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**METHODS OF OBJECTIFICATION OF ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION  
IN MODERN GERMAN MEDIA-CULTURE**

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*Abstract*

This article examines the phenomenon of media culture and its functions in the modern society. Media culture is usually understood as an area of culture that is formed in the interaction of an individual with mass communication, including mass print, radio, cinematography, television, video, certain types of network-based computer technologies. Media culture opens up great opportunities for a person and influences the values of society, the worldview of different sociocultural groups, shapes these values and manipulates public opinion. As a result of the European migration crisis, the relationship between two large social and cultural groups has become important for the German society. These two groups are host side and newcomers, migrants which have another, “foreign” culture and traditions. A concept of discrimination, its types and forms, as well as its manifestation in the modern media-culture in the German mass media materials is considered in the article.

One of the common types of discrimination is ethnic discrimination that is manifested in mass media by opposing one’s own to another’s culture, creating a negative image of the representatives of the “alien” ethnic group and can be seen in lexical, evaluative and structural levels of texts.

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**Keywords:** Media culture, discrimination, migration crisis, ethnic discrimination, gender discrimination, ageism.



## **1. Introduction**

The concept of media culture is relatively new in scientific discourse and is widely interpreted by modern scholars (culturologists, linguists). Media culture is usually understood as an area of culture that is formed in the interaction of an individual with mass communication, including mass print, radio, cinematography, television, video, certain types of network-based computer technologies (Kapterev, 2002). Media (from the Latin "media", "medium", meaning mediator) is a term originally introduced to describe the phenomenon of "mass culture" ("mass culture"). This type of culture of the information society, which is included in the concept of a general culture and is represented by printed media such as books, newspapers, magazines, films, radio and television, Internet resources, everything that connects a person with the outside world, entertains, promotes, influences people's opinions and behavior (Kirillova, 2005, p. 11).

It is certain that media culture opens up great opportunities for a person and, being a product of the information era, influences the values of society, the worldview of different sociocultural groups, shapes these values and manipulates public opinion.

German mass media, being an important element of the media culture of the society, perform their core function of disseminating information, promptly reacting to the current situation, reflecting both objective reality and different opinions of various social groups. The main field for discussions in this area is the field of media culture.

In the past few years, the topic of discrimination is very pressing and actively discussed in the Western media. This is primarily due to the large influx of migrants to Europe. Racial discrimination is not the only topic that receives wide public response. The scandal in the United States in 2017, which exposed numerous cases of sexual harassment and violence in the film industry, raised a wave of discussions about the problem of discrimination against women in mass media. In addition, the German media is actively discussing the issue of age discrimination, and not only elderly, but also young (up to 30-35) citizens feel suppressed in rights. For example, members of the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Jusos), participating in the political life of Germany, are debating with representatives of the older generation and convincing them of their political maturity and independence (Twitter, <https://twitter.com/hashtag/diesejungeneute?src=hash&lang=de>).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Discrimination is studied in modern science in the framework of various scientific directions and research, from the field of labor relations and sociology to cultural studies and linguistics. Despite a lot of legislative acts and condemnation of this phenomenon at the international level, the problem of discrimination in society is not resolved yet (Kuznetsova, 2017).

Discrimination is understood as an unjustifiable distinction in the rights and duties of a person on a various grounds. These include race, nationality, religious beliefs, age, sex, sexual orientation, etc. Certain types of discrimination are widely known and have their own terminology. For example, the concept of racism is used for racial discrimination, sexism is used to denote gender discrimination, and the term "ageism" refers to discrimination based on age.

### 3. Research Questions

We'll take a look at the problem of ethnic discrimination, which in our opinion is the most common in the real life of today's Germany and the most frequently manifested type of discrimination in the German media.

In connection with the large influx of refugees in 2015 (about 1.14 million people according to the Federal Statistical Office of the Federal Republic of Germany), a rather complicated situation has developed in modern German society, leading to the so-called migration crisis.

In the light of this crisis, the relationship between two large sociocultural groups-the host and the migrants who are the bearers of "alien" culture and traditions-comes to the fore (Kuznecova, 2017).

Opposition of one's own - alien - is one of the basic cultural universals. People tend to distribute objects, cultural processes and phenomena to "their own" and the "others". As a rule, "their own" are those phenomena that individuals consider to be traditional, which are regularly repeated in the reality surrounding them. "Alien" customs violate the established tradition and do not occur in a familiar environment. Therefore, a large number of "foreign" people with their culture, customs and traditions are perceived by the host with a certain degree of fear, misunderstanding and often rejection and hostility. The problem of ethnic discrimination is quite acute when it comes to recruitment, studying, finding accommodation, salary, etc. (Kuznecova, 2017).

### 4. Purpose of the Study

Against the backdrop of significant changes in the cultural and social spheres of society in the last few years, the attention of German-speaking media has focused on the topic of migration. It seems interesting to us to consider the phenomenon of ethnic discrimination in the German media culture on the materials of the magazines Spiegel ONLINE and Focus ONLINE.

### 5. Research Methods

The main research methods are the method of component analysis, the method of context analysis, including the elements of quantitative analysis.

### 6. Findings

**6.1.** The lexemes "Migranten" (migrants) and "Flüchtlinge" (refugees) are the most frequent in the articles of the magazines Spiegel ONLINE and Focus ONLINE. Analysis of the text of the articles allows us to conclude that in the understanding of the media, the following groups belong to these categories of people:

- People who are given citizenship: Es gibt nur einen Weg, zu verhindern, dass der politische Streit des Auslands hier ausgetragen wird: die Einbürgerung der Migranten. (There is only one way to prevent that there will be clarification of political relations - the adoption of citizenship by migrants.)

- People who came to Germany to study or work: Die Befragten machten einen klaren Unterschied zwischen Menschen, die vor Krieg und Verfolgung fliehen, und Menschen, die zum Lernen oder Arbeiten nach Deutschland

kommen. (The interviewees clearly discern people who fled from the war and persecution and people who came to Germany to study or work.)

- People seeking political asylum: Im Osten sind Asylsuchende bei vielen nicht willkommen, im Westen ist es mittlerweile ähnlich. (In the East, a warm welcome to asylum seekers is not provided, in the West the situation so far looks similar.)

- Those who were to flee from the war: Wie lernen Kinder, die vor Krieg flüchten mussten - und wie ergeht es ihnen mit ihren deutschen Mitschülern? (How do the children learn who were supposed to flee from the war, and how do they get along with their German classmates?)

- Those who fled from persecution and terrorism: "Ja, wir helfen denen, die unsere Hilfe brauchen, weil sie vor Krieg, Verfolgung und Terrorismus fliehen", beharrte Merkel." ("Yes, we help those who need our help, because they fled from the war, persecution and terrorism," Merkel insisted.)

The difference between "Migranten" (migrants) and "Flüchtlinge" (refugees) is that the migrant chooses to move in search of a better conditions, for example, by recruiting, receiving training, etc., outside his country of origin. A refugee is a person who "flees from armed conflict or persecution" because of his race, religion, citizenship or membership in a particular social group.

**6.2.** Researches done by Russian linguists Kasatkina and Smirnova, (2017) show that the lexeme "migrant" is mostly accompanied by neutral synonyms, while revealing the predominance of negative-colored elements over positively-colored elements more than doubled. This is confirmed by examples from the German press:

"In einem" WAZ "-Interview und auf Facebook warnt Karlheinz Endruschat (der Essener SPD-Vize) vor sich bildenden" Migranten-Milieus "und macht sich speziell Sorgen um seinen Stadtteil" - (In an interview with WAZ and Facebook Karlheinz Endruschat (LNG vice president in Essen) warns about the formation of a "migration environment" and is particularly concerned about his local area).

The very concept of "migratory environment" contrasts two major social groups - the indigenous population and the newcomers. And the fact that the head of the district is highly concerned about migrants makes readers suspicious and causes negative emotions towards migrants, without even getting deeper into the essence of the problem.

The following example illustrates the fear and rejection of another's culture and religion: "Die Muslimisierung der Stadtteile im Essener Norden ist niemals seriös hinsichtlich zukünftiger Konflikte hinterfragt worden." ([https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/image-als-no-go-area-migranten-milieus-in-essen-spd-mann-reisst-alte-wunden-auf\\_id\\_8394793.html](https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/image-als-no-go-area-migranten-milieus-in-essen-spd-mann-reisst-alte-wunden-auf_id_8394793.html)) - (The Muslimization of the areas in the north of Essen has never been seriously considered in relation to future conflicts).

The use of lexemes "Muslim" and "conflicts" in one sentence contributes to the formation of a negative assessment of the situation and causes fear in the German-speaking reader.

The following example is taken from an article in the Spiegel magazine "Freiberg will keine Flüchtlinge mehr" ("Freiberg no longer wants refugees"). The article provides convincing reasons why the city can no longer accept refugees. The lack of places in schools and kindergartens, the high percentage of refugees in oppose to the local population, and the lack of funding appear to be strong arguments. The text of the article is composed logically, neutrally, the argument is accompanied by digital data. Psychological research found out that the reader is most

affected by the first and last information. The last sentence of the article “Vor kurzem stoppte Brandenburgs Innenminister Karl-Heinz Schröter (SPD) nach zwei Messerangriffen durch minderjährige Flüchtlinge in Cottbus bis auf Weiteres den Zuzug von Flüchtlingen in die Stadt.“ (<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/sachsen-freiberg-will-vier-jahre-lang-keine-fluechtlinge-mehr-aufnehmen-a-1191019.html>) - (The Minister of Internal Affairs of Brandenburg Karl-Heinz Schröter (SPD) recently stopped the influx of refugees into the city after two attacks of underage refugees with a knife in Cottbus) undoubtedly demonstrates a more intense negative emotional impact on the reader than all reasonable arguments and figures given in the text of the article. Thus, forms an image of an aggressive refugee armed with a knife. If after reading the title a reader asks, “why the city does not want to let refugees in?”, then in the end they get an exhaustive answer.

## 7. Conclusion

As we can see from the examples above, ethnic discrimination manifests itself in the media culture as opposed to its own and "alien" culture, creating a negative image of the representatives of the “alien” ethnic group and can be seen in lexical, evaluative and structural levels of texts.

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