

PhD program in Mass Communications

Construction of Identity of the Crimean Tatars in The Ukrainian media discourse

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Research interests: media discourse analysis, ethnic identities, collective memory, Crimean politics

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Research problem

The Crimean Autonomous Republic is an ethnically diverse region and the only region in Ukraine where the Crimean Tatars, a Muslim ethnic group, lives within compact vicinity among the Slavic majority (mostly ethnic Russians and Ukrainians). Crimean Tatars, who suffered deportation in 1944 by the Stalin regime, have been returning en masse to their native lands since the 1980s. They consider themselves indigenous population to the Crimean peninsula and demand respective political and cultural rights as well as in need for state support of their economic and cultural development.

Despite the long-lasting attempts for economic and cultural integration of the returnees, the Slavic majority of the Crimea shares a high level of xenophobic beliefs towards the Crimean Tatars, their culture and religion, excluding them from political and social spheres.

National and regional media play a crucial role in shaping the exiting popular beliefs about the Crimean Tatars as well as sustaining and reproducing a certain image of this ethnic group, influencing both how the Crimean Tatar population perceives its own national identity and how it is being imagined by the rest of the Ukrainian society.

Research questions

1. How is the Crimean Tatar identity being constructed by the Ukrainian media discourse?
2. How do the Ukrainian media shape the self-identification of the Crimean Tatars?
3. Which narratives of deportation communicated by the media discourse impact the Crimean Tatar national identity?

The study is grounded in the social constructivism ontology and uses critical discourse analysis and audience analysis as dominant methodological approaches.

The research examines practices of representation of the Crimean Tatars in the texts of the leading Ukrainian national and the Crimean regional printed and online media outlets. Additionally, historical narratives of the 1944 deportation are analyzed in the national, Crimean as well as the Crimean Tatar national media.

Conducting of the audience analysis in the last chapter of the thesis is aimed at the study of perception of the media discourse by the population of the Crimea – the Crimean Tatar and the Slavic majority.

Based on the research findings a theoretical model or a key argument will be developed.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis, collective memory, deportation of the Crimean Tatars, exclusion, hate speech, ideology and common sense.