

# The representations of racism in immigrant students' essays in Greece

## The 'hybrid balance' between legitimizing and resistance identities

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Racism as a means for accomplishing homogeneity is at the center of this study which draws on Critical Discourse Analysis and focuses on descriptions of racist behaviors included in immigrant students' school essays. We investigate how the dominant assimilative and homogenizing discourse operates in Greece and how immigrant students position themselves towards this dominant discourse. Our analysis focuses on the ways the immigrant students of our sample construct legitimizing and hybrid resistance identities. We demonstrate that legitimizing identities are found in the vast majority of the essays of our data due to the racist behaviors experienced by immigrant people. On the other hand, the explicit description of such behaviors appears only in few essays. We argue that in these few essays, via referring to racist behaviors of majority people against them, immigrant students manage to build hybrid resistance identities.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, racism, dilemmatic positioning, membership categorization device, face threat, hybridity, legitimizing identities, resistance identities

### 1. Introduction

In contemporary nation-states cultural, social and linguistic mixtures between minorities/immigrants and the majority are to be avoided and homogenization is a permanent and persistent goal. Having this assumption as our starting point, in this paper we approach racism as one of the basic means for achieving homogenization. Based on school essays written by immigrant students living in Greece, we investigate the ways they describe the racist behaviors they suffer from and, thus,

the homogenizing pressures they experience. According to the proposed analysis, immigrant students' references to racist behaviors in their school essays, constitute attempts to resist the homogenizing pressures exercised upon them.

Our research question evolves around the ways the immigrant students of our data encode their racist experiences in order to construct their own identities. We will claim that via this encoding (a) they reveal the procedures that lead them to opt for legitimizing identities and (b) they are involved in constructing hybrid resistance identities diverging from dominant national discourses.

The theoretical framework of our study is that of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the main goal of which is to unveil the ways social inequality is (re)produced via discourse. Furthermore, CDA brings to the surface and discusses the various forms of resistance against the discursive naturalization of such inequality (see Blommaert 2005; van Dijk 2008). In this framework, we will discuss the dominant assimilative and homogenizing impositions and, specifically, the role of racism in achieving homogenization. We will also explore the complex and hybrid ways with which individuals, in our case immigrant students, position themselves towards the dominant discourse. To this end, we will employ the model of three dilemmas proposed by Bamberg (2011) in combination with the concepts of membership categorization device (Sacks 1995), face threat (Brown and Levinson 1987) and mimicry (Bhabha 1994/2004). After describing the data of the study and the data collection process, we will focus on specific narrative positionings of our immigrant students and, particularly, on the ways they construct legitimizing and hybrid resistance identities via their descriptions of racist behaviors in their writings.

## 2. Theoretical framework: Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) investigates how discourse contributes to reproducing social inequalities including racism, among other things (see van Dijk 2005, 2008). One of the most important CDA principles pertains to the relationship between the macro-level involving the dominant (social, linguistic, educational etc.) values and views included in the discourses surrounding them, and the micro-level involving the various (linguistic, discursive, semiotic, etc.) positionings of individuals towards the discourses of the macro-level (see van Dijk 2008, 85–89). We use the term *discourses* as referring to the ways in which social reality is organized and represented (see Fairclough 2003).

Within this framework, we argue that via their linguistic and discursive choices the immigrant students of our data position themselves towards dominant values and views of the macro-level and, particularly, towards the assimilative, homogenizing directives of the xenophobic national discourse in Greece. Via these

positionings, they construct their situated identities (see Bamberg 1997) which, among other things, could be in alignment with dominant values and views, in (sharp or hybrid) resistance to them, in a critical balance, etc.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we assume that *identity* is not a set of stable and fixed internal characteristics of individuals, but multiple constructions shaped by individuals' discursal choices (see Archakis and Tsakona 2012 and the references therein).

In Sections 2.1.1., 2.1.2. and 2.1.4. of the theoretical framework, we will refer to the macro-level including homogenizing discourses circulating in western nations in general and in Greece in particular, so as to show how racism contributes to homogenization. In Sections 2.1.3. and 2.1.4. we will also discuss the complex and hybrid ways with which individuals position themselves towards the dominant, homogenizing discourses. Then, we will move on to the micro-level (Sections 2.2.1. and 2.2.2.) in order to discuss the tools with which we will investigate the positionings of immigrant students towards these discourses.

## 2.1 Macro-level

### 2.1.1 *Homogenization in the western states*

It is well-known that the structure and the composition of the western nation-states are based on the principle of linguistic and cultural homogeneity suggesting that within their territory there should be a *single* national culture and a *single* national language (see, among others, Piller 2001). Anderson (1991) maintains that the advent of print capitalism strengthened this principle contributing drastically to the massive production of texts, written in vernacular languages, so that they could be read by everyone. Thus, people were able to imagine themselves as members of the same "limited and sovereign" national community (ibid., 6). Moreover, adopting Said's (1983) perspective on "interpretive communities", Billig (1995, 70) very aptly points out that "nations not only have to be imagined, but also have to create their own histories, or interpretations of themselves". He adds that

[o]ne of the essential characteristics of modernity was vital to state-making: the intolerance of difference. The new states were to be centralized polities, which flattened traditional regional, cultural, linguistic and ethnic differences.

(Billig 1995, 130)

Hence, the national homogenizing discourse attempts to delimit the nation-state and present it as a pure entity with internal (linguo-cultural and historical)

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1. It is at this particular point that we could attest the interplay between CDA's principle pertaining to the relationship between the macro-level and the micro-level, one the one hand, and the positioning theory of identity construction, on the other.

coherence within its state borders. In order to avoid potential mixtures, racist behaviors are activated. As a result, when the coexistence of immigrant groups and majority populations takes place within national territories, immigrant people are quite often forced to develop assimilative strategies through accepting the values, beliefs and behaviors of the majority. This means that the racist behaviors against them have achieved their goal.

### 2.1.2 *Racist behaviors*

Here, we define racist ideology and behaviors mostly following van Dijk's (1998, 2008) approach. First, a point of clarification is necessary in relation to van Dijk's conceptualization of *ideology*: He maintains that "[i]deologies are not merely defined in cognitive terms, but also in terms of social groups (...). They are social constructs shared by a group" (van Dijk 1998, 9). He adds that ideologies are "socially shared mental representations (...) [(partly) controlling] social practices (...) by which they are constructed" (ibid.). In this context van Dijk perceives racism as "constituted by social practices of discrimination (...) and relationships of power abuse by dominant groups, organizations, and institutions" which all have "a mental basis (...) rooted in racist prejudices and ideologies", i.e. in "socially shared and negatively oriented mental representations of Us about Them" (2008, 103). Discussing racism in Spain and Latin America, van Dijk illustrates his theoretical conceptualization of racism as follows:

if 'whites', as a group, have more economic, political, social or cultural power<sup>2</sup> in society, and they abuse of such power by keeping non-whites 'down and out', out of the country, the city, the neighborhood, the company, the shop, the university, the job, the position, the newspaper or the scholarly journal, then we are dealing with manifestations of racism  
(van Dijk 2005, 2)

In view of the above, "manifestations of racism" maintain the social inequality between majority and minority people (ibid., 2). These manifestations are rooted in negative ideological stereotypes and prejudices for minority people resulting in their marginalization and exclusion (ibid., 3, 7). Majority people who opt for racist behaviors tend to present foreign outgroups in a negative manner (see e.g. van Dijk 1993, 2005; van der Valk 2003; Augoustinos and Every 2007; Every and Augoustinos 2007; Wodak and Richardson 2013). They perceive the usual (linguistic and cultural) differences between majority and minority people as weaknesses of the latter. Thus, they not only sustain, but also "justify" and "rationalize" the unequal treatment of immigrant groups in case immigrant people do not comply

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2. Power involves "having preferential access to and control over scarce social resources" (van Dijk 2005, 2).

to the dominant norms of the majority group (Hanson-Easy and Augoustinos 2012, 29). As a consequence, immigrant people are forced to marginalization unless they adjust to assimilative homogeneity.

Summing up, racist behaviors imply a “submissive living” for immigrants and “the[ir] exclusion from public and social benefits or the unequal access to them” (Tsiakalos 2011, 75). In our analysis, we focus our attention to racist behaviors against immigrants and, in particular, against the immigrant students of our sample. Racism is mainly identified in their discriminating and unequal treatment by their classmates, teachers and neighbors. As the analysis will show, this unequal treatment takes the form of devaluation, insults, exclusion and violence.

### 2.1.3 *The hybrid resistance to racist homogenization*

In the previous two sections we demonstrated that the principle of homogeneity on which western nation-states are based, is often pursued and attained via racist attitudes and assimilation practices.

Every national territory that may host immigrants is strictly linked with conventions and norms which (directly or indirectly) regulate linguistic, social and cultural behaviors. However, as Duchêne et al. aptly point out,

[m]igration and the mobility of citizens (...) pose important challenges to the linguistic and cultural homogeneity that nation-states still rely on for defining their physical boundaries, their language and identity as well as the rights and obligations of their citizens. (Duchêne et al. 2013, 6)

We could elaborate on the challenges to national homogeneity posed by immigrants by drawing on the distinction between *legitimizing identities* and *resistance identities* proposed by Castells (2010). Legitimizing identities aim to the assimilation of out-groups like immigrants and “are introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination *vis à vis* social actors” (ibid., 8). Resistance identities

are generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society. (Castells 2010, 8)

Thus, the coexistence of diverse groups within a national territory and the relationships between them might be more complicated than the proponents of the homogeneity principle would have expected. In the era of globalization and de-regularization of mighty structures of the past (e.g. the breakdown of the Eastern-Communist Block or of the regimes of North Africa), the mass immigrants' flows could even challenge the established *national* order of normativity.

Post-colonial studies draw our attention to the complex and hybrid ways via which people from different cultural backgrounds and in inferior social positions manage to construct resistance identities against homogenizing impositions. In particular, Bhabha (1994/2004) argues that when people from different origins and hierarchical statuses, such as majority and immigrant people, come into contact, they might not either get assimilated or being marginalized. Immigrants could instead create a “Third Space” (ibid., 53), a “cultural hybridity” (ibid., 5), “an in-between reality” (ibid., 19) of “mixed and split texts” (ibid., 161) that “unsettles any simplistic polarities or binarisms” (ibid., 76). From this perspective,

[h]ybridity is the sign of (...) shifting forces and fixities; is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority).  
(Bhabha 1994/2004, 159)

Thus, “[t]he paranoid threat from the hybrid is finally uncontainable because it breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside” (ibid., 165).

This conceptualization of hybridity helps us understand the complicated ways resistance identities and practices can actually be exercised against homogenizing impositions. As Bhabha points out,

[r]esistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is the simple negation or exclusion of the ‘content’ of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses (...).  
(Bhabha 1994/2004, 157–158)

As already mentioned, in the analysis of our data we focus on descriptions of racist behaviors against immigrant students in Greece included in some of their essays. The fact that a few immigrant students deviate from majority’s legitimizing expectations and describe racist behaviors against themselves, reveals that immigrants do not form a unitary category in process of assimilation (see also Section 2.1.4.). Moreover, it reveals that these immigrants choose to construct *hybrid identities* (Bhabha 1994/2004, 55), i.e. identities that are not aligned with the stereotypical categorical assumptions of inferiority and submissiveness, but identities that are built on a resisting “counter-gaze that turns the discriminatory look (...) back to itself” (ibid., 67). In other words, the analysis will show how some immigrant students from our data can be turned from “objectified others (...) into subjects of their history and experience” (ibid., 255).

### 2.1.4 *The Greek national discourse of xenophobia and homogenization and the hybrid resistance to it*

Since 1990, Greece has received immigrants from different countries, both inside and outside Europe. The majority of them came from Albania and started flowing into Greece at the beginning of the 1990s due to the intense social and economic changes that took place in their country of origin. They were immediately faced with an intense xenophobic and racist discourse, as attested by the following facts (among others):

- the formation of the slogan “You will never be Greek, you Albanian”;
- the violent reactions of local communities to the possibility of students of Albanian origin carrying the Greek flag in national parades;<sup>3</sup>
- the employment of immigrants mainly – if not exclusively – in manual, low prestige jobs;
- the circulation of many negative stereotypes for Albanians via the media: they are represented, for example, as *undermining the national coherence and financial prosperity, addicted to delinquent behavior, responsible for the low educational level in Greek schools*, etc. (see Kapplani and Mai 2005; Gogonas 2010, 72–78).

In brief, the racist discourse produced about immigrants (from Albania and elsewhere) is based on the sharp, binary distinction between the foreign immigrants and the indigenous majority people. Due to their cultural and linguistic difference, foreign immigrants have been singled out and constructed as an “abnormal” and “suspect community”, as constituting a “security risk” and “an existential threat” for national homogenizing ideals (see Charalambous et al. 2016).

In the public sphere, the ‘violent disturbance’ caused to the ‘homogeneous’ majority is described with some vivid and particularly telling metaphors. Reference is thus made to *εισβολή των μεταναστών* “immigrants’ invasion”, to the Greek society being transformed into a *ξέφραγο αμπέλι* “unconfined space”, *ένα απέραντο γιουσουρούμι Τουρκαλβανών και Βουλγαροπακιστανών* “an endless mess full of Turco-Albanians and Bulgaropakis”, due to the fact that with unbelievable easiness the official authorities *ανοίγουν ‘κερκόπορτες’ για τη δεύτερη και οριστική άλωση του Ελληνισμού* “open ‘backdoors’ for the second and final fall of Hellenism” (see Boutoulousi 2005). Via this projection of ‘foreign immigrants’ as ‘an existential threat’ against the national culture, the majority’s intense wish for their exclusion from the national body and from the national rights is highlighted.

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3. On Greek national holidays, student parades usually take place, where the best student from each school is the head of the parade and carries the Greek flag.

Particularly revealing is the way immigrant students and their heritage languages are treated by the Greek school and the Greek state. Although the Greek educational system responded to immigrant flows with a ‘cover up’ of ‘progressive’ laws involving reception classes, intercultural schools and even courses on immigrants’ heritage languages (Boutoulousi 2002, 56), everyday educational practices exhibit a totally different orientation. All this legislation did not lead to maintaining immigrants’ heritage languages, but to their exclusion and to the absolute dominance of the Greek language as both a teaching subject and the only teaching language (see Kiliari 2005, 130–133). It seems that for the Greek curriculum, teaching the Greek language and teaching exclusively in Greek are considered the appropriate pedagogical methods despite the fact that Greek classrooms are now multicultural and multilingual (see Boutoulousi 2002; Gogonas 2010).

The reason for this discrepancy between the current educational laws and the dominant norms dictating the educational practices at school should probably be traced to a “securitizing discourse”, in Charalambous et al.’s (2016) terms, that seems to operate above and beyond the (progressive) laws. This discourse, as part of the national xenophobic discourse, aims at highlighting the risks of cultural and linguistic impurity that the nation-state runs from the very existence of the foreign others’ ‘suspect community’. In this context, many majority school teachers suggest that immigrant students and their parents learn Greek and use them as much as possible, even at home (Gkaintartzi et al. 2016).

The above description of the Greek social and educational context helps us understand that immigrants were faced with a xenophobic and racist discourse aiming at their homogenization. The host country seems to offer them two options: to become either marginalized or assimilated. However, as we have already pointed out in Section (2.1.3.) and we will see in more detail in the analysis below, some immigrant students dare to follow an alternative way through constructing hybrid identities of resistance. Consequently, despite dominant discourse’s expectations, immigrants in Greece do not form a unitary category in process of assimilation. The meticulous ethnographic research conducted by Papandreou (2013) on the attitudes and identities of immigrant Lyceum students in the centre of Athens during 2004–2005, supports this claim. Papandreou maintains that the students of his study seem to position themselves in a complex manner, since most of them follow their own individual itineraries, being in a more stable and secure position than their parents were due to family support and to their parents’ urge to integrate. In particular, they go beyond traditional borderlines via adopting hybrid identities that include bonding both with the homeland and with the host country (cf. Papandreou 2013, 210, 216, 440). A student-informant of Papandreou’s study very aptly suggests the following: *Να είσαι Αλβανός στην καρδιά και να ζεις στην*



Ελλάδα (i.e. *Be an Albanian at heart while living in Greece*) (ibid., 209). Papandreou (ibid., 217–218, 441–442) thus identifies a few cases of immigrant students who insist on stressing their loyalty to their ethnic group without, however, belonging to a subculture juxtaposed to the majority population.

In a similar vein, Archakis (2014) has more recently shown how some immigrant students seem to construct ambivalent identities via several versions of the disclaimer *I am adjusting myself, but...* They attempt both to comply with assimilationist pressures so as to legitimize themselves as members of the host community, and to resist such pressures by highlighting aspects of their own immigrant experiences (see also Archakis and Tsakona 2016). In particular, although these students indicate their willingness to align themselves with the dominant Greek national discourse, they simultaneously seem to be reluctant to overlook the racist behaviors they suffered from, and unable to forget their affection for their homeland and its people.<sup>4</sup> It is exactly such ambivalent identities that are at the center of the present study.

Finally, in the analysis and interpretation of our data we will take into consideration the fact that Greek xenophobic and racist discourses come into conflict with the orientation of many “liberal democracies in Europe and the US [which] have increasingly adopted laws and norms that presuppose or guarantee equality [between majority and minority/immigrant populations]” (van Dijk 1992, 95). Generally speaking, extreme racist behaviors are hindered or banned (van Dijk 1992, 89, 95–97). Thus, in the western world verbal racist attacks have acquired a mitigated form and are often produced via disclaimers such as *I'm not a racist, but..., I'm not against the black people, but..., All immigrants are not criminals, but...* Such disclaimers permit the recycling of established stereotypes for immigrants (e.g. that they are prone to illegal and violent activities) carefully disguised and rationalized (van Dijk 2008, 122–124). Simultaneously, in the western world the humanitarian and anti-racist values of tolerance and acceptance of difference are in wide social circulation (van Dijk 1992, 95–97). All such conditions are relevant to the present discussion, as will be shown in the analysis of our data.

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4. Michail and Christou's (2016) research is also worth mentioning here, as they take into account youth and gender issues in the construction of immigrant identities in Greece.

## 2.2 Micro-level

### 2.2.1 *Analyzing majority racist behaviors using Bamberg's model on the narrative construction of identities*

We move on to the micro-level and to the presentation of the analytical tools chosen for tracing immigrant students' positionings and their identity construction. Our basic assumption is that the immigrant students of our data construct their identities via the description of the racist behaviors they suffer from.

Investigating the narrative construction of identities, Bamberg (2011) proposes a model that attempts to explain this process on the basis of three dilemmatic positionings. The first dilemma involves *constancy and change across time* as observed in the lives of the represented characters. We can detect the diachronic maintenance of some (or all the) characteristics of the represented characters or the changes occurring to some (or all) of them, e.g. to their sexual preferences or to their place of residence due to migration.

The second dilemma involves the projection of *sameness versus difference*. We investigate the way a character or a group of characters is represented in comparison to others. That is, whether a character is classified with others or other groups, on the basis of specific shared attributes (e.g. common moral values), or whether s/he is distinguished from others – or other groups – having been placed in different social (or other) category. At this point, it is useful to introduce and exploit the ethnomethodological concept of *membership categorization device* (Sacks 1995). Such devices are socioculturally determined and include various categories of members. For example, the membership categorization device *profession* includes, among other things, the categories of *doctors, patients, engineers*, etc. among which we can discern similarities and differences. Each of these categories carries a set of *category-bound predicates*, i.e. typical characteristics and activities. For example, doctors heal patients, lawyers represent citizens in court, engineers construct buildings, etc. (Sacks 1995, 40–48, 243–251, 259–266; see also Bamberg et al. 2011).

The third and final dilemma concerns the *agency* of the represented characters, namely how they are positioned in relation to dominant discourses that are in social circulation. More specifically, we investigate whether the represented characters are presented as being aligned with the directives of the dominant discourses, thus their agency and initiative are low, or whether they are presented as resisting against these discourses, thus their agency and initiative are high. In other words, we concentrate on the 'tension' between the impositions entailed by the dominant discourses and the observed choices via specific discourse practices (see Bamberg et al. 2011).

The above mentioned tools will help us understand and organize the narrative – biographical framework of immigrant students as emerging from their essays. Moreover, these tools allow us to account for the ways immigrant students encode

the racist behaviors they suffered from in order to construct their identities. In particular, as we shall see, *change* is observed in the lives of the immigrants as they are forced (for various political, social, financial and other reasons) to move from their country of origin to a host country, that is Greece. Immigrants' arrival forces the majority population to position themselves in relation to the *differences* detected in immigrants, including their languages and cultures.

At this point, the crucial research question involves how majority people deal with immigrants' differences: Do they treat them as a stimulus for language and cultural mixture? Or do they treat them in a racist manner, aiming at the maintenance of national homogeneity? Similar questions can be posed in relation to immigrant students: Do they rush to adjust themselves to the directives of the dominant majority discourse (through constructing legitimizing identities)? Or do they attempt to resist against this discourse claiming their difference (and thus constructing resistance identities)?

In the data analysis (Section 4), we will show that some of the immigrant students of our data represent majority people as behaving in a racist manner against them. The majority people coexist with the immigrants but they see them as 'foreigners' due to their different languages and cultures. In other words, the immigrants' arrival leads to the rearrangement of the structure of the membership categorization device *living populations in Greece* which includes immigrants but positions them in a *different social category* than that of the majority people. In order to eliminate such social division, some immigrant students represent majority people's racist behaviors as forcing them to construct assimilative and legitimizing identities. On the other hand, however, we will argue that, via their references to majority people's racist behaviors, immigrant students evaluate such behaviors negatively. We will show that such references and evaluations constitute a threat towards the face of majority people and eventually a means for immigrant students to construct identities resisting the directives of national discourse.

### 2.2.2 *The threat against majority people's face*

In order to analyze the *threat* against the face of majority people and, thus, the construction of resistance identities by immigrant students, we will draw on the concept of *mimicry* introduced by Bhabha (1994/2004) as well as on aspects of politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). As already pointed out, young immigrants' construction of resistance identities is traced in their school essays when they refer to racist attacks against them.

In Section (2.1.3.), we elaborated on the concept of hybridity in post-colonial contexts as a form of resistance against dominant homogenizing discourses. Bhabha (1994/2004) suggests that *mimicry* is a particular discursive means for the construction of hybrid identities, i.e. a "ruse" that "terrorizes authority" (ibid., 165), an

efficient means for “a counter-gaze that turns the discriminatory look (...) back to itself” (ibid., 67) (see also Section 2.1.3.). More specifically, “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (ibid., 123). It “emerges as the representation of a difference (...) that is almost the same but not quite” and “that is itself a process of disavowal” (ibid., 122). Thus, when mimicry applies to dominant figures, like majority people, its effect could be “profound and disturbing” (ibid., 123): “[T]he observer becomes the observed” and, thus, “the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined” (ibid., 127).

The concept of mimicry, carrying a component of *menace*, seems to fit well with the notion of *threat* in the framework of politeness theory. According to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, individuals aiming to show or build solidarity bonds with the members of a (dominant) group resort to *positive politeness strategies* which, among other things, evoke shared values, common ground, and the mutual appreciation between group members, and also show speakers’ acceptance of common traits, wishes, aspirations, etc. On the other hand, when such strategies are not used or when speakers (directly or indirectly) keep a distance from a (dominant) group or even comment negatively on it and its members, mutual appreciation, namely their positive face, is threatened or damaged (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66ff).

In the analytical Section (4), we will employ the concepts of mimicry and threat to analyze our immigrant students’ essays. We will show how majority people are represented as changing roles with immigrant students and how from racist “observers” of immigrants’ deviant behavior, majority people become “the observed” from the “displacing” and threatening perspective adopted by the immigrants.

### 3. The data of the study and the research questions

Within the framework of the research project *Education for Foreign and Repatriate Students* under the auspices of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the research team of the University of Patras<sup>5</sup> visited approximately 50 schools (including primary schools, high schools and lyceums) in Attica and the Peloponnese. The data collection process lasted from April to October 2011. Questionnaires were used to investigate immigrant students’ attitudes towards their heritage languages and the Greek language. Students were also asked to write a letter taking the position of an imaginary immigrant friend of theirs about what troubles and what pleases them in the new place of residence.

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5. The research team of the University of Patras participated in the sub-action 5.1. of the project, entitled *Exploration of the need to support repatriated and foreign students’ heritage languages*.

In the present study, we concentrate on 284 essays collected from 6 primary schools, 4 high schools and 8 lyceums situated in different parts of the Peloponnese. Their authors were bilingual speakers, mostly from Albania, but also from other countries.

Our expectation was that immigrant students would draw from their own experiences or from those of their relatives composing what could be seen as *identity texts* in Cummins' (2004) terms. In other words, despite the fact that the essays of our data were produced in the formal circumstances of essay writing in class, we assumed that – at least some – immigrant students would “invest their identities in these texts” and thus these texts would function as “a mirror” (ibid., 72) or as “an informative window into students' expression of their identities” (Cohen 2008, 218). This is what happened in most cases, as the vast majority of the immigrant students drew on a common collective narrative related to migration experiences that comes either from their own experience and/or from those of their parents, relatives or communities.

Our research question evolves around the identification and classification of racist behaviors in immigrant students' narratives. In Table 1, we present the number and percentage of the essays including explicit descriptions of racist behaviors of the majority.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1.** Essays with references and without references to racist attitudes

	Essays <i>without</i> references to racist attitudes		Essays <i>with</i> references to racist attitudes		Total
	Rate%	Tokens	Rate%	Tokens	
Primary schools	80.5	58	19.4	14	72
High schools	82.1	78	17.8	17	95
Lyceums	84.7	100	15.2	18	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>82.8</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>285</b>

According to Table 1, only a small number of essays include references to racist behaviors (17.1%). The vast majority of the essays examined (82.8%) do not include explicit references to racist behaviors, although there are reports of the difficulties immigrant students and their families faced in the first years of their living in Greece. We consider this indicative of the intense homogenizing and assimilative pressures exercised on these kids by the securitizing discourse (Charalambous et al.

6. As suggested by one of the two reviewers, an interesting question for future research is to compare the data of this study to interviews with adult Greeks.

2016). Immigrants seem to avoid stigmatizing majority people by revealing their racist behaviors as far as they want to be invisible and not stay as a “security risk” and “an existential threat” for national homogenizing ideals (Charalambous et al. 2016). This is why, in our view, only a small amount of immigrant students explicitly referred to specific racist experiences.

Moreover, we should point out that no significant differences in the three levels of education (i.e. primary schools, high schools and lyceums) are attested in this corpus. The difference of 4.2% between the primary school essays and the lyceum essays could possibly be due to the most complete assimilation of older lyceum students to the majority setting: They have lived for more years in Greece than primary school students.

In what follows, our attention is mainly focused on this restricted number of essays that include descriptions of racist behaviors and, hence, have attracted our attention. The aim of our analysis is to show the ways the immigrant students of our data describe their racist experiences in order to construct their identities. We will argue that via such descriptions, they project themselves in an ambivalent way: (a) as victims of majority racist behaviors which force them to adjust to the national homogenizing discourse, and (b) as victimizers attempting to resist homogenization by threatening the collective majority face.

## 4. Analysis

The analysis that follows is placed on the micro-level and investigates the positionings of immigrant students of our data on the basis of the three dilemmas proposed by Bamberg: *Constancy and change, sameness versus difference, agency (adjustment or resistance)*. We will show the reasons why immigrant students are forced to choose legitimizing identities aligned with the dominant national discourse, as well as the ways they construct hybrid resistance identities opposing the dominant discourse.

### 4.1 Legitimizing identities

According to Table 1, the vast majority of immigrant students’ school essays includes legitimizing identities. A case in point is the following example:<sup>7</sup>

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7. All the examples were translated into English by the author. Original Greek texts are omitted due to space limitations. However, they are available upon request.

(1) Dear pal,

When I came here I found a different culture, people seemed a bit cold to me. At the beginning my parents had difficulty in finding a job at the beginning, and I had difficulty in adjusting myself to school, my classmates were a bit distanced and strange. Fortunately however my dear pal it was not that difficult for me to learn Greek, but my teachers helped me in that. They were very nice. At the beginning things may have been difficult, but as time went by I managed to adjust myself (to the new place). Everything then seemed very different to me. I felt that I was in my own homeland, I got new friends coming from different countries too and having more or less the same experiences as I had. My friends treat me very nice and they don't treat me with racism. My parents work and their salary is very good. Our life here is very good. But I really miss my homeland and my relatives. [lyceum essay]

Applying the three dilemmas of Bamberg's (2011) model to essay (1), we observe that a female student of Albanian origin assumes the role of a hypothetical friend of hers to refer to the *change* that occurred to her life due to her migration. It should be noted, however, that her migration experience is described as accompanied by mild and not harsh difficulties via the mitigating modal verb *may* (*At the beginning things may have been difficult*). Special emphasis is given to the *different* socio-cultural environment she found herself in compared to that of her country of origin (cf. *When I came here I found a different culture*). Majority people kept her (and her relatives) at a distance (cf. *people seemed a bit cold to me*). In particular, the student writes about difficulties in establishing relationships with majority people, in her parents' job searching and in her adjustment to school. She manages to overcome this marked social categorization only when she learns the Greek language, thus starting to become assimilated to the Greek environment. In other words, the student lives a *very good life*, but this happens only when she accepts the values of the host country and recognizes it as her *own homeland*. Such assimilation opens the door both for her parents to find job with a good salary – the central concern of their migration – and for herself to make friendships with other immigrant students as well as with indigenous peers who no longer behave in a racist manner towards her: *My friends treat me very nice and they don't treat me with racism*. This formulation is particularly interesting: It implies that when the student and her family did not know Greek and thus did not explicitly accept the national values (i.e. they did not eliminate their socio-cultural differences), her 'friends' treated her in a racist manner. In sum, in this autobiographical report, the student projects her *agency* in the form of adjustment to the directives of the dominant assimilative discourse, thus constructing a legitimizing identity.<sup>8</sup> We assume that

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8. Some aspects of hybrid resistance identities could be identified in the phrase *But I really miss my homeland and my relatives*. For an analysis of such disclaimers, see Archakis (2014); Archakis & Tsakona (2016).

such an adjustment, as described in essay (1) and identified in the vast majority of the essays in our corpus, is the outcome of racist behaviors against immigrant students. The description of such racist behaviors, however, are rare in our data, mostly because of the assimilative and homogenizing pressures they relate to.

In the following sections, we will draw our attention to these few essays that, unlike the one in Example (1), do not only imply racist experiences but contain explicit and extensive descriptions of racist behaviors.

## 4.2 Classifying the descriptions of racist behaviors

### 4.2.1 *Introductory remarks*

We propose a classification of the expressions with which immigrant students describe racist behaviors they themselves experienced. Thus, this section supports the claim that some immigrant students construct *hybrid resistance identities* through referring to racist behaviors coming from majority people. In Bhabha's (1994/2004, 159) terms, some immigrant students attempt to "shift forces and fixities" in a "strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal".

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory (see Section 2.2.2.), when the positive traits of a group are not highlighted or, on the contrary, when speakers comment negatively on the group and its members, mutual appreciation, namely their positive face, is threatened or damaged. Thus, the descriptions of racist behaviors examined here constitute threatening acts against the collective positive face of the majority (see Sifianou and Bayraktaroğlu 2012). From Bhabha's (1994/2004, 123) perspective, immigrant students activate the discursive means of mimicry which, representing majority people's racist behaviors, is "at once resemblance and menace". The majority racist "observers" of immigrants' deviant behavior become "the observed" and their "look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined" (ibid., 127).

We suggest that the graded intensity of immigrant students' descriptions reflects the intensity of the phenomenon and accounts for its assimilative effects. Among these effects is the limited number of racist descriptions as young immigrants tend to avoid writing about racist behaviors against them in the school essays under scrutiny (see Table 1).

### 4.2.2 *Descriptions of racist behaviors*

In what follows, we analyze and classify the descriptions of racist behaviors identified in our data. According to Boutoulousi, racist practices form a continuum:



[O]n the one end, we could place the behaviors that seem to be positive, e.g. a compliment to an individual (see friendly racism: '*you Gypsies sing very nice*'); on the other end, we could place extreme violent behaviors, whereas in between (we could place) the denigration of a group, e.g. using a joke against it, avoiding physical contact, excluding it from rights and privileges, etc. (Boutoulousi 2004, 512)

Following Boutoulousi's (ibid.) proposal, we distinguish five descriptive categories of racist behaviors which could be graded on the basis of the degree of imposition on various aspects of the personality of immigrant people, as follows:

- denigrating behaviors
- verbal insults
- insults through eye gaze
- excluding behaviors
- abusive behaviors

Our continuum ranges from the description of general denigrating behaviors to specific insults (verbal or through eye gaze), to the avoidance of physical contact and, finally, to physical abuse. Such racist behaviors result from the superiority majority people feel in their social contacts with immigrants. It seems that (at least some) majority people are reluctant to live in harmony with immigrants and respect their personality (see Dynel 2012).

We proceed with a detailed presentation of the above categories. We should bear in mind that the graded threat towards immigrants' face attested in these categories is reversed in young immigrants descriptions and targets the collective positive face of majority people. A process of mimicry takes place where "the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined", in Bhabha's words (1994/2004, 127). As already mentioned, when the positive attributes of a group are not highlighted, or when negative comments are addressed to this group (or its members), its positive face is threatened. The degree of threat against the majority positive face depends on immigrant students' linguistic and stylistic choices. Thus, in what follows we discuss the linguistic means used by immigrant students in each category. We also discuss the intensity of racism, as well as the source of racist behavior, wherever possible (e.g. we distinguish general references to majority people from specific references to peers, classmates, neighbors, teachers):

#### a. *Denigrating behaviors*

General references to denigrating behaviors:

- (2) They don't treat me nice [primary school essay]
- (3) People react like they haven't seen an immigrant before [primary school essay]
- (4) There are however racists that treat you like garbage [high school essay]

Specific references to denigrating behaviors by peers:

- (5) Kids don't treat me so nice because I'm not like them I don't belong to their place I don't behave like them [lyceum essay]
- (6) Kids treat me in a hostile manner due to my origin [high school essay]

The above examples show that the category of denigrating behaviors includes descriptions coming from both majority people in general and peers in particular. Diversity is observed in relation to the intensity of the denigrating acts:

- Low intensity of denigrating behaviors: *They don't treat me (so) nice* (Example 2, 5)
- Medium intensity of denigrating behaviors: *People react like they haven't seen an immigrant before* (Example 3)
- High intensity of denigrating behaviors: *Kids treat me in a hostile manner* (Example 6), *There are however racists that treat you like garbage* (Example 4)

It is important to underline that such denigrating behaviors are directly related to immigrants' different origin and habits (Example 5, 6).

Specific references to denigrating behaviors by immigrants' teachers:

- (7) I don't like the way that my teacher treats me at school. My teacher always punishes me and you know why? Because I can't speak the language they use here [primary school essay]
- (8) All teachers and professors underestimated me and I had to prove that things are not the way they think they are [lyceum essay]

In Examples (7–8), majority teachers' discrimination against immigrant students is reported. Such behavior is attributed to immigrants' limited skills in Greek (Example 7). It is therefore very difficult for immigrant students to overlook their school teachers' rejection. They seem to be trapped in a vicious circle where their limited knowledge of Greek results in a negative evaluation in class which further discourages them from trying (Example 8).

## b. *Verbal insults*

General references to verbal insults:

- (9) People are making fun of you [lyceum essay]
- (10) The society in the beginning is making fun of you [high school essay]
- (11) Here everybody is making fun of me [primary school essay]
- (12) Many people are racists and make fun of the foreigners [high school essay]
- (13) People make fun of me all the time [primary school essay]

- (14) They laugh at me [primary school essay]
- (15) They blame me for every bad thing that's happening here [primary school essay]

In this category, it is interesting to focus our attention to the source of the insult and its verbal encoding. To indicate the sources of insults immigrant students use (a) generic terms such as *people* (Example 9), *society* (Example 10), and (b) quantifiers such as *everybody* (Example 11) and *many* (Example 12). The act of insulting is mainly encoded through the verbal phrase *make fun of* (Example 9–13). Moreover, the synonym *laugh at* (Example 14) and the verb *blame* (Example 15) are used for the same purpose. In Example (13) the adverbial phrase *all the time* presents the insult as a recurrent act. The same effect is achieved with the use of simple present in Greek, which denotes, among other things, repetition and habituality. Through these linguistic means, verbal abuse against immigrant students is represented as being performed repeatedly and aggressively by many members of the majority.

Specific references to verbal insults by peers and classmates:

- (16) On the first day at school nobody wanted to sit next to me and they characterized me with some bad adjectives [lyceum essay]
- (17) Kids in Greece were making fun of us all the time because we are coming from another country [high school essay]
- (18) Kids were insulting us [high school essay]
- (19) Kids were making fun of us (...) were insulting us with vulgar and bad words [lyceum essay]
- (20) My classmates were making fun of me using various words which I do not want to tell you [lyceum essay]
- (21) Every day at school I receive racist comments – as far as I understand of course [lyceum essay]
- (22) Kids are making fun of me and I'm in a very bad psychological condition [lyceum essay]

When verbal insults are attributed to peers and classmates (Example 16–22), different verbs (and complements) are used to encode the insults:

- Low insult intensity: *they characterized me with some bad adjectives* (Example 16)
- Medium insult intensity: *Kids were making fun of us* (Example 17, 19)
- High insult intensity: *Kids were insulting us* (Example 18), *Kids were insulting us with vulgar and bad words* (Example 19), *My classmates were making fun of me using various words which I do not want to tell you* (Example 20), *I receive racist comments* (Example 21)

All this variety of verbal insults by peers and classmates seem to cause serious psychological problems to the immigrant students, as Example (22) shows.

Specific references to verbal insults by old women:

- (23) Old women make fun of you, especially when they know that you are an Albanian [lyceum essay]
- (24) Old women are gossiping behind your back; they say look he is an Albanian [lyceum essay]

Apart from peers and classmates, old women are portrayed as sources of verbal insults against immigrant people. These old women – who are quite often immigrants' neighbors – make fun of them (Example 23) and gossip about them (Example 24).

### c. *Eye gaze insults*

Specific references to eye gaze insults by classmates:

- (25) when I entered the classroom for the first time, all kids were looking at me I felt so ashamed that I didn't say anything and I went out of the classroom for a while [high school essay]
- (26) when I went (to school), I entered the classroom and everybody was looking at me in a very strange manner [high school essay]

Specific references to eye gaze insults by neighbors:

- (27) Everybody in the neighborhood, in the small store is looking at me in a strange manner [high school essay]

Insults through eye gaze constitute a category similar to the one of verbal insults previously examined. However, the semiotic medium used, i.e. that of eye gaze, is different. Immigrant students become the recipients of the insulting gaze of their majority classmates and neighbors. Thus, the verb *is/was looking* is complemented by the prepositional phrase *in a very strange manner* (Example 26) which indicates negative evaluation. This behavior of majority classmates probably explains why immigrant students feel so ashamed of their difference (see Examples 25).

### d. *Excluding behaviors*

General references to excluding behaviors:

- (28) Society doesn't accept you easily [high school essay]
- (29) At the beginning they were very close hearted and reserved, not for some particular reason but because we were from another country and they were afraid of us [lyceum essay]

The above examples describe the obstacles immigrants meet on their way to integration. These obstacles are usually related to the fear majority people felt due to the fact that immigrants have different origins (Example 29).

Specific references to excluding behaviors by peers and classmates:

- (30) Nobody wants me to be his friend [primary school essay]
- (31) Kids didn't want to hang out with me because they didn't know me [high school essay]
- (32) In my neighborhood no kid plays with me, because I come from another country [primary school essay]
- (33) Kids (...) didn't play with us and they pushed us aside [lyceum essay]
- (34) The first day at school nobody wanted to sit next to me [lyceum essay]
- (35) Kids at my school ignore me [lyceum essay]
- (36) Kids didn't like me and they avoided me "like I had done something (wrong) to them". They didn't even touch me [lyceum essay]

The excluding behaviors attributed to peers and classmates involve majority students' reluctance to establish social relations with immigrant students, such as friendship (Example 30), fellowship (Example 31), playing (Example 32, 33), sharing the same desk in class (Example 34). This lack of social contact is highlighted by emotionally loaded expressions such as *they pushed us aside* (Example 33), *Kids at my school ignore me* (Example 35), *They didn't even touch me* (Example 36).

Specific references to excluding behaviors by neighbors:

- (37) My neighbors don't talk to me [primary school essay]
- (38) Tenants of the other apartments, when they realized that we come from Albania, started to collect signatures in order to kick us out of the house [high school essay]

According to the above extracts, intense excluding behaviors are attributed to majority neighbors as well, who live together with immigrant families but avoid talking to them (Example 37). Neighbors are represented to even collect signatures to evict them from the building where they all stay (Example 38).

#### e. *Abusive behaviors*

Specific abusive behaviors by peers and classmates:

- (39) Some kids are bullying me [primary school essay]
- (40) Kids in Greece (...) were hitting us [high school essay]
- (41) All students spit on me and they throw my bag away [primary school essay]
- (42) During the break boys were hitting me very hard [primary school essay]

This final category includes the most violent racist behaviors, i.e. those containing physical threat and abuse. In particular, we identify descriptions of majority students' actions denoting body abuse or intention for body abuse: *Some kids are bullying me* (Example 39), *Kids in Greece (...) were hitting us* (Example 40), *All students spit on me* (Example 41), *boys were hitting me very hard* (Example 42). Violence is not only physical but also symbolic: In Example (41) an immigrant student mentions that majority students threw his bag away to humiliate him.

#### 4.2.3 Summary

In the previous section we classified expressions referring to racist behaviors included in the immigrant students' essays of our data. We presented five categories of racist behaviors which exhibit graded intensity and threat against immigrant people. We argue that the graded threat against immigrants' face is actually reversed and targets the collective positive face of the majority people when racist behaviors are described in immigrant students' essays. In Bhabha's (1994/2004, 123, 127) terms, immigrant students, activating the discursive means of mimicry, reverse "the look of surveillance" to a "displacing" and "menac[ing]" gaze. This results from the fact that, when immigrant students refer to threatening acts against them, they do not highlight the positive but the negative traits of majority people, i.e. their contempt and aggressiveness against immigrants. The intensity of the threat against the majority face depends on immigrant students' linguistic and stylistic choices, as shown in our analysis. We will elaborate on the threat against the majority face in the following section.

### 4.3 Racist behaviors: From legitimizing identities to hybrid resistance identities

Employing Bamberg's (2011) model of the three dilemmatic positionings, i.e. *constancy and change*, *sameness versus difference*, *agency (adjustment or resistance)*, we could summarize the common points of the immigrant essays of our data. A representative case is the essay in Example (1). Our attention will be focused on the third dilemma which is related to the racist behaviors examined in the previous section.

Immigrant students represent themselves (and/or their parents and relatives) as not being in a permanent, stable situation but in a process of intense *change* in their lives, since they have moved from their place of origin to Greece. Their arrival at Greece brought to the surface a dominant national/xenophobic discourse: The members of the majority highlighted immigrants' linguistic and cultural *differences* and stigmatized any type of linguistic and/or cultural contact and mixture. Thus, newcomers were assigned to a different social category, i.e. that of (*foreign*) *immigrant people*. Predicates bound to this category are the following:

Insufficient knowledge of the Greek language, different habits and ways of living, low educational level, low-prestige/manual work, criminal activities etc. (see Section 2.1.4. and Archakis 2016). As already mentioned, apart from the social category of *majority people*, the membership categorization device *living populations in Greece* now includes the social category of *immigrant people*, among various others categories.

At this point, the third dilemma concerning the *agency* of the represented immigrants emerges, i.e. their positionings in relation to dominant discourses in social circulation. The dominant national discourse seems to give 'two options' to immigrant people: Either to become assimilated or, alternatively, to become permanent victims of racist behaviors and eventually to become marginalized and excluded. In other words, the dominant national discourse pursues immigrants' assimilation via their racist treatment and the threat of social exclusion (see Example 1). Such a treatment has proved most effective as, e.g., Albanian immigrants in Greece have to a significant extent become invisible from the majority by making their family names look and sound like Greek ones, by participating in Orthodox Christian celebrations and by learning Greek very quickly (see Gogonas 2010, 75, 78, 91, 101–102, 157). Thus, our data support the claim that immigrant students are forced to conform to the dominant national discourse. More specifically, our data demonstrate the racist behaviors of the majority triggered by the dominant national discourse, stigmatizing linguocultural differences and aiming at their elimination (see the examples of Section 4.2.).

In Section (4.2.) we classified the expressions via which immigrant students describe majority's racist behaviors against them. We distinguished five categories of racist behaviors that are graded according to the degree of threat they imply for immigrant students' personality. In particular, we identified denigrating behaviors, verbal insults, eye gaze insults, excluding behaviors and abusive behaviors. Via these descriptions, immigrant students position themselves towards the national, xenophobic and homogenizing discourse as victims of racist behaviors caused precisely by this discourse. Racist behaviors have led them – or even coerced them – to accept the assimilative directives and to adopt *legitimizing identities*. This is attested by the fact that the vast majority of available essays do not contain explicit references to racist behaviors (see Table 1).

However, we assume that the limited number of essays including descriptions of racist behaviors (see Table 1) constitute a resistance initiative 'from below', i.e. from the immigrant students. Their decision to refer to their sufferings functions like "a counter-gaze that turns the discriminatory look (...) back to itself", as Bhabha (1994/2004, 67) would put it. This decision damages the face of the majority members, thus demonstrating an effort by some immigrant students to construct a *hybrid resistance identity*.

As already mentioned in Section (2.1.4.), in the western world humanitarian and antiracist views promoting tolerance and acceptance are in social circulation. Thus, racist behaviors do not seem to be tolerated, or rather, they are covered up or mitigated. In this context, we could exploit Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory suggesting that the wish for appreciation and solidarity, i.e. the positive face of a group of people or of its members, is threatened, when the positive characteristics of this group (or of its members) are not highlighted or when negative comments are made for them. As shown in Section (4.2.), various descriptions of racist behaviors coming from majority people and targeting immigrants are included in our data. This means that in the essays examined, immigrant students unveil what majority people should not have done. Thus, they stigmatize majority people and damage their collective positive face (see Sifianou and Bayraktaroğlu 2012). Using various linguistic means, immigrant students show that they do not accept the racist behaviors of the majority, thus building *hybrid resistance identities* against majority racist actions and against the national, assimilative discourse. Via these identities, "the 'pure' and original identity of authority" is disavowed, as Bhabha (1994/2004, 159) would put it.

## 5. Concluding remarks

Our study draws on Critical Discourse Analysis and focuses on descriptions of racist behaviors identified in immigrant students' school essays functioning as identity texts. One important parameter of our analysis pertains to the relation between the macro-level involving the dominant assimilative context in Greece and the micro-level involving the particular linguistic and narrative choices and positionings of immigrant students.

The classification and analysis of our data have shown that some immigrant students choose to resist the assimilative pressures of the national homogenizing discourse, constructing hybrid identities that are not aligned with the stereotypical categorical assumptions of their inferiority and submissiveness. In particular, we discovered a limited number of essays where immigrant students referred to the racist behaviors they experienced through more or less strong evaluative linguistic means.

Employing Bamberg's (2011) model of the three dilemmatic positionings, we highlighted the changes observed in immigrants' lives and their reception as foreigners in the host country, i.e. Greece. In this context, first we discussed how racist behaviors contribute to creating homogenizing expectations with regard to immigrant people entering Greece. We assumed that such racist behaviors operate as a means for promoting the homogenizing discourse and, eventually, for imposing



it on immigrant people who in turn adopt legitimizing identities and demonstrate compliance. On the other hand, the references to racist behaviors in immigrant student essays constitute a form of resistance: They damage the collective face of the majority (despite the fact that not all majority people agree with racist behaviors and hopefully few exhibit such behaviors). Thus, the descriptions of racist behaviors in immigrant students' essays do not only show that immigrant students are forced to adopt legitimizing identities, but also that they nevertheless attempt to construct hybrid resistance identities against the majority's assimilative norms, i.e. identities that are not aligned with the stereotypical categorical assumptions of their inferiority and submissiveness.

To conclude, the few immigrant students of our sample who include descriptions of racist behaviors in their essays show that immigrants do not constitute a uniform category. This is something also attested in other research findings (Papandreou 2013; Archakis 2014; Michail and Christou 2016). These few immigrant students do not explicitly state that they comply with the assimilative views of the national discourse or that they oppose them. They rather demonstrate the harsh and painful situation they and other immigrants experience, even if many of the latter avoid such references. The difference between the immigrant students who include racist descriptions in their essays and those who avoid to do so, is that the former attempt to strike a 'hybrid balance'. On the one hand, they have to face the coercing discourse of national homogenization that causes racist behaviors; on the other, they wish to resist it by revealing racist behaviors, thus damaging the face of the majority victimizer. And as Bhabha (1994/2004, 157–158) reminds us, "resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act" but it "is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses". It is our contention that those immigrant students who fight to strike this balance also underline the ambivalence between the dominant norms and discourses in Greece and their own cultural pride.

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