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UKRAINIAN IDENTITIES IN THE GREEK MEDIA: CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF THE "ACCEPTABLE" REFUGEE

Abstract. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Ukrainian refugees fleeing their homeland appear to have been more positively perceived in European countries and media than those coming from Asian or African countries, who were treated with suspicion and even hostility. The present study focuses on the identities Ukrainian refugees construct for themselves while addressing the Greek audience and attempting to become accepted by them. We specifically examine Ukrainian refugees' oral narratives embedded in Greek news reports, where they recount their experiences from the war zone, their fear and uncertainty for the future, their concerns for those who were left behind, as well as their experiences and expectations in the host country. The analysis in terms of the model of three dilemmas (Bamberg 2004, 2011) and the typology of racist strategies (Karachaliou *et al.* 2024) will demonstrate, respectively, how Ukrainian refugees frame themselves and their trajectories after deciding to leave their country of origin, and how aspects of the Greek national/racist discourse become part of how Ukrainian refugees perceive and represent themselves in front of the Greek audience.

Keywords: racism, national discourse, liquid racism, internalized racism, identities, narratives, small stories

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1. Introduction

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, more than 5 million refugees left for neighboring countries within a few months (Bellizzi *et al.* 2022). Even though Greece does not share borders with Ukraine, it was one of the European countries hosting Ukrainian refugees. As a result, the displacement of such a large number of people was extensively reported in the Greek media. In contrast to migrants[3] coming from Asian or African countries, Ukrainians were more positively perceived in European countries (including Greece; see Michali, Tsakona 2024 and references therein). Previous research has shown that Asian or African migrants are treated with suspicion and even hostility when they arrive in European or other Western countries, hence they attempt, or are forced, to mitigate or subvert the negative stereotypes at their expense through, for instance, their narratives (see Aliai, Tsakona 2020; Archakis 2020; Giaxoglou, Spilioti 2024; and references therein).

In this context, the present study investigates Ukrainian refugees' narratives embedded in Greek news reports, where they share their experiences from the war zone, their fear and uncertainty for the future, their concerns for those who were left behind, as well as their experiences and expectations in the host country. More specifically, we are interested in bringing to the surface the identities Ukrainian refugees construct for themselves while addressing the Greek audience and attempting to become accepted by them. In such an effort, Ukrainian refugees seem to align themselves with the dominant Greek national and racist values and views about how migrants 'should' behave in a nation-state such as Greece.

To this end, we first discuss the concepts of *national discourse* (see among others Archakis 2020) and *liquid racism* (Weaver 2016; Archakis, Tsakona 2024c), which are central to our study (section 2.1). We also elaborate on how narratives are employed for the construction of identities (section 2.2) focusing specifically on migrant identities (section 2.3). Then, we present the data of our study (section 3.1) and the methodological

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[3]   Being aware of the distinction between *refugee* and *immigrant* as to the reasons of mobility, we adopt here the term *migrant* as an umbrella term (see also Archakis, Tsakona 2024b: 2).

tools employed for their analysis (section 3.2). Section 4 includes the analysis of representative examples of our dataset: the analyzed narratives refer to Ukrainians' experiences from the first days of the war and their escape from Ukraine (section 4.1), their lives in Greece (section 4.2), and their future plans (section 4.3). Finally, in section 5, we summarize our findings and some limitations of our study.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. National discourse, liquid and internalized racism

In contemporary nation-states such as Greece, national discourse aims to build a homogeneous community where one language and one culture prevail. However, this is not always feasible due to migration: people cross national borders for various reasons and 'threaten' the attempted homogeneity of nation-states. Whether migrants will be accepted or not by the host majorities seems to depend on the former's willingness to become part of the 'homogeneous' community and on the extent of that willingness. Migrants who adapt to the local culture, values, and language, namely they assimilate to national discourse, have more chances of becoming accepted by local majorities. On the contrary, those who resist national discourse and respective values are more often than not denigrated and marginalized by local majorities and may eventually be excluded from nation-states. Thus, national discourse (re)produces inequalities between migrant/minority and majority populations as well as between assimilated and unassimilated migrants (see Taguieff 2001: 21; Wodak 2015; Archakis 2016: 60-61; Nguyen 2016; Archakis, Tsakona 2022: 163-164; 2024a: 227-228; 2024b: 5-7, 14-18; and references therein).

Given that it is not always easy to assimilate or exclude migrants, majority members usually resort to covert and mitigated racist strategies to denigrate and stigmatize them. Nowadays, in Western nation-states, racism is not commonly expressed through blatant violent acts and overt hostility against Others, but is still present and widespread in mitigated, ambiguous, and eventually normalized forms of speech, hence it is not always easy to detect it in everyday communication (see among others

Wodak 2015). Weaver (2016) calls this kind of racism *liquid racism*. Liquid racism surfaces in (con)texts where both racist and antiracist meanings coexist and overlap, resulting in disguising racist assimilation and exclusion as non-racist or even antiracist claims and positions (Weaver 2016; Tsakona *et al.* 2020; Archakis 2021; Archakis, Tsakona 2024c; Tsakona 2024).

Being hard to detect, liquid racism seems to be "immune" to criticism (Weaver 2016: 63) and eventually infiltrates migrants' own discourse: they end up accepting and internalizing the majority's racist values and views, thus undervaluing themselves and their own cultures and languages. Such an acceptance and naturalization of majority racist values by minority populations is called *internalized racism* and seems to be quite common among migrants who acquiesce to national discourse and assimilate to respective values and norms in their effort to become accepted by their hosts (Pyke 2010: 353; see also Speight 2007; Nguyen 2016; Archakis, Tsakona 2022, 2024b). Minority groups thus end up embracing the dominant national discourse: their interests are determined on the basis of the majority interests, so the conflict between the two groups is minimized and the former become assimilated to the latter (Pyke 2010: 556).

It is in this context that we investigate Ukrainian refugees' narrative identities in Greek news reports: we examine if and how such identities align with Greek national discourse showing their assimilation to it and, thus, gaining access to public (media) discourse.

2.2. Narratives and the construction of identities

Within the social constructionism paradigm, identities are not individuals' innate and permanent features but are discursively constructed in interaction within diverse social contexts. Hence, speakers may construct various, even unexpected, contradictory, or subversive identities depending on how they wish to present themselves in front of a specific audience (see among others Bucholtz, Hall 2005: 588; Benwell, Stokoe 2006; Archakis, Tsakona 2012).

More specifically, identities are not something given and unchangeable in time, that is, something people *have* (De Fina 2011: 267). Instead, speakers reflect on their identities, constantly recreate them, and adjust them to the

different conditions they may have to deal with (Giddens 1991: 52-53). Consequently, speakers may build multiple identities depending on when, where, for what purpose, about what, etc. they are talking. Concurrently, they present their own perspectives on social events, hence identities do not constitute 'objective descriptions' of who speakers are but subjective interpretations emerging in interaction (Gauntlett 2008: 108). In this sense, identities convey our value-laden interpretations of social affairs and, as such, they become a significant and most relevant part of narratives and their analysis (De Fina 2003; Bamberg 2011: 103).

Narratives are often examined as *loci* where a wide range of identities is constructed, as they allow speakers to reconstruct, interpret, and share their experiences. Through narratives, speakers create a world where they place themselves and/or other people as protagonists. The form and content of narratives reveal aspects of the narrator's self, e.g., their values and views as well as aspects of their cultural and social identities. In other words, narratives constitute an important resource through which we can manage ourselves, our identities, and those of others (Schiffrin 1996: 167, 170-171, 199). At the same time, narratives allow us to construct (versions of) social reality: narrators choose those events and details they deem important for representing the social context and their own identities (Bauman 1986: 5; Bamberg 2011). Such choices depend on the audience that narrators address each time (Bamberg 2011; Archakis, Tsakona 2012; Baynham, De Fina 2017; De Fina 2020; Giaxoglou, Spilioti 2024; Lampropoulou, Johnson 2024). In this sense, narratives should be perceived and analyzed not only in terms of their content and structure but as a social practice which is shaped and makes sense in certain historical and social conditions, since they are circulated in bigger or smaller communities and anchored in time and place (De Fina 2020).

In sum, narratives allow for the construction of various, context-dependent identities through discursive choices and projected evaluations or feelings that narrators ascribe to themselves or others (Ochs, Capps 1996: 20-22). As Toni Morrison stated, "[n]arrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created" (cited in Ochs, Capps 1996: 22). Moreover, important parameters for narrative analysis are the audience addressed each time and narrators' intentions in relation to the expectations of that audience.

2.3. *Narratives and migrant identities*

As already mentioned (in section 2.2), narratives constitute an important means of identity construction. Narrators often project a positive image of themselves so as to become accepted by their intended audience. When it comes to migrant narrators, this wish for acceptance may be rather strong, hence narrators tend to represent themselves as aligned with what they perceive as the dominant values of their intended audience (De Fina 2000: 131-132). Relevant research, however, shows that migrant narrators' identity constructions are more complex than that. In this section, we briefly refer to different studies focusing on migrant identities constructed via narratives. Our aim is to illustrate the variety of identities surfacing therein as well as the significance of context for such discursive constructions.

Following Castells' (2010: 8) distinction, Archakis (2020: 190-194) suggests that migrant identities emerging from narratives may constitute *legitimizing*, *resistance*, or *project identities*. Legitimizing identities are constructed by those migrants who choose to assimilate themselves to majority norms and expectations under the pressure of national discourse. Resistance identities are built by those migrants who experience marginalization and exclusion because they are not willing to yield to assimilationist, nationalist, and eventually racist pressures, but instead prefer to maintain their heritage cultures and languages. Project identities are hybrid constructs combining elements from the cultures and languages of origin and from those of the host country. In the latter case, migrant narrators create more complex identities and place themselves in between assimilation and resistance (see also Archakis 2022).

By oscillating between different cultures and languages, hybrid identities enable narrators to create bonds with the host countries without disrupting those with the countries of origin. For instance, such identities are built by Greek migrants living in Canada and interviewed by Greek researchers. Greek Canadians wish to maintain their connection with both Greek and Canadian cultures. On the one hand, they seem to claim Greekness and position themselves positively towards their Greek heritage; on the other, they distance themselves from Greek identity by praising the positive aspects of Canadianness (Karachaliou *et al.* 2018).

Narratives revealing that identities are an ongoing process are produced, for instance, by Vietnamese-Ukrainian university students who were forced to return to Vietnam after the Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2022 (Wessling *et al.* 2024). Being second-generation migrants in Ukraine, the Vietnamese students participating in this study construct hybrid ethnic identities: they represent themselves as Vietnamese due to their origins, tradition, values, and language; and as Ukrainians on the basis of their birthplace, upbringing, formal education, sense of belonging, language, and mentality. Wessling *et al.* (2024) analyze narratives referring to different periods of the students' lives ranging from their birth in Ukraine to their settling in Vietnam as war refugees. It seems that during their childhood narrators experienced stressful situations due to the ways they were treated by the members of the Ukrainian majority. This led to their marginalization, confusion, self-doubt, and rendered them introverts. However, through certain strategies (e.g., speaking a mixed language variety of Ukrainian and Vietnamese and avoiding eating Vietnamese food outside of the home), the students in question showed eagerness to become accepted, that is, they attempted to assimilate themselves into the local culture (Wessling *et al.* 2024: 1-4, 9-12). Later on, the war in Ukraine brought about significant changes in their identities due to the uncertainty, fear, and trauma they felt: some of them constructed for themselves a Ukrainian identity mobilized by patriotism, while others experienced a conflict of identities, as in Ukraine they were treated as foreign students, but in Vietnam as war refugees and repatriated migrants (Wessling *et al.* 2024: 13-14).

Building positive migrant identities is usually the goal of migrant narratives curated by institutions offering administrative, legal, financial, or other support to migrants. Such narratives are circulated in the online sphere and may highlight the migrant narrator's personal experience, but eventually they serve the interests of the institution responsible for the publication of the narrative (De Fina 2020: 7). For instance, De Fina (2018) analyzes a video including migrant narratives uploaded to the website *United We Dream*. These narratives appear to project favorable representations of undocumented migrants within the US context. On one hand, they aim at sensitizing the wider audience to migrants' difficult experiences and, on the other, they aim at representing migrants as "desirable citizens". In particular, migrant narrators build a positive public image for themselves as individuals who accept core values of the host country, such as work ethics, honesty, altruism,

and the struggle for a better future. All these are framed as 'American' values which are required for migrants' acceptance and integration in the host country (see also Lampropoulou, Johnson 2024).

In a similar vein, Aliai, Tsakona (2020) investigate curated migrant narratives published on the Greek webpage of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Their analysis brings to the surface migrant identities which are compatible with the moral values of the Greek majority and aim at sensitizing the wider Greek audience to migration issues. It is interesting to note here that the narratives examined by Aliai, Tsakona (2020) are often concluded with accounts of not past but future events: migrant narrators refer to their goals to assimilate to local norms and expectations, to move and settle in another country, or even to return to their countries of origin after receiving considerable assistance from IOM. Such curated narratives seem to be part of IOM's effort to gain Greek people's support at a time when migration towards Greece was a particularly controversial issue among Greeks (see also Kavalari 2024).

The collectivization of personal experience is the focus of Giaxoglou, Spilioti's (2024) study, who analyze the curated version of the personal story of an asylum seeker called Zakaria Alo. The curated narrative is uploaded as an infographic story on the webpage *EU Protects*. The analysis reveals that Alo's personal narrated experience is exploited as a collective experience pertaining to the entire migrant population. Through the collectivization and projection of exemplary images for asylum seekers, EU officials attempt to discursively construct them as "desirable citizens" who are not only eager to integrate into the host country, but also express their gratitude toward its majority population. Such stories, the researchers claim, become useful tools for representing the EU under a favorable light and for highlighting core values ascribed to the EU, such as acceptance and solidarity. At the same time, they silence events and procedures which could disclose the complexity and diversity of migrant experiences.

To sum up, narratives play an important role in the sense-making and representation of migrant experiences. Migrant narrators construct various identities therein: they often attempt to strike a balance between 'there' (*i.e.*, their country of origin) and 'here' (*i.e.*, the host country) by combining different linguacultural features; or their rejection and marginalization by host majorities may lead them to the construction of

resistance identities by maintaining their original linguacultural particularities. In addition, curated migrant narratives constitute an important area of research for identity construction, since such narratives become useful tools in the hands of the powerful institutions that edit and publicize them for their own benefit. The migrant narratives scrutinized here could be placed somewhere in between these two categories: in the news reports examined here, Ukrainian migrants in Greece tell their own stories, but their content and form are shaped not only by the media framework and the Greek audience's expectations, but also by the questions or comments offered by the journalists who interview them.

3. Data and methodology

3.1. *The data of the study*

The aim of our study is to analyze Ukrainian refugee narratives included in Greek television news reports in order to trace the identities that narrators construct *vis-à-vis* the Greek national discourse and its homogenizing impositions (see sections 1-2.1). To this end, we compiled a dataset of 38 oral *small stories* (approximately 24,000 words in total) broadcast on television and embedded in 11 written news reports uploaded to the webpage of the state-owned Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (*Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία Τηλεόραση* in Greek; henceforth ERT). *Small stories* constitute brief stories characterized by fluidity and accounting for future or hypothetical events, shared/known past events, recent or ongoing events, etc. (Georgakopoulou 2007). The small stories under scrutiny refer to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Greece as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In these video-clips, Ukrainian refugees are interviewed by Greek journalists working in ERT and talk about their experiences from the moment they were forced to leave Ukraine (*i.e.*, February 2022) until approximately 10 months after that. It should be noted here that most of the news reports collected were published during the first month of the war (9 out of 11 news reports; 32 out of 38 narratives; see *Table 1*), when the Greek media, in general, dedicated more space and time to Ukrainian refugees and their trajectories.

The data of the study

Date of publication of the news reports	Number of news reports	Number of narratives and narrators embedded in the news reports
28.02.2022	2	8 (3 men/5 women)
01.03.2022	1	2 (1 man/1 woman)
06.03.2022	1	6 (all women)
08.03.2022	1	6 (all women)
10.03.2022	1	4 (1 man/3 women)
17.03.2022	2	5 (1 man/4 women)
23.03.2022	1	1 (woman)
12.04.2022	1	3 (all women)
23.12.2022	1	3 (1 man/2 women)
Total	**11**	**38 (7 men/31 women)**

The narratives under scrutiny refer to the following topics:

- The first days of the war and refugees' escape from Ukraine
- Refugees' lives in the host country
- Refugees' future plans.

In what follows, we analyze examples covering all the above-mentioned topics and illustrating the variety of migrant identities constructed therein.

Given that the narratives come from interviews with Greek journalists, they were elicited by questions or comments offered by them. Thus, Ukrainian refugees shape their narratives and identities not only bearing in mind that they address the wider Greek audience but also taking into consideration the journalists' questions or comments. Such questions and comments usually pertain to the above-mentioned topics (*i.e.*, the first days of the war, refugees' escape from Ukraine, their lives in the host country, and their future plans). Even though such questions or comments are not the main focus of our study, they cannot be ignored during the analysis of the narratives as they play a more or less significant role in how Ukrainian refugees build their narrative identities. Most importantly, they seem to reflect what the state-owned television channel thinks the Greek public wants to hear about themselves in relation to the Ukrainians (e.g., that Greeks are superior, helpful, and tolerant), as well as how the Greek state and journalists as its representatives promote official state positionings

and decisions concerning the Russian-Ukrainian war. As we intend to show, the narratives under scrutiny allow Ukrainian refugees to project themselves in certain ways, but these ways cannot help but be influenced by the (often nationalist) expectations of the Greek majority as Ukrainians experience them in Greece and as journalists reproduce them in their discourse (cf. De Fina 2020: 7).

It should also be noted that the narratives analyzed here are either told in Greek, or translated from Ukrainian or English, with the Greek translation appearing in subtitles in the videoclips (especially when narratives were told in English). The translations were mainly assisted by Ukrainians: some Ukrainians who came to Greece in 2022 either returned to Greece, where they had lived and worked for some years in the past, or were members of the Greek diaspora in Ukraine (see examples 5 and 9). These are also the ones who tell their stories in Greek in the interviews. This means that the translator also acts as a mediator between Ukrainians and the Greek audience shaping the content and form of the narratives and hence the identities included therein.

Last but not least, even though the narratives are originally videotaped, due to space limitations, we concentrate here on the verbal aspects of the narration without taking into consideration other semiotic resources such as camera frames, narrators' (and journalists') appearances and movements, and editing procedures.

Despite these limitations, we consider that the narratives examined here could shed some light on how Ukrainian refugees position themselves *vis-à-vis* the Greek audience and the dominant national/racist discourse (cf. Bamberg, Georgakopoulou 2008: 382).

3.2. Analytical tools

In order to analyze migrant identities in our small stories, we rely on Bamberg's (2004, 2011) model of three dilemmas which will reveal how Ukrainian refugees frame and interpret themselves and their trajectories after deciding to leave their country of origin. Furthermore, in order to show that the emerging narrative identities are indicative of Ukrainian refugees' internalized racism, we will use the typology of racist categories offered by Karachaliou *et al.* (2024). These categories will allow us to

trace the aspects of racist discourse that are endorsed by Ukrainian migrants in their effort to become accepted by the Greek audience (for the combination of these analytical tools, see also Kavalari 2024).

3.2.1. Bamberg's model of three dilemmas

Bamberg (2004, 2011) suggests that, in order to address the question of "Who am I?", narrators are faced with three dilemmas (see also Archakis 2020: 204-205; Lampropoulou, Johnson 2024: 207-208):

- *1st dilemma – Constancy and change across time*: The narrator or other represented characters may change or remain the same as time goes by. Emphasis is placed not so much on the narrated events *per se*, but on how stability or change is represented by the narrator (Bamberg 2011: 103-104).
- *2nd dilemma – Sameness versus difference*: This dilemma involves whether a represented character is different from, or the same as, the others. In other words, narrators discursively construct themselves or others as more or less similar in terms of values, views, ways of living, etc. depending on the context in which they are placed each time (Bamberg 2011: 104-105).
- *3rd dilemma – Agency*: This dilemma pertains to the narrators' agency *vis-à-vis* dominant discourses. Narrators may represent themselves as low-agency individuals acquiescing to dominant discourses and assuming the role of the victim or passive recipient in a certain situation; or as high-agency individuals being strong and in control of the situation they find themselves in (Bamberg 2011: 106). In the present case, this dilemma could be used to account for Ukrainian narrators' assimilation (low agency) or resistance (high agency) to the Greek national discourse (cf. Archakis 2020: 205).

3.2.2. Karachaliou et al.'s typology of racist categories

As already mentioned (in section 1), our goal is to show how through their narrative identities Ukrainian refugees align themselves with the

dominant national/racist expectations to which they have been exposed since the moment they arrived in Greece. In other words, our emphasis is on tracing how aspects of the Greek national/racist discourse are reproduced in Ukrainian refugees' narratives and become part of how they perceive and represent themselves in front of the Greek audience. To this end, we employ Karachaliou *et al.*'s (2024) typology of discursive strategies that indicate racism and are commonly attested even in antiracist discourse. As these authors convincingly argue, such strategies are pervasive and normalized to such an extent that they may infiltrate texts intended as antiracist, non-racist, or even subversive of racism.

The typology in question is based on the premise that racism is materialized through either *discrimination* at the expense of Others or their *assimilation* to dominant values and ways of living (Karachaliou *et al.* 2024: 48−64; on discrimination and assimilation as the main aspects of national/racist discourse, see section 2.1). Via the analysis of a large corpus of antiracist texts, Karachaliou *et al.* (2024) come up with different categories of discursive strategies either discriminating against or assimilating Others. These are the following:

Discrimination:
- References to Others as a problem
- References to illegal/legal Others
- References to anonymous Others
- References to temporary Others
- References to inactive Others
- References to Others as victims
- References to Others as recipients of help

Assimilation:
- (General) references to integration/inclusion practices
- References to mitigated racism denouncements
- References to learning Greek [or any dominant/official language] as an L2
- References to migrants' positive stance towards practices of integration

By tracing at least some of these categories in Ukrainian refugees' narratives and identities, we intend to show their internalized racism, namely their

acceptance of the Greek majority's discriminatory and assimilative perspectives on them as Others.

4. Data analysis

4.1. The first days of the war and refugees' escape from Ukraine

In the small stories of this category, Ukrainian refugees share their experiences from the first days of the Russian invasion and the conditions in their country of origin. They often report that, although they managed to escape, members of their families are left behind.[4]

(1)   Δημοσιογράφος: Ξέρουμε ότι περάσατε πολύ δύσκολα, κάνατε ένα πολύ μεγάλο ταξίδι, πώς το βιώσατε όλο αυτό;
Ντιάνα: Ναι, πολύ δύσκολα, ήτανε δραματική η κατάσταση, ήταν ακριβώς στα σύνορα. Πολλοί φεύγουνε οι άνθρωποι και, όπως βλέπετε, πιο πολύ οι μαμάδες με τα παιδιά, γίνεται χαμός στο σύνορα, επειδή άντρες δεν αφήνουνε να περάσουνε και κλάματα, γιατί οι γυναίκες φεύγουνε με τα παιδιά τους. Εμείς είμαστε από τη από την πόλη Λβιβ, που είναι δυτική πλευρά της Ουκρανίας. Είναι δίπλα πιο πολύ στην Πολωνία και από κει φεύγουνε πάρα πολλοί οπότε, γιατί κάθε δύο ώρες ακούγαμε ήχους, σειρήνες ήτανε, και οι άνθρωποι φοβούνται, δηλαδή πρώτες μέρες γίνανε κάτι, πέσανε κάτι βόμβες στο στρατιωτικό αεροδρόμιο και τώρα έχουμε και άλλα και σε άλλο στρατιωτικό σημείο, πιο πολύ αυτό τους νοιάζει. Προς το παρόν δεν είχαμε σε κάποιες πολυκατοικίες, ευτυχώς, αλλά στις άλλες πόλεις διπλανές χειρότερα ακόμα η κατάσταση.
Παρουσιάστρια: Βασίλη, η ίδια έχει αφήσει την οικογένειά της εκεί; […]
Ντιάνα: Ναι, έχω αφήσει στην πόλη μου τη γιαγιά μου, τη θεία μου, τους συγγενείς μου, τους αδερφούς μου (ERT 2022b).

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[4]   The oral narratives were transcribed and translated from Greek by the authors for the purposes of this study. Narrators' first names are not always mentioned during the interviews. When they are not, they are identified as *fe/male narrator*.

Journalist: We know that you have been through hard times, you made a very long trip, how did you experience all this?

Diana: Yes, [it was] very difficult, the situation was tragic, it was exactly on the borders. Many people are leaving and, as you see, [they are] mostly mothers with children, there is panic on the borders, because men are not allowed to cross them, and people cry, because women are leaving with their children. We are from the city of Lviv, which is in the western part of Ukraine. It is closer to Poland and many people leave from there so, because every two hours we heard noises, they were sirens, and people are scared, that is, on the first days something happened, some bombs fell on the military airport and now we have more [bombs] on another military spot, this is what they [*i.e.*, Russians] are most interested in. For the time being we didn't have [bombs falling] on apartment blocks, fortunately, but in other neighboring cities the situation is even worse.

News presenter: Vasili [addressing the male journalist], has she [*i.e.*, the interviewee] left her family there? […]

Diana: Yes, I have left my grandmother in my city, my aunt, my relatives, my brothers.

(2)   Κατρίνα: Η *πόλη μου δεν είναι πρωτεύουσα και δεν είναι κοντά στα σύνορα με τη Ρωσία, αλλά ωστόσο βομβαρδίζεται κάθε μέρα. Η οικογένειά μου είναι ακόμη εκεί και προσπαθούν κάθε μέρα να σώσουν τη ζωή τους* (ERT 2022a).

Katrina: My city is not the capital and it is not close to the borders with Russia, however, it is bombarded every day. My family is still there and they try to save their lives every day.

(3)   Αφηγήτρια: Φίλοι μας, *ο πατέρας μου, ο σύζυγός της αδερφής μου, όλοι έμειναν στην Ουκρανία, γιατί δεν τους επιτρέπεται να περάσουν σε άλλη ευρωπαϊκή χώρα. Θα πρέπει να μείνουν σπίτι να υπερασπιστούν την πόλη μας. Είναι ένας μεγάλος πόλεμος. Υπάρχουν τόσοι πολλοί νεκροί άνθρωποι, τόσα πολλά νεκρά παιδιά. Φοβάμαι πολύ* (ERT 2022c).

> Female narrator: Our friends, my father, my sister's husband, all stayed in Ukraine, because they are not permitted to go to another European country. They will have to stay home to defend our city. It is a big war. There are so many dead people, so many dead children. I am so scared.

In example 1, Diana presents herself as a person who experiences a sudden and dramatic change (*the situation was tragic…*): she refers to the violent changes in everyday 'normal' life (*every two hours we heard noises, they were sirens, some bombs fell*) resulting in her being forced to leave the homeland and members of her family. Her identity is built around change affecting her everyday life, place of residence, and her connection with family members (1st dilemma). As to the 2nd dilemma, her identity as a refugee who was forced to leave her homeland places her in the same group as other Ukrainians, especially women and children (*many people are leaving, mostly mothers with children, there is panic on the borders, women are leaving with their children*) and in a different group from the Greek audience she addresses. In addition, her reference to her city and family as well as the use of first-person plural (*we are from the city of Lviv, we have more [bombs] on another military spot*) underline her similarities with other Ukrainians who are brought together by the same experiences. Furthermore, Diana portrays herself as a high agency individual who took the initiative of leaving her country to save herself (*I have left my grandmother in my city…*; 3rd dilemma).

In a similar vein, in example 2, Katrina's identity is built around the notion of change (1st dilemma) as her everyday life is no longer what it used to be (*My city is not the capital and is not close to the borders with Russia, however, it is bombarded every day*).

Finally, in example 3, the female narrator experiences a dramatic change in her everyday life and in her sense of security when the war begins (*it is a great war, there are so many dead people, so many dead children*; 1st dilemma). Simultaneously, her identity is also constructed through the 2nd dilemma of sameness/difference: she differentiates herself from those who stayed behind because they were not permitted to leave the country (*they are not permitted to go to another European country, they will have to stay home*). As to the 3rd dilemma involving the narrator's agency, she portrays herself as a low-agency individual living in fear and feeling weak (*it is a big war, I am so scared*).

Viewing the analysis above in terms of the categories of racist discourse explored by Karachaliou *et al.* (2024), we could suggest that the narrators present themselves as Others in the Greek context, and as victims due to the difficulties they were faced with when the war began. In example 1 in particular, such a representation seems to be prompted by the journalists' comments framing the narrative (*we know that you have been through hard times, you made a very long trip, has she left her family there?*).

4.2. Refugees' lives in the host country

The small stories of this category concentrate on Ukrainian refugees' adjustment to the host environment. More specifically, they try to learn the Greek language and adjust themselves to the new educational environment. Some of them also express their satisfaction with Greek people's hospitality.

(4)   Δημοσιογράφος: Στην πιο τρυφερή τους ηλικία χιλιάδες παιδιά έχουν βγει στον δρόμο της προσφυγιάς. Η Ελλάδα άνοιξε την αγκαλιά της και έχει υποδεχθεί ήδη 2000. Αρκετά από αυτά που άφησαν στη μέση το σχολείο τους έχουν ενταχθεί ήδη σε τάξεις, όπως στη Δράμα όπου φοιτούν τέσσερα.
Αφηγήτρια: Από τις πρώτες μέρες που πήγε σχολείο έρχεται πάρα πολύ χαρούμενη, την αρέσουν να κάνει στο σπίτι της αυτά τα φυλλάδια που δείχνουνε, να ζωγραφίζει και αυτά, χαρούμενη έρχεται, στο σχολείο πολύ της αρέσει (ERT 2022c).

Journalist: In their most tender age, thousands of children have left their countries as refugees. Greece has opened its arms and has already welcomed 2,000 [of them]. Several of them who dropped out of their schools are already integrated into [Greek] classrooms, like in Drama [*i.e.,* a city in Northern Greece], where four of them attend courses.
Female narrator: Since the first days she [i.e., the narrator's daughter] went to school, she comes back [home] very happy, she likes to work at home on the handouts provided, to paint them too, she comes back [home] happy, she likes school very much.

(5)   Δημοσιογράφος: Γλιτώσατε από τον πόλεμο και έχετε έρθει σε
ένα νέο περιβάλλον στο σχολείο, πώς είναι να αφήνεις το σπίτι
σου, το σχολείο σου; Είστε έτοιμοι; Είστε έτοιμες με τις τσάντες να
πάνε στο σχολείο πως είναι πλέον στην Ελλάδα αυτή η νέα αρχή;
Αφηγήτρια 1: Εντάξει, είναι λίγο δύσκολο γιατί ντάξει. Τρίτη
λυκείου πανελλήνιες και όλα αυτά, αλλά προσπαθούμε. Να
αφήσουμε το σπίτι μας και το σχολείο ήταν δύσκολο πάρα
πολύ, γιατί ήμασταν εκεί τρία χρόνια το έχουμε συνηθίσει,
είχαμε συνηθίσει να πηγαίνουμε παντού με τα πόδια από το
σχολείο στο σπίτι, ενώ εδώ είναι διαφορετικά τα πράγματα.
Δεν είναι, δεν είναι χωριό ας πούμε, όπως μέναμε στον Σαρτανά.
Δημοσιογράφος: Εδώ στη Ραφήνα υπάρχουν και παιδιά που
είναι από την Ουκρανία, για σας είναι πιο εύκολο λόγω
γλώσσας. Βοηθάτε εδώ τους φίλους που δεν ξέρουν τη γλώσσα
να προσαρμοστούν;
Αφηγήτρια 2: Πάντα βοηθάμε, γιατί πρέπει να βοηθάμε. Ουσιαστικά
τώρα που έχουν αρχίσει να πηγαίνουν σχολείο θέλουν μεγάλη
βοήθεια, γιατί δεν την ξέρουν καλά τη γλώσσα. Οπότε είναι
λίγο δύσκολο για αυτούς, μαθαίνουν καινούργιες λέξεις ελληνικών
στο σχολείο, αλλά το καλό είναι ότι ξέρουν να γράφουν και
μερικά πράγματα να διαβάζουνε (ERT 2022d).

Journalist: You escaped the war and you have come to a new
school environment, how does it feel to leave your home behind,
[to leave] your school? Are you ready [to do this]? Are you ready
with the school bags to go to school [meaning] that now this is a
new beginning taking place in Greece?
Female narrator 1:[5] OK, it's a bit difficult because OK. [She goes to
the] 3rd year of Lyceum [*i.e.*, the final year of Greek secondary
education] [and has to sit for] university entry exams and all that,
but we try. It was very difficult to leave our home and our school
because we had been there for three years [and] we are used to it,
we were used to going everywhere on foot from school to home,

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[5]   The two narrators in this example are sisters and they either have lived in Greece in
the past or have learnt Greek from their Greek expatriate parents.

but here things are different. It's not, it's not a village, let's say, like when we lived in Sartana [*i.e.*, a village in Eastern Ukraine].
Journalist: Here in Rafina [*i.e.*, a suburban port town close to Athens] there are also children who are from Ukraine, it is easier for you because of the language. Do you help here your friends who do not speak the [Greek] language to adjust themselves?
Female narrator 2: We always help, because we must help. In fact, now that they have started going to school, they need lots of help, because they do not speak the [Greek] language well. So, it is a bit difficult for them, they learn new Greek words at school, but it's good that they know how to write and to read a few things.

(6)   Αφηγήτρια: Είμαστε εννιά μήνες εδώ, είναι πολύ φιλόξενοι όλοι και μας έχουν βοηθήσει πάρα πολύ (ERT 2022e).

Female narrator: We have been here for nine months, all [Greek] people are very hospitable and have helped us very much.

In example 4, the female narrator talks about her daughter attending a Greek school, which makes both very happy (*since the first days she [i.e., the narrator's daughter] went to school, she comes [home] very happy… she likes school very much*). Thus, the narrator underlines their similarity with Greek people and their acceptance by the Greek school, which seem to be important for Ukrainian refugees' integration and assimilation (2nd dilemma). The narrator indirectly expresses her gratitude for, and satisfaction with, Greek people's support.

In example 5, female narrator 1 refers to the fact that they were forced to abandon their place of origin, and to her sister's and her own effort to adjust themselves to a new reality (*it was very difficult to leave our home and our school*). Her words reveal that their lives changed drastically: due to their displacement, they lost their sense of stability and comfort (*we had been there for three years and we were used to it… but here things are different. It's not, it's not a village*). In the host country, they try (*we try*) to accommodate and to create a new sense of stability (1st dilemma). Such an identity construction is explicitly prompted by the journalist's question (*You escaped the war and you have come to a new school environment… this is*

a new beginning taking place in Greece?). In the same example, when the journalist asks whether the narrators help those Ukrainians who do not speak Greek (*do you help here your friends to adjust themselves, who do not speak the [Greek] language…?*), female narrator 2 refers to the support they provide to other refugees learning the Greek language. Thus, she portrays her sister and herself both as belonging to the group of refugees who recently arrived in Greece and to those who know the Greek language either because they lived in Greece in the past or because they learnt it from their Greek expatriate parents (2nd dilemma).

In example 6, the female narrator acknowledges Greek people's hospitality and help (*all [Greek] people are very hospitable and have helped us very much*), thus showing that she feels accepted as a member of a new community, but at the same time she maintains a sense of difference as she states that she has been here for 9 months only (*we have been here for nine months*; 2nd dilemma). By acknowledging Greek people's support for her and other Ukrainians, she frames the whole group as dependent on majority members' generosity, thus constructing a low-agency identity for Ukrainians (3rd dilemma).

Taking into consideration the discursive categories of racism identified by Karachaliou *et al.* (2024), we observe that racism infiltrates Ukrainian refugees' narratives as they present themselves as assimilated individuals or individuals willing to be assimilated to the norms and standards of the Greek majority. More specifically, in example 5, learning the Greek language is projected as a prerequisite for Ukrainian students' integration into the new school environments (*now that they have started going to school, they need lots of help, because they do not speak the [Greek] language well... it's good that they know how to write and to read a few things*). It, therefore, seems that assimilation processes are taken for granted by them, as also shown in example 4, where the young student appears to be happy to assimilate herself into the new Greek school. The same holds for example 6, where Ukrainian refugees are positioned as inactive and passive recipients of help coming from the Greek majority. The narrator's reference to Greek hospitality points to Ukrainian refugees' dependent position, as the latter need the Greek majority's support to adjust themselves and survive.

4.3. Refugees' future plans

The small stories of this category refer to the nostalgia Ukrainian refugees feel for their homeland, their wish to return there someday and to rebuild it after the war. The narrators highlight their emotional attachment to their country of origin as well as their expectations concerning Greek and EU support for starting a new life. It is not uncommon for migrant narrators to produce future narratives or to conclude narratives of past events by referring to their hopes for the future (see Aliai, Tsakona 2020; Arvanitis, Yelland 2021; on stories of future/hypothetical events, see also Georgakopoulou 2007).

(7)   Αφηγήτρια: Όλοι θα γυρίσουμε στα σπίτια μας και θα χτίσουμε μια νέα ζωή για την χώρα μας. Το πιστεύω (ERT 2022c).

Female narrator: We will all return to our homes and we will build a new life for our country. I do believe that.

(8)   Αφηγήτρια: Ναι, το έχω σκεφτεί πάρα πολλές φορές ότι θέλω να γυρίσω πίσω γιατί είναι σαν δεύτερη χώρα της ζωής μου. Είναι σαν δεύτερο κομμάτι της ζωής μου. […] Έχω αφήσει εκεί όλους, τους φίλους μου στο σχολείο που το έχω συνηθίσει, ουσιαστικά που περπατάμε με τα πόδια παντού. Έβγαινα με τους φίλους μου και πηγαίναμε με τα πόδια παντού και είναι λίγο στεναχωρητικό που αφήσαμε τη χώρα μας για έναν πόλεμο ο οποίος δεν έχει νόημα.
Αφηγητής: Νομίζω πως ήταν το μεγαλύτερο δώρο που μπορούσαμε να δώσουμε στα παιδιά μας. Το να κρατηθούμε εγώ και η σύζυγός μου να είμαστε ζωντανοί. Οι εικόνες και οι μνήμες οι οποίες θα έχουν και θα τους συντροφεύουν για πάντα στη ζωή τους θα είναι μόνο πολεμικές. Αν υπήρχε και ο θάνατος θα ήτανε δραματικότερες. Όλα τα υπόλοιπα θα γίνουν. Αυτό έχουμε υποσχεθεί στα παιδιά και θα γίνει πραγματικότητα. Υπάρχει βοήθεια της Πολιτείας, Ελληνικής Πολιτείας. Υπάρχουν οι ευρωπαϊκές οδηγίες, οι οποίες αγκαλιάζουν και στηρίζουν αυτές τις προσπάθειες, τη θέληση την έχουμε και εμείς για μια καινούργια αρχή, αρκεί που είμαστε στη ζωή. Θα

γυρίσουμε πίσω για να δούμε τι έχει απομείνει. Αν μπορούμε να φέρουμε έστω και ένα πιρούνι, μια οδοντογλυφίδα πίσω, θα τη φέρουμε. Προσωπικά δεν νομίζω ότι θα βρω τίποτα, αλλά έστω και ένα πραγματάκι. Κάτι που να μας θυμίζει αυτό που υπήρχε (ERT 2022d).

Female narrator: Yes, I have thought about it many times, that I want to go back because it's like a second country of my life. It's like a second part of my life. […] I have left everybody there, my friends at school where I am used to going, we actually go everywhere on foot. I used to go out with my friends and we went everywhere on foot and it's a bit disappointing that we left our country for a war that has no meaning.
Male narrator: I think that this was the greatest gift we could give to our children: the fact that my wife and I managed to stay alive. [Our children's] images and memories [of the country of origin] which will remain in their minds for the rest of their lives, will only be war-related. If death were added [to the memories], they would be even more tragic. Everything else will be fixed. This is what we have promised our children and it will come true. There is help coming from the State, the Greek state. There are European directives which endorse and support such efforts, we also want a new beginning, as long as we are alive. We will go back to see what's left [after the war]. If we can bring back [with us] even a fork, a toothpick, we'll do it. Personally, I don't think that I will find anything, but [I hope to find] just a small thing. Something to remind us of what was there.

(9)   Δημοσιογράφος: Να μπορέσει να επικοινωνήσει με τη μητέρα του θέλει για τα φετινά Χριστούγεννα ο Σάββας που βίωσε τη σκληρότητα του πολέμου.
Σάββας: Αδερφό μου έχασα και τον παππού μου έχασα. […] Τα Χριστούγεννα να περάσω μαζί με την οικογένειά μου, ναι, θα κάνουμε το βιντεάκι με με τη μαμά μου, κάπως έτσι νομίζω θα ναι. […]

Σάββας: Είχα προγιαγιά που ήταν ελληνίδα, είναι οι ρίζες μου και εκτός *από αυτό ξεκίνησα να μάθω ελληνικά στο σχολείο, μ' άρεσε διαφορά μεταξύ το διάλεκτο δηλαδή κρητική και ελληνική για παράδειγμα ζαρβά είναι αριστερά* (ERT 2022e).

Journalist: Savvas who experienced the cruelty of war wishes to be able to communicate with his mother for this Christmas.
Savvas: I lost my brother and I lost my grandfather. […] I will spend Christmas with my family, yes, we will create a small video clip with with my mum, I think it will be like this. […]
Savvas: I had a grandmother who was Greek, these are my roots and besides I started learning Greek at school, I like the difference between dialects, that is, the Cretan and the [standard] Greek ones, for example, zarva means left [in the Cretan dialect].

In example 7, the female narrator expresses her wish to recreate their lives after the war (*we will all return to our homes and we will build a new life for our country*), that is, to change her current status and return to what was previously considered as normal (1st dilemma). Via 1st person plural (*we will all… our homes and we will build… our country*) she constructs a collective identity and includes herself in the group of refugees with whom she shares common hopes and expectations for the future, while simultaneously distancing herself from the majority of the host country (2nd dilemma). Finally, through expressions such as *we will all return*, *we will build a new life for our country* and *I do believe that*, she represents herself as a powerful and determined person who will actively shape her future despite the uncertainties of the war. In other words, she portrays herself as a high-agency individual (3rd dilemma).

In example 8, the female narrator talks about her life-changing experiences: she left her everyday activities and friends in Ukraine, which makes her sad (*it's a bit disappointing*), and she longs to return there one day to reclaim that stability (*I want to go back, because it is like a second country of my life*; 1st dilemma). Via 1st person plural (*we actually go everywhere on foot, we went everywhere on foot, we left our country*) she also portrays herself as similar to those who left Ukraine and as different from the host majority (2nd dilemma). Finally, leaving a country which

she perceives as a significant part of her life portrays her as a high-agency individual who is capable of making difficult decisions (3rd dilemma).

The male narrator in example 8 also seems to be willing to return to Ukraine and claim even a small mundane object (*a fork, a toothpick*), thus identifying himself with those Ukrainians who would like to at least visit their homeland for one last time, and differentiating himself from the Greek majority (2nd dilemma). The use of 1st person plural throughout his narrative contributes to the same effect. However, he also presents himself as a caring husband and father protecting his family from physical and psychological harm, thus highlighting a similarity with the host majority (*this was the greatest gift we could give to our children… This is what we have promised our children*; 2nd dilemma). In addition, the male narrator attempts to strike a balance between an independent/high-agency and a dependent/ low-agency self: on the one hand, he wishes to take control of his life (*this was the greatest gift we could give to our children: the fact that my wife and I managed to stay alive, this is what we have promised our children and it will become true, as long as we stay alive, we'll do it*) and, on the other, he expects support from Greek and EU authorities to start anew in Greece (*there is help coming from the Greek state. There are European directives which endorse and support such efforts*; 3rd dilemma).

In example 9, Savvas' life has changed as now he lives away from his homeland and he has lost some family members to the war (*I lost my brother and I lost my grandfather*; 1st dilemma). Moreover, Savvas attempts to identify himself with the Greek majority by referring to his Greek grandmother and to his Greek language skills (*I had a grandmother who was Greek, these are my roots and besides I started learning Greek at school, I like the difference between dialects…*; 2nd dilemma), thus wishing to gain Greek people's acceptance and respect. Finally, his assimilation into the Greek majority through his language skills and his partially Greek origins shows his low agency (3rd dilemma).

In terms of the categories of racist discourse identified by Karachaliou *et al.* (2024), both discrimination and assimilation strategies are attested in the narratives of this category. When it comes to discrimination, the Ukrainian narrators present themselves as temporary inhabitants of Greece, thus underlining their Otherness. They also construct themselves as passive recipients of state support and as victims of an unfair war. As to

assimilation, they refer to their efforts to learn the Greek language, and even to their knowledge of non-standard Greek dialects (example 9), thus showing their eagerness to integrate themselves linguaculturally.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The goal of our study was to examine the identities emerging in Ukrainian refugees' narratives during Greek news reports. More specifically, we focused on the identities which relate to their experiences and plans ever since they were forced to abandon their country of origin and during their stay in Greece as a host country. Our findings suggest that Ukrainian narrators' identities point to both their discrimination by and assimilation into the Greek majority: through the use of racist discursive strategies to refer to themselves, Ukrainian narrators appear to have internalized the racism surrounding them in the host community.

Our narrative data come from video clips embedded in news reports broadcast in ERT, the Greek state-owned media, during the first year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Their analysis in terms of Bamberg's (2004, 2011) model of 3 dilemmas show that Ukrainians position themselves *vis-à-vis* the changes in their lives due to the war (1st dilemma): they were forced to move to another country, lost their sense of stability, some family members, etc. Narrators perceive the adjustment to the new community as a new challenge that will eventually help them regain their sense of stability. Nevertheless, they also portray themselves as willing to return to their homeland someday, thus presenting themselves as non-permanent residents of Greece.

Their identities are also shaped through their connection with other Ukrainians and their differentiation from Greeks (2nd dilemma). The refugee narrators of our dataset construct a collective identity via references to the shared experiences of war. Simultaneously, living in Greece creates a sense of differentiation, since the host environment is perceived as new and different from what they were used to. The Ukrainian narrators attempt to bridge this gap by learning the Greek language and adjusting themselves to the new sociocultural context.

Furthermore, Ukrainian narrators present themselves as dependent on other people's help and as low-agency individuals who have limited control over the events that affect their lives (mostly war-related ones). Hence, on the one hand, they often express their gratitude towards members of the Greek majority for their hospitality and support, and seem to assimilate themselves to the latter's (racist) expectations. On the other hand, in some cases, Ukrainian narrators portray themselves as high-agency individuals willing to take things into their own hands: they made the difficult decision of leaving their homeland and/or they wish to make a new start by returning to Ukraine and rebuilding it.

The categories of racist discourse investigated by Karachaliou *et al.* (2024) have proven most useful for our analysis, since they allowed us to explore if, to what extent, and why Ukrainian narrators have internalized widespread racist values and views surrounding them during their stay in Greece. Under this light, in terms of discrimination, they appear to present themselves as victims and passive recipients of Greek majority's support and generosity, thus positioning themselves as inferior and submissive to them. Their gratitude for the financial or other support coming from the Greek state or majority points to an unequal power relationship between Ukrainians and Greeks. At the same time, Ukrainians' wish to return to their homeland and their sense of non-permanence in Greece reveal that they perceive themselves as Others. On the other hand, their eagerness to learn the Greek language is framed as a way to assimilate to the new community. Table 2 shows the categories of racism identified in each thematic category of narratives:

The categories of racism identified in the thematic categories of narratives

Thematic category of narratives	Category of racism: Discrimination	Category of racism: Assimilation
The first days of the war and refugees' escape from Ukraine	References to Others as victims	
Refugees' lives in the host country	References to inactive Others References to Others as recipients of help	(General) references to integration/inclusion practices References to learning Greek as an L2 References to migrants' positive stance towards practices of integration
Refugees' future plans	References to temporary Others References to Others as victims References to Others as recipients of help	(General) references to integration/inclusion practices References to learning Greek as an L2 References to migrants' positive stance towards practices of integration

Our analysis demonstrates that the Ukrainian identities that are granted access to the wider Greek audience through state-owned media are those whereby Ukrainians align themselves with the national/racist expectations of the Greek majority: Ukrainians are positioned as inferior, grateful, temporary residents, and eventually non-threatening for the cohesion and homogeneity of the nation-state. Such identities are often prompted (if not dictated) by the journalists who interview Ukrainian refugees through the former's questions or comments, in order to construct the image of the "acceptable refugee". This is compatible with widespread political values and views within not only the Greek but also the EU context (see also Michali, Tsakona 2024 and section 2.3). In other words, it is not accidental, in our view, that in Greek news reports Ukrainians are portrayed as willing to be assimilated, culturally aligned with the Greek context, and non-permanent recipients of financial or other support. Through their questions and comments during the interviews with Ukrainian refugees, Greek journalists make sure that such a dependent and temporary positioning renders the former acceptable in the eyes of the Greek audience.

At the same time, journalists working for a state-owned television channel put forward what they and the Greek state assume that the Greek public want to hear about themselves in relation to Ukrainian refugees (e.g., that Greeks are superior, hospitable, and tolerant). Moreover, these elicited narratives may indicate a broader government effort to maintain public support for Greece's official policy regarding the war and the reception of Ukrainian refugees. A more detailed examination of journalists' interventions may shed more light on how these utterances work in shaping interviewees' narratives (Michali in preparation).

Needless to say, there are certain limitations in our study, which could be overcome by future ones. Among other things, a more extensive corpus of refugee/migrant narratives could be more enlightening as to the variety of identities narrators construct when interviewed in the host communities. It would also be interesting to compare the dataset analyzed here with similar narratives broadcast on private television channels or other media. In any case, the role journalists play in shaping such identities also seems to be crucial and, hence, it is worthy of further investigation. As already shown in the present study, journalists' interventions and refugees' own awareness that they address the wider majority audience, may influence the refugees' narrative strategies and projected identities by, for instance, curtailing their spontaneity and resistance to majority norms and expectations. Moreover, it is impossible to know whether the state-run television channel may have edited out parts of the narratives that could have included different content or additional references to the topics already identified (see also section 3.1). Last but not least, we consider it most interesting to compare Ukrainian refugees' narrative identities emerging during the first year of their stay in Greece, to those emerging nowadays, that is, more than 3 years after the war began. Ukrainians' perspectives and experiences may have more or less reshaped their wishes and expectations concerning living in Greece.

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CORPUS

ERT.2022a, February 28. The first refugees from Ukraine arrive in Greece. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSyAVhaGfLU&t=121s [in Greek]

ERT.2022b, February 28. In Greece the first refugees seeking shelter. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zw0wmeDlooQ&t=9s [in Greek]

ERT.2022c, March 10. Hundreds of refugees from Ukraine found shelter in Greece. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVKhvltCwfU [in Greek]

ERT.2022d, March 17. Expatriates from Ukraine are hosted in a camp in Rafina – "We want a new life", they say to ERT. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YJ-lDbnMUs&t=10s [in Greek]

ERT.2022e, December 23. Ukrainians' first Christmas away from the homeland. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-z2MVcjMI&t=53s [in Greek]

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