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DOCTORAL THESIS

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS  
IN THE UKRAINIAN MEDIA DISCOURSE

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## Summary

Crimea is a unique, ethnically diverse region of Ukraine where the Crimean Tatars, live within compact vicinity among the Slavic majority. In 1944 this ethnic group has undergone deportation by the Soviet regime and since the late 1980s started to return en masse to Crimea. Crimean Tatars constitute 14% of the Crimean population, and they are a politically active ethnic group.

**Research objectives.** Current study seeks to explore the ways in which media discourse reflects and shapes the popular image of the Crimean Tatars in the Ukrainian society. The research is aimed to discuss the key discursive strategies utilized by the media to construct the identity of the group, reflecting the power inequality between the Crimean Tatars and dominant ethnic groups of Ukraine and Crimea.

**Methods.** The dissertation provides an analysis of the media representation of the Crimean Tatars in the Ukrainian media discourse by theoretical and methodological means of the critical discourse analysis. The study shares the idea of the discursive nature of the social reality and the statement that the collective identities are constructed and constantly (re)negotiated in discursive interactions. In addition, 11 Crimean journalists and media experts were interviewed to contextualize the textual analysis.

**Chapter outline.** The study comprises of the introduction, four chapters and the conclusion. Chapter two outlines the features of the Ukrainian media landscape and discusses the literature on the Crimean Tatars. Chapter three provides a detailed account of the structure and features of the Crimean Tatars' representations by the national and Crimean mainstream media during the 2010-2012. An additional sample of media texts from 2007-2012 covering the Crimean Tatars' deportation is analyzed in chapter four. The total number of media texts in both samples is 1429.

**Research findings and conclusions.** The research findings demonstrated that the agency of the Crimean Tatars is mostly suppressed or passivated, they are represented in the less powerful position, as recipients of the state concessions. But in the news about conflicts or street confrontations, the Crimean Tatars are often positioned as an active subject, which “demands” and “criticizes”, rather than “seeks dialogue”.

One of the dominant ideological frames of the media representation of the Crimean Tatars is a frame showing the group “as a problem and burden” for the majority and a source of a potential threat and disorder. The key argument of the study is that the mentioned strategy used by the Ukrainian and Crimean media is part of the larger discursive strategy of the 'positive-self' and 'negative-other' presentation, typical for the discriminatory rhetoric of ethnicism, widely used in the European media against minority groups and studied by the Western scholars (T. van Dijk, N. Fairclough, S. Riggins).

On the other hand, research demonstrated features of the Crimean Tatars' media representation directly related to the post-Soviet political and cultural legacy, which

influences the Crimean public and media discourses. The Russian dominance is manifested in the media representation of the commemoration of the Crimean Tatars' deportation of 1944 (mostly by the indirect and subtle forms) and the Crimean politics of memory remained under ideological influence of the Soviet historical meta-narrative. The Crimean Tatars in turn constructed and promoted their own version of memory of deportation in order to justify their return from exile and reestablish their historical and cultural ties with their land. The research has revealed the elements of the counter-discourse, which aims to undermine the dominant power relations. In this regard, the Crimean Tatar national media put emphasis on publication of the personal narratives of the deportation survivors in order to promote their alternative meaning of deportation.

**Key words:** discourse analysis, media representation, national identity, the Crimean