cypriot origin and adopted the British identity.[22]It is believed that there is an identity problem among the Cypriot emigrants of 1950s and 1960s. On the one hand, they feel British and act like British among their foreign friends at school and work, and on the other hand they act like Cypriots inside their family and Cypriot circles.[23]These identity problems did exist in Cypriot emigrants because of their attempt to fit into the particular situation they experienced. The threat of Anglicization was one of the reasons that Cypriot emigrants managed to keep their identity, language and education strong. These factors resulted to being connected with Cypriot culture which Cypriots managed to keep strong until now. The distance from their mother country did not weaken Cypriot customs but strengthened them, while in many cases Cypriot emigrants follow their tradition in more devotion than those in Cyprus. It is highly imperative for them to keep their culture and not to forget or deny their origins because they were settled in a new country.[24]Cypriot emigrants feared that the loss of their customs meant the loss of everything they had achieved in their lives; they believed

that as long as they kept their customs they remained pure Cypriots and won the struggle over Anglicization.[25]The spread of Anglicization influenced the daily life of many emigrant groups in Britain. However, in the case of the Cypriot Community it has to be mentioned that no total transformation occurred with reference to Cypriots who overcame the obstacle of losing their culture and managed to keep their tradition. For example, it has been stated that by 1956, Greek music was resonated in the most Cypriot districts of London every Saturday night. As Kanaouros mentioned in 1956 in Haravgi, Cypriot emigrants listened to Cypriot traditional music and felt proud for their country.[26]This case reveals that Cypriots felt their country and family near them through Cypriot songs and strong emotions they had. By the late 1950s Greek-Cypriot coffee shops were created in London, known as kafeneia. In those places men had the opportunity to drink Cypriot coffee, read Cypriot newspapers and play tavli which is the most famous Cypriot table game and it is familiar to chess.[27]Furthermore, Cypriot emigrants had the opportunity to listen to Greek music in Cypriot night clubs, known as bouzoukia. In sequence that the majority of Cypriot emigrants was poor and could not buy a television, the community created a theatre workshop. The first one was formed in 1957 and was named " Theatro Technis". In 1959 they held their first Greek-speaking play, providing to Cypriots a kind of leisure time that connected with their country.[28]In contrast, there were some Cypriots who chose to live outside the Cypriot community. They preferred to adopt the British way of life and customs being fully transformed by Anglicization.[29]Their decision is based on the belief that culture is not a box that parents can fit their children in and a person's identity is made up

from his environment, language and education. Following the above threat of Anglicization, Mrs. Euripidou argued that the creation of Cypriot newspapers in London strengthen the culture and unity among the Cypriot emigrants, who had the opportunity to get educated about their origins; at the same time, these newspapers were the connection between Cyprus and emigrants in Britain.[30](iv) The Greek Orthodox Church and its importance Religion was very important for most of the emigrant communities in Britain. Communities like the Germans, the Italians, the Jews and the Greek Cypriots identified themselves as a religious group, revealing that their religion was a way of life.[31]Christianity, Judaism and Islamism are only some examples of religions that establish themselves in Britain in accordance to strength the faith of specific emigrant groups.[32]Religious faith plays significant role among the Cypriot emigrants. Greek Orthodox church is very central in the lives of Cypriot emigrants and symbolizes the place where they will get married, baptize their children and bury their dead. The first Greek Orthodox church was build in London in 1878 and on a later stage two other were build in Camden Town and Kentish Town; by the end of 1990's thirty two Greek Orthodox churches were build.[33]Most of the elder Cypriot women believed that God was the only one who could help them to overcome the difficulties they faced when they emigrated to an unknown country. By 1968, Hammond mentioned that the Greek Orthodox Church was the strongest organized force among the Cypriot community as it adopted educational role; run evening classes twice a week about the Cypriot language and culture and organized English courses for the newcomer Cypriot emigrants.[34]In conclusion, Cypriot emigrants faced the threat of Anglicization but did not

succumb. Even though some emigrants chosen British identity and forgot their Cypriot customs and tradition, most of the Cypriots in Britain managed to keep their language and identity strong. They adopted English words in their vocabulary and managed to fit them in the Greek language creating a unique dialect that few can understand. Additionally, they created Greek schools in order to prevent the spread of Anglicization in their community and furthermore to transfer the Greek language and history to their children. Finally, Cypriot emigrants managed to fit inside the British community by keeping their culture and tradition. They built places in which they gathered daily to discuss their problems; they kept their religious faith strong and continued their customs for religious anniversaries, marriages and baptisms.