

Nationalism and the Media  
Ethnic Minorities Portrayal in Russian Television Series

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## ABSTRACT

Russian contemporary society experiences nationalistic moods contagion that causes tensions among different ethnic groups. The subject of these tensions, ethnic minorities, comprises 22% of the population, a total of 26 million people (RFSSS, 2010). However, relatively little research is conducted on the topic of ethnic minorities media representation in Russia. Scholars focus on television news coverage though entertaining media is being neglected in existing academic research. The project explores ethnic minorities representation in the Russian television series in order to fill in the lacuna. It combines theoretical foundations from nationalism theories and media representation theory to explore the particular case. The first theoretical pillar brings a specific understanding of ethnicity as a socially constructed notion; the second one contributes by explaining the media role in ideology transmission. As a method, the thesis uses Multimodal Discourse Analysis to investigate the chosen series from a multimodal perspective. It allows the researcher to fix meanings in a variety of semiotic resources as well as explores socio-economic and political influences on the media representations. Project's results provide confirmatory evidence that ethnic minorities in the series are undervalued — they are represented as insignificant parts of the Russian society. Furthermore, the data appear to suggest five ethnic minorities representation themes exist in the Russian TV discourse — money, traditionalism, aggression, illiteracy and criminality. However, some tensions within this discourse were also discovered. As such, five representation themes are problematic only within ethnic characters — the same characteristics for Russian characters are approved and justified. Moreover, the research has found that the series frequently mock the society itself for being xenophobic and judgmental.

**KEYWORDS:** Ethnic minorities, Nationalism, Media Representations, Russia, Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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## 1. Introduction

I write this introduction on the day following the fight at Moscow's Khovanskoye cemetery. According to BBC's "Moscow cemetery brawl: Three dead and 90 arrested" (2016), a mass ethnic riot involving 200 people, 23 grievously wounded and at least three dead, took place in the Russian capital on the 14th of May. As the source report, the fight happened owing to tensions between two ethnic groups. The event had been the subject of a high local and international news coverage and emphasised once again the fact that Russian society experiences a significant rise in radical ethnic nationalistic beliefs.

<u>Ethnic group</u>	<u>Percentage of the whole population</u>
Russians	77,71%
Tatars	3,72%
Ukrainians	1,35%
Bashkirs	1,11%
Chuvashes	1,01%
Chechens	1,00%
Armenians	0,83%
Avars	0,64%
Mordovians	0,52%
Kazakhs	0,45%

The subject of the tensions in Russia, ethnic minorities, comprises 22% of the population, a total of 26 million people (Table 1). Disturbingly, apart from ethnic Russians, the Western Slavic population that is also guided by nationalistic moods is only 2% of country's population. Ukrainians and Belorussians are those indigenous Slavic groups commonly perceived as ethnic "friendlies". Mostly, nationalistic moods affect ethnic communities from Caucasus as well as immigrants from post-Soviet states located in South-West and Central Asia. Non-Slavic groups from these regions do not share traditional Orthodox Christian values, language and are thoroughly consistent with Islam that makes them culturally

different from ethnic Slavs. The largest group, approximately 4%, are Tatars, followed by Bashkirs, Chuvashes, Chechens, Armenians, Avars, Mordovians and Kazakhs.

The social importance of the problem is high as these nationalistic sentiments are no longer passive in a way they used to be in the Soviet era; nowadays, they partly cause an increase in violence and interethnic crimes appearance — Khovanskoye fight is a vivid example. According to SOVA Center for Information and Analysis, in the past two years 19 migrants from Central Asia were reported to be killed, 41 injured. Moreover, citizens from Caucasian Region were attacked with 8 killed and 13 injured (Yudina & Alperovich, 2015). It is important to underline that the amount of not reported crimes is not estimated by the Center.

From personal experience, being brought up in Russia, I have plainly seen how xenophobic moods create a tension between different ethnic groups making the environment hostile and insecure. As a set of ideas penetrating various realms of Russian life, nationalism creates Schmitt's us-versus-them dichotomy. It implies the perception of ethnic communities as not of equal citizens but rather of subordinate elements excluded from the society (Schmitt, 2008). Despite the fact that ethnicity per se is a socially constructed concept (Gellner, 1983, Anderson, 2006), nationalistic discourse understands it as an inherited and fatal characteristic of an individual affecting interpersonal communication and public attitudes. Here, nationalism has become a veritable ideology, a base for Russian identity and a crucial set of beliefs about Russian societal and political environment. It is often brought up in political campaigns, variously manipulated by state's officials and is frequently noticed in the media (Rogoza, 2014, Gudkov, 2005, Alexseev, 2010).

The aim of this work is to address the issue from a media perspective. According to critical theorist Stuart Hall, media representations are always consistent with society's dominant ideology (1996, 1997, 1981, 1990). They continuously reproduce community's existing discourses and establish events' meanings in coherence with those discourses. During the process, representations both appear influenced by the ideology as well as they further contribute to ideology's circulation. As media are image constructors and broader reflections on societal values, studying their content contributes to a broader understanding of underlying ideologies of a particular society. As such, analysing media representations of Russian ethnicities will inevitably contribute to an elaborate comprehension of how "our

images of the world are skewed in the ways they inevitably are” in relation to contemporary Russian society (Kidd, 2016, p.8).

The focus of this project is entertaining television series and there are three rationales underpinning the choice. Firstly, with their constant reference to “real” situations, proximate characters and existing events, television series seem suitable for the project. In academic research, sitcoms and television dramas have been called representations of society rather than simple reflections (Tager & Ngwenya, 2011). By watching television audiences “gain knowledge and understanding of themselves and others and the world in which we live” (Gillespie, 2005, p.138. Also Lull, 1990, p.40; McQuail, 1987, p.73; Taylor, 1989, p. 153). Subsequently, the ethnic content we watch on television reveals insights about the way we think of ethnicity, our own identity, our values and the system of ideas circulating in the society.

Secondly, television itself is a highly popular mass media source in Russia. Despite the fact that new digital media is growing, television remains dominant. In 2014, Russians watched 282 minutes of TV content per day. These numbers put the country in top five in accordance with an average daily TV viewing time rating per person (Ofcom, 2015, p.139).

Finally yet importantly, during the preliminary stage of this research, an academic gap on the topic has been identified. Obviously, Russian scholarly literature has already noticed mass media plays an important role in stirring up ethnic hatred (Habenskaya, 2005; Malkova, 2002; Sledzevskiy, Filippov & Habenskaya, 1999). However, existing research on the topic of ethnic media representations concentrates solely on journalism. A number of works articulating the problem explored newspapers, television and radio news from an ethnic perspective (Enina, 2002, Verkhovskiy, 2007, Zvereva, 2002). Nevertheless, ethnic minority representations haven't been researched in Russian entertaining media and this project is going to contribute to this gap's reduction by television series investigation.

Based on these considerations — the social importance of the problem and the existing academic gap in the scholarly literature, the aim of this work is to answer the following research question: *How do Russian television series represent ethnic minorities?*

In the thesis ethnicity is seen as a socially constructed category. The notion of ethnicity is grounded in particular social and political circumstances rather than it exists invariably. Ethnicities are ideas that are not real per se but created and justified by humans. Here, media

plays an important role in representing ethnicities from a peculiar perspective that is in sync with societal values of an examined society.

The series chosen for the analysis represent the preferences of the Russian audience. Four series were taken for investigation in accordance with the Internet Movie Database rating (ImDb, 2015). In order to answer the question discourse analysis has been applied to the transcribed data. Since discourse is a rather vague set of approaches than a self-consistent method, Multimodal Discourse Analysis was chosen as a narrow and detailed perspective (Halliday, 1994, Kress & van Leeuwen, 2010, O'Halloran, 2004). The method gives excellent agreement with the topic — it analyses media texts as combinations of semiotic resources instead of classical discourse focus on verbal messages. It is absolutely crucial to look at television series from this perspective as movies combine visual messages, sound messages, motion messages all together in order to create meanings for a represented concept.

The work is divided into four chapters apart from introduction and conclusion, each contributing to a successful question's exploration. Following the introduction, chapter two provides main theoretical blocks underpinning the analysis: media representation theory and nationalism. Starting with the latter, nationalism theories support the research with a certain understanding of the main concepts — nation and ethnicity. The work adopts functionalist approach assuming that ethnicities are products of social construction. The subchapter also explains nationalism as an ideology that has a specific attitude to ethnicities as identity-construction notions. Moreover, the first theoretical pillar introduces the Russian case and reveals characteristics of Russian ethnic nationalism. As for media representation theory, it contributes to the project with a specific approach to language, meaning-creation process, and the media role in ideology transmission. Here, media representations are approached as ideology-driven reflections on certain events, ideas and groups that are consistent with society's values.

In the third chapter, the focus moves to the methodology. The chosen method, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, is extremely useful for the project due to its both multimodal and discourse dimensions. As for the multimodality, it helps the researcher to fix representation's meaning in different semiotic resources — sound, picture, motion are taken into account. This is highly relevant for TV series research as movies are complex products, and simple dialogues analysis is likely to miss parts of a represented object's image. As far as discourse



is concerned, it is a special way of object's representation. Here, discourse is a set of ideas providing a specific view on ethnicities within the homogeneous nation that guides the researcher through the analysis. The chapter describes the chosen method in detail, including the rationale, method's procedures, limitations and existing toolkits. It also presents the corpus for the analysis and explicitly articulates on the chosen research design.

Chapter four moves on to the findings of the analysis and their further discussion. It presents the overall trends as well as five reoccurring themes in ethnic minority representation in the Russian TV series. The results provide confirmatory evidence that Russian television series represent ethnic minorities as extraneous individuals excluded from the Russian society — meaningless and subordinate. Along similar lines, the chapter argues there are five main ethnic minorities' representation themes across the series — money, traditionalism, illiteracy, emotions and criminality. The arguments are supported by quotations and cases taken from the transcripts. The second part of the chapter unveils the discussion of the findings. It answers the research question and gives extra speculations on the executed work. A closer look at the data indicates contradictions within ethnicity representation — occasionally the series mock the society for being judgmental and xenophobic rather than depict ethnic minorities in a negative way. Moreover, the analysis appears to suggest the problematic characteristics ascribed to ethnicities are frequently presented by the Russian characters as justified and undoubted.

The concluding section summarises theoretical backgrounds and the conducted research answering the research question — ethnic minorities in the Russian television series are represented as unimportant, insignificant and dependent individuals excluded from the society.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This section presents the project's theoretical background, namely nationalism and media representation theory. This chapter starts with the introduction of the main concepts relevant to the research question — a nation and an ethnicity. Given the focus of the research, the first subchapter presents these concepts as socially constructed categories. It also further elaborates on the notion of nationalism as an ideology with a focus on the different types of nationalisms and their evaluation of ethnicity and nation as identity markers. The subchapter concludes with an introduction of the Russian case. It lists main features of Russian ethnic nationalism as well as underlying reasons behind nationalism's appearance. It provides a detailed discussion of exclusive characteristics that discursively contrast Slavic population with ethnic minorities. Those features inform the researcher during the further analysis as the project seeks to investigate if those are reproduced in the analysed media texts.

In order to clarify the role mass media plays in the process of social construction, the second subchapter, media representation theory, provides a specific view on the language as the means of reality construction. The theory draws heavily on the works of Stuart Hall (1996, 1997, 1981, 1990). His approach fits well with the nationalism theories as Hall equally defines nations and ethnicities as socially constructed concepts. This theoretical discussion concludes with reviewing existing research on ethnic minorities and media representation. It first presents the link between ethnic representations and media channels moving on to exploring existing research on the chosen topic.

### **2.1 Nations and nationalism**

#### **2.1.1 Nation and ethnicity**

The two most common understandings of the term “nation” are discussed within two different scholarly approaches — primordialists and functionalists.

The word primordialist itself stands for “inborn”. Primordialists' general presupposition suggests nationality is an ancient and natural phenomena — to belong to a nation means to have “naturally” predetermined similarities with its members. Primordialists' explanations of national differences are confined to traditional biological differences between ethnicities which are basic and immutable associations of people with well-defined and constant features. To this extent, their approach is often combined with the sociobiologist which goes

further explaining ethnicity from a biological perspective. It states that human ethnic nature is ineffable, even coercive, and concerned more with affections rather than rationality. Primordialists also believe that every nation has its own cultural features set that appeared at the same time as the ethnic groups themselves proving ethnicities' unadulterated nature.

Following that line of reasoning, the main primordialist theory of nationalism is called ethnosymbolism and was developed by Anthony Smith. In one of his major works he suggests a term "ethnies" standing for "human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity" (1986, p. 32). The author links nations with ethnicities; he explains the appearance of nations' diverse characteristics through relating their nature to ethnic backgrounds.

Focusing on the cultural differences, Smith's theory does not consider the intersection between ethnicities and other realms of social life, such as politics. His definition of "nation" does not go beyond his "ethnie" explanation: "a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith, 1991, p.14). However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century this approach seems to be too narrow. It is impossible to look at modern nations without touching upon certain power aspects and investigating the political side of nation-building that classical functionalists do take into account. Moreover, most contemporary nations consist of different ethnicities and cultures. Take for instance Russian capital, Moscow, where Muslims and Christians live together despite sharing diverse values and traditions.

Apart from sharing cultural values, it is important to understand that as well as a nation an ethnicity is also a socially constructed category. Explained by a number of authors interested in the topic, "ethnicity is relational and processual: it is not a "thing", but an aspect of social process" (Eriksen, 1995, p.244). Doubtless, ethnicities have more "real" background than nations — it is a partly biological and anthropological concept. However, social theorists claim that only through social interaction do ethnicities appear (Downing & Husband, 2005, Turner et al., 1987). Unless a direct interaction happens, people are not aware of their differences thus, do not construct their ethnic identities. Moreover, to prove this point, as stated by Eriksen (1995, p.251), the differences that build up an ethnic identity are not those that really exist, but those that group members consider being socially relevant. One of the

simple definitions of ethnicity given by Downing and Husband — ethnicities are “cultures in contact” (2005, p.14).

In the functionalist tradition the nation is approached as a political concept. Functionalists believe that nations are socially engineered or constructed. According to Ernest Gellner, one of the biggest theorists of nationalism, the nation exists when people start thinking of themselves as belonging to the community: “...nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognise certain mutual rights and duties to each other virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members” (1983, pp.6-7).

Following the same line of reasoning, Benedict Anderson proposes a nation is not an innate notion but an “imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2006, p.6). His main argument towards the socially engineered nature of nations is that “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (2006, p.6). His second argument is a certain “comradeship” that holds nations together and sometimes, despite actual inequality within the nation, is the reason behind wars where citizens are willing to kill and die for “such limited imaginings” (2006, p. 7).

The main difference between these two authors lies in their personal attitude. Gellner’s position is evidently more critical. The author uses words “fabrication” and “falsity” while Anderson uses “imagining” and “creation” (Anderson, 2006, p.6). Nevertheless, as far as this research is concerned, both of these authors’ contribution to the understanding of a nation seems important. Whilst talking about ethnic minorities within the borders of the Russian nation-state, the project is based on Gellner’s and Anderson’s ideas on the nation’s nature as a socially engineered concept.

To sum up, the main idea taken from the literature for this research is the assumption that ethnicities do not create nations so the work is framed within functionalist’s approach. Ethnicities are parts of the political unit and can coexist together in modern states but they are

not constructive units of a state's nation. In other words, ethnicities are merely artificial concepts appearing through various social interactions as against being innate characteristics. They are constructed notions and do not exist in reality without human interaction. Here, social attitudes to ethnicities as well as their role in a homogeneous nation are consistent with the set of values in an analysed society. Nationalism, as a particular set of values, can influence prominently the way ethnicity is seen and presented.

### **2.1.2 Nationalism**

The concept of nationalism has multiple definitions. As Aronczyk states, nationalism is “a strategy for nation building that can present itself as either ancient or invented to advance certain ends: systems of belief, political goals of self-determination or legitimacy, or economic incentives” (2013, p.28). As for Smith (1991), nationalism is a movement that seeks to maintain an identity and unity of a nation. Gellner argues that nationalism “is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent”. It “is a theory of political legitimacy” (Gellner, 1983, p.1). All three definitions emphasise an ideological nature of nationalism — it tries to create a national identity with an underlying meaning applicable to different aspects of social life. Here, an ideology stands for “articulated sets of ideas, ideals and purposes which help members of the system to interpret the past, explain the present, and offer a vision for the future” (Easton, 1965, p.290).

Ideologies are certain “mental frameworks” (Hall, 1996, p.26) — different social groups utilise them in order to set a specific way of thinking about society and its processes. These ideologies have an enormous power to shape and alter people's attitudes, they might transform ideas and concepts into ‘common sense’ knowledge. Ideology provides us with broader ideas through which we see the world and reflect on the interests of in- and out-groups. Here, nationalism is a bright example of an ideology giving a unique societal vision that contributes to an essentialist understanding of ethnic ties constructing identities.

Nationalism as an idea appeals to government officials. It might be easily manipulated by politicians or power elites in order to pursue different goals or to fight with various forms of social discontent caused by political discrimination or economic deprivation. As explained by Pamir (1997), the goals of the state might vary from formation to survival as well as the dismemberment of nation states.

All in all, as an ideology likely to be supported by the government — the major political power in the state, nationalism can be called a system of representation that inevitably influences or seeks to influence people’s perceptions of themselves, the others and the world around them. Here, as a concept, the system of representation is similar to the concept of ideology. However, it will be further discussed in the context of representations in the second part of the chapter.

Theories of nationalism highlight two different formats of the ideology: civic nationalism and ethnonationalism, based on the concepts of “nation” and “ethnicity” respectively. Since the latter is central to the Russian case that is analysed in the work, it is important that the differences between the two are outlined.

### **2.1.3 Types of nationalism**

Hans Kohn (1944, 1994) proposed that nation is a primarily political community where everyone has equality after being tightly linked with social constructs as church or class. This kind of nationalism, namely, civic nationalism developed in the countries with long lasting liberal tradition, like Great Britain, the Netherlands or France. However, a slightly different kind of solidarity appeared in countries with a prominent absolutist past. It has overviewed one’s nationality as a natural and long lasting unity ascribed with language, religious and cultural factors in opposition to civic voluntarist idea that appeared across Western European countries. According to Kohn, the countries exposed to the ethnic branch of nationalism are mostly Central European, Eastern European and some peripheral Western European states like Ireland.

Kohn’s dichotomy was widely used by other theorists including Gellner. According to Gellner, the unit of civic nationalism is the state rather than an ethnic group. This nation-state is “the protector” and “the maintainer of the inescapably homogeneous and standardising educational system, which alone can turn out the kind of personnel capable of switching from one job to another within a growing economy and a mobile society, and indeed of performing jobs which involve manipulating meanings and people rather than things” (1983, p.110). Obviously, in a state promoting such beliefs, every citizen is a member of the society. The state’s aim is to unite everyone who belongs to the nation within the territory, legal codes and equal law. However, this is not the case for ethnic nationalists.

Ethnic nationalism defines nations by the ethnic origin of their members. Within ethnic nationalism, following the definition of “ethnie” by Smith, national identity is constructed around blood ties, myths, common memories and shared symbols (Smith, 1986, p.3). The principals of exclusion and inclusion for that type of nationalism are very dependent on a particular society. A variety of criteria that are used by ethnic nationalists may be the phenotype, language, religion, clothes and so on (Eriksen, 1995, p.251). However, from an outside perspective, it might be extremely difficult to study those differences as even within one language vocabulary accents and intonations might be markers for a “stranger”. As the process of identity construction is continuous and fluid, some markers might be embedded in cultural history for a long period of time, triggered by some particular events, others might disappear rather quickly and get replaced by new ones. Former USSR countries, including Russia, have been frequently regarded as examples of ethnic nationalism (Snyder, 1993, Greenfeld and Chirot, 1994, Hagendoorn and Pepels, 2000, Kølsto, 2000).

Nevertheless, many theorists opposed the suggested model. Authors like Schoepflin, for instance, claim, that ethnic foundations in all nations, including Western Europe, are prominent enough — “without ethnicity it is difficult to secure democracy” (2000, p.6). In his work Schoepflin says that even though ethnic ties might be stronger in the modern East, Western states would have never created civic nations without resting upon some ethnic backgrounds. Some other authors stand on the position that ethnic/civic nationalisms are ideal models that can never exist in reality. Following this line of reasoning, authors like Kuzio (2001) or Kymlicka (1999) suggest all nations share both ethnic and civic traits of nationalism, a mixture of cultural, ascriptive, inclusive and exclusive traits creating a solid national identity. Thus, one type of nationalism always compliments the other. However, any type can never exist solely in a society.

Russian nationalism analysed in the thesis is seen primarily as an ethnic one. It constructs Russian identity through ethnic characteristics as well as creates outsiders based on their ethnic affinity. Here, ethnic nationalism highlights the importance of being ethnically Slavic, having light hair and blue eyes and sharing Russian behaviour patterns. The next part is going to introduce the contemporary Russian nationalistic moods contagion as a beneficial discourse for Russian authorities creating a sense of solidarity among the Slavic population.

Moreover, it is going to elaborate on ethnic characteristics that Russian discourse emphasise as truly “Russian” and on those that nationalists ascribe to ethnic minorities.

#### **2.1.4 Nationalism in contemporary Russia**

So far, nationalism has been defined as a discourse and ideology beneficial for the authorities, politicians or dominant groups in the society. The Russian government re-frames civic discontent into a massive hatred towards selected groups, countries or cultures in order to give utterance to their grievances without changing the existing power structures. The following subchapter works on this argument and enriches it with empirical and theoretical proof.

Rooted as far back as the 19th century and penetrating the whole history of the Soviet Union, nationalistic sentiments are now highly influential in contemporary Russia. From the emergence of Soviet Union until its last day of existence there was much tension around the issue of inter-ethnic relations. A soviet citizen was declared to be free from ethnic bias though the true reason behind the absence of ethnic conflicts was the state’s coercive power. In fact, USSR’s main nation from 1930’s was the Russians; equally, the Russian Soviet Republic was always not equal to other units but “first among equals”. After the Second World War authorities emphasised the role of the Russians in the victory further stirring nationalistic views. Moreover, during that period, Stalin accused some nationalities of total “unreliability” and he commissioned the deportation of 3.5 million people including 56 nationalities, such as Chechens and Crimean Tatars (Khiterer, 2004).

As stated by Andrey Shcherbak (2015) in his comparative historical analysis of nationalism in USSR, Joseph Stalin’s measures were the first step towards the appearance of ethnic hatred. They led to the development of latent cultural nationalism within every ethnic republic that waited for its time to be articulated. During Stalin’s rule, USSR experienced a peak of “great-power Russian nationalism, the last period of intensive Russification, and the last period of empire building” (2015, p.882). However, in the late Soviet period, there was a slight change in the officials’ attitudes towards ethnic elites. A lot of autonomy was given to local governances that negatively influenced the way ethnic Russians perceive their historical role in the country today (Shcherbak, 2015). As the author concludes, “the ignorance of the historic legacy of both the Soviet national policy and ethnic conflicts may lead to a new wave



of ethnic conflicts in Russia in the near future” (2015, p.882). Indeed, after the break-up of USSR the Russian state started to emphasise the role of the ethnic Russians as the most important ethnic community within the united nation. A lot of arguments they use are linked to the Soviet epoch where ethnic Russians constantly “have been disadvantaged” (Shevel, 2011, p.185). During parliamentary hearing on the “Russian idea” in 1996 and hearing in the Duma Committee on Nationalities in 2001 the following arguments were used: Russians have been the main victim of totalitarian repressions, their representation in power structure is extremely low, they suffer from demographic decline, supporting other ethnicities at the expense of themselves and so on (Shevel, 2011).

Nowadays, Russian citizens that are ethnically Ukrainian or Belorussian are often perceived as “Slavic” and true Russian in the nationalists’ discourse. They have Slavic appearances (blue eyes, light hair), share Orthodox values and Russian traditions. Moreover, Slavic population perceives itself as more Western-orientated, urban citizens partly share postmodern values, such as individualism or nuclear family. Non-Slavic groups like Caucasians are perceived as ‘ethnically different’ as they do not share Russian values, belong to the Islamic faith, have a dark southern or Asian appearance and do not participate in traditional Russian holidays and historic celebrations. They are also perceived as more traditional living in accordance with typical sympathies. Russian nationalism itself counters unfamiliar Muslim traditional celebrations like Eid-al-Adha and does not approve Ramadan fasting rules.

Explained by Rogoza (2014, pp.80-84), nationalism in Russia has two faces. Firstly, it is a xenophobic defensive nationalism, focusing on ethnic minorities. This type of nationalism is essentially close to Kohn’s ethnic nationalism. Secondly, it is an imperial expansionist one, which is concentrated on the West and has some features of civic nationalism. As for the state’s rhetoric, often these two complement each other though the difference between them exist.

Doubtless, after the “reunification” with Crimea in 2014, the imperial sentiments became a more prominent trend. Imperial expansionist nationalism lies beyond ethnic categories, focusing on the Russian cultural and linguistic dominance in the region. It opposes not the immigrants but the West due to post-imperial complex within the country after the break-up of the USSR. Nevertheless, certain implications for the non-Slavic people of the state appear.

Firstly, imperial moods accept the existence of ethnic minorities only on the condition of Russian cultural hegemony that makes them less important members of the society. Secondly, as stated by the author, this type of nationalism is based on the idea of pan-Slavism which proposes a unification of all Slavs in one country — ethnic Ukrainians, Belorussians and Russians.

Table 2.1 <i>Are you for or against the following actions? (% of the number of respondents, October 2002, N=1600, based on Gudkov (2003))</i>				
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Social class</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Low</u>
To limit the opportunities for non-Russians to live on the territory of Russia				
Yes	66	62	67	66
No	22	26	23	19
Do not know	12	12	11	15
To give ethnic Russians prerogative rights of job appointment				
Yes	59	54	59	61
No	23	31	23	18
Do not know	18	15	18	21
To forbid the residence in your city for the migrants from Caucasus				
Yes	58	52	58	60
No	22	28	22	19
Do not know	20	20	20	21

With regards to the xenophobic nationalism, it concentrates on ethnic criteria, paying special attention to language and culture. Here, the opponents arise to be non-Slavic members of the society, as they do not share national culture, traditions and faith. Originally Russian population opposes the upcoming migrants from Caucasus and Central Asia willing to have priorities in different spheres of societal life (Table 2.1). Rather worryingly, these sentiments are not discussed in a critical manner in the Russian public discourse. The state is wisely manipulating them which is evident in many political programs, both liberal and pro-

Kremlin. For instance, one of the reasons for Alexei Navalny, anti-corruption activist and liberal politician popularity, is his programs on restricting immigration and fighting with corruption on immigration issues (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 <i>Which policy on migration should be followed by the Russian government?</i> <i>(as % of the number of respondents, 2002 and 2004 N=1600; 2005 N=1881, based on Gudkov (2003))</i>			
<u>Answer</u>	<u>2002 July</u>	<u>2004 August</u>	<u>2005 August</u>
To stem the tide of entrants	45	54	59
Not to limit migration and work it to the benefit of Russia	44	38	36
Do not know	11	7	5

However, its wide dispersion amongst the population cannot be dismissed by scholars specialising in the field. According to them (Gudkov, 2003; Alexeev, 2010) the nature of the xenophobia and the reasons behind its popularity lie deep in the times of the Putin regime. As Gudkov describes the notion, xenophobia is a common modernising societal answer to the break of the previous norms: territorial, ethnic and religious barriers, social mobility, social and cultural differentiation, and so forth. During this phase of social and political transformation, an ethnic-phobia is citizens' archaic and protective reaction as they feel vulnerable in a new environment where the resources are limited and familiar social positions are no longer existent. After the prominent weakening of the former communist block and the further break-up of USSR, an identity problem has appeared activating primitive ideas of ethnic solidarity. As the native population lacks social gratifications and have no visible opportunities to improve their livelihoods in political and social crisis, the system keeps using old and well-known anti-democratic procedures. The transformation of Yeltsin's regime into Putin's regime without democratic elections is one of the cases — the proclaimed democracy and the new party system became absolutely useless and fake. Thus, the society started to stagnate with no hopes for a better future, but without previous social guarantees either. Here

xenophobia is a primitive form of self-defence and an attempt to save the soviet community system using ethnicities as a substitute for identity (Gudkov, 2003, p.61).

Moreover, during the first years after the break-up, Russia became the most migrant receiving country, with a prominent native population declining (Alexeev, 2010). The reason behind that is an absolute manufacturing and economic breakdown in peripheral republics and former USSR states, whilst Russia showed an upturn in the economic cycle becoming one of the most comfortable places to live in the post-Soviet space. Ethnic minorities started moving to Russian cities mostly motivated by economic reasons such as unemployment. Against the backdrop of conservative locals who were used to the former state-distributive system, the new members of society adapted faster to the free market taking job positions in small and medium enterprises, trade, construction and municipal economy. Thus, ethnicities are being accused by locals of taking jobs and social positions that in the opinion of the locals originally belong to them. An important remark is that those realms where migrants have recently become successful, like trade or entrepreneurship, were considered shameful, unvalued and even illegal during the USSR period. The fact that in a new democratic environment earning money by working in these spheres is approved clashes with the values still existing in the society. It creates annoyance among the citizens as the migrants become equal in their social and economic status.

The data on nationalism, taken by the FOM fund in the first decade of the 2000s, shows that almost half of the respondents (august 2004, n=1600) think that Russians live poorer than other nationalities in the country (Gudkov, 2003). Obviously, the opportunities to adapt and achieve success were equal for both locals and new upcoming ethnicities. However, the incentives of ethnic minorities were higher as they usually are for migrants in other countries. The new citizens were not hoping to get any social guarantees from the democratic government that were expected by the Slavic community. In this particular environment, those new members of society who were ethnically different became the objects of massive frustration and aggression, especially amongst maladjusted Russian population. Consistently, one of the main elements of those complex xenophobic moods is an accusation of “groundlessness”. Many Russians consider ethnic minority groups living in the Russian cities to have too many rights in comparison with Russian population. In 1993 about one-third of the respondents claimed that ethnic groups are the reason behind social plagues in Russia,

more than a half thought that non-Russians have too much influence and around 75% accuse ethnic minorities of unequal distribution of national wealth, the rise of criminal activity and drug distribution (Gudkov, 2003, p.61).

In a relatively unfriendly environment and with no government support, these new migrants seek assistance within other migrants who already managed to set up in Russian cities. They help each other with employment and assimilation creating ethnic communities that become markers for exclusion and hatred subjects from Russian population. Furthermore, living within their communities, new citizens have less motivation to advance their language skills that take a shape of a widely spread perception that ethnic non-Russians are badly educated and dumb (Malashenko, 1999).

In the environment with ethnic nationalistic moods contagion, ethnic minorities start being perceived as “others”, unwanted and inorganic parts of the society. According to Malashenko (1999), many behavioural habits has appeared to be exclusive markers. As such, “mountain behaviour patterns” are mentioned by the author. The concept is highly latent and complex, it consists of southern expressivity, gesticulation and loudness that serves as an indicator of a “barbarian”, an alienated individual that does not fit it within the Russian community.

No doubt, these feelings have increased as the government constantly showed its incapability in caring about its “native” citizens, waging war with Southern republics and lacking social policy. During the democratisation period, a numerous amount of wars owing to national and ethnic issues appeared. Starting with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1988, it expanded into a real war in the Caucasus region with South Ossetia War (1991-1992), Georgian Civil War (1991-1993), War in Abkhazia (1992-1993, 1998), Civil war in Tajikistan (1992-1997), Chechen Wars (1994-1996, 1999-2009) and so forth. Consistently, the media presented those conflicts as Russia versus intolerant and culturally different enemies who do not have anything in common with a Slavic population (Zvereva, 2002). Their Muslim culture and natural “otherness” has been frequently emphasised in order to justify political actions. Here, ethnic minorities’ traditionalism serves as an expelling characteristic. Modern Russian society, despite being orthodox in many family and gender related issues, positions itself as European and liberal, with loose morals towards nuclear families and untraditional gender behaviour.

All in all, Russian nationalism has a strong link with the power structures affecting its prominence in the society. In the Russian case, nationalist moods appeared as a reaction to the identity and economic crisis that appeared after the break-up of USSR. Obviously, wars with post-Soviet ethnic republics and having lack of social welfare triggered the massive hatred towards ethnic minorities in the Russian cities. Based on those considerations and the context of xenophobia appearance, the stereotypes ethnic Russians have about other nationalities seems logical to appear. First of all, they accuse ethnicities of having more financial resources and being more prosperous than ethnic Russians. Secondly, they do not approve their community feelings and attachment to their ethnic traditions and culture, not least Muslim celebrations and rituals. Moreover, their language skills are being contested and serve as an indicator for one's intelligence level. Ethnic minorities were also accused of having "mountain behaviour patterns" — a complex characteristic, including aggression, emotionality, loudness and excessive gesticulation. All those features discovered in the literature were taken into consideration and informed the researcher during the following coding procedures.

To conclude the subchapter, the main ideas should be highlighted once again. In this project I work with the definitions of nation and ethnicity in a functionalist way. That implies that both nation and ethnicity are socially constructed concepts that are shaped by existing discourse or ideology dominant in the society. Within the ideology of ethnic nationalism, an ethnicity is perceived as an inborn characteristic that underlies a nation. Thus, ethnic nationalism constructs a strong "us and them" dichotomy based on ethnic criteria — shared history and culture, association with certain territories, a sense of solidarity and proclaimed blood ties. However, based on the functionalist approach, this particular understanding of ethnicity appears as too narrow and politics-neglecting — nations are no longer ethnically homogeneous. Contemporary states consist of culturally and ethnically different citizens and it is a nationalistic ideology that ascribes an opposite view on national identity. In Russia today, nationalism appears as having a long-term and complex influence on societal attitudes as well as a prominent ideology supported by the government itself. In order to explore representations of ethnicity, one should address the problem of media representation per se presented in the second subchapter.

## **2.2 Media representation theory**

### **2.2.1 Media representation theory, ethnicity and nationalism**

The topic of media and ethnicity is widely covered in the academic literature. However, approaches and methodologies to explore the relation vary significantly. Different kinds of Sociological and Cultural Studies approaches have been utilised as frameworks for associated research. This particular project was influenced by the media representation theory elaborated by critical theorist Stuart Hall. Hall's model suggests reality is socially constructed through language. In part, the social construction of reality is also achieved through media representations. This approach to reality as mediated by language fits well with the constructivist definitions of nations and ethnicity. Moreover, the theory answers the question of how media texts contribute to this process of reality construction.

Hall claims representation lies deep in the constitution of things and it drastically shapes social subjects and historical events that we assume to be natural and incontestable (Hall, 1997, p.6). His ideas drive from semiotics; semioticians believe that nothing has a meaning in itself — the language is a social institution establishing the meanings that we frequently take for granted (Berger, 2013). It is through certain juxtapositions of different signs the meaning appears. Hall further elaborates on the topic of representation within this approach and implements it to media texts.

According to Hall, the meaning of “representation” has changed dramatically over the years. As he states in his lectures (1997a), in the early academic discourse ‘representation’ stood for event’s transparent ‘reflection’ — a reproduction of a pre-existing reality. “Represent” assumed that meaning exists per se and representation’s function is simply to transmit it to the audience. The new view on representation focuses on its constitutive function. Hall argues, that reality does not exist outside the process of representation — despite being “realistic” it is constructed by representation itself. Through constant repetition of those representations they are likely to become familiar and natural in the society. In that case, it is us who look at the events through a particular framework of interpretation, creating meaning by representing the events in a particular way. Thus, representations on their own are inevitably biased and selective — the way an event or object is represented always involves foregrounding some details and backgrounding others.

The author underlines the role of contemporary media channels as the most powerful representation and meaning creators in the modern society. The media play a special and unique role as they indeed constantly produce representations of the social world (Hall, 1981). In particular, Gillespie adopted this approach and applied it to the television research. She claimed that television “represents varieties of socially constructed speech, and so, like speech itself, it forms a nexus between language and the social world. It represents models of speech, portrays patterns of sociable interaction and provides shared resources for speaking” (1995, p.56).

Here, it is relevant to bring up Hall’s application of the media representation model to ethnicities. As soon as members of one ethnicity have a shared culture and identify themselves with it, it makes it possible for them to represent objects in a similar way and understand each other. As Hall states, shared meanings and common representations appear through individuals constant social and personal interactions as well as the media influence. These representations we share prominently influence our identities — “the expression on my face says something about who I am (identity) and what I am feeling (emotions) and what group I feel I belong to (attachment), which can be read and understood by other people” (Hall, 1997a, p.2-3). Thus, as well as Gellner and Anderson, Hall emphasises the fact that ethnicity is an artificial concept that appears through the constant influence of human communication and media representation.

As stated by the author, the particular way an object, person or event is represented is always consistent with the dominant “systems of representation” in the society — “it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others” (Hall, 1997a, p. 25). In this context, media transmit certain ideologies discussed in the first subchapter, a similar concept meaning “mental frameworks — the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation — which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligibly the way society works” (Hall, 1996, p.26). What is being represented, the way it is represented and the choice of foregrounded and backgrounded



details is claimed to be a reflection of the interests of the dominating power, telling us “how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work” (Hall 1981, p.11).

These ideologies transmitted through various forms of media are strong enough to modify the attitudes of a given audience, and with repeated and frequent exposure, they present some ideas as commonly accepted. Here, nationalism is a vivid case — it is an ideology and a unique system of representation projecting essentialist ideas of ethnic superiority within a nation-state. In the chosen series, ethnic minorities portrayal is expected to be consistent with nationalistic ideas spread in the society.

### **2.2.2 Why media representation of ethnic minorities matters**

Following this line of reasoning, specific representations of race and ethnicity often result in perceiving certain groups through a lens of constructed reality that is unfair or not true. As stated by Cottle, “the relationship between the media and ethnic minorities is typically characterised by continuity, conflict and change” (2000, p.1). Media greatly enhance the development and common occurrence of stereotypes in which individuals try to label an entire group of people based on pre-conceived characteristics. Stereotypes reproduced by the media do not always have a direct correlation with negative ethnic attitudes’ existence. However, researches have proven they do dramatically influence racial and ethnic perceptions of the self and the others (Derman-Sparks,1989, Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002). Disregarding or negatively portraying minorities in the media is likely to contribute to a wide-spread perception that some ethnic groups are less important members of the society as compared to the other (Gerbner et al., 2002; Bang & Reece, 2003).

Hall focused most of his later research on the concept of media and race where he set out to investigate the implications of how media represented the Afro-American population (1981). He concluded, that racial media representations are simply products of social construction produced by white ideology. Through frequent exposure to the idea of cultural differences between black and white populations such representations contributed to common stereotypes and beliefs that “all black people are like that” (Mercer, 1989, p.3). Such perception completely undervalues the diversity among the black population.

Moreover, many researchers, including Hall (1990, p.52), also suggest that negative media representations of ethnic groups not only influence the relationships between the majority and

minority groups within a society but also have an impact on the ethnic minorities' identity construction. The hypothesis here is that individuals belonging to ethnic groups might start identifying with common stereotypes and, over time, change their behaviour to match these pre-established stereotypes.

All in all, negative or biased depiction of ethnic minorities in the media encourages widespread negative attitudes towards these groups. Plus, working as an identity constructor, media texts may influence minorities themselves as they start perceiving themselves as the 'outsiders'.

To sum up, representations existing in the society are artificial constructions correlating with the system of representations dominating in the society, namely ideology. In the case of ethnic nationalism, the ideas of a nation as being ethnically homogeneous are expected to transpire into different media channels — one of the most influential representation transmitters in the contemporary world that influences, shapes and distorts the values and attitudes of their audience. Since Russian nationalism is presented by media primarily as an ethnic one, these ideas of ethnic Russians as a main ethnic group in the state are expected to be found in the analysed media as it has an ability to provide us with messages through which we gain knowledge and understanding of ourselves, others and the general world around us. Media representations of ethnicity contribute to the perpetuation of the Russian ethnic homogeneity myth by failing to reflect the ethnic diversity of the nation and by encouraging audiences to imagine the nation as ethnically homogeneous. By creating us-and-them dichotomy as a particular inclusion principal, a variety of criteria to differentiate ethnic minorities can be found in the chosen corpus of analysis.

### **2.2.3 Existing research on media representations of ethnic minorities**

The role of race and ethnicity has historically been of an interest for media representation researchers. As stated by Croteau, Hoynes & Milan (2012, p.190), concepts such as ethnicity and race are generally accepted by nearly all sociologists to be socially constructed with an unfixed meaning. Most works on the topic of media representation and ethnicity are conducted on the topic of race. The United States, with its diverse population and traditionally complex black-white relations, has been at the centre of attention in many publications. Aside from the presence of Afro-Americans in the media content, a large body

of works published recently involves the issues of Latinos, Arabs, Asians and Native Americans — not only in the US but around the Western World as a whole.

Providing careful consideration to the literature, three main research directions in the study of the representation of ethnic minorities were found. These are production control, inclusion and stereotyped roles.

### ***Ethnic minorities and production control***

Some studies concentrate on media ownership and ethnic minority media involvement. This body of the research is relatively small, though influential — it challenges the ideas behind the majority of media representation research. Paying specific attention to “operations, institutions and practices” (Cottle, 2000, p.16), a complex system behind underrepresentation and stereotyping is likely to be found.

Traditionally, mass media have been controlled by white men whilst the black culture was defined by resistance (Croteau, Hoynes & Milan, 2012, p.200). This notion of ownership, decision-making and unequal unemployment is being studied in a number of articles (Van Dijk, 2000; Haynes, 2007). Within this type of research, a certain amount of literature focuses on political ideas forming state policies (Jakubowicz, 1995, Husband, 1994).

These works pay attention to the changing media environment that drastically influences and frames the production. The range of media, analysed within this approach varies: from documentaries (Roscoe, 1999), British independent film collectives (Pines, 1988) to local radio stations (Husband and Chouhan, 1985) and cable TV (Cottle, 1997). Together, these studies reveal a complex mechanism behind media production that can not be narrowed down to a solely institutional or individual explanation. As Halloran says, in order to conduct a high-quality research on topic of ethnicity and media involvement, one should look into a variety of factors, including event-orientation of the news, news values, the commercial logic of the media industries, cultural professional outlooks, expectations of the media workers and so on (Halloran, 1974). Obviously, it is highly unlikely that a single research can cover all these diverse dimensions difficult to analyse even isolated from the others. However, some articles focus successfully on one of those dimensions exclusively connected to media production process. For instance, the topic of journalism reporters’ training and ethnic involvement in the education process was researched. According to Ainley (1998), in the

whole British broadcasting industry, less than 3% of the staff is Black or Asian. In authors opinion, this trend structures the employment and leads to further journalism training inequality.

Some of the findings acknowledge an existing correlation between ethnic minorities' participation on the web and unequal distribution of jobs in the media sector. For instance, the fact that Latinos are an actively participating audience on Youtube channels is explained by their shut out of traditional media (Negrón-Muntaner, 2014).

Nevertheless, this type of research seems to be the least relevant for the paper as the analysis seeks to understand the way minorities are represented in the television series rather than the production circumstances or media ownership.

### ***Ethnic minorities and inclusion***

Within the framework of media representations, inclusion means that researchers are seeking an answer to the simple question if media content includes ethnic diversity groups or not. Such works rely mostly on quantitative methods allowing the researcher to count and compare the proportions of ethnic minorities in the whole population with the same proportions in the media. A number of studies in the last decades of the 20th century in the USA were conducted on television representation (Seggar, Hafen & Hannonen-Gladden, 1981; Greenberg & Brand, 1994), showing that while Black populations are growing, the numbers of Black characters remain low. A similar study was made in other immigrant-receiving countries — in the UK the percentage of main roles given to Black characters is significantly lower than their actual presence in the society (Cumberbatch et al., 2001, p.3-4). The same tendency is applicable to Latin characters (National Latino Media Council [NLMC], 2009) and Asian characters who appear less than any other minority group (Asian Pacific American Media Coalition [APAMC], 2009). As stated in the works dedicated to Asian inclusive representation in American media, Asian diaspora is the fastest-growing racial group (Sun et al., 2015, Aoki & Takeda, 2011). However, they are almost neglected by popular media — a Prime Time Diversity Report concluded Asians play 3% of all characters in network shows and 1% of opening-credit characters (Children Now, 2004). Another study shows similar results — based on prime-time programming Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005) showed that Asian Americans constitute just 1.5% of the characters.

As for the notion of inclusive representation in Russia, no prominent research exists on the topic. Moreover, most papers researching the presence of minorities in media content are focused on numbers as they use quantitative methods. This particular research aims at qualitative representation in order to answer how exactly minorities are represented rather than if they are represented and to what extent.

### ***Ethnic minorities and stereotyped roles***

Last but not least, even when minorities are represented, their image is highly driven by stereotypes. Downing and Husband (2005) suggest the term “ghettoisation” to explain this phenomenon meaning the image of a character in the media is restricted to a limited number of roles they play. In this research the same effect can be expected from the TV series, showing the characters from former Soviet republics as marginalised individuals, illegal immigrants or criminals.

Existing research on the topic comes from the academic literature focusing on racial relationships between the White and the Black. One of the fundamental works belongs to already mentioned media theorist Stuart Hall. Mixed with the theoretical explanation, his work “The Spectacle of the “Other”” (Hall, 1997) investigates the White hegemony through the negative representations of Black in the media. He claims the process of creating stereotypes does not start with the media, though it may be reproduced and enhanced significantly by media channels. In the case of the British media, Blacks are “reduced to a few essentials, fixed in Nature by a few, simplified characteristics” like “the signifiers of physical difference” (Hall, 1997, p. 249).

A significant amount of other academic sources further elaborates on the stereotyped representation of the Black in the media. Studies focus on the TV representations of Afro-Americans (Bogle, 1994, Cripps, 1993; Dates & Barlow, 1993) and the Black in the UK (Gillespie, 2002, Pines, 1989). For instance, Ross (1996) examined early film industry where the image of Black people was narrowed down to “the happy slave, the noble savage and the entertainer” (Rose, 1996, p. xxii). Whilst Rose claims much improvement has been made since then (1996, p. 89), some researchers claim this trend is still present on American and British television (Gray, 2000, p.119, Pilkington, 2003, p.190). According to Bell Hooks, “there has been little change in the area of representation. Opening a magazine, book, turning

on the television set, watching a film, or looking at photographs in public spaces, we are most likely to see images of black people that reinforce and reinscribe white supremacy” (1990, p. 1). As Hall states, though the diversity of representations is higher than it used to be, the familiar topics are still being reproduced preventing any kind of progress for the ethnic minority characters or models within the media (1997, pp.272-273).

A similar research on the visual media representation was conducted for the British documentaries of a later period (Malik, 2002). The findings showed Black people were positioned as a social problem — media depicted them within the topics of crimes, unemployment, overcrowding and miscegenation (Malik, 2002, p.30). This trend is also present now and was widely explored in both news reporting (Van Dijk, 2000, p.38, Paletz and Dunn, 1969) and entertaining media where topics as crime, aggression, hypersexuality and physical superiority are widely spread within the Black image (Cumberbatch et al., 2001, Adair, 2013). On the contrary, the White are shown to have more important roles in the society, issuing instructions and moderating discussions, whilst Black people rarely do so on the TV (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

As for the new forms of entertainment TV, ethnic minorities frequently become main characters of the so-called “makeover” television shows. The goal of these shows is to produce changes in someone’s life who is depicted as an irresponsible individual unable to care for himself. Thus, the intervention of a white “expert” guiding the main character through consumption and life choices is being presented as an inevitable necessity. Following this line of reasoning, ethnic minorities are shown as having moral-behavioural deviance as they are not able to change their life for the better future. A number of scholars with the use of discourse analysis and neoliberalism as a theoretical approach have proven this trend. (Bratich, 2007; Ouellette & Hay, 2008; Skeggs, 2009). For instance, Mercer analyses “The Cosby Show” where the Blacks are exposed to white middle-class American culture in order to introduce “normative ideas” through the television.

The problem representation of Asians, as well as the Blacks, is also widely covered in the academic literature. Analysing soap operas in Britain, Bourne (1989) concluded that Asian characters were prevalently omitted whilst their inclusion meant an appearance in marginalised and stereotypical ways, “undervalued” and “underused” (Bourne, 1989, p.129). This was also proven by a number of other scholars stating “marginalisation” of Asian

characters (Narasaki, 2005). For instance, another research revealed that more often than not the Asians are stereotypically shown in the role of shopkeepers (Cumberbatch et al., 2001).

Following the 9/11 attacks a new stereotyped minority widely appeared in American media — Arab-Americans were depicted negatively in both news (Awass, 1996, Karim, 2006, Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007) and entertaining programs (Shasheen, 2009) across the USA. What is important, that the trend went further than terrorism fear, causing negative attitudes not only towards Arabs but towards all Muslim cultures (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005, p.5). The fact, that not all Muslims are Arabs, like Indonesians for instance, is being massively neglected.

This “islamophobia” trend has been widely spread to other Western countries leading to isolation and victimisation of Muslims in the West. This also leads to Muslims’ alienation in the society and a high pervasion of so-called orientalist approach, explicitly explained by Robin Richardson (2004). As stated by the author, the term “orientalism” stands for “systems of representation framed by the hegemonic political forces of colonialism, post-colonialism and neo-colonialism, which act towards bringing ‘the Orient’ into ‘Western’ consciousness, Western dispensation and under Western dominion” (Richardson, 2004, p. 5). Those official media exposed to oriental ideas are reproducing them in order to represent the contradictions arising within two cultures as absolutely insoluble. According to scholars, interested in the issue, media’s contribution to the formation of intolerant opinions about ethnic minorities is extremely high. A prominent number of researches were conducted in order to uncover the stereotypes lying behind Muslim representation all over the world. Surprisingly, the results are similar across the globe. Research on Australian Muslims, for instance, shows that the media reproduce images of the Muslims as the Other by depicting them as fundamentalist, terrorist, sexist, undemocratic, violent, orthodox, and fanatic (Asmar, 1992, Dunn et al., 2004, Manning, 2004). The same findings are applicable to the countries in EU with the special emphasis on the media as an institution shaping cultural production of knowledge and having a negative social influence — UK (Halliday, 2006, Frost, 2008, Poole, 2002, Sheridan, 2006), Denmark (Hussain, 2000) and Belgium (Zemni, 2011).

In regards to the Russian scholarly research, some academics have also studied the image of a minority member in the mass media (Habenskaya, 2005; Malkova, 2002; Sledzevskiy, Filippov & Habenskaya, 1999). Mostly, as stated above, research is focused on news

coverage with the use of textual qualitative analysis. However, there is not enough empirical work done on the representation of ethnicity – and particularly ethnic minority groups – in entertaining TV.

The most important outcome derived from the literature review is the expectations about this particular work through informing the researcher on the media portrayal and its possible characteristics, namely “ghettoisation” and stereotyped roles. No doubt, this particular research is positioned within the third group of articles, contributing to the deep qualitative representation research. Moreover, the interest in movie research has also been justified by an existing gap in the empirical study of Russian media texts, entertaining media in particular.

In summary, in the Russian case, nationalism serves as an ideology providing the people with an understanding of who they are and who they are not. Within the nationalist’s approach, ethnicities construct nations. Ethnic nationalism suggests that nations are born out of pre-established ethnic groups. This often means that members of other ethnic groups are never seen as ‘belonging’ to the nation; rather, they are seen as outsiders and treated with suspicion. However, in a modern world, this essentialist way to think about ethnicity is no longer applicable. Working with the functionalist understanding of the concept, this project claims that ethnicity is a socially constructed category that does not lie in the heart of a nation. Contemporary nations are never ethnically homogeneous, they are rather mixed projects. With a foundation of media representation theory that drives from semiotics, this work suggests that the way we talk about ideas directly influences our reality — the way of thinking about those ideas. Here, media come across as powerful reality creators that construct the whole topics according to the ideological framework and the context of a given society. For these reasons, in order to explore certain representations of ethnicity in Russia one should address the problem through studying media representations.



### 3. Method

This chapter describes the method used in the analysis of television series. The foregoing discussion implies that ethnicity is socially constructed within the discourse of ethnic nationalism. It is seen as a vitally important inclusive element that lies at the heart of national identity. In this discourse, ethnicity is seen as a built up notion that appears through people's interactions with the media, power and each other. Here, ethnicity is used as an inclusive mechanism — it shapes ethnic identity and creates “outsiders” within a national unit excluding ethnically different members from the community. Media representations feature prominently in the creation and maintenance of such beliefs within nationalistic ideology spread in a society — they frequently limit, ignore or stereotypically depict so-called “outsiders”. In contemporary Russia these “outsiders” appear as ethnic minorities and the wide-spread hatred is partly aggravated by governmental actions. According to scholars specialised in the topic, ethnic communities in Russia are perceived as money-orientated, illiterate and traditional, being aggressive, loud and drastically different from Slavic Russians (Gudkov, 2003, Malashenko, 1999).

In order to understand the way Russian media represents the image of non-Slavic ethnic minorities, the project looks at the representation of ethnic characters in a set of entertainment television series. Television is not only one of the most popular media channels in Russia — entertaining television is a vivid representation of societal values. Moreover, it hasn't been fully explored by Russian academics yet.

The first section of this chapter presents the chosen method, namely Multimodal Discourse Analysis, with the inspirational sub-frameworks used for analysis, method's assumptions and limitations. The method allows us to bring light to the representations of ethnic minorities in the context of TV series — it uses multimodality approach that analyses representations through a variety of semiotic resources that a TV series impart. The second part moves on to introduce in greater detail the corpus of analysis. Four selected TV series chosen in accordance with IMDb (2015) rating — “Kukhnya”, “Univer”, “Londongrad” and “Fizruk”, and an overview of the chosen ethnic characters is presented in order to provide the reader with more context. The concluding section deals with the exact steps conducted during the analysis, such as the choice of elements for the analysis and the coding procedures.

### **3.1 Methodology**

Given the research question, namely how do Russian television series represent ethnic minorities, a qualitative methodology has been selected. Based on Hall (1997), the researcher assumes that representations drastically influence the way social concepts, such as ethnicity, are made sense of.

As qualitative research aims at a deep understanding of a particular object or event it seems suitable for the project. This work seeks to reveal how ethnicity is represented through the media. Thus, the goal is to discover the characteristics of these representations rather than use a synthetic data that quantitative methods allow doing. For these reasons, the particular method was taken from the qualitative framework.

By asking how the meaning is created and what is the underlying meaning behind the particular representation, an analysis of an articulation of social practices in the media is inevitable. For Chouliaraki and Fairclough, in order to explore those practices one should look into discourses — language (written and spoken texts and in combination with their semiotics, for example, with music in singing), nonverbal communication, (facial expressions, body movements, gestures, etc.) and visual images (for instance, photographs, film) (1999, p.38). However, discourse is much more than just a meaningful text. It is the way of producing the knowledge through those texts, a way of representing a particular topic that inevitably limits topic's explanation as it presents only one way to think about it (Hall, 1992). Here, discourse is similar to what ideology stands for in the project's context. Nationalistic discourse or ideology is a set of beliefs that produce a certain picture of the world where ethnicities construct nations. That's why discourse analysis was chosen as a broader methodology for further investigation of the social practices existing in the society transmitted via media channels.

Various approaches to discourse analysis have appeared in the qualitative research since its advent. An indicative statement emphasising the complexity of the method belongs to Jørgenson and Phillips: “discourse analysis is not just one approach, but a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies” (2002, p.1). Emphasised by the authors, the necessity of choosing a specific type of discourse analysis seemed inevitable for the research conduction.

However, within any type of discourse analysis, the concept of “discourse” remains central and needs more elaboration.

As Machin and Mayr explains, “discourse is language in real contexts of use”, it is how meaning is being created through choices of grammar and semantics in different socio-political realms of life (2012, p.20). The aim of discourse analyst is to reveal the underlying meanings and ideology behind the text representing an event or an object. For example, Machin and Mayr discuss how the sentence “immigrants are a threat to a national culture” highlights a certain ideology associated with “the notion that there is a unified nation and identifiable national identity and culture” (2012, p.20). This is an indication of a discourse fixing meanings, such as what is a nation and what should we think about national identity. In other words, discourses are set of ideas that are spread in a society and are consistent with ideologies implemented by dominant groups.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) also suggest looking at those discourses, like national or ethnic identity, as at projections of social values and ideas inevitably involved in the reproduction of social life. This idea goes together with Hall’s suggestion that our language and communication are the means by which we construct the reality, and the interests of the powerful play an important role in the process of its construction.

In this project, such tool as discourse analysis seems suitable for the collected data analysis. As Wood & Kroger (2000, p.x) state, it “is not only about method; it is also a perspective on the nature of language and its relationship to the central issues of the social sciences”. It brings together aforementioned understandings of nationalism as an ideology and media representations as parts of ideology’s transmission to further shape the data analysis process. Here, discourse analysis is a helpful tool to approach television series — the researcher is focused on tracing media representations but informed by the values existing in the society affecting those representations. Moreover, as stated by Reisigl & Wodak (2001, p. 21), discourse analysis is able to discover the inconsistencies and tensions within the discourse that help to answer the question, what does this particular representation mean, what does it stand for, and what is the hidden message. On these grounds, I argue discourse analysis is an appropriate method for the project.

### ***From Discourse to Multimodal Discourse Analysis***

The ways of communication in the contemporary world have drastically changed with the development of technologies, and verbal analysis solely does not provide a full picture of what has been communicated. Emphasised by scholars (Goldstone, 2004, Serafini, 2011, Liu, 2013), the culture we live in is “increasingly visual” (Liu, 2013, p.1259) and there are many different semiotic resources or modes, apart from words, that create meaning in media texts. Driving back to Chouliaraki and Fairclough, discourse in their definition is also not restricted to verbal communication — authors call it an ideological perspective on a variety of semiotic resources (1999, p.38). As stated by Liu, “images and texts are being combined in unique ways, and readers in today’s world need new skills and strategies for constructing meaning in transaction with these multimodal texts as they are encountered during the social practices of interpretation and representation” (2013, p.1259). For these reasons, a more elaborated and detailed approach to the analysis of meanings in the media texts was chosen — a Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

The project rests on the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) that comes from Michael Halliday’s social semiotics. Halliday understood language as a “network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning” (1994, p.15). Despite the fact the author mostly worked with textual data, his contribution to multimodal understanding of languages as a reflection on multidimensional nature of communication is highly significant. All further works on Multimodal Discourse Analysis are based on Halliday’s language functions, “metafunctions” in his interpretation — ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational metafunction relates to how we make sense of reality — grammatical choices like combination of clauses; the interpersonal metafunction explores attitudes of the speaker, social statuses and distances — the use of positive or negative language, equality in the relations, amount of power and so on. Last but not least, textual metafunction deals with internal structure of the text — intonations, tonality, lexical chains are taken into account.

Halliday’s approach was further extended by a number of scholars who have applied it to a variety of semiotic resources. In other words, they adapted his multimodality perspective for different media texts analysis. In particular, three-dimensional objects were analysed with multimodal discourse analysis by O’Toole (2004) and Alias (2004), image analysis was

elaborated by Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) and Yuen (2004). As for the video communication analysis, O'Halloran (2004) and Thibault (2000) are relevant to mention.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis works on the principles allowing viewers to get the meaning out of a variety of elements in a particular media text (Machin, 2007). Here, multimodality is the combinatory usage of different modes to produce meanings for an object or an event (Kress, 2009). Thus, "mode" is a "socially and culturally shaped resource for meaning-making. Image, writing, layout, speech, moving images are examples of different modes" (2010, p.79).

Before the introduction of the method, language was perceived as an isolated phenomenon strictly tied to verbal communication — "the majority of research endeavours in linguistics have tended to concentrate solely on language while ignoring or at least downplaying, the contributions of other meaning-making resources. This has resulted in rather an impoverished view of functions and meaning of discourse" (O'Halloran, p.2). Multimodal discourse analysis fills this lacuna with a detailed consideration of how texts draw on modes of communication such as pictures, films, videos, images and sounds in combination with words to make meaning. A particular focus of the method is the interconnections between the modes in a media text (Paltridge, 2012, p.170). Studying representations in a movie with MDA allows researcher to make sense of the studied phenomenon by a comprehensive analysis of different semiotic resources creating an overall image of the analysed object.

In order to better understand the applicability of MDA, Jewitt (2009) proposed four essential assumptions underlying the method. Firstly, language is an equal part of ensemble of modes and each mode equally adds to the overall meaning of a text. Secondly, each mode adds different layers of meaning to the whole picture. Thirdly, the interaction between the modes also contributes to the production. Last but not least, meanings should be understood as social concepts being shaped by norms and rules of some groups. Here, it is important to underline that multimodal discourse theorists also claim modes in a text are not free from agreed standards in the analysed culture. In order to interpret the meaning of a mode or a correlation of modes one should be aware of social, political and ideological context of media text creation (Scott, 1994, Sturken & Cartwright, 2001).

All in all, these assumptions make the method applicable to this particular research as the series are complex communication tools where not only verbal mode contribute to

representations' creation, but a variety of other semiotic resources. Together, those resources construct meanings compliant with the dominant system of representations in the society. This is also consistent with Stuart Hall's understanding of representations as parts of ideology and a broader socio-cultural and political context that inevitably influences the media texts. Representations are more than texts, they make sense through a variety of semiotic resources that MDA allows to capture.

Despite the fact that meaning-making in visual communication was analysed before introduction of the method in the 1980s, a systematic toolkit for the analysis was created by multimodal theorists. As such, Kress's and van Leeuwen's contribution to MDA resides in a detailed description of semiotic resources analysis as a general framework (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Based on Halliday's linguistic metafunctions, the authors were the pioneers of the Multimodal Analysis suggesting to explore representational, interpersonal and compositional levels existing in objects' images. On every level researcher seeks to analyse the link between the verbal and the visual mode. As for the representational level, the analysis digs for the represented participants and their intercommunication with each other through various actions: their activities, attributes and qualities, their communication with each other and the transitions between them. The interpersonal level is dedicated to the producers-the audience relationship. It assumes that specific messages are always being transmitted through each mode that requires the audience to adapt ideas or approaches, like social distance or equality relations. Thus, for the images, Royce (2007, p.72) suggests, that high angles might contribute to a feeling of superiority of the viewer whilst low angles, on the opposite, emphasises a character's leading position. Finally, the compositional level studies organisational features of a media text. For instance for visual mode the features like size, colour and frame should be taken into considerations. Altogether these levels create a completed image of an analysed object from as many angles as possible.

The model is a strong asset to a multimodal discourse analysis framework, however, it is more applicable for visual imagery analysis. Respectively, a similar approach in video analysis was introduced by O'Halloran (2004, pp.120-123). She created a special multimodal *mise-èn-scène* complex coding scheme for the analysis where visual imagery (shots, characters) and soundtracks (speech, music and sound effects) are taken into account. She proposed to analyse the modes on logical, compositional, modal and representational levels.

As well as in Kress's and van Leeuwen's framework, representational level in a movie stands for the relations between the participants and the circumstances. The level may pay attention to such features as content, musical motifs, lexical content for the sound mode and movement-action-events, sequences, relations, characters, their appearances and behaviour for the visual mode. As for the modal level, it moves further into characters investigation concentrating on their prominence in the scene. Within the compositional level one should analyse symbolism behind the characters and their actions understanding "labelling" of the figures. The fourth level, the logical one, simply fixes image or sound contribution to narrative cause-effect relations — what exactly happens in the scene. Thibault's model for video analysis slightly differs from those based on Halliday's metafunctions (2000, p. 374-385). While analysing video material he proposes an analyst to fix four dimensions — visual image, kinetic action, soundtrack and metafunctional interpretation of phases and subphases, namely "an intermediate level of analysis which lies between the microlevel lexicogrammatical, kinesic, and image selections and the global structuring of the text as a whole" (2000, p.365).

Evidently, some limitations of the method should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the representations studied in the project are obviously polysemic — one of the difficulties associated with discourse analysis is ignoring alternative readings that might appear for the readers. Culturally different viewers might perceive the chosen series from a different perspective as "the image we see is subordinated to the meanings we know" (Bal, 1991, p. 181). In case of this project, being personally a part of the Russian society helped researcher to better understand both direct and latent meanings of the representations. As a part of the series audience, I share the same cultural code as the rest of the Russian TV-watchers. A vivid example when the background helped me during the coding procedure is grammar and syntax mistakes ethnic characters make in the series. Those mistakes constituted a variety of codes leading to an appearance of a representation theme, namely illiteracy. Here, my personal awareness of grammatically incorrect formulations due to my cultural background assisted the analysis. However, this personal dimension can also be a limitation. Here, in order to avoid subjectivity, researcher has provided transparency in codes interpretations (Appendix 1).

Another criticism is that discourse analysts neglect the role of text producers tying the meaning to broader ideologies. The link between ideologies and media production process remains weak and relatively unexplored in the academic discourse (Richardson, 2007). The same is true for the audience perceptions — MDA interprets media texts on the behalf of the audiences, however, the real mental processes of understanding those texts is hidden (Chilton, 2005, p.30). Nevertheless, this project does not touch upon the aspects of audience perceptions and focus solely on media representations of ethnicity. The audience reception might be a sufficient way to further enrich the project with the cognitive approach, though this side is being out of the focus in this particular work.

The other criticism of the MDA is the claim that method frequently uses the corpus of analysis “known in advance to be contentious” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.213). For instance, many newspaper articles chosen for analysis contain contestable headlines that do not require a deeper interpretation: “if a newspaper article runs the headline “Britain swamped by flood of immigrants”, do we need linguistic analysis to work out that it is anti-immigration?” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.211). To tackle the issue, a wide corpus of series was taken in accordance with Russian audience preferences rather than solely researcher’s choice. This issue will be addressed in details in the following sub-chapter.

The other disadvantage of the method is the amount of time the analysis takes unless preliminary scheme is proposed. The problem is aggravated by the difficulty of choosing a concrete procedural design before the actual data acquaintance (Iedema, 2001, Tan, 2009; Zappavigna et al., 2010). In spite of the presented toolkit in the chapter, so far the method seems to be relatively new and unexplored — analysis procedures should be adjusted for each specific project. In order to avoid the issue the plan of data analysis, including the choice of exact episodes and carefully specified categories for the procedure, has been provided in advance and explained below.

To conclude this introduction of the method, its relevance for the project should be covered once again. Representations are products of political and cultural movements penetrating the society. They do not simply reflect on events, they construct them for the audience through the lens of discourse that is spread in the society. It is absolutely crucial to study representations in order to understand how the images of the world are advanced, how they impact our identities as well as our everyday lives. In particular, the representations of



ethnicity are important markers of a nationalistic discourse existing in the society that is studied in the project. The MDA helps the researcher to understand representations from a social constructionist perspective — as reflections and further contributions to unequal power relations. Moreover, the pervasion of media into our lives should also be taken into account — with the development of technologies our communication has shifted from principally verbal to increasingly visual. This implies the complexity of media texts analysis as they use different semiotic resources in order to create representations. The combinatory analysis of different semiotic resources, like sound, image and text is pertinent to an analysis of TV series. MDA provides a perfect toolkit to explore those modes and their interconnection which makes the method highly beneficial for the project.

## 3.2 The data

### 3.2.1 Corpus of texts

The series for the analysis were chosen in accordance with the latest IMDb most popular Russian-language TV Series rating that reflects the preferences of the Russian audience (IMDb, 2015). The four most popular movies, excluding cartoons, fantasy genres and movies from non-Russian producers, are: “Kukhnya” [*Kitchen*] (6 seasons, 120 episodes), “Fizruk” [*PE teacher*] (2 seasons, 40 episodes), “Londograd” [*The town of London*] (2 seasons, 28 episodes) and “Univer” [*Uni*] (5 seasons, 255 episodes). The preliminary research on the plot and characters of the series has shown they contain a certain amount of episodic roles (a character appears in one episode only), secondary roles (a character plays a supportive role) and leading roles (a character is one of the main protagonists of the series) with ethnic minority characters (Table 3.1). All four series are officially uploaded on public access on the internet and can be easily accessed anytime.

- “Kukhnya” is a comedy set in Moscow for STS network by Yellow, Black and White and KeyStone Production. The series focuses on the young guy Maxim, who started working in the most expensive restaurant of the city dreaming to become a chief-cook. The show is also concentrated on the other characters in the restaurant, like Maxim’s boss and his co-workers. In total, 7 ethnic characters were found throughout the series: two leading roles, two secondary roles and three episodic roles.
- “Fizruk” is also a comedy TV show aired on STS network produced by “Good story media” and “MF media”. The main character, Oleg Fomin, has been fired from his previous crime job and had to try his luck in school working as Physical Education instructor. One ethnic secondary character was found in this series.
- “Londograd” is an adventure action series by “Sputnik Vostok Production” that was created for STS network and shot in London. The plot tells the story about the Russian agency “Londograd” located in Great Britain that helps rich people to solve their diverse problems. Three episodic ethnic characters are presented though two of them appear together in one episode.

- “Univer” by “7 art media” is a sitcom launched on TNT about the life of students in a dormitory block in Moscow. One main ethnic character and one secondary ethnic character appear in the series.

However, as one of the major limitations of the method is the amount of time a researcher spends on analysing full screens, the corpus of the analysis consists of the TV series episodes that contain ethnic minority characters exclusively. A preliminary survey of the shows indicated that the chosen series contain 3 main ethnic characters, 4 secondary ethnic characters and 6 episodic ethnic characters in total. For the analysis, purposive (selective) sampling has been chosen. The sampling is widely used in qualitative research aiming at investigating specific characteristics that interest the researcher and making generalisations as a conclusion. Within this sampling type, it is the researcher who chooses the sampling units informed by his or her own research question (Palys, 2008, p.697). An average of 5 episodes with each leading character, 2 episodes with each secondary character and 1 episode with an episodic character were chosen after series review, 28 episodes in total. The unit of analysis is a sequence — a series of scenes within the episode that form the entire body with space or time unity.

	<u>“Kukhnya”</u>	<u>“Fizruk”</u>	<u>“Londongrad”</u>	<u>“Univer”</u>
Number of seasons	6	2	2	5
Number of episodes	120	40	28	255
Year of release	2012	2014	2015	2008
General topic	Restaurant life	School life	Russians in London	University life
Genre	Comedy	Comedy	Action	Sitcom
Number of episodes for the analysis	17	2	2	7

### 3.2.2 Ethnic minority characters overview

In sum, thirteen ethnic minority characters were analysed during this research — seven characters from “Kukhnya”, two from “Univer”, three from “Londongrad” and one from “Fizruk”. This subsection acquaints with the characters’ roles in the larger plot and presents their relations with main protagonists of the whole series.

Aynur (“Kukhnya”), Gulnara (“Kukhnya”) and Artur (“Univer”) are all leading characters. Aynur and Gulnara have low-prestige jobs that do not require skills, while Artur is a student. In “Kukhnya”, Aynur, who is depicted as a Kirghiz, works as a janitor in the restaurant with other protagonists. In the same restaurant, Gulnara, Aynur’s niece, works as a dishwasher. The series follows her love story with Lyova, the restaurant’s sous chef. While both characters seem to be presented as unserious and funny, poor and living in a community of migrants, Artur provides an image of a success-seeking young Armenian that has just arrived in Moscow.

The secondary characters, Soslan and Timur appear in “Kukhnya”, while Ashot is part of the series “Univer”. Soslan and Timur have jobs in the service sector connected with sales and delivery. But on the side, they are both involved in criminal activities that bring them illegal financial profit. In the series “Univer”, Ashot is Artur’s (the main character discussed above) brother. Like Artur, he has a similar image of a “capital-conquerer”, a man who wants to escape his small town in order to succeed in a Russian megapolis. All three characters are frequently put into situations where their ethnic identity ironically shows their “otherness”.

As for the episodic characters, a variety of image trajectories have been identified. Ethnic minority members are often represented in a low-paid job that does not require a lot of knowledge, usually in the service sector. This was the case of Fayzul (“Kukhnya”) and Kanat (“Kukhnya”). Fayzul, who is ethnically Tajik, is a construction worker and is often depicted as ignorant; Kanat, described as ethnically Kirghiz, works as a prep cook without a legal permit. Both characters are shown as not respected by others and are rather funny additions to the general plot. Another type of ethnic characters is an aggressive or emotional one, presented by Madina (“Fizruk”) and the Caucasian guy (“Kukhnya”). Madina is portrayed as a rude and manlike character who is frequently aggressive and unfriendly. The same is true for the Caucasian guy. The episode starring the character follows the story of him trying to get into the fight with Maxim because of an argument outside the restaurant. Last but not

least, episodic characters from “Londongrad” follow the luxury consumption and status orientation theme. The theme was brought up in the literature review by both Gudkov (2003) and Malashenko (1999). Zafar, Denni and Dinara are Russian ethnic minorities living in London. Zafar is Misha’s client who is looking for ways (often illegal) to help his nephew with the university. Throughout the series, he bribes everyone so that Denni remains studying in Cambridge. For him being kicked out of school would destroy the reputation of the family. Dinara is an oligarch’s wife. She is a money digger, who stole her husband from a friend in order to become rich. In the analysed episode, her “rich and mean” image is confirmed when she bribes her friend’s babysitter so she stops teaching her friends’ children. All three characters are presented negatively as willing to live in luxury high-status consumption environments, concentrating solely on pursuing financial success and reputation-caring.

All in all, the representations of ethnic minorities can hardly be called holistic. Despite the fact, that not many characters are presented in an obviously negative manner, most of them are not taken serious and have a vivid ironic image. Mostly, each character is a mockery rather than a dramatical character or an equal citizen contributing to Russian society. Even when a character has a leading role, he or she mainly supports the overall plot, but rarely is meant to cause audience’s rueful feelings with a few exceptions (Gulnara, for instance). However, it is important to emphasise that the mockery goes two-way — some episodes evidently show the characters from a negative/ironic side, whilst others explicitly deride widespread xenophobic perceptions portraying Slavic characters as unjust villains. In general, within ethnic minority roles, a lot of stereotypes existing in the Russian society are being reproduced. Correlating with the literature review on the topic of contemporary nationalism in Russia, many features described there are noticeable throughout the movies. As such, negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities’ economic prosperity and profit-seeking as well as unusual “mountain” aggressive behaviour patterns, mentioned by Malashenko (1999).

### **3.3 Data analysis**

As stated by Paltridge (2012, p.179), the steps of multimodal discourse analysis are very similar to those of a usual discourse analysis project. Nevertheless, the difference lies in what data aspects are analysed. The identification and reconstruction of the discourse were conducted by re-watching series several times. As for the analysis itself, the researcher

<u>Time</u>	<u>Development of the plot</u>	<u>Dialogue</u>	<u>Visual imagery</u>
4.23 — 4.50	In order to surprise Vika German brought her a bouquet of roses. She refused to accept the present and left for work. Passing the restaurant’s entrance, she meets Aynur taking out the thrash.	<p>Aynur: Good morning, Viktoria Sergeevna!</p> <p>German (walking disappointed towards Aynur and giving her the flowers): Aynur, this is of you.</p> <p>Aynur (smiling and reading the note from the bouquet): “Your smile makes the world better!”</p>	Aynur wears her red/pink working uniform above the flower patterned shirt; bang straggler under the headpiece

watched the selected shows and recorded the information according to the chosen coding scheme.

Mentioned earlier, the coding scheme was inspired by O’Halloran’s (2004) multimodal *mise-èn-scene* complex analysis and Thibault’s (2000) four dimension model. All in all, three different modes were decided to be taken into account — visual imagery, dialogues and plot of a sequence (soundtrack and kinetic action from Thibault) and character’s role within the bigger plot. As for the visual imagery, the researcher paid attention to the way the characters look, their outfits and personal belongings. As soon as essentialists and nationalists describe ethnicity as an inherited cultural feature shared within your community, the visual mode can reveal representations of “the otherness” through specific apparel or body complexions.

The dialogues and plot mode combined the analysis of dialogues transcripts with the special attention to the content of the conversations (what is the topic of the conversation and what exactly is being said) and the format (e.g. accents and specific vocabulary used). As soon as language is considered to be a big part of ethnical identity, this mode is expected to highly contribute to the meaning creation.

Last but not least, the third mode, character’s role, investigated character’s position within the overall plot of the series moving further beyond a sequence.

The chosen episodes were transcribed in Russian and analysed manually. For the dialogue and plot, the speech and the actions of the characters were transcribed in a chronological way. As for the visual mode, every time an ethnic character appears, his look was fixed in a descriptive way next to the dialogue/action column (Table 3.2).

After the episodes were analysed in the way described above, the information was further analysed by means of a coding process. Coding is “a systematic way in which to condense extensive data sets into smaller analyzable units through the creation of categories and concepts derived from the data” (Lockyer, 2004, p.137). As a process of converting data into meaningful categories to answer a research question, coding is useful to make sense of the data collected. It “facilitates the organization, retrieval, and interpretation of data and leads to conclusions on the basis of that interpretation” (Lockyer, 2004, p.138). Qualitative research revealing the underlying meanings requires researcher’s attention to language and elaborate reflection on reoccurring patterns emerging in the data (Saldaña, 2015, p.10). For this reasons, coding is a sufficient way to work with textually collected data in a media representation research.

The coding process was developed in an inductive as well as deductive way. The literature review indicated the researcher should pay attention to the following themes often present in the depiction of ethnic minority members: economic issues, criminal activity and drug distribution (Gudkov, 2005), as well as traditional unity, luxury consumption orientation, low educational levels and mountain behavioural patterns (Malashenko, 1999). However, the data also revealed new insights not stated by Russian scholars — the particular details of representations. Here, findings significantly enhance and specify theoretical characteristics from the literature review. As such, the topic of money in the analysis brought up by Gudkov (2005) as generalised commercial success orientation and luxury consumption orientation by Malashenko (1999), reveals many hidden details. The topic is widely covered by a variety of characteristics such as mercenariness, bribing, commercialism and so on. This level of details elaboration was not presented by the scholars.

Informed by grounded theory principles (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), three coding stages were implemented to the research: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. During the first phase, open coding, the transcripts were labelled freely but loosely informed by the inductive and deductive mix described above. That means that all quotes or features within a sequence that seemed relevant for the study were given a label referring to the content. For example, all statements where an ethnic minority character was using his own native language were simply labelled with “native language usage” code. Here, a code stands for “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/

or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2015, p.10). After this step, 18 independent codes were detected for the dialogues mode (5 for the format and 13 for the content of the speech), 6 for the visual mode and 2 for the role mode. To increase the validity of the coding procedures, a detailed coding book is presented at the end of the thesis (Appendix A).

In the second phase, axial coding, more attention was paid to the labels themselves so they were organised into relevant clusters. The categories were separated from the mode — thus, formed categories might include codes from both visual and dialogue modes. For the purposes of the research six broader categories were created: “gender & family”, “money”, “disgrace towards minorities”, “illegitimacy”, “intellectuality” and “apparel”. One category remained from the first step — emotions. Within the category, codes relate to the broader topic by being their particular examples (see Appendix A).

Finally, in the third phase, selective coding, these new concepts were being hierarchically sorted out in order to understand them in relation to quotations in other groups and to build up for the research question answer. All in all, five major trends were discovered: money-seeking (presented by 8 characters out of 11), traditionalism (presented by 7 characters out of 11), ignorance and illiteracy (presented by 6 characters out of 11), emotionality (presented by 5 characters out of 11) criminal involvement (presented by 5 characters out of 11).

To sum up, the coding as a concrete procedure within MDA allowed the researcher to work sufficiently with a big qualitative dataset. It hierarchically organised information found in the three different modes and made it easy to compare it between the modes contributing to a deep representations understanding. Labelling pieces of information informed by the literature on Russian nationalism helped the researcher to get into representations and fix the meanings existing in the chosen media texts.



## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Findings**

The analysis discovered some major patterns that frequently appear in the representation of ethnic minority characters based on the chosen series. Drawing upon the research question — how do the Russian TV series represent ethnic minorities — Multimodal Discourse Analysis was chosen to uncover representations of ethnicity. With its multimodal perspective to semiotic resources analysis, its discursive dimension fixing a socio-political component of representations and its ability to look into inconsistencies within the discourses the method helped the researcher to get into representations. The chapter puts forward the claim that ethnic minorities are represented as negligible and insignificant individuals not playing an important role in the Russian society. Significantly, reoccurring representation trends were traced and highlighted.

Firstly, the chapter provides an overview of the five themes found throughout the series, namely money, traditionalism, illiteracy, criminality, and emotions. After the themes are introduced, a detailed description supported with quotations from empirical data and in-depth investigation of the illustrative cases is presented. The chapter concludes with the general trend of the representation — unserious characters or objects of hatred, as well as it presents the inconsistencies and challenges within the studied discourse.

#### ***Themes overview***

Considering the themes found throughout the corpus of analysis, the first one, money-seeking is presented by 11 characters out of 13. The theme included the following codes: “mercenariness”, “bribing”, “commercialism”, “luxury consumption orientation” from the dialogues and plot mode; “business casual/smart casual appearances”, “accessories”, “luxury consumption orientation”, “excessive colouring/patterning” from the visual mode; “high-middle/high class orientation” from the roles mode. The overall direction of the ethnic characters representation within this theme is consistent with widely-spread perceptions of ethnic minorities among ethnically Russian population discussed in Chapter 2.3. In Russia, the population is in the state of frustration experiencing socio-economical anomie whilst new ethnically diverse citizens are highly motivated by the absence of social privileges. This leads to the development of ethnic entrepreneurship and ethnic minorities’ trade market entrance.

Proven by empirical data, it induces Russian population to accuse ethnic minorities of money-seeking, orientation to luxury lifestyles and commercialism (2003, p.61). Here, apart from dialogue codes, a variety of apparel features represent the theme. Bright colours, excessive accessories and smart casual looks ironically show minorities as seeking to look rich and well presented.

The second theme, traditionalism, is presented by 10 characters out of 13 and remains to be among the prominent throughout the analysis. The theme included “community feelings”, “family values”, “hypersexuality”, “sexism towards women”, “nepotism” codes from dialogues and plot mode; “femininity” and “masculinity” from the visual mode. Topics of sex, gender and family relations are usually associated with adherence to the doctrines and practices of traditionalism — traditional gender roles and strong family attachment. The general trend of the theme is presenting ethnic minorities as culturally “different” in line with ethnic nationalists’ assumption that ethnicities are culturally homogeneous communities with common traditions and shared values. Contemporary Russian society presents itself as modern with Slavic orthodox cultural tradition. For these reasons, features like Islamic traditionalism, communality and patriarchal relations indicate society’s outsiders.

The topic of ignorance and illiteracy is also covered in the chosen series. Presented by 7 characters out of 13, the theme was captured by codes such as “grammatical issues”, “native language usage”, “specific vocabulary usage”, “obtusity” from the dialogues and plot mode and “mcjobs” code from the roles mode. Here, two major trends constitute the theme as a whole unit — language and bad education. The importance of language to ethnic nationalists is crucial — linguistic competency is a remarkable marker of being a “native” member. Big amount of lexical and grammatical mistakes, unusual vocabulary usage and ethnic language usage found in the series mark ethnic minority characters as “non-members”, as outsiders, as objects of ridicule. Manifested in the Russian scholars’ works, language skills in combination with poor education leading to disrespected labour positions create a stereotype of an ethnic minority character as an ignoramus that doesn't fit within the society. Against this background, Russian nationalism creates a utopian and elitist vision of Russian Slavic society where individuals belong to lower and upper middle classes — educated professionals with respectable wages. The system of representation mocks ethnic minorities for being poorly-paid and uneducated with routinised and disrespected job positions.

Two less significant themes were approached — criminal involvement and emotional expressivity. The topic of criminal involvement included “criminal activity” and “illegal stay in Russia” codes. As stated by Gudkov (2003), Russian indigenous population frequently accuse other ethnicities of rising the levels of criminality and being involved in activities such as drug distribution or trafficking. Here, a typical stereotyping occurred creating an image of an ethnic character as a criminal or a non-compliant citizen. Moreover, sometimes ethnic citizens are approached as illegals, who do not have a permission to live or work in Russia. As for emotional expressivity, it was demonstrated by 6 characters out of 13 arising from one dialogue and plot code, namely, “emotions expression”. The theme captures one of those “mountain behaviour patterns” ascribed by Slavs to ethnic minorities from Caucasus — a typical southern stereotype includes excessive emotional expression such as aggression, gestures and elevated voices (Malashenko, 1999). The theme contributes to us-and-them dichotomy by representing ethnic minorities as aggressive “barbarians” different from the majority of society.

#### ***Ethnic minorities as money-seekers***

One of the major characteristics ascribed to minority characters independent of their ethnicity, age or gender was their pursuance of money. This broad description consists of many subtopics but connected together by its relation to money-grabbing, bribing and luxury products orientation. The broad topic was firstly discovered in the literature review (Gudkov, 2003, p.61) — influenced by contemporary power dynamics in the service and small enterprises sector in Russian cities, the local urban population is showing constant awareness of their economic and labour positions in comparison with the positions of ethnicities. This constant frustration penetrates societal attitudes on a number of levels covering a wide range of money-related topics. Money-orientation, seeking for luxury and wealth are presented as a rather negative trait. Oftentimes, characters in the series are shown as hucksters that are used to achieve their goals through bribes or under the table payments and who will prioritise financial profit over personal relations. For instance, when Zafar’s nephew, Denny, was almost kicked out from the university, he paid money to the main character, Misha, so he can come up with a solution for Zafar:

Zafar: Denni has to graduate. Do anything — it is important he won't be kicked out <...>  
You have already received the advanced sum. In a case of a success, I am ready to offer a bonus.

(“Londongrad”, season 1, episode 7)

A similar situation happened in episode 49 of “Univer” when Artur failed his PE exam and decided to buy his teacher a fencing gear in order to get a pass:

Kuzya: Cool, an epee!

Artur: This is not an epee, Kuzya, it's my PE exam pass. I got to know that our Tamara [PE teacher] won 1980's Olympics in fencing. So I decided to buy her an epee and a mask.

Kuzya: What for?

Artur: Well I'll go to her, tell her I am amazed by her athletic achievements, present this shit. She will beg me to let her put a “pass”!

(“Univer”, season 1, episode 49)

As well as paying to get something themselves ethnic characters would happily agree to do extra work or friendly favours exclusively for the monetary reward. In series this is evident through ethnic characters' interaction with Slavic leads — In “Kukhnya”, both Timur and Aynur frequently show those “money-seeking” qualities:

Timur: Hey, chief-bro, good afternoon! Listen, you are so lucky today! I want to gift you VIP tickets for tomorrow's Spartak game <...>

Chief: Thank you, Timur!

Timur: You are welcome, it will cost you three thousand rubbles.

Chief: What, three thousand? You've just said it's a present, haven't you?

Timur: Chief, you know the price for VIP tickets, for 3000 — it's like a present.

(“Kukhnya”, season 3, episode 44)

Maxim: Aynur, can you help me kill a goose?

Aynur: One thousand rubles and you will ever [an intentional ethnic grammar mistake] see him again.

(“Kukhnya”, season 1, episode 3)

Alongside with bribing and panel games, ethnic minorities, in general, are presented as people who value money over other things trying hard to make a profit on everything. A bright example is the episode 47 of “Univer” — it turned out in the past Artur was meant to marry an old rich lady in order to get her inheritance, though she died a day before the marriage so his plan had failed. Timur also frequently tries to sell rotten products to the restaurant to profit. In case he is suspected he quickly lowers the prices demonstrating widely hated bargainer’s traits associated with ethnic minorities:

Timur: Lyova, you look at this fish like you gonna marry her.

Lyova: The fish is expensive, it has to be in a perfect condition...

Timur: Okay, want the same one with a discount?

(“Kukhnya”, season 3, Episode 54)

In connection with high appreciation of money, many characters demonstrate orientation towards luxury products — they adore fine dining restaurants, high-end brands and chase after upscale material possessions. For instance, this is manifested in Zafar’s and Denny case in “Londograd”. According to the plot, Denny’s village paid for his education in Cambridge as they perceived the university to be elitist and prestigious (“Londograd”, season 1, episode 7). In Zafar’s and Misha’s dialogue the main character explicitly made fun of Zafar’s family for being stubborn and close-minded — Zafar didn’t appreciate any other educational institution, including Oxford, resting his argument upon tuition fees. The case also exemplifies a traditional collective culture that is going to be discussed later on.

The trend is also quite visible in the visual representations of ethnic minorities. On numerous occasions, ethnic characters are presented as using excessive patterning, immoderate accessories and formal clothing in informal situations in order to look presentable and rich. The patterning and excessive colouring are recognisable for both women and men — Ashot and Artur frequently wear lots of colours, bright scarfs and flower

print shirts; Aynur also likes excessive make-up and glittery accessories. Moreover, oftentimes, characters try to look more presentable in completely informal situations. For instance, many times Artur was depicted sitting in a blazer and a shirt in his dorm, whereas his flatmates wear tracksuits. Here, this outstanding apparel trend can be interpreted as a common view on ethnicities trying to look well presented and wealthy through their outfits whilst oftentimes their wealth is artificial and ostentatious.

### ***Ethnic minorities as having traditional values***

Repeatedly and prominently, the image of ethnic minorities in the series emphasise their adherence to traditional values — beliefs that are passed down from the past, like strong family values and traditional gender roles within the society. These features discursively distinguish them from the Slavic urban population that prefers seeing itself as more European and liberal. Despite the fact, that ethnic Russians have a lot of traditionalist characteristics within their own culture, when it comes to us-them division, Slavs explicitly point out their “contemporaneity”. The series mock traditional values as ridiculous and old-fashioned suggesting new gender and family relations through Russian Slavic characters plot lines. In the series, the topic is noticeable through ethnic characters allegiance to a family as well as traditional gender behaviour supported by visual representation.

First of all, blood ties are presented to be an important factor in characters’ life. Frequently, family reputation or indeterminate family obligations motivate characters to act or express themselves in a specific way. In “Londongrad”, for instance, Danny always talks about his family and those obligations: “I need to help my family”, “I am thinking about the family all the time”, “my family should feel pride in me” (“Londongrad”, season 1, episode 7). As for the “Kukhnya,” in season 3 episode 54 Timur’s nephew crashed into “a gangster’s car” and Timur immediately went there for wrangling as his family member. Same is true for ethnic characters from “Univer” — when Ashot’s wife got to know about Ashot’s brother’s nightlife, alcohol consumption and love affairs she immediately made a comment on the reputation of their family:

Karina: Artur, how dare you? What a shame for our respected family!

(“Univer”, season 3, episode 148)

The sense of belonging to the family among Russian urban population has been gradually shifted from a traditional one to the Western nuclear family concept — a contemporary approach where blood ties do not matter. In that sense, Russian society positions itself as a modern liberal community of individuals rather than a traditionalist society. Despite the fact that in practice Russians themselves are quite orthodox in a number of family and gender issues, the case exemplifies their “modernity” as a mechanism of superiority proclamation. This is proven by a number of contrasting cases, where in the same episode Russian Slavic family relations were shown as modern and liberal — Artur’s flatmate, Sasha, has a very casual relationship with his father. Another example is “Kukhnya” — all the young couples such as Maxim and Vika or Kostia and Nastya are nuclear families that do not have connections with their older relatives. Moreover, in some episodes with their parents visiting, the characters are shown as displeased with parents’ intrusion.

Interlinked with a strong family devotion, nepotism is frequently shown as a traditional way to hire family members or favour them in the employment issues. Thus, Timur hired Soslan, his nephew, to work in his delivery enterprise in the second season of “Kukhnya”. The same is true for Aynur, Gulnara’s aunt, who helped Gulnara to move to Moscow and employed her as a dishwasher in the restaurant she worked herself.

Secondly, traditional values become apparent through the gender roles and behaviour, ascribed to characters. Thus, beyond working hours, females in the series are presented as housekeepers — Gulnara usually cleans Lyova’s house or cook her signature dishes (“Kukhnya”, season 5). As for Dinara, she is unemployed and stays at home during the daytime (“Londongrad”, season 1, episode 18). On the contrary, many Russian female characters are represented as businesswomen who do not have time for the housework — Nastya and Vika from “Kukhnya” work full-time and never babysit their children during the weekdays; Alisa from “Londongrad” has never cooked as she always gets take-out; Alla from “Univer” never does any cleaning or tidying up.

In support, ethnic male characters show strong sexism towards women leaving them a marginal significance. Frequently, this is noticeable through men’s attitude to females attributing importance to them as sexual objects:

Artur: You have everything that hot chicks want.

Geek: Hot chicks, you mean, girls?

Artur: Yeah, girls, chicks, women. They were all invented for us, real machos!

(“Univer”, season 1, episode 47)

As another example, from time to time Timur addresses female characters in “Kukhnya” with “Hey you, beauty”. In the same line, in “Univer” when a new guy came to the university and flirted with girls by citing them his poems, Artur was miffed and decided to talk with him referring to the girls in the university as “fawns”:

Artur: Listen up, you, my name is Artur Mikaelyan, every word with a capital letter. The cafe and the dorm are my territories. A word in your ear — all local fawns are minded by Uncle Artur, got it?

(“Univer”, season 3, episode 146)

With regard to male roles and behaviour, it is also relevant to mention a detected male sexual prowess proclamation. Notably, this is demonstrated in “Univer” by both Artur and Ashot. In that way, according to the plot, Ashot frequently have affairs betraying his wife. For instance, in episode 148 he asked Artur to invent a story for his spouse in order to cover his recent visit to a foam party in a strip club. As well as his brother, Artur equally exhibits those qualities:

Alla [Artur’s girlfriend]: How many women did you have?

Artur: You are my first one is a wrong answer, is it? Well okay, around fifty.

(“Univer”, season 4, episode 190)

After the conversation, Artur discusses his dialogue with Alla with a mate confessing that it was a huge understatement in order not to have an argument with Alla and in fact he lost the count on a one hundred third girl.

Thirdly, detected on the visual level, analysed characters’ apparel as well as their behaviour usually embrace traditional gender appearances — feminine for women and



masculine for men. To name a few, all ethnic female characters accentuate their femininity by their womanish garments such as jewelry, flower patterns and effeminate apparel designs. As for Aynur and Gulnara from “Kukhnya”, despite the fact they both earn money by manual labour jobs requiring a utility uniform, they emphasise their femininity by a variety of accessories. Gulnara, for example, always wears high-heeled slippers and a dress under the uniform whilst working in the kitchen. Aynur, who is a janitor, wears red floral-patterned shirts under her working jumpsuit. She usually wears a lot of feminine accessories: big earrings, a necklace, variety of rings, a bracelet, and a bright make-up using lipstick, eye-liner and eyeshadows at the same time. Such accessories are noticeable in contrast with non-ethnic characters, who frequently wear non-traditional gender outfits. Both feminine male behaviour (like Maxim, the main character, is feminine, mild and tender in relation to his girlfriend) and masculine female behaviour (Katya, a molecular gastronomy chief, is a manlike biker who usually wears jeans and leather jackets) are contrasting ethnic characters.

As well as females, men in the series also tend to underline their masculinity with some garments. For instance, Artur, Ashot and Timur are frequently seen with heavy golden chains on their chests and unbuttoned shirts so their locks are visible — a typical standard masculinity appearance spread on the South.

### ***Ethnic minorities as illiterates***

The analysis showed that ethnic minority characters are likely to be represented as illiterate, poor educated and ignorant. According to the series, this image is developed through several representation features: language, social positions and their stupidity of manners.

As for the language, almost every character analysed in the work demonstrates difficulties with language. First of all, they use an indicative vocabulary that has become associated with ethnicities — phrases like “bro” or “hail and prosper you” in the Russian language are typically connoted to non-native speakers from the Caucasus or former USSR republics. Moreover, frequent use of interjections along with condemning vocabulary in one’s speech also gives away a minority member. Thus, in order to replace unknown words in the fast speech Timur often recourse to interjections:

Timur: Yes, *here it is, yeah*, the way you said, *I mean*, this bloke. Briefly, they something like kicked up a stink on the training session, *ai, ouch*, he is screaming — *swear by my mother*, you won't take the field next time!

(“Kukhnya”, season 1, episode 10)

Quite often, characters do not use the words properly and a lot of grammar and syntax mistakes appear. Unfortunately, some of them, like case and gender grammar mistakes are lost in translation to English. However, a lot of them are obvious with the direct translation:

Timur: Listen, do you need fresh *fico*?

Chief: What?!

Timur: Has arrived from Japan this morning.

Chief: It's a fugu fish!

Timur: Ah, yeah, fugu! Do you need some?

Chief: Are you crazy? It is poisonous!

Timur: I will give it you twice as cheap!

(“Kukhnya”, season 5 , episode 120)

Aynur: No hard feelings but you are *not... tasty for me*. I mean... Not at all to my taste!

(“Kukhnya”, season 5, episode 89)

These mistakes are a strong indication of ethnic characters being members of an outer group. For ethnic nationalism, language is a strong criterion for inclusion, thus, a manifest sign of the otherness. In some situations, character's Russian fluency can be equally noticed through the plot development. By way of illustration, in season 1 episode 16 Aynur had a dinner in a restaurant. In the episode, she couldn't read the menu so when the waiter came she was pointing with her finger on every dish she wanted to order.

Another indication of the language knowledge is characters' usage of their own language in the Russian speech. Oftentimes, characters insert their own words in conversations. In the analysed episodes Artur frequently speaks Armenian without any translation (e.g. episode 46, from 1:30). Timur and Aynur also demonstrate the feature:

Timur: I do remember, I do! *Aihalypschsherny*, Sosik! Come and clean after your sheep!

(“Kukhnya”, season 3, episode 42)

As far as characters’ roles are concerned, they also represent a common opinion that ethnic minorities are foolish and less talented than natives. This runs through the plot as we see characters positions in the series — all in all, more than a half of all ethnic minority characters are having jobs that do not require any specific skills, are disrespected and underpaid: Aynur is a janitor, Gulnara is a dishwasher, Fayzul is a construction worker, Kanat is a prep cook, Soslan is a driver, Timur is a delivery man. On average, in the movies all important positions that require responsibilities and specific knowledge are given to Slavic characters (e.g. all cooks and waiters in “Kukhnya” are ethnically Russian except for Louis, a French confectioner). This is consistent with widely spread perceptions that Russians are more educated and talented than the migrants, discussed in the literature review.

Moreover, an ethnic minority character’s behaviour or speech attest to his or her intelligence level. Aynur frequently shows ignorance and obtusity in everyday situations. For instance, in season 5 she was convinced that restaurant’s new chief cook is in love with her — his every action was perceived as a romantic act towards her and was presented in an ridiculous and ironic way.

In the episode with Fayzul, the character painted the floor instead of the walls, exaggerating ethnic stupidity above the levels of jobs that do not require any skills:

Kostia: Fayzul, why the hell did you paint the floor?

Fayzul: Nastia said to do so.

Nastia: Walls, you should have painted the walls!

Fayzul: You said the room — I started with the floor.

(“Kukhnya”, season 3, episode 52)

### ***Ethnic minorities as illegals and as affective individuals***

The two following themes are not as prominent as the aforementioned three. However, they are still worth mentioning. As stated in the literature review and proven by empirical data

provided in the chapter, the Russian population is blaming ethnic minorities for crime contagions, such as drug distribution and contrabands. Respectively, in the series that theme was covered as well. Two reoccurring topics possessing ethnic minorities as illegals were noticed throughout the movies. These are their involvement in criminal activity and their undocumented migrant status.

As for the latter, a number of scenes reveal the fact that ethnic minority characters do not have labour permits or residence permits. The whole episode of “Kukhnya” in the first season was dedicated to an unexpected migration service audit in the restaurant. It turned out Aynur and a big amount of background characters were illegal residents with no labour permits. For the rest of the episode, they were hiding from the inspectors in different places around the restaurant. Another indicative example is Kanat, who received his Russian passport only with the help of chief-cook in season 4 episode 64. As far as criminal activity is concerned, sometimes characters are represented as involved in different kinds of illegal activities, from fire-fights to contrabands:

Timur: Chief-bro, do you need truffles? At an easy rate!

Chief: Timur, are you up to your old games again?

Timur: Er?

Chief: Are you suggesting me a contraband?

Timur (smiling): So...

(“Kukhnya”, season 1, episode 6)

Last but not least, ethnic minority characters are represented as emotionally unstable and affective personalities, frequently high-pressure and easily offended. Being one of the hardest literature review concepts to explain, “mountain behaviour patterns” include aggressive behaviour, excessive gesturing and loud voices. This set of features was frequently noticed in the series. For instance, when driving, Timur and his nephew Soslan are shown as emotionally charged and aggressive, screaming and swearing “Watch your steps, asshole!” (“Kukhnya”, season 3, episode 47). Another bright example is the episode with Caucasian episodic character — after having an argument because of his wrongly parked car with Maxim, he brings his three Caucasian friends to the restaurant in order to have a

fight. Also in “Fizruk” also, Madina aggressively reacts to Sasha’s speech about the school test trying to start a fight:

Madina: Wanna me to clean your clock, huh?

(“Fizruk”, season 1, episode 2)

With the combination of expressive body language and intonations frequently demonstrated by Timur, Soslan, Madina, Artur and others, emotionality directly refers to ethnicity as an indicator of the “otherness”. Being affective marks an individual as having a “southern” or Caucasian mentality and virtually separates him from the society.

### ***The overall image of ethnic minorities***

All in all, it seems necessary to state the general image direction — ethnic minorities are frequently represented as funny and meaningless characters or objects of hatred and contempt from the Slavic characters. Even though oftentimes ethnic characters are not presented from an obviously negative side, in many cases caustic elements of their image appear.

In many cases ethnically Russian heroes showed their disrespect or discredit towards ethnic characters. For instance, in “Kukhnya” (season 2, episode 36), Viktor, one of the main characters and restaurant’s chief-cook, behaved in an unusual way. His co-workers started to suspect him in taking drugs. Without any hesitation, they jumped to the conclusion that Timur, restaurant’s food deliverer, was providing Viktor with the drugs. However it is not stated in the dialogue, their assumption was based on his ethnic affiliation — a commonly spread stereotype that ethnic minorities are involved in criminal activity and drug distribution is vividly presented by this particular example:

Fedya: Tell me another one! Spit it out, what junk did he order? Afghan, chronic, hemp, pot, salvia?

Timur: Wow, wow, wow, listen, he ordered an orchid, a flower...

Fedya: Police might trust you but not us!

(“Kukhnya”, season 2, episode 36)

Another example is a case presented in “Univer” when Artur was picking up his brother Ashot from a train station and gone missing for a day:

Sasha [Artur’s flatmate, a traditionally Slavic character]: He is not picking up the phone. They might be both already caught by the police. What? Two Armenians on the station, surrounded by hobos with no ticket and the bread. Have been caught for sure.

(“Univer”, season 3, episode 152)

The example also shows societal sentiments towards ethnic minorities — they are perceived as social outcasts that need to be controlled by the governmental structures, such as police. It assumes that two Armenians hanging out on the train station should raise policemen’s suspicions as they might be involved in an illegal activity, such as irregular migration or drug distribution. Keeping with the theme, oftentimes Slavic characters address ethnic minorities with their ethnicities rather than their names in the conversations behind their backs. Here, they evidently place ethnicity as identity-marker distinguishing friends and foes:

Concierge: Have you seen it? Giraffe has fallen in love with the Kirghiz!

(“Kukhnya”, season 5, episode 89)

Fedya: What’s up, Lyova? Decided to lasso a Kirghiz filly?

(“Kukhnya”, season 5, episode 93)

Even the characters themselves realise their vulnerable position within the Russian society. For example, when Aynur’s niece Gulnara dropped a vegetable basket in the kitchen, Aynur was very scared and concerned:

Aynur: Careful! They don’t like us in Russia as it is!

(“Kukhnya”, season 5, episode 89)

Being a part of an ironic interplay between Lyova and Gulnara, the moment reflects on the societal injustice on the topic of ethnic minorities as parts of the proclaimed secular equal democratic society where ethnicities forecast attitudes.

However, it is important to emphasise the inconsistencies within this discourse. Frequently, in those situations when ethnic Russians are being mean or unfair, ethnic characters were presented as protagonists rather than villains. In these cases, the discourse is subversive — it mocks the society for being judgmental rather than makes fun of ethnic minorities. In a similar way, in “Kukhnya” episode 104 Lyova started dating Gulnara and decided to invite her to his place to meet his mother. During the scene, the characters realise they have forgotten to buy an ingredient for Gulnara’s dinner dish and Lyova had to take some money from his mother’s jewel box to quickly go to the grocery store. While Lyova is absent, his mother comes back home with her friend. When they meet Gulnara, without a second thought, they assume she was a housemaid and started giving her household tasks. Most ethnic minorities are perceived as being uneducated and illiterate — they are expected to do cheap manual labour in the service sector rather than being equal parts of the society and indigenously Russian families. Judging Gulnara by her Central Asian appearance, two Slavic characters immediately made stereotyped assumptions about the girl who simply doesn't look like them. When the scene continued, Lyova’s mother discovered that some money is missing from her box. Her friend immediately blamed Gulnara in an extremely rude manner:

Mother’s friend: Show us your bag and then you can go on foot to your Tajikistan!

Gulnara: What?

Lyova’s mother: Gulnara, we don’t accuse of anything, but...

Mother’s friend: Walked away with five thousand rubbles, do you think no one noticed?  
Give me your bag! Show it now!

(“Kukhnya”, season 6, episode 124)

The case provides extra details on the perception of ethnically different citizens as swindlers and devious citizens. To continue this sub-story, season 6 tells the life of Gulnara

and Lyova after the described meeting with his mother. It took her months to accept Gulnara as being her son's girlfriend, she was frequently rude and tried to do everything so the young never meet again. She was accusing her of being from a "barbarian" culture, though Gulnara had never explicitly shown any cultural differences that demonstratively stood out. In this case, movie plot depicts Gulnara as a protagonist — an unjustly treated victim of circumstances and xenophobic social attitudes. Considering Gulnara's case, the series treats Russian society with a wide-spread hatred towards ethnic minorities with irony and disapproval rather than mock ethnicities themselves.

Another example is an episode of "Kukhnya" in season 5, where an episodic character refers to ethnic minorities from the series as "illegals". This character was an immigration official who was auditing the restaurant. The auditing caused a lot of troubles for the main characters, especially the chief-cook and Aynur, representing the official as a "villain". During the episode he frequently showed his disgust towards ethnic minorities explicitly representing widespread attitudes among the Russian population:

Immigration official: If we think about illegals — they look like rats, don't they? Mark you, it is not offensive at all as rats are our world's enemies. They are hated by everyone. I reckon you don't quite like rats, do you?

("Kukhnya", season 1, episode 16)

What is particularly important in the case is the word choice constructing the image of an ethnic minority character. "Illegals" and "rats" strongly contribute to the message that migrants are not simply unequal and subdued in relation to ethnic Russians, they are extraneous and detrimental rudiments not contributing anything to the Russian society. It shows Russian attitude towards upcoming entrants as intruders that do not have a chance for assimilation.

Another challenging inconsistency noticed in the series involve representations of Slavic characters. Sometimes Slavic characters themselves show the qualities they ascribe to ethnic minorities. However, within the plot, those characteristics are usually excused and do not appear as problematic. Those tensions within the discourse prove once again the exclusive mechanism of nationalistic ideology. As such, the topic of money frequently appears in



“Londograd”. The main character, Misha, sets up his own agency that helps Russian immigrants in London. He is also a money-oriented young entrepreneur, however, these traits are presented as a clear personal leadership and ambition. From the first episode, viewers following his story create an image of a smart and deserving Slavic dramatic character who encourages sympathy.

In the same manner, exemplified by nepotism in “Kukhnya”, the topic of traditionalism also reoccurs within the Slavs. In season 4, episode 62, Maxim, the main character, brings his brother Denis to cook in the restaurant because Denis was unemployed and needed support. Denis didn't have any culinary education and was obviously taken due to his relation to Maxim. The whole episode is an adventurous story of hiding the truth from restaurant's chief and art director. Here, main protagonists, Maxim and his friends, actively support Denis and help him to go round a variety of circumstantial obstacles on his way to employment. The episode presents Denis as a new protagonist causing audience's emphatic feelings rather than an unfair villain using his brother's reputation.

Considering criminal activity, Foma, the leading character of the “Fizruk” is a criminal himself. The plot follows his story — he was a violent ex-security of a rich Russian criminal and was fired due to his old-fashioned methods. Being show's main protagonist, he is represented as a pitiful and gentle-hearted outlaw trying to get his job back and find his happiness in life.

All these aforementioned cases prove the point, that exclusive practices are artificial differentiation mechanisms creating in-group and out-group identities through selective remembering and forgetting. Many characteristics ascribed to ethnicities are exaggerations and are present within Russian population as well. However, nationalism as an ideology has definite answers to such questions as who are we and who are they, influencing stereotypes appearance by exclusion traits amplification.

Another important observation touches upon the differences between the attitudes towards different ethnicities. Based on the analysed characters, a vivid distinction between Central Asian characters and Caucasian characters exists. As for the first group (Aynur, Gulnara, Fayzul, Kanat), the general tendency is depicting them as marginal and illiterate. The main feature found in their images is their distinct subordinate position in the Russian society. It is clearly manifested through their obtuseness, disrespected labour positions and poor language

skills. As for the second group, referred to as “Caucasians”, they are evidently represented in a less dominant societal position. Characters, such as Artur, Timur, Dinara or Soslan, are equal citizens in terms of their financial and labour stratification. Artur, for instance, is a young and promising student who seeks to become a businessman and succeed in life. The same tendency is true for Timur and Soslan with their small entrepreneurship — characters are working hard to be parts of the Russian urban community and have respected job positions. However, as mentioned above, these characteristics, such as money-seeking, financial profit orientation and ambitious life position are perceived negatively by Russians constructing them as “others” through these qualities.

All in all, in the series, ethnic characters can be characterised as subordinate and meaningless. Ethnic “otherness” is presented by five reoccurring “exclusion” themes found throughout the analysis. Each theme contributes to an elaborate understanding of an image of an ethnic individual in Russia and is consistent with the literature review on the Russian case. The themes presenting characteristics of ethnic exclusion are money-seeking, traditionalism, illiteracy, crime involvement, and excessive emotionality. To emphasise once again, frequently, representation of ethnicity is subversive so the discourse is challenged — TV series also concentrate on Russian stereotyped thinking and intolerance. Moreover, important observations on Russian characters were conducted. As such, many cases found in the movies show that Slavic characters also represent negative traits ascribed to ethnic minorities. However, these traits are presented as not problematic and are usually justified. Last but not least, certain differences between different minority groups were found. Here, Caucasians are represented as more integrated into Russian society whilst Central Asians have a strong subordinate image.

## 5. Conclusion

In the present study, the issue under scrutiny is the representation of ethnic minorities in Russian TV series. Multimodal Discourse Analysis was used in order to answer the question how do these movies represent ethnic minorities in Russia. Current project seems to validate the view that ethnic minorities are presented as inappreciable and negligible parts of society.

This study draws on theoretical works conducted in the fields of nationalism and media representation. The contemporary scholarly literature on nationalism adopts a functionalist approach to nations and ethnicities that implies ethnicities are socially shaped concepts. They are not inborn characteristics but invented and constructed notions that develop through intercommunications, social widespread acceptance and influenced by society's set of values. Those sets of values, namely ideologies, prevalent in a given community frame people's identities with distinct understandings of who are they and who they are not. Influenced by nationalistic ideology regnant in today's Russia, ethnicity is being understood by Slavic communities as one's inherited and inevitable trait dramatically influencing individual's cultural values, appearance, behaviour and societal status. Here, Russian nationalistic discourse uses ethnicity in order to create in-and-out groups — a special Slavic identity opposes Caucasian and Central Asian ethnic minorities.

To date, there is insufficient research on ethnic minorities in Russia to draw any firm conclusions about their media representations within the nationalistic discourse. However, based on Stuart Hall's media representation theory (1996, 1997, 1981, 1990), it can be assumed that media is one of the most powerful ideology transmitters. Thus, in a society with strong nationalism penetration, media unavoidably reflects social attitudes and moods through their representations. This project fills in this academic lacuna and demonstrates how ethnic minorities are represented in the Russian entertaining media. Based on Russian scholars emphasising society's attitudes to minorities (Gudkov, 2003, Malashenko, 1999), the work shows common portrayal themes in details as well as inconsistencies within Russian nationalistic discourse. Here, discourse is understood as specific practices and representations constructing identities and social values.

It is relevant to state that preliminary expectations do not fully match with the results of the project. Before the start of the analysis, based on the literature, it was expected that ethnic minorities would be portrayed in a rather negative as well as exclusive way. Informed by

existing research on ethnic minorities portrayal and the Russian case per se, researcher anticipated prominence of features, such as “ghettoisation” (Downing and Husband, 2005), “marginalisation” (Narasaki, 2005), stereotype-driven appearances — “undervalued” and “underused” (Bourne, 1989). Partly, those points were found in the corpus, however, the overall trend of ethnic minorities representation has a slightly different focus.

On the one hand, ethnic minorities are frequently depicted as aliens, as something that Russians should put up with but who are essentially different and subordinate. However, despite the fact that many characters are shown as problematic individuals, the majority of representations are not straightforwardly negative. More often than not, ethnic characters are addressed as funny additions to the general plot line, they are meaningless and unserious. Their roles are not of a dramatic character — characters are not meant to cause audience’s deep feelings or strong empathy. Rather than being the focus of attention, they distract viewers from main events development with a sub-story entertainment where compassion is not expected. Characters like Timur, Soslan, Madina or Aynur have rarely been in the centre of attention in an episode and they can hardly be called fully developed leads. Their roles, despite being stated as principal or secondary, never go further than supporting main characters or developing circumstances. They are amusing and funny, easy to comprehend and mostly very likeable. Matching with secondary positions Russian society gives to ethnic minorities, they present subordinate characters in the series consistent with their societal roles prescribed by Russian nationalistic discourse.

Consistent with the “rejection” factors found in the relevant Russian scholarly literature (Gudkov, 2003, Malashenko, 1999), five reoccurring exclusion themes were found throughout the corpus of analysis. Money-seeking and profit orientation, frequently represented as ethnicities’ negative traits, reflect social discontent with their own current social and labour position. As soon as native population awaits for social guarantees and is economically inactive, newcomers appear too commercial, keen on gain and up-and-doing by contrast. A variety of topics addressing the issue were found in the chosen series, such as mercenariness, bribing or orientation towards premium consumption. Another theme, traditionalism, works as an identity constructor through contrasting Slavic and ethnic values on sex, gender and family. Here, Russian nationalistic discourse produces an image of the Russian community as a part of European society with a more liberal and modern approach.

In comparison with Islamic traditionalism and traditional gender roles, Russian attitude seems to be drastically different, aggravating the distance between the cultures. As well as the values, ethnic nationalism pays special attention to language issues. Representation of minorities in the series frequently touches upon ethnic characters' illiteracy, inarticulate language, ethnic vocabulary and bad education. This is evident through grammar and syntax mistakes characters make in their speeches as well as their societal stratification — some of them are presented as dumb and incapable of having a job outside manual labour sector. Here, Russian society poses itself as a very elitist community of middle-class people rejecting the lower working class poorly-paid individuals. Less often but still prominent, criminal involvement appears in characters' representations. Proven by polls on attitudes towards newcomers, Russians blame ethnicities in having a harmful effect on the society due to their crime involvement, such as drugs distribution and trafficking. Moreover, series display ethnicities as “barbarians”, having “mountain behaviour patterns” (Malashenko, 1999) — being loud and emotionally aggressive, rude and inadequate.

On the other hand, the discourse is challenged by some tensions found during the analysis. First of all, oftentimes, irony in the series goes two-fold — as well as mocking some ethnic traits, movies deride Russian xenophobic society itself for being biased, unfair and judgmental. This is evidently clear from some cases presented in the section, such as Gulnara's first meeting with her boyfriend's mother (“Kukhnya”, season 6, episode 124) or immigration official's comments on the essence of migrants (“Kukhnya”, season 1, episode 16). Here, we see how ideological resources, both intentionally and not, reproduce discourses turning them upon themselves — mocking the society for having predetermined and nationalistic views groundlessly excluding some groups from the community. Secondly, Slavic protagonists frequently demonstrate all those negative qualities ascribed to ethnic minorities. However, within the plot, their actions are always justified and rarely presented negatively. Last but not least, a difference in the attitudes towards different minority groups was noticed. As such, Caucasians seems to be more integrated into the Russian urban and financial life whilst ethnic minorities from Central Asia are represented as dumb, subordinate and illiterate.

The findings are definitely a contribution to the existing academic research on ethnic minorities representation. As stated before, Russian academic literature is yet to develop the

topic in great detail. Despite the fact that works on ethnicities and their image in journalistic publications exist, entertainment media haven't been examined yet. This brings up the question of further research in the field that inescapably should touch on new genres of Russian entertainment media to fill the lacuna. Notwithstanding, a lack of prior research on the topic of nationalism in contemporary Russia should be indicated. Though there are sufficient sources on the history of nationalism, this work provides a detailed and previously nonexistent explanation of how exactly the discourse constructs the image of Russian ethnic minorities and what are the characteristics being ascribed to the minority communities.

Despite the fact that the project has academic relevance, it lacks practical implications. Russian society is on its peak of nationalistic moods contagion, the problem analysed in the thesis is pressing — these moods influence a number of violent crimes commission and create a rivalry between state's citizens. However, the work analyses it from a solely theoretical perspective.

Additionally, the limitations of media analysis should be taken into account. Representations are only capable of showing media positions on specific topics. However, representation research is not able to argue, that the viewers perceive those movies in exactly the same manner. Moreover, it is unlikely that representations are totally free from producers' influence. Thus, a further research suggestion for nationalism explorers in the Russian media is to address the problem through studying viewers' perceptions or creators involvement in ethnic minorities representations discovered in the project. Here, the choice of media representation as a theoretical pillar is more a delimitation — a researcher's conscious selection.

As well as media analysis limitations, cultural bias should be taken into account. As stated previously, in many cases throughout the analysis researcher's cultural background helped to identify ethnic characteristics from an insider's perspective (e.g. grammar mistakes in the speech). However, this is also one of the major limitations of the project. In order to make the process of analysing media text transparent, the procedures and the codes were discussed in details with relevant examples. The researcher challenged the codes appearing throughout the analysis by asking if they can be explained explicitly for non-Russian audiences. Nevertheless, there seems to be no compelling reason to argue that the research is absolutely free from researcher's cultural bias.

The last important observation touches upon series' genres. Even within the examined TV series, though they were chosen in accordance with Russian audience preference, three shows out of four are comedies. This fact limits the generalisation potential of the work as soon as most of the issues are presented with irony and are not taken seriously. Within only one action series, Londongrad, it is evident, that non-comedy shows are less likely to mock either the Russian society or the minorities per se. They rather create a serious negative image (Dinara, Denni and Zafar are strongly unfavourable characters) and this issue should be taken into consideration in further projects.

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**Appendix A**  
**Coding tree descriptions for three modes**

Table A1 <i>Coding tree description: dialogues and plot</i>				
<u>Category</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Appearance frequency (in times)</u>
Intellectuality	Grammatical issues	Character makes grammar/lexical/syntax mistakes in his/her Russian speech	Aynur: One thousand rubbles and you will ever see him again. Maxim: Maybe never? Aynur: Ah, yeah, never. (Kukhnya, 1.3)	13
	Native language usage	Character inserts his own ethnic language in the Russian sentence in his/her speech	Timur: I do remember, I do! Aihalypsichsherny, Sosik! Come and clean after your sheep! (Kukhnya, 3.42)	16
	Specific vocabulary usage	Character uses an uncommon for Russian syntax vocabulary that is associated with ethnic minorities	Caucasian guy on black BMW: My bro, I guess I drove into the wrong place. (Kukhnya, 3.54)	30
	Obtusity	Character shows ignorance/misunderstands the situation	Nastia: I am a vegetarian. Aynur: Really? I thought you were Russian. (Kukhnya, 1.3)	5
	Emotions	Character acts/talks expressively	Madina (aggressively): Wanna me to clean your clock, huh? (Fizruk, 1.2)	19

Table A1  
Coding tree description: dialogues and plot

Gender and family	Community feelings	Character possesses overriding interest/ attachment/ appreciation of his own ethnic culture/ethnic group	<p>Ashot: Listen, do you rub elbows with celebs?          Artur: They call me everyday, like every!          Ashot: You know Galustian?          [Popular actor and comedian originally Armenian]          Artur: Ours? Me and Mishka are so close!          Ashot: And you know Djigarhanyan?          [Soviet actor from Armenia]          Artur: Intercrossed          Ashot: Look, and Garik Martirosyan?          [Popular comedian and actor, originally Armenian] Also met?          (Univer 2.63)</p>	14
	Family values	Character shows high personal importance of family/blood ties	<p>Zafar: Misha, you don't know our family. Denny has arrived from a completely different world. All the village chipped in for his education and the shame would be common as well. I would be accused as his uncle — I am here for a long time, why didn't I look after him? Why didn't negotiate?          (Londongrad 1.7)</p>	26

Table A1  
Coding tree description: dialogues and plot

	Nepotism	Character demonstrates favoritism granted to relatives in non-family employment issues	Timur: Too much work, too much stress, so decided to hire my nevvu. (Kukhnya, 2.22)	6
	Hypersexuality	Character emphasises the role of sexual relationships/his interest in sexual contact	Artur: Alla, my baby, no one can do it better than me. I am the most mature men in this dorm, in this university and this city. I have to be your first men, trust me. (Univer, 1.46)	15
	Sexism towards women	Character possesses gender discrimination towards women prescribing certain gender roles/showing less respect	Artur: You have everything that hot chicks want. Geek: Hot chicks, you mean, girls? Artur: Yeah, girls, chicks, women. They all were invented for us, real machos! (Univer, 1.47)	17
Money	Mercenariness	Character hucksters in order to achieve something	Dinara: So how much do they pay you? Nanny: Excuse me, I am not allowed to discuss it. Dinara: Double it. Nanny: You don't get it? This is my reputation issue. Dinara: Then multiply by five. (Londongrad, 2.18)	8

Table A1  
*Coding tree description: dialogues and plot*

	Bribing	Ethnic character is bribing in order to solve the upcoming problems	Timur: Chef, need to sell this sheep today! Bought it as a bribe for Sosik's university but this mutton-head passed his exams himself! (Kukhnya, 3.42)	8
	Commercialism	Character prioritises money and seeks to profit financially	Artur: [about oligarch's son who is a geek] Guy doesn't live a real life, he is not capable of using the money, though I am, but I don't have any. I will become friends with him, share my experience, obviously at his expense. When he will learn, he, I mean, we, gonna bliss out all our life. (Univer, 1.47)	19
	Luxury consumption orientation	Character demonstrates high appreciation/ orientation towards luxury products (e.g. cars, restaurants, expensive material possessions and leisure)	Artur: [Lying to his brother about his finances] And I tell them, am I just a banker for you or what? Why should I live in a two-floor house? They have the crisis so let them build garden sheds for themselves. I want a big house, 5-6 floors, with a garden and a swimming pool. (Univer, 2.63)	11

Table A1  
*Coding tree description: dialogues and plot*

Disgrace towards minorities	Contempt from Russians	Russian characters show contempt towards ethnic characters/ ethnic characters are aware of the contempt from the Russians	Kostia: Nastia, who is that? Nastia: Surprise! I mean this is Fayzul, from Tajikistan. He is renovating the children's room Kostia: Could you have asked my advice before? Tajiks they are... they would... Nastia: What? Kostia: Well you know yourself... (Kukhnya, 3.52)	18
	Address with ethnicity	Russian characters name ethnic characters with ethnicity rather than their names	Concierge: Have you seen it? Giraffe has fallen in love with the Kirghiz! (Kukhnya, 5.89)	4
Illegitimacy	Criminal activity	Character shows involvement in any illegal and criminal issues	Timur: [about Maxim's edible paper invention] Will need to make an ID from that paper. If the cops burn I will eat it straight there! (Kukhnya, 5.95)	17
	Illegal stay in Russia	Ethnic character is depicted as staying illegally on the territory of Russia	Elena: This is Kanat, he is kirghiz. Poor fellow, still haven't managed to get his residence permit. (Kukhnya, 4.64)	2



Table A2  
Coding tree description: visual imagery

<u>Category</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Discription</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Family and gender	Femininity	Character embraces female identity through their appearance	Dinara: wears an elegant maxi dress with pearls on the collar, loose hair tressed, a silver ring and a big bracelet on the hand (Londongrad, 1.18)	9
	Masculinity	Character embraces male identity through their appearance	Ashot: wears a brown suit with an orange shirt, unbuttoned, so you can see locks on the chest, a golden chain (Univer, 3.151)	4
Apparel	Accessories	Character has many accessories in the outfit	Aynur: working as a janitor in the uniform, wears big earrings, a necklace, variety of rings and a bracelet (Kukhnya, 4.74)	22
	Excessive colouring/patterning	Character uses bright colouring/excessive patterning/glitter in his/her outfits	Ashot: wears grey coat, flower-patterned shirt, brown trousers, white shoes and green scarf (Univer, 3.152)	26
	Business casual/smart casual appearances	Character tries to look neat in the informal situations	Artur: sits in his university dorm, wears a cream-coloured shirt, a black blazer, dark trousers and white shoes (Univer, 3.148)	32
Money	Luxury consumption orientation	Character pursues luxury and expensive-looking appearance	Caucasian guy: arrives on black BMW with privacy glass, wears black leather jacket (Kukhnya, 3.54)	9

Table A3  
*Coding tree description: characters roles*

<u>Category</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Intellectuality	Mcjobs	Character has a low-paying, low-prestige dead-end job that requires few skills	Aynur is a janitor in the restaurant	4
Money	High-middle class/ high class orientation	Character belongs/pursue to belong to financially higher social stratification	Dinara is an oligarch's wife	7